

# Adversity, Relationships and Complex Needs

Dr. Adam Burley  
Consultant Clinical Psychologist

NHS Lothian Psychotherapy Department,  
Edinburgh  
Scotland



# Multiply Excluded Homelessness

‘‘multiple exclusion homelessness’ (MEH) – a form of ‘deep’ social exclusion involving not just homelessness but also substance misuse, institutional care and/or involvement in ‘street culture’ activities.’

‘Most MEH service users had experienced troubled childhoods marred by school and/or family problems, with many also reporting traumatic experiences such as sexual or physical abuse, homelessness or neglect. In adulthood, the incidence of self-harm and suicide attempts is notable.’

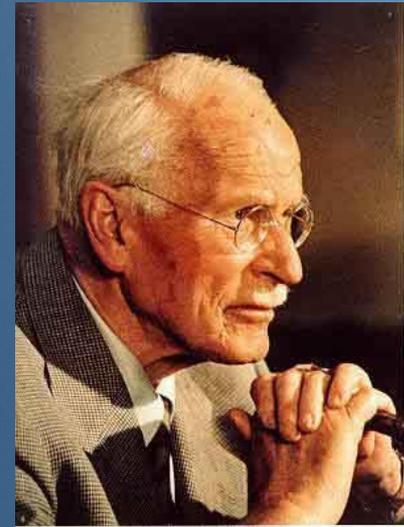
*Fitzpatrick, Bramley and Johnsen (2012)*



# Life begins at 40.....\*

‘Life really does begin at 40, up until then you are just doing research’

*Carl Jung, Psychoanalyst.*



\*Unless you are multiply excluded and homeless.

Mean age of death = 42

Mode = 38

*(EAP mortality data 2010-2015)*



# Multiply Excluded Homelessness

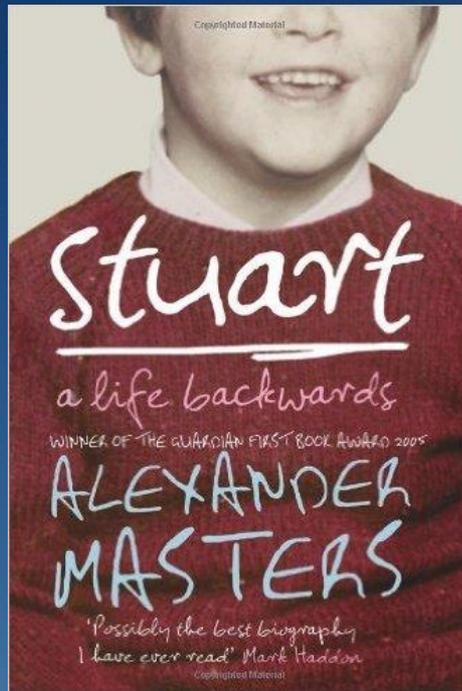
- 42% reported having been sexually abused.
- 61% reported having been physically abused.
- 55% reported having been excluded from school
- 72% reported having experienced familial conflict.
- 78% had previous criminal convictions.
- 45% had spent time in prison.
- 69% reported regular drug and alcohol abuse.
- 32% reported a significant head injury.
- 57% reported an ongoing chronic mental illness.
- 72% showed at least one diagnosable personality disorder.
- 54% reported having no friends or confidantes.

*Burley (2002) n = 125*



# Multiply Excluded Homelessness

‘Homelessness – It’s not about not having a home. It’s about something being seriously f\*\*king wrong.’



*Stuart, quoted in: “Stuart: A Life Backwards”  
by Alexander Masters, HarperPerennial, 2006*





# Why?

## Psychological Conflicts.

*The relations with carers are characteristic; they are characterized by the defeat of help.*

R. Hinshelwood (2002)



# Why?

## Comprehension Conflicts.



*When a young person is to be found running down the street smashing windows, he is looking for his mother.*

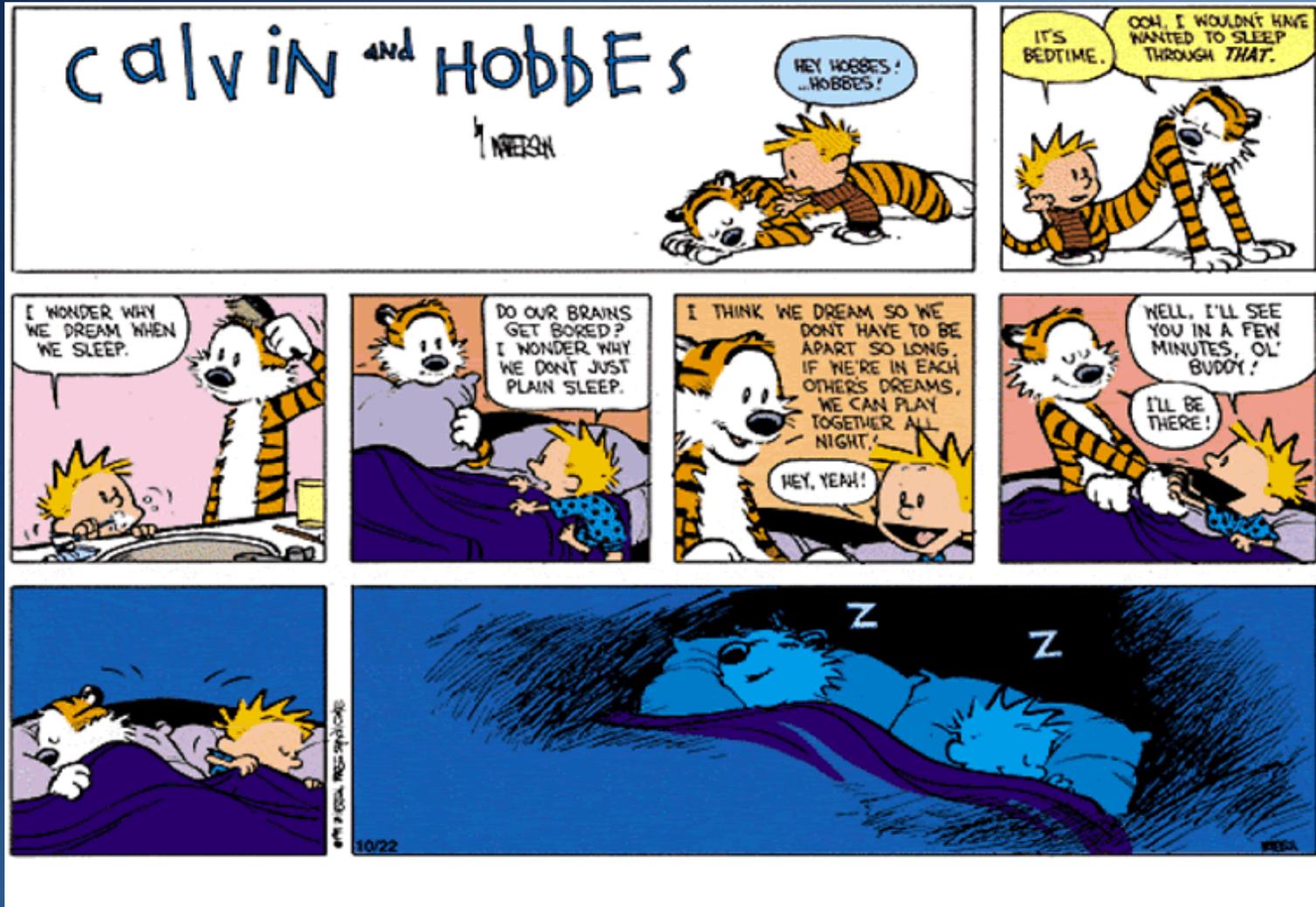
D. W. Winnicott (1949)



*There is no such thing as a baby.*

D.W. Winnicott (1957)





The Internal World.  
The Emotional Experience.



# Human Relationships as the Psychological Bedrock

- The fundamental human experience
- Central to development and health across the lifespan
- The defining element in most health and social care



# Engagement



# Multiple and Complex Needs



# Multiple and Complex Needs



# Multiple and Complex Needs

- Young female living in supported accommodation.
- Dependent on carers for basic ADL's
- Splits carers.
- 'Engages' with support in a variety of, often challenging, ways.
- At times very demanding, at other times totally self reliant.
- Range of challenging behaviour in relation to eating, conduct.
- Highly, highly emotionally labile.
- Occasionally aggressive and violent.
- Evokes very strong extremes of emotion in carers.
- Called 'bonkers' by other residents.
- Very volatile relationships with friends.
- Range of addictions.





Complex Presentation  $\neq$  Complex Intervention



# Case Study – Permanent Temporary

- 43 year old man.
- Long term rough sleeper (19 years).
- Long term street drinker.
- Developmental history containing high levels of abuse and neglect.
- Range of psychiatric symptoms and diagnoses.
- Poor ‘engagement’ with health, housing and social care services.
- Longest housed period in one place = 4 months.
- Apart from prison!



# Case Study – Permanent Temporary

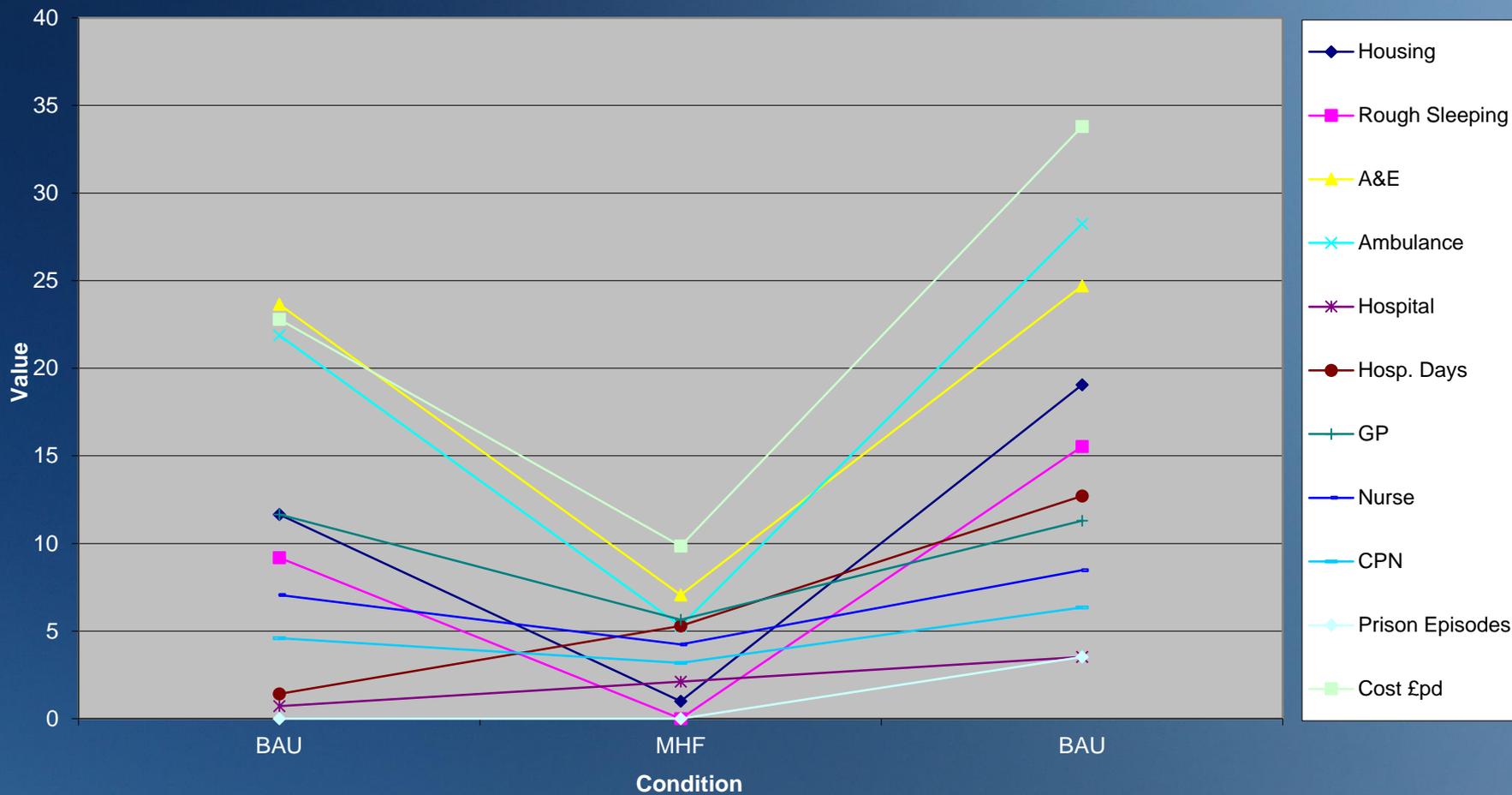
Intervention draws on an understanding of the relationship that has developed between client and services over the years. An agoraphobic / claustrophobic relationship with care attachments.

A1 and A2 are normal housing procedure.

B is a modified version of housing first – The provision of temporary accommodation on a permanent basis. Benign but present care. Support for staff. Contracts.



# Business as Usual (BAU) v Modified Housing First (MHF)



*There is no such thing as a patient.*

A. Burley (2017)



# Thoughts / Questions..?



S. GROSS

*"It sort of makes you stop and think, doesn't it."*

