

MOBILIZING NETWORK SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

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RESEARCH QUESTION AND DATA

RQ: How do the Housing First caseworkers engage with homeless people’s network and in which way does this potentially alter their access to support networks?

Qualitative interview and ethnographic fieldwork at one municipal shelter

- i) One municipal shelter in Denmark inspired by Housing First methods. It offered multiple services; form emergency shelter to Housing First programs.
- ii) 14 interviews with professional support staff at the shelter.
- iii) Shadowing - Ethnographic field study of caseworkers working with people living in the shelter or enrolled in Housing First programs.

Important note: Work-in-progress – I am still in the process of gathering and assessing data.

VERY DIFFERENTIATED NETWORK ACCESS

Some homeless people have close to no network, others seem to have a substantial social network.

FOUR SOURCES OF SUPPORT NETWORKS



The four sources of support as identified by Cummings et al. (2022)

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

MOBILIZING NETWORKS (PRELIMINARY CATEGORIES)

Main ways the caseworkers and/or the homeless person engaged with the network:

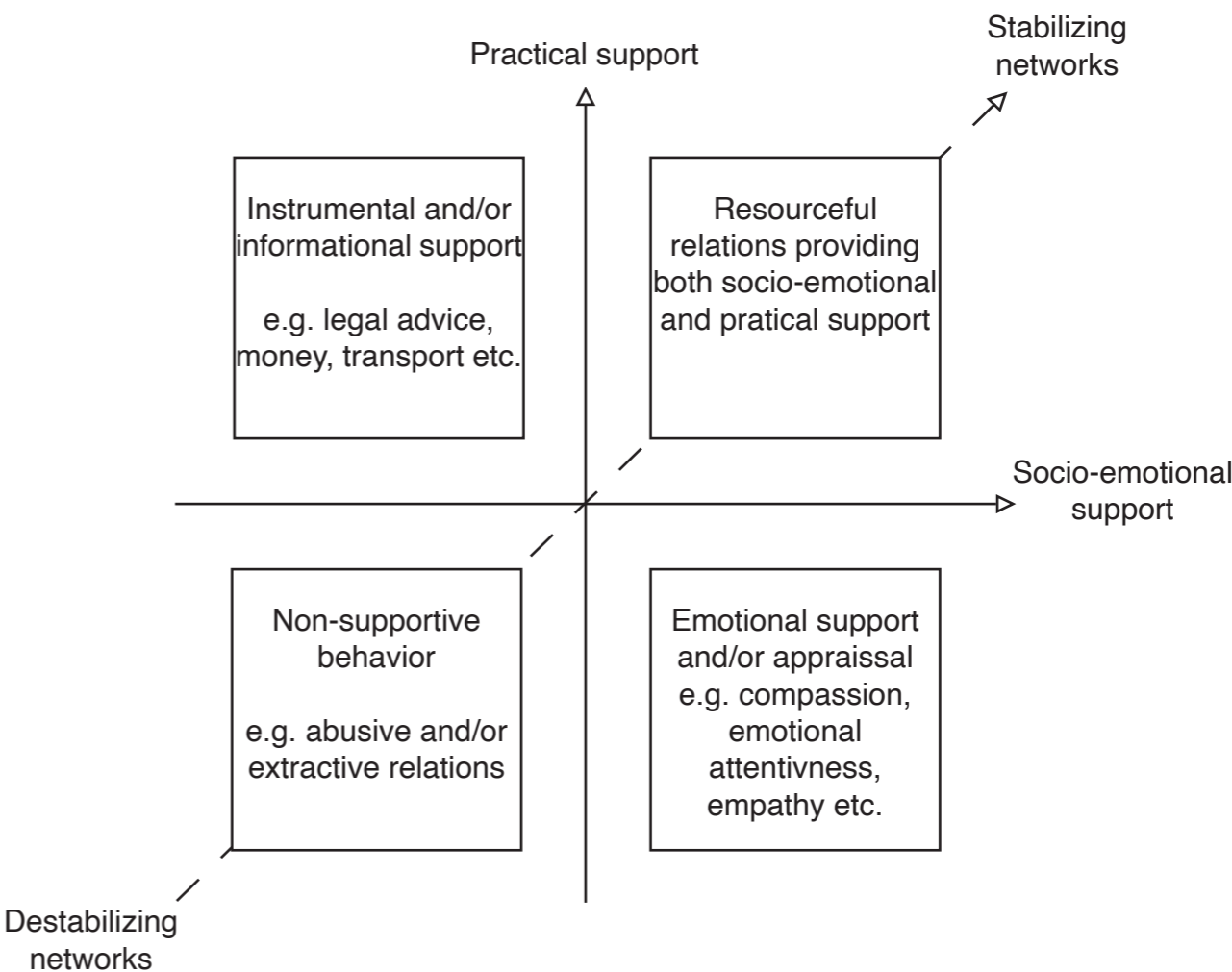
- a) **Repairing relations**
Reaching out to people, whom the homeless person previously has had a relationship with e.g. parents, children or an ex-partner.
- b) **Maintaining relations**
Maintaining relations to people in the network e.g. service providers, family, peers/lateral ties.
- c) **Creating new relations**
 - i) Peers/Lateral ties e.g. activities at shelter, volunteer foot ball for homeless people.
 - ii) Vertical ties e.g. service workers, volunteers, co-workers, education
- d) **Distancing relations**
Re-negotiating relations e.g. people in the network actively using drugs, parent-child relation.

Altering one’s network through one of the above strategies may change the type of support one has access to.

STABILIZING NETWORKS – DIMENSIONS OF SUPPORT

I have re-grouped the four types of social support identified by House (1981) into the following model:

- Practical help:**
- a) Instrumental support – help with practical issues
 - b) Informational support – useful information
- Socio-emotional help:**
- c) Emotional support – help to manage emotions
 - d) Appraisal – expanding self-confidence



Key references: Golembiewski, E., Watson, D. P., Robison, L., & Coberg II, J. W. (2017). Social Network Decay as Potential Recovery from Homelessness: A Mixed Methods Study in Housing First Programming. Social Sciences, 6(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6030096>, Ayed, N., Akther, S., Bird, V., Priebe, S., and Jones, J.M. (2020). How is Social Capital Conceptualised in the Context of Homelessness? A Conceptual Review Using a Systematic Search. European Journal of Homelessness Vol. 14(2) pp.95-132., Cummings, C. Lei, Q., Hochberg, L., Hones, V. and Brown, M. (2022). Social support and Networks Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness: A Systematic Review. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 92 (3), p. 349-363., House, J. S. (1981). Work, Stress and social support. Addison-Wesley., Desmond, M. (2012). Disposable Ties and the Urban Poor. American Journal of Sociology, 117(5), 1295–1335. <https://doi.org/10.1086/663574>