

NAME:

Causes of Homelessness

Read the 'Causes of Homelessness' (page 7) section of the fact book and complete the following activities.

ACTIVITY 1 – CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

List the different causes of homelessness and give a brief explanation of how each cause can lead to homelessness.



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ACTIVITY 2 – STORIES OF HOMELESSNESS

Read through each of the stories below. They are real life stories of people who have or are experiencing homelessness. After reading each story, identify which of the causes you listed above have caused this person to experience homelessness.

STORY	CAUSE/S
<p>Eighteen months ago, Maria’s job disappeared and she was laid off. Maria tried desperately to find work, but was unsuccessful. Being over 55, Maria was able to access her \$9000 superannuation fund. She used it to supplement her unemployment benefits, but in July 2014 it was exhausted. Maria has nothing. Her only income is her government unemployment benefit of \$630 per fortnight. However, her rent and utilities are \$600 per fortnight. With only \$30 a fortnight left to live on, Maria is unable to pay for an internet or phone connection, so is cut off from the world and the job market. She relies on charity for food. However, she is now unable to meet her rental and car payments. When her car is repossessed she will be cut off from her only means of potentially securing the employment she is so desperately seeking. Maria faces imminent homelessness and absolute poverty, and there seems to be nothing she can do about.</p>	
<p>Joanna was happily married and lived in one of Melbourne’s ‘leafy’ eastern suburbs. Joanna has a son and daughter, and with her husband owned and operated two businesses. Sadly, the marriage fell apart and the house and businesses were sold to pay off debts. Joanna began suffering from severe depression and anxiety. With no family support, Joanna and her young son moved into government transitional housing for 12 months, and her daughter stayed with Joanna’s ex-partner. Joanna and her son eventually moved into a flat in a public housing estate. Joanna met someone new, but, tragically, he was killed by a vehicle running a red light. This sent her into a state of further deep depression from which she is now slowly recovering. Joanna and her son are desperate to move out of their current accommodation because of fears for their safety.</p>	



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STORY	CAUSE/S
<p>Carey is a 41 year old man who has served a stint in prison. He suffers from diagnosed depression, is on medication and lives at a Catholic Church-run temporary men's hostel, awaiting permanent accommodation. We have seen Carey for nearly twelve months, and he has just identified a two bedroom private rental duplex which he plans to co-share with a friend. Carey was ecstatic that he could finally leave the hostel and have his own place. We are concerned that because of Carey's mental health condition that he may not manage as well as he hopes, and may run into financial management issues which may compound his health issues. Unlike Department of Housing accommodation where direct payments can be made by Centrelink for rental and utilities costs, Carey will have to manage these independently. If he does not manage to do so, he will be at risk of relationship break down with his friend, cutting off of services, eviction and potentially running the risk of the homelessness cycle re-setting. Given Carey's past prison record and mental health diagnosis, he is likely to need ongoing support with responsible life skills building. We believe that Carey might be better off in a social housing setting rather than private rental, but this is unavailable.</p>	



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ACTIVITY 3 – CREATE YOUR OWN STORY

Choose one of the 'Causes of homelessness' (page 7) from the list and write a fictional story about someone who lost their home due to this cause. Try to focus on the emotions and feelings that would be experienced by this person and what their life would be like after losing their home. The Short Story Structure and Editing Guide will assist you to organise and plan your writing.

