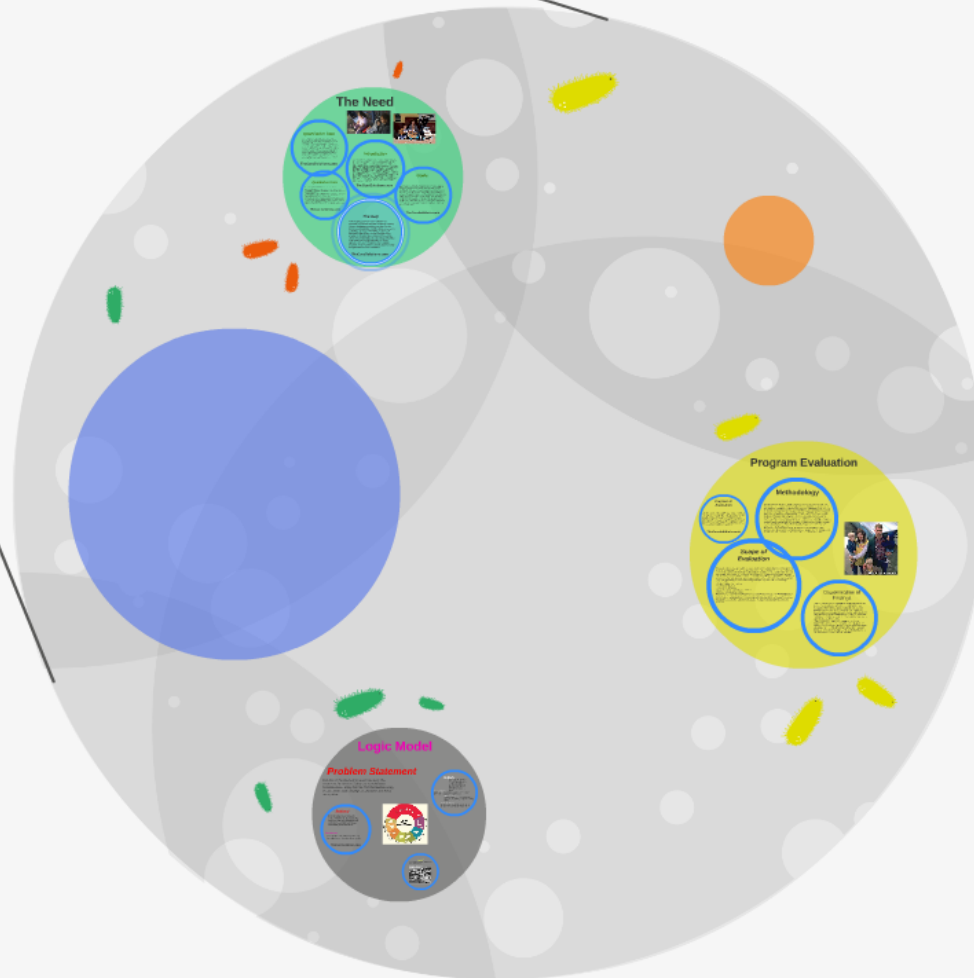


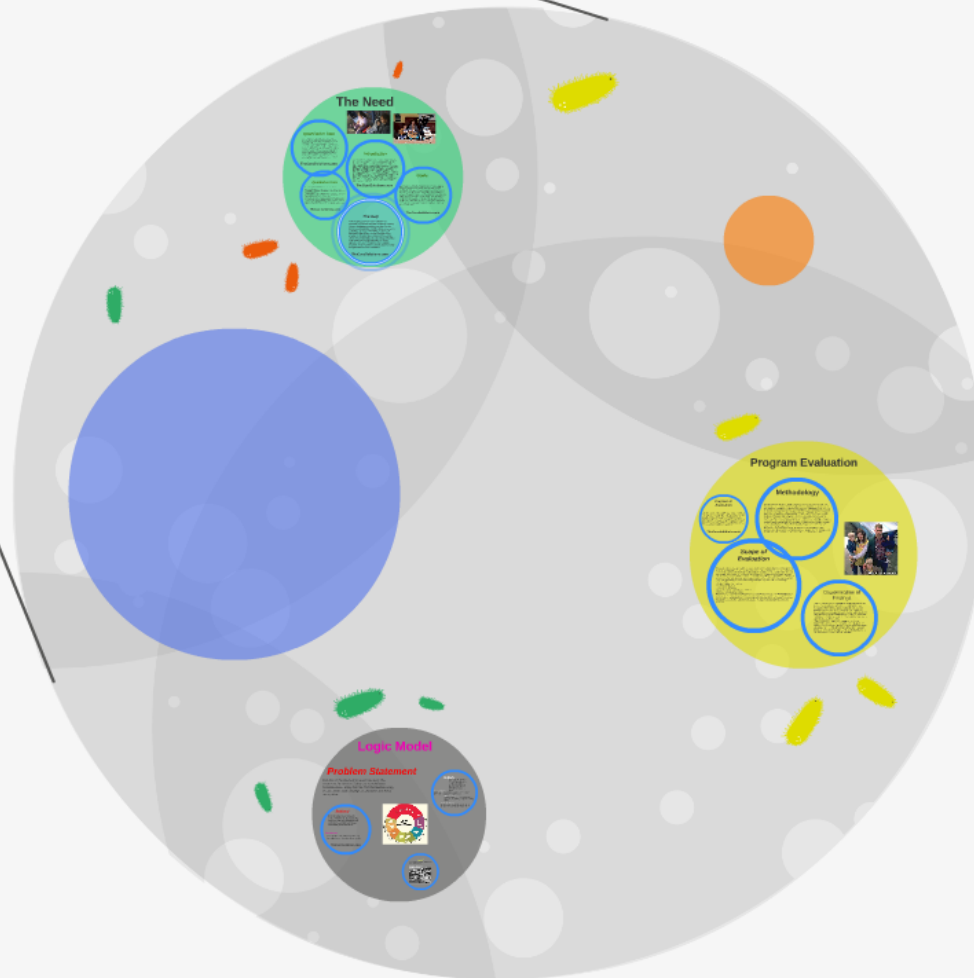
Watson Children's Shelter

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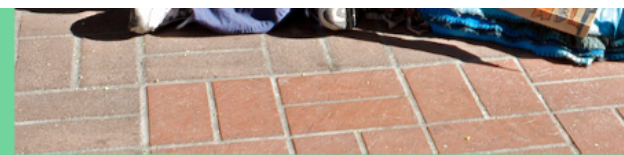


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Introduction

Currently in Kitsap County there is a lack of shelter options for homeless families. A family is being defined for this needs assessment as a group of people who live together with an emotional attachment. This definition is meant to encompass all couples, male and female, male and female with children, female with children, male with children, female and female couples, male and male couples all with or without children. Homeless families have a hard time finding adequate shelter due to shelters limiting services to either female clients with or without children or men with or without children. Families must make the choice to sleep outside or split up for the night adding to the many barriers they face. In Kitsap County, Bremerton specifically, there are three shelters which provide services to women with children and one that has one room for a man with a child. Currently in Bremerton there are no shelters providing housing to couples with or without children. Making it even harder is the age limit shelters put in place for children; some shelters will only take male children 11 and younger and family shelters stop taking children once that child turns 18.

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Looking at the shelters trying to include or include individuals living as a families receiving inter services designed to g with a goal of retaining shelter. If adding spac

Quantitative Data

In Kitsap County there are shelters that provide services to women, women with children, men and men with children. In some cases the shelter will only take male children if the child is 11 or younger. There is one shelter, The Benedict House that can house one male and child.

Data from the 2014 Point in Time Count for Kitsap County shows there were 672 homeless people in Kitsap County with 476 households, (Kitsap CoCC, "Kitsap County PIT Count", 2014). Of the 476, 93 reported being unsheltered with 66 of those reporting they are a family unit, 6 of the families reported having children. 51 households report living in emergency shelters, 111 households in transitional housing, 147 households living with family or friends (this population may not consider themselves homeless), 55 reports living outside, 25 report living in a car, 4 report living in an abandoned building (Kitsap CoCC, "Kitsap County PIT Count", 2014). Length of time was captured by the survey as well with 22 households reporting being homeless less than a month, 19 reporting 2-3 months, 31 reporting 4-12 months and 161 reporting being homeless for more than a year (Kitsap CoCC, "Kitsap County PIT Count", 2014).

On January 29, 2015 I conducted a small survey at the Bremerton Foodline. I was able to survey six people. All six reported they are homeless, all six responded as a family, two reported they are currently living outside because they need a family shelter, one reported not being able to stay in a shelter due to her son's age.

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Qualitative Data

In the Underserved Homeless Populations report written by Marta Holt for the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council in 2013, key findings were reported showing gaps in service for the homeless. The report shows individual barriers and program gaps:
The key findings of personal barriers include:

1. Criminal records, especially serious felony crimes. Among the most difficult to house populations in Kitsap County are ex-offenders with little or no income.
2. It is difficult to house homeless individuals who are unable or unwilling to comply with case management requirements, including abstinence from substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, and who have little or no income.
3. Homeless individuals who require respite, wound care, or medication management after being released from hospitals, and who have little or no income.
4. There are additional populations who are going underserved due to previously unidentified barriers. This includes couples who wish to remain together, single mothers with boys 13 and older, and households with pets.

The key findings of housing and program gaps include:

1. There is no Unconditional Overnight Shelter in Kitsap County open to all who need it.
 2. There is no Permanent Supportive Housing that does not require abstinence and/or participation with case management for chronically homeless individuals with multiple high barriers.
 3. There are no coordinated discharge policies or programs in Kitsap County for re-entry populations; especially needed for those re-entering from jails, prisons, and hospitals.
 4. There are not enough permanently subsidized housing units or housing vouchers for households with little income, including elderly homeless.
 5. Existing program funds for financial assistance are under-funded, and do not meet the demand for assistance.
- (Holt, "Under Served Populations Report", 2013)

According to Patti Peterson Director of Bremerton Foodline, whom I interviewed on February 9, 2015, the men and women she comes into contact with need a family shelter where they can feel safe. She feels that there is a gap in service for families because currently there is no place for a family to go. Patti feels that in order to truly help the homeless family population a shelter that can hold households for more than six months while providing intensive case management to help with barriers would be needed. Because of the immense amount of individual struggle to get back into permanent housing, families need more than the six week maximum that most shelters offer. Patti points out that it can be a great financial burden for the organization providing shelter for families. Insurance rates go up with blame put on the issue of domestic violence and sexual assaults. She feels that if a family shelter were opened in Bremerton there would be several individuals who would use the service. However, these shelters would have to be closely monitored and set up with strict case management guidelines to ensure effectiveness.

I was also able to speak with Minty MacPherson Manager of Bremerton Foodline on February 9, 2015 who feels that lack of education, space, money and awareness around homeless families is a problem. She also pointed out that at this time there is no place for families to go and being that they want to stay together they tend to stay outside. She spoke of a client who came to stay at Bremerton Foodline when the sever weather shelter was opened, the women had a car full of kids but could not find shelter due to the ages of the children.

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February 9, 2015, the men and women she comes into contact with need a family shelter currently there is no place for a family to go. Patti feels that in order to truly help the families while providing intensive case management to help with barriers would be needed. Patti points out that the maximum stay in shelters is six weeks, but families need more than that. Patti points out that insurance rates go up with blame put on the issue of domestic violence and sexual assault. However, these shelters would have to be open to several individuals who would use the service.

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The Gap

After looking over the data collected on services provided to families in Kitsap County, there is inadequate shelter provided for the homeless population. Families deserve a warm, safe place to sleep. Providing shelter is an important step to ensure that families have access to the very basic needs and services. Many times individuals feel as if they only have each other and being separated is not an option. It also puts further barriers in place because of transportation issues and how they will get from one site to another.

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shelter. If adding space to shelters is an unreachable goal, find funding through grants or vouchers for hotels.

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Goals

Looking at the shelters already in place I would suggest trying to include or incorporate separate quarters for individuals living as a family. It would be beneficial to see families receiving intensive case management and other services designed to get them into job placement programs with a goal of retaining their own home while utilizing the shelter. If adding space for families into already existing shelters is an unreachable goal the next goal would be to find funding through grants and other sources to provide vouchers for hotels.

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Rational

Families who have access to shelter which includes intensive case management targeting self-sufficiency and job training are more likely to find housing.

Assumptions

One family shelter can serve up to 24 individuals or six families of four people.

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Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the progress of adding homeless family shelters in Kitsap County that provide intense case management. It will evaluate how case management within the shelter has helped families become self-sufficient. The evaluation will also be used to emphasize parts of the program that may need improvement in order to increase success rates of family independence. The hope is to determine that the participants involved in the intensive case management as well as the case managers are able to see the process as beneficial and life changing. Through this evaluation I also hope to determine any areas that are in need of improvement so modifications can be made to better serve those entering the shelter.

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