

## 14<sup>th</sup> European Research Conference Helsingborg, 20th September 2019

VENUE: Helsingborg Campus of the University of Lund, Sweden  
**Bios and Abstracts**

### Seminar 17: Room C218 - Mobilizing Knowledge to Support Integrated Systems Approaches to the Prevention of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (2)

Chair: **Albert Sales, ES (TBC)**

**Patrick Fowler and Daniel Farrell, USA:** Designing Innovative Homelessness Prevention Systems for Youth



Patrick J. Fowler, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Brown School and Division of Computational and Data Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. His research aims to prevent homelessness and its deleterious effects on child, family and community well-being. Trained in child clinical-community psychology, Fowler uses innovative methods that rigorously investigate policies and programs intended to promote housing and family stability.



**Daniel Farrell** is a Senior Vice President of Assessment, Diversion and Research at HELP USA, an American non-profit provider with programs that provide transitional, permanent housing and homeless prevention services to people at risk, literally homeless and formerly homeless adults and families. Daniel is responsible for multiple transitional housing, shelter and homeless prevention/rapid rehousing programs in multiple US cities including New York City, Philadelphia and Las Vegas serving over 10,000 homeless or at risk single adults and families each year. He is also an Adjunct Professor at the Hunter College School of Social Work, and a graduate from the New York Institute for Psychoanalytic Self Psychology. He has published multiple papers on homelessness, most recently a book chapter titled, Relational Theoretical Foundations and Clinical Practice Methods with People Experiencing Homelessness.

Communities around the globe increasingly adopt policies that shift homeless services from 'after the fact' responses towards efforts that quickly mitigate or prevent homelessness. Movement upstream reflects a growing body of evidence demonstrates the utility of prevention models, as well as emerging insights into contextual factors that facilitate policy changes. Although expansions in prevention practice and policy are promising, a potential threat to broader dissemination concerns the inherent complexities involved in redesigning existing service systems. Communities face difficult decisions regarding how best to tailor and target prevention resources that meet the demands of multiple populations with different needs. Communities simultaneously balance concerns regarding efficiency (i.e. greatest return from services) and fairness (i.e., equitable distribution of resources).

This presentation focuses on youth homelessness prevention to illustrate the challenges and opportunities for innovative systems transformation. Youth homelessness remains stubbornly high in communities across the globe, despite considerable efforts to mitigate through homeless services. Inadequately housed youth typify variability that challenges customized services; emerging adulthood presents unique developmental considerations that differ from families and adults, while youth also vary considerably from each other, such as parenting youth, runaway youth, and institutionalized youth. Tensions arise regarding how to allocate resources that broadly protect youth. Fortunately, systems design thinking provides strategies to manage and learn from the complexities. The presentation provides case studies on the design, implementation, and evaluation of youth homelessness prevention systems in multiple communities. Examples will highlight common and unique components that facilitate complex decision-making, and particular emphasis will be placed on evaluation frameworks that provide rapid information for program improvement. The presentation will conclude with a reflection on the implications of systems design thinking for global policies that

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promote homelessness prevention. The second of two presentations on homelessness prevention ensures productive feedback on emerging evidence from policy and practice developments.

**Francesca Albanese, UK:** Prevention or Cure? A Year on from the Homelessness Reduction Act in England



**Francesca Albanese** is currently the Head of Research and Evaluation at Crisis, the national UK charity for homeless people. She oversees Crisis' external commissioning and in-house research and evaluation function including management of the Homelessness Monitor series and longitudinal project on the Homelessness Reduction Act. Francesca has worked in housing and homelessness policy and research for the past twelve years, at Crisis, Shelter and Homeless Link and completed her PhD in housing policy in 2007.

Introduced in April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) shifts the statutory approach to homelessness across Local Authorities in England from crisis management to preventative action, widening the eligibility of those seeking assistance. However, trends in local authority statistics show that the instability and precariousness of the private rented sector is increasingly contributing to the rise in homelessness in England, whilst lack of affordable housing supply and changes to welfare policies limits the options many local authorities have in preventing and ending homelessness.

This paper presents the baseline findings of a three-year research project research currently being undertaken by Crisis' exploring the implementation of the HRA across six Local Authority areas in England. The study is using a mixed methods approach and findings from the first year are based on surveys and interviews with over 500 service users and staff working in the six case study areas. The research looks at the delivery of the HRA and its impact on housing outcomes. It considers the approaches Local Authorities are taking to prevent and relieve homelessness under their new duties, and identifies and explores the tension between the new legislation and the realities of the local housing market. As Local Authorities are constrained by the housing supply available to them, their ability to provide sustainable outcomes for homeless households becomes harder to deliver suggesting a potential conflict between the HRA and the current housing market.