

“Waiting to go home”: Narratives of homelessness, housing and home among older adults with schizophrenia

Lydia P. Ogden

Journal of Aging Studies, Volume 29, April 2014, Pages 53–65

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2014.01.002>

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0890406514000048>

Highlights

- Narratives of homelessness, housing and home of 5 older adults with schizophrenia
- Housing status and identity were interwoven.
- Participants formulated present-time housing as a symbol of personal resilience.
- Achieving a sense of home was hindered by a lack of autonomy in housing programs.

Abstract

This study used thematic narrative analysis to develop an understanding of how older adults with ongoing symptoms of schizophrenia who have experienced homelessness understand and express their life course and present-time narratives of homelessness, housing, and home. Findings were developed from 26 individual interviews with five study participants and 33 systematic field observations of their homes, treatment environments and neighborhoods. Presentation of the participants' narratives illuminates how participants experienced shared challenges in unique ways and the meaning they assigned to experiences of homelessness, housing and home, particularly in regard to identity and ongoing challenges. While all participants were housed, housing did not equate to a sense of being home. Implications for social work practice and policy, and directions for future research, are discussed.