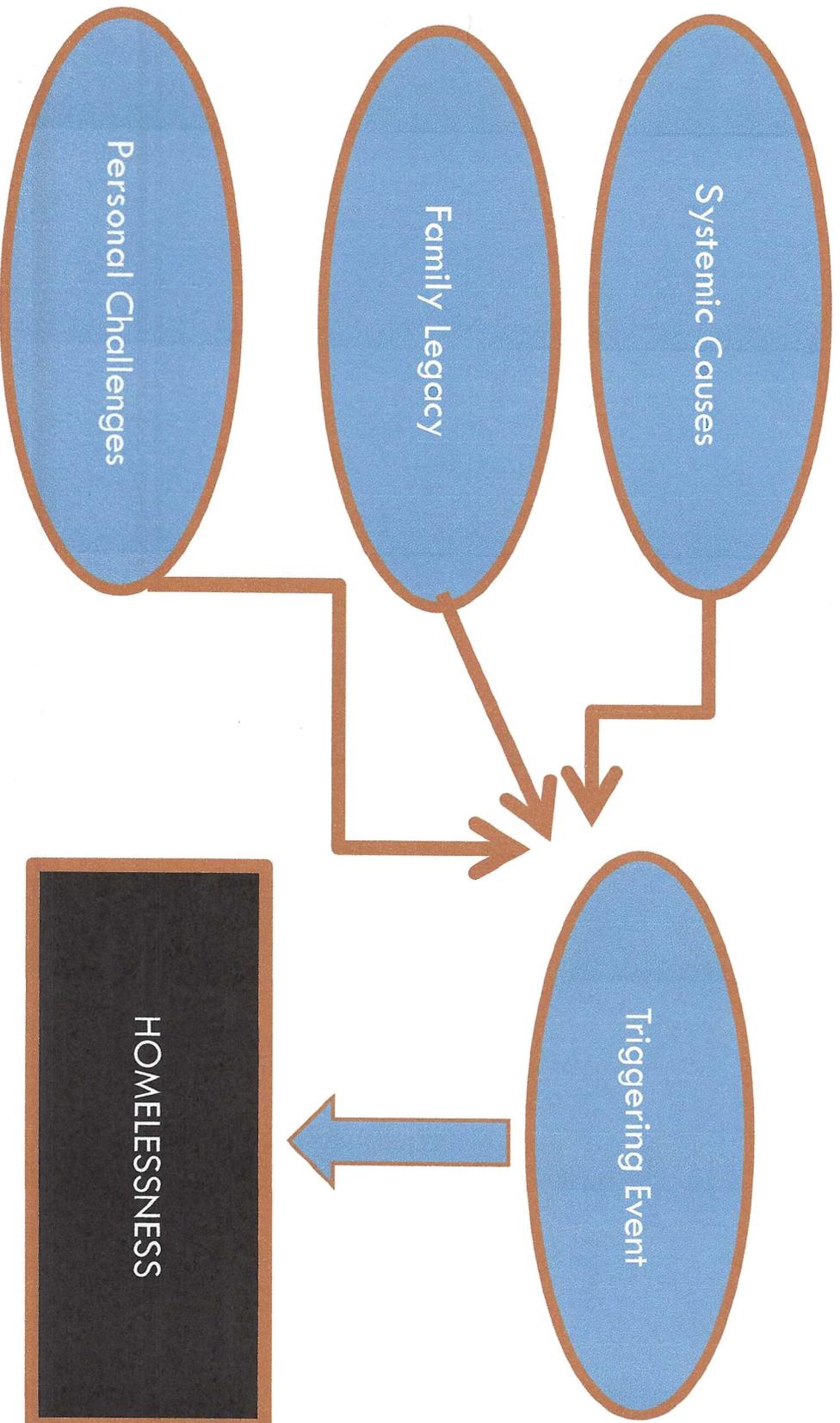


The Causal Levels of Homelessness

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Examples of Causal Levels

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Systemic Causes [*Conditions that are in or of our political, economic, and social/cultural systems that can cause mass homelessness*]: Institutional & structural racism; sexism; homophobia; transphobia; ableism; xenophobia, classism; economic flux; lack of affordable housing; unsustainable minimum wages, disability income, and entitlements; unemployment rate; failures in-- public education, ward emancipation, rehabilitation of ex-offenders, and in community-based mental/medical health care...

Family Pathologies [*Conditions in the family unit that can make one more vulnerable*]: Death, incarceration, physical or mental illness, or substance addiction of a parent/guardian; domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect in the family; multigenerational poverty; lack of generational wealth, family instability, frequent residential moves; multiple foster placements...

Personal Challenges [*Circumstances or choices that can make one more vulnerable*]: Having a disability, substance addiction, or a history of domestic violence or incarceration; losing a job; dropping out of school; unplanned pregnancy; coming out as LGBTQ; lack of life skills; making "poor" choices...

Triggering Event [*What happens between being housed and becoming homeless*]: Eviction (legal or illegal); fire or other disaster; domestic violence episode; family dispute (person is thrown out of the home); released from an institution...

This hand is responsible for homelessness, but only 1 finger is an individual's contribution to their circumstances.

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The political right often promotes that people become homeless due to a lack of personal responsibility, while the political left claims systemic factors are the causes. Both are right and both are wrong.

Personal Choices: Who says: "When I grow up I want to spend my life on the streets,"? Who among us hasn't made some bad decisions, especially when young? Fact: Most persons who make mistakes or have addictions never become homeless.

Though personal challenges are not the only cause of an individual's homelessness, personal human agency is essential in order for the individual to become housed. In working with an individual experiencing homelessness, paraprofessional and degreed human service workers assist by connecting resources and providing guidance.

