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Insights: Publications

Sunshine: A Case Study on Elderly Female Homelessness

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Many women face additional risks as a result of being homeless that go beyond the typical disadvantages homeless men face. These disadvantages include increased risk of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and the inability to care for their children. During my overnight stay at the El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO) Shelter in Atascadero, I met a woman in her late seventies known only as Sunshine. She told me about her life before homelessness, her children, and the disease that is taking her life. My conversation with Sunshine mirrors past and present research concerning the disproportionately poor conditions endured by older homeless women. These women are particularly prone to such poor conditions because of economic disadvantages, physical and mental problems, and a lack of family support.