

Finding Home: Using Photos and Storytelling to Share the Meaning of Recovery

Part of larger CBPR WASH project

- Engages residence operators in a Quality Improvement project.
 - Operators work as a network to identify standards, metrics, and benchmarks and share their data for continuous quality improvement
- Resident voices
 - The photos and narratives in this collection were created by residents at the Lighthouse Recovery Residence in Manitowoc, Wisconsin in the spring of 2023 as part of a PhotoVoice project.



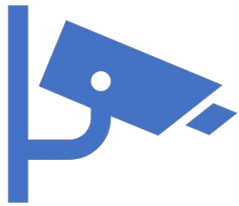
**University of Wisconsin
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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

What is Photo Voice?

A qualitative research methodology with the intent of fostering social change.

Compliment to traditional research approaches, allowing researchers deeper insights into the lived experience of participants.



Self-expression: Photovoice puts cameras into participants' hands to help them document, reflect upon, and communicate issues of concern. A way for individuals and communities to tell their own stories and share their experiences to bring about change.



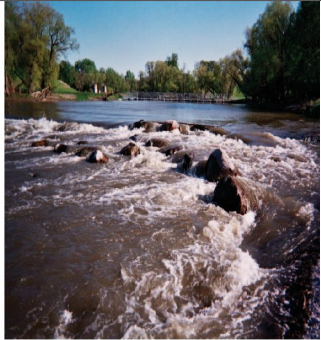
Community Engagement: group discussion and collaborative activities foster a sense of community and social cohesion. Participants work together to identify shared issues and develop collective solutions.



Advocacy and social change: - Visual depictions may offer viewers a vivid window onto an unknown world or offer a new perspective of familiar scenes and people. Pictures can be more powerful than words and lead to deeper understanding and prompt new ways of thinking. Policy makers and other decision makers may be more inclined to take action when presented with compelling visual evidence.

A

Participant: "Before the dam it is as smooth as glass and then all of a sudden it turns into the white water rapids...I have had 4 episodes of major depression and all of them have been related to jobs... depression just tends to sneak up on you and you don't see it coming and by the time you see it, you feel it is too late...Right now I feel like it is the calm."



B



"I'm making myself choke down these pills. I don't like taking these meds in the morning because they make me feel sick, but I know that I have to or I won't be in control of my own head and that's when I get really scared."

Figure 1. Personal photos and narratives as self-reflective with mental illness stories

Vancouver: Public Seating

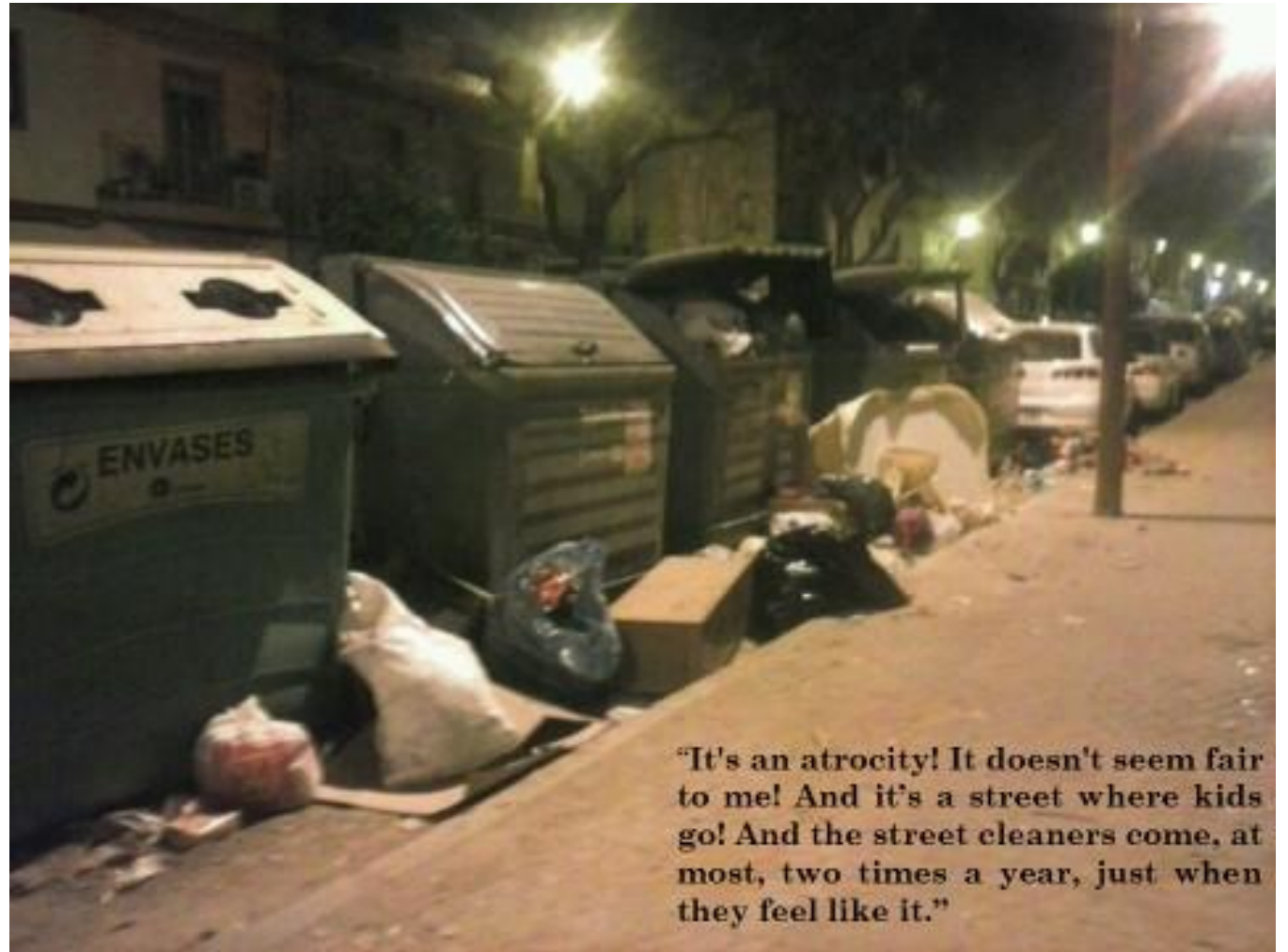


"Senior at rest! Beautiful red-iron bench just off busy shopping street. We meet friends here ... She is prone to falling, so this bench is a fine resting spot on her walks. This bench ... brings ... seniors and other folks together. It's a good community builder. As I get older I appreciate them more and more." (69, F, Vancouver)

Portland: Access Barrier



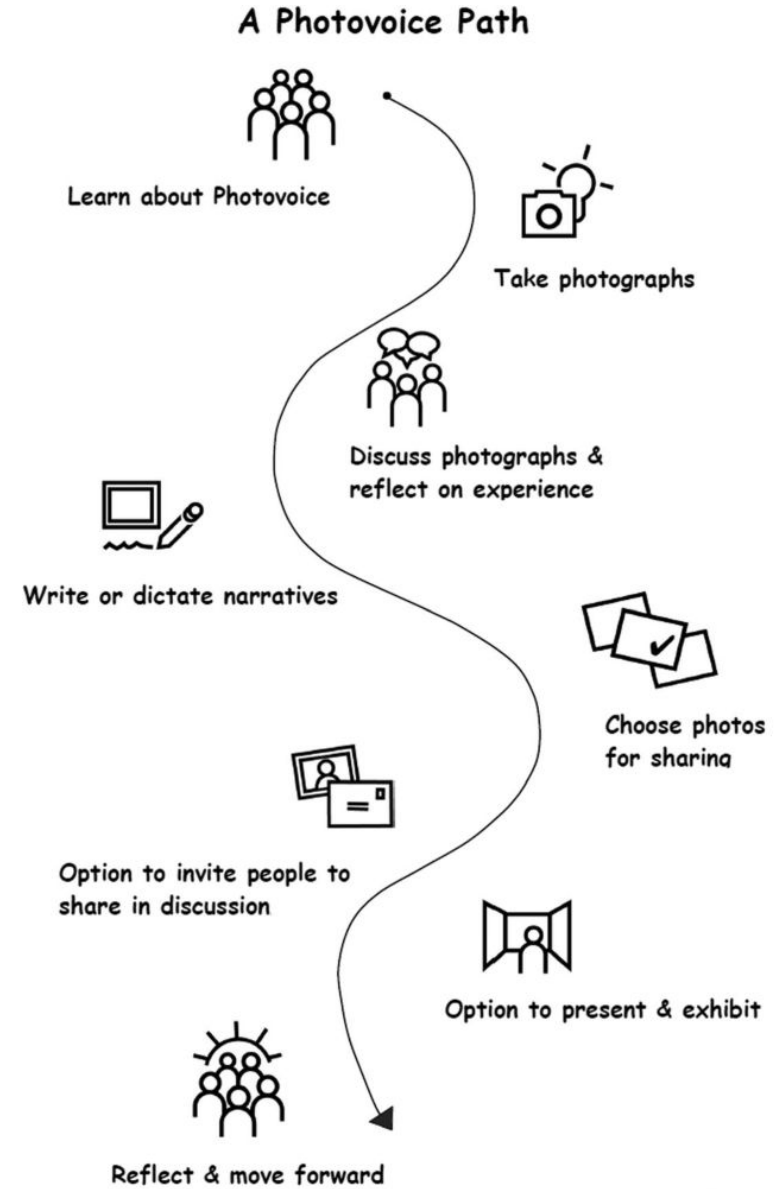
"Mount Tabor Park. Many steps to "level" area - no railings. Too many steps for seniors - no rails to help balance." (83, F, Mt. Tabor)



"It's an atrocity! It doesn't seem fair to me! And it's a street where kids go! And the street cleaners come, at most, two times a year, just when they feel like it."

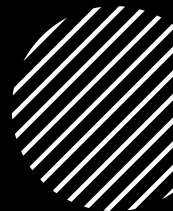
Conducting a Photovoice project

- 4 meetings
- Presentations
 - Library
 - Gallery
- Evaluation
 - Gain in knowledge, skills, or critical awareness
 - Change in self-perception and self efficacy
 - Expanded social networks and links with different actors
- Importance of implementing with ethical standards, informed consent, and sensitivity to cultural and emotional needs of participants





Photovoice is a powerful tool for individuals in substance use recovery to express themselves, heal, connect with others and contribute to the broader conversation about addiction and recovery. Enables them to reclaim their narratives and demonstrate their resilience and strength.



Community and support



Reducing Stigma: challenging stereotypes



Building resilience: reframe experiences and mark progress



Goal setting: tangible representation of progress and aspirations



Advocacy and awareness: advocate for improved substance use treatment and support services



Creative outlet: therapeutic and enjoyable, fulfilling activity



Recovery narratives: inspire others on the same path