

Outcomes

We would like to demonstrate the following **outcomes** with our experiences:

1. Understanding why it's easy to fall into homelessness.
2. See how experiencing homelessness can make formerly friendly places unwelcoming.
3. Learn that/why it's difficult to use the homeless shelters system.
4. Understanding why it's difficult to escape homelessness.

The Narrative We Will Communicate

(The key "lessons" about homelessness each experience should convey are in *blue*)

Intro/Eviction

Background: The experience begins by a narrator who sets the scene of who you are and introduces your backstory. You have been living in low income housing and working two jobs while caring for your elderly mother who is sick. Because of the time spent at the hospital you lose one of your jobs, and rent was already hard to make as is.

Being Evicted: You have received a notice that your rent will suddenly be raised by 10% to *meet demand in Seattle*. You are unable to handle the growing hospital bills and increased rent. You then receive an eviction notice and the landlord is telling you to evacuate by 5pm the next day.

(Multiple weeks pass)

Morning in Shelter

Restlessness: You are sleeping in a Seattle homeless shelter. You wake up several times during the night, and when the morning alarm goes off, *you are not well-rested*.

Searching Possessions: Your possessions are next to your bed, but they are not locked so you are constantly *paranoid about theft*. You frantically search to see if anything is missing -- and your only formal shirt and pair of shoes have been stolen.

Having to Leave: The shelter workers require you to leave by 7:30am, even though you have *nowhere else to go during the day*.

Spending Time in a Public Space

You need more time to get breakfast and to figure out what to do in the day, but the workers repeatedly emphasize that you must leave and you go hungry.

Unfriendly Atmosphere: You go to a public park where you enjoyed spending time just a short month ago. Now that you are homeless, this [formerly friendly space has become unwelcoming](#) for you. A nearby family gets up and leaves when you approach because of your appearance even though you intend no harm.

Police Harassment: A police officer approaches and lets you know you cannot hang out in the park, even though other people have been there longer. You protest, but the police officers tells you it's loitering. You [don't know your own rights](#) well enough to fight back.

Choosing Work or Shelter

Interview Scheduling Choice: You are attempting to find another job, and have an interview scheduled for today. Your formal clothing was already stolen so you are worried about the impression you will make. You receive a message on your [phone \(which is vital for today's job search\)](#) that the interview has been rescheduled to today at 4:00. Now you must choose -- [either pursue a job and possible financial stability, or line up and have a better chance at a place to sleep tonight.](#)

Finding a Place to Sleep

Shelter Choice: Regardless of your choice above, you must now choose a shelter to sleep in from several options, none of which are ideal:

Crowded Shelter: This shelter is popular because it offers breakfast and a late mandatory leaving time. By the time you get there, the line is too long for you to make it in -- you would have had to spend an [impractical amount of time waiting](#) to get access.

Max-Stay Shelter: This shelter would work, but you already stayed there 3 nights this month so [they will not let you stay again.](#)

Dirty Shelter: This shelter will accept you, but it has a reputation for poor cleanliness and several people in line are visibly ill. [You risk lowering your productivity](#) even further by sleeping here and getting sick.

How the User Will Experience Our Narrative

Intro/Eviction

Background (VR VIDEO): We show a video of the user's apartment, and a narrator voiceover explains the necessary background and your situation.

Being Evicted (VR VIDEO): The user sees a notice about a sudden rent raise on the counter, and a voiceover explains that the landlord raised prices because of skyrocketing demand in Seattle. The user can click on various items in the VR Video scene to see a version of that item held up to their face, such as a newspaper article about home prices in Seattle or a magazine clipping about rent control.

The user hears a knock on the door, and the landlord's voice tells them they have to be out by 5pm the next day. A voiceover explains how difficult it will be to choose what to take.



RENT INCREASE NOTICE

To _____

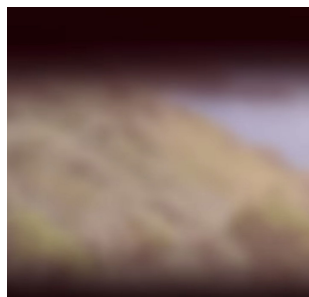
On this ___ day of _____, 20___ the Landlord known as _____ is increasing your rent to _____ Dollars (\$) from its current rate of _____ Dollars (\$) for the property with a street address of _____ in the City of _____ State of _____.

This rental increase shall take effect on the ___ day of _____, 20___ and I wish to sign a new agreement, or continue as a tenancy at will (month-to-month), the other terms and conditions of your lease shall remain in effect. If you do not wish to continue to rent the premises due to this change you may contact the Landlord by _____ day of _____, 20___ by sending notice in the following manner:

(Multiple weeks pass)

Morning in Shelter

Restlessness (VR VIDEO): The screen "blinks" with black eyelids and blurry vision several times as the user wakes up, and we repeat that fitful waking multiple times to simulate poor sleep and fear of not waking up on time. A voiceover describes how tired the user still is and has been left homeless with the eviction.



Searching Possessions (VR VIDEO + RENDER): A voiceover portrays how paranoid the user is about their possessions, and the user must interact with a rendered bin of items to root through and look for their stuff. The rendered bin will be overlaid on top of a VR video so there is some interaction but the setting of the environment is largely provided via VR Video. A formal shirt is missing, which is portrayed via a simple checklist in the air.



Having to Leave (VR VIDEO): A voice over the loudspeaker tells the user they have to leave. A voiceover describes the user's frustration because they haven't gotten a chance to eat breakfast, and because they have nowhere else to go. The user must click on the door in the VR Video to exit.

Spending Time in a Public Space

Unfriendly Atmosphere (VR VIDEO): We play a VR video of the user approaching a public park. The scene fades to have the user closer. They sit down at a table, but the group of people nearby gives them nasty looks and gets up pointedly. A voiceover lets the user know that this used to be one of their favorite parks but that they are no longer welcome.



[Stretch Goal] Police Harassment (VR VIDEO): We show a video of a police officer approaching and letting you know you cannot hang out in the park, even though other people have been there longer. The user gets a choice of several dialogue options they can say to the police officer, rendered as a floating menu in the air. No matter what the user says, the police officer

disputes it and tells them to move, and a voiceover lets the user know they don't know their rights well enough to fight back.



Choosing Work or Shelter

Interview Scheduling Choice (VR VIDEO): The user is sitting outside a shelter in a video. There is a text sound from their phone, and looking down, you see a message saying that the interview you had tomorrow is now today at 4:00pm. A voiceover lets you know that you need to be lining up outside a shelter at that time to get a good spot.

A rendered menu appears, letting the user choose between going to an interview and going to a shelter to line up early. If the user chooses the interview, the screen fades to black and a voice lets them know that the interviewers were uncomfortable hiring someone associated with homelessness so they probably won't get the job. If the user chooses the shelter, the screen fades to black and a voiceover tells the user they have missed out on the opportunity to gain some financial independence.

Finding a Place to Sleep

Shelter Choice (VR VIDEO): The user is presented with a VR video of a billboard displaying flyers for 3 different shelters they can go to, and the information they know about each one. Going to any shelter will result in a VR video/photo of the shelter (or whatever we can film) where the user sees the downsides of that shelter, and a voiceover explaining why it's not ideal. The user can then choose to go back and explore another one, or can commit to this shelter (where the experience ends).

[One Possibility] Crowded Shelter (VR VIDEO): The menu shows that the user knows this shelter is clean, offers breakfast, and has a reputation

for letting occupants stay later in the morning.

When the user attempts to go here, the line is shown to be quite long and the user's voiceover speculates that they probably won't get a spot.



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[One Possibility] Max-Stay Shelter (VR VIDEO): The menu shows that the user knows this shelter is clean but has a policy of only allowing each person to stay for 3 nights out of the month.

When the user attempts to go here, they see people checking off a list at the entrance. A voiceover speculates that you could maybe make it, but if they figure out you had already been there you would be kicked out.

[One Possibility] Dirty Shelter (VR VIDEO): The menu shows that the user knows this shelter has a reputation for being dirty, although it is easy to get into.

When the user attempts to go here, they see people in line coughing and a voiceover speculates that sleeping here might make the user sick.



Call to Action

Links to Engage (VR VIDEO): The user is given some voice over about the ways they can help, and is presented with some buttons that let them invoke the VR headset's web browser to learn more about the real-life shelters our application mentions.