



# **Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction**

**Vancouver (DTES), BC  
March 10, 2018**

## Introduction and Event Summary

On March 10, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Vancouver, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together approximately 245 to 255 participants including people with lived experience of poverty; poverty reduction front line workers and advocates; people from the non-profit and business sectors; and other community members from all walks of life.

The event began with a welcome from Elder Lorelei Hawkins and Donald Wadhams, followed by opening remarks from Shane Simpson (Minister of Poverty Reduction and Social Development).

Participants then engaged in round table discussions in groups of 8 to 10 people per table. Each table had a dedicated facilitator from a local community group or from SPARC BC who helped to guide the conversations. Each table also had a dedicated note taker who helped to record the discussion.

There were two rounds of discussion which focused on the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Following the discussions, participants were invited to put a sticky dot beside the strategies or solutions that were most important to them. Each participant received four (4) sticky dots. Following the individual priority setting exercise, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities from the evening and to report these priorities back to the room.

The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction shared some closing remarks.

## Document Organization

This document contains the transcripts from the flip chart notes from those in attendance. The flip chart notes have been transcribed verbatim, correcting only for spelling and grammar as needed. The notes are organized according to the feedback received to the two questions beginning with:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

## Question 1: What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

- Transportation
  - o Not enough, too expensive, not convenient
- Affordability
  - o Month to month living w/out food after rent
  - o Restriction on access to welfare if you have some assets (car)
  - o Welfare, at rates, can be a trap, no way out
  - o Cost of medications
- Addictions and Substance Use
  - o Not enough help for folks with addictions
  - o Some people are feeling hopeless in their addictions
  - o Need detox on demand, more detox facilities, support, long term
  - o People with mental health issues and with no help or support, they get taken advantage e.g. former Riverview folks
  - o Connection to sober community and sponsors for folks currently in addiction or in recovery is key
  - o Discarded rigs (drug paraphernalia) and not enough safe removal/disposal
  - o Drug dealers taking advantage of people/elders
- Housing
  - o High rents \$620/month
  - o Low wages versus housing costs
  - o There is a shortage of safe supported and affordable housing
  - o Not enough affordable and decent housing (1 dot)
  - o Healthy environment and a healthy home lead to good beginnings (3 dots)
  - o Not enough housing subsidies in the current system
  - o Not enough rent controls
  - o Real estate speculation and inflation of values
- Services and Supports
  - o Need more support workers to work with seniors
  - o Need language skills to help elderly newcomers and immigrants who don't have English language skills (otherwise they get taken advantage of or bullied)
- Health Care
  - o The cost of MSP
- Stigma
  - o There is discrimination and racism against people living in poverty
  - o There is too much criminalizing poverty (1 dot)
  - o We want to be treated how normal people live (1 dot)
  - o Why are we treated differently?
- Families and Children
  - o There is a lot of intergenerational poverty
  - o So many children are living in poverty

- Women and elderly are vulnerable
- Transportation
  - Public transit is too expensive
  - Transit is expensive
- Housing
  - Rooms are not safe
  - Some building like Abbott Mansion are very dangerous places to live
  - Too many places have bed bugs, mice, rats and are very dirty and dangerous
  - There is black mold in many of these buildings
  - There is a lack of dignity for many living in affordable housing
  - There is not enough housing
  - Sometimes landlords collect rents even when people are not living there
  - Bed bugs are a huge problem
  - The condition of many BC Housing buildings is bad – they are not safe
  - People die in rooms and no one notices
  - Subsidized housing doesn't have enough support
  - People running the buildings do not care
- The Impact of Poverty
  - People in low income with low wage jobs are one paycheque away from homelessness
  - Student loans not enough to live on
  - It is very hard to get out of the poverty cycle
  - Generation after generation are living in poverty
  - There are so many people living in poverty in Gastown and downtown
  - It is hard to get off welfare when you are not ready for employment
  - Have to find wages to deal with other poverty issues
- Mental Health
  - Needs outreach services for people with mental illness and addictions
  - There is stigma around mental health issues (1 dot)
  - There are lack of options for mental health care
- Food security
  - Food banks are inaccessible
  - It is hard to get to the food bank
  - Food is too expensive
- Education
  - Lack of education leads to lack of knowledge and ability to engage and access resources
  - Education is important - it is part of the solution
- Children and Families
  - Families need to stay together
  - There need to be opportunities for families to eat together
  - Monthly family gatherings could help
  - There is the need to review foster care programs
  - Government should support families with counselling services

- When there are issues of mental illness or addictions kids get affected
  - Need more support for families
  - There are not enough lunch programs
- Education
  - Should be equal opportunity for kids to study whatever they want
  - Need to ensure that kids can access education
- Stigma/ Judgment
  - There is racism within the school system
  - Racism comes from people being angry
  - There is systemic racism that holds people back
- Housing
  - “Affordable” housing has issues – bed bugs
  - Landlords in the Downtown Eastside don’t care about people only about collecting money
  - No one cares about the physical or mental state of people living in hotels, SRO, BC Housing
  - Sahota Housing – need I say more?
- Health Care (2 dots)
  - Working poor have no access to dental/medical supports
  - There are not enough clinics
  - No doctors are taking new patients
- Addictions and Substance Use
  - Detox issues such as lack of access - not enough spaces
  - Supportive housing can help enable fight against addiction
  - There is no help for the people with mental health issues
- Seniors
  - Poverty among seniors is growing
  - Many seniors are living in squalor
  - Some have been isolated in the same room for 20, 30, 40 years
- Income
  - Minimum Wage is too low (1 dot)
  - BC has the lowest minimum wage in Canada
- The DTES factor
  - The DTES is treated differently than the rest of the city
  - The rights of people are being violated by police
  - People are searched and forced to empty bags/pockets in broad daylight when no crime has been committed
  - Because people are seen as addicts, their rights get violated
  - There are too many rules like having to report guests coming over to my residence
  - The building manager has a rule that guests have to be reported by 11:00 pm or no guests - sometimes by 7 p.m. and after 11 p.m. no guests (I’m 43 years old!)

- Transportation
  - o You try to get on the bus but you risk a fine
  - o I can't afford the bus
  - o You can't use bus ticket in the sky train so you have to pay twice
  - o You can't use the transfer
  - o PWD gets bus pass but social assistance doesn't
- Food
  - o There is a meal program at the women's centre 6:00 pm every night
  - o This is an important service for women
  - o Men don't have the same types of supports
- SRO Housing
  - o The landlord doesn't fix anything
  - o The sink overflows
  - o The space heaters don't work properly
  - o You can't walk through the hallway without getting high second hand
  - o People constantly have guests coming over who are doing drugs
  - o The cable is included in the rent but you only have two channels
  - o The new modular housing does not cable
  - o Need safe secure affordable housing
  - o There is not enough affordable housing (2 dots)
  - o Even the affordable buildings are run down
  - o The London Hotel has no laundry, no working showers, and mould
  - o The bathrooms have no locks and no lights
  - o The maintenance is poor
  - o There are always people/strangers in the building (1 dot)
  - o The London Hotel has cockroaches and mice (1 dot)
  - o The landlord said he would fix things but he lies
  - o There is no heat in the building - at night you can see your breath
- Ministry Services
  - o People have to wait for an hour to get a cheque
  - o It is hard to get on PWD
  - o There is not enough money for food and other needs (2 dots)
  - o There is no money for clothes, shoes, books
- Safety
  - o People are not always safe. I need protection from my ex-partner
  - o I don't want to go back – I wasn't safe
  - o There are dealers/addicts and no locks on any of the doors
  - o People often steal your stuff
  - o In the SROs there is no security- everything gets stolen
  - o Poverty leaves people in vulnerable positions

- People are at risk of theft/crime
- People often have their belongings stolen
- Even if it is of no value, people will still steal from you (everything)
- Health
  - People don't get their medication
  - People are at risk if they can't take the medication they need
- Spiritual
  - Get rid of money and there would be no problem
  - There would be no more stealing from people
  - More spiritual focus on individuals
  - We need to rebuild spirituality - build spiritual strength
- Housing
  - Every other day there are puddles in the hallway
  - There is no heat
  - I have been homeless since April but I just got into the modular housing
  - The modular housing is great – it has heat and air conditioning (1 dot)
  - It is far from here so I still come down for the services - need the Women's Centre (1 dot)
- Employment
  - We need more volunteer opportunities – perhaps at the foodbank
  - There should be more internships- work opportunities -opportunities like at MEC – real opportunities
  - Need more adult training programs
  - Need real opportunities to realize your place and goals
  - Getting a job is hard – there are too many criteria/qualifications needed
  - Need to find opportunities where any help is welcome
- SRO Housing
  - My family would need to shower so they don't visit
  - No one can stay over -there are times when I would like to have my kids and grandkids stay over but I can't
  - The rules setting the visiting hours are proving to be pretty good –it is helping to keep things calm
  - There is a lot of drug use within the building – the rules help address this
  - The intercom system is an invasion of privacy
  - The landlord had the money to install an intercom but he doesn't have money to fix anything else -he won't walk up the stairs - he uses the intercom to give directions
  - Many of the workers in the SROs are addicts themselves – they are “using” on the job
  - There are no phones in the rooms or in the building
  - The landlords know everybody – they treat us like children, but we are adults
  - There is no air circulation or heat flow at First Place (SRO building)
  - People have to buy their own heaters but you don't get paid back

- Social Housing
  - o I have a bachelor unit at First Place and landlord comes regularly to check the room
  - o The landlord will say they are checking to see if the heat is working so you have to let them in -it is against the law but they don't care
  - o You have to sign a contract - visitors are allowed between 6:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M.
  - o The rent is \$450 and you have to be on PWD
- Housing
  - o It is hard to find housing
  - o I have been homeless for a year
  - o There are long waiting lists for housing
  - o Orange Hall (BC Housing) said it is a two (2) year wait
  - o People are homeless and on the streets because the shelters were full
  - o It has been like this for five (5) years
  - o "I would rather sleep on the street, at least there are no cockroaches"
- Ministry Services
  - o You can't get crisis grant for food
  - o You can only get a crisis grant once a year
- Realities of Poverty
  - o People have to work multiple jobs to survive (survival mode)
  - o Poverty keeps women in vulnerable positions (1 dot)
  - o Dangerous ways to make money
  - o Sponsorships/control of bank account \$\$
  - o SRO (health issues) 1 year
  - o Student loans
  - o Relationship breakdown
  - o I receive the Disability Pension but I used to be able to work
  - o Poverty affects mental health (1 dot)
  - o People have to line up for everything
  - o People line up for food, showers, welfare
  - o "I would rather starve than line up for food"
  - o You have low self-esteem if you are in poverty
  - o The cycle is never ending
  - o The poverty cycle is never ending (3 dots)
- Transportation
  - o The transit is not wheelchair accessible
  - o If the bus driver is grumpy they drive by
- Shelters
  - o The night houses/transitional houses are full
  - o People can't be outside due to weather (1 dot)
  - o The family shelters are full as well



- There are age limits for boys and older children
- There are not enough shelters for families
- Neighbourhoods don't want more shelters/transitional houses
- The after-hours policy for women/children escaping violence is restrictive
- People need safe housing but they are getting turned down
- You can call for a bed at a shelter and get rejected but if you call with an outreach worker you can get in
- Ministry Services
  - The clothing supplement policy is unfair
  - People have to jump through a lot of hoops
  - The rule does not make sense in the real world
  - The Ministry will give you less money if you can find work
  - The claw backs are not fair to people – if you get a job they take money off your cheque – it is like they are punishing you for getting a job
  - The rules make you feel like you shouldn't tell the truth about the money you receive
  - You don't feel proud but you have to lie
  - The Ministry communication is poor
  - There are unknown programs/supplements - "I don't know what I'm entitled to"
  - Everything is online and this can be a barrier
  - Sometimes you need to talk to someone face-to-face - when you call the Ministry's 1-866 line you can be on hold for 45 minutes
  - The Ministry needs to increase the funding available
  - The system does not promote honesty
  - Welfare rates too low
  - More emergency funds - \$20 not enough
- Affordability
  - Food prices are going up
  - There are too many people abusing government resources
  - Housing taxes are being passed on to renters
  - The cost of living is too high
  - The rent is too expensive – no one can afford it
  - Incomes are not going up
  - People have problems with their landlords
  - There is a lack of government resources
- Transportation
  - People can't afford a bus pass
  - Gas is too expensive but a lot of people don't have cars anyways
  - Transportation costs are too high
- Addictions and Substance Use
  - The detox beds are full - typically people are waiting four (4) days
  - The rate of addictions and substance use is high
  - There are long wait times for detox/treatment

- There is a lack of immediate help
- There have been so many unintentional overdoses
- Street drugs are unpredictable
- Addiction programs need to be run by qualified people i.e. medical professionals
- Addiction and recovery (1 dot)
- People overmedicate to deal with mental health issues
- The Impact of Poverty
  - It is difficult to look for work when so much time is spent standing in food lines
  - It is hard to take care of yourself
  - There is a lack of secure storage at shelters
  - Homelessness is a different level of poverty
  - There is no time off – people never get weekends or holidays off
  - People never get a chance to recharge
  - When you run out of money you have to go stand in line
  - Everyone runs out of money even people that work
- Income
  - There is the need for unconditional, universal liveable income
  - There is a real gap between minimum wage and a living wage
- Housing
  - There is the need for affordable housing (2 dots)
  - It is hard to do anything without housing
  - City workers are destroying tents with the help of police
  - Housing costs are so high that even with two jobs it is impossible
  - We need more housing subsidies and more supply
  - More non market housing for seniors (3 dots)
  - The cost of housing not proportional to income
  - Even if sharing housing – laws should allow for ‘sharing’
  - Difficult to get an apartment – need a perfect record
  - It is like applying for a job – need references
  - Criminal record check is a huge barrier for some
  - Government policy to support- co-operative housing/living arrangements
  - How do you stop capitalism in the housing real estate market?
  - Housing should be no more than 25% of income
- Services and Supports
  - More subsidies for childcare, medical
  - Increase availability of services
- Recreation
  - Need access to gyms
  - Need access to Community services
- Housing
  - Need more housing, like post world war 2 when government built 2 million houses for returning vets

- More apartment buildings
- Need more 1 bedroom and studio units
- Need housing not like SROs
- When landlord is renovating he will increase rent (housing still not good--very little change)
- Transportation
  - The cost of bus fare is high and you need to pay it to get to WorkBC daily
  - The bus fare is \$4.40 – this is a lot of money when you don’t have any and you can’t do job searches from home
  - It is tough getting \$2.85 for the bus
  - Need free parking at parks and hospitals
  - Free transit pass when receiving income assistance
  - People on assistance can’t afford the bus
- Income and Employment
  - Agencies to help find employment
  - People with disabilities need extra supports
  - Vancouver is very competitive
- Inequality
  - Huge inequality gap
  - The 1% is controlling democracy
- Employment
  - Workhouses (sarcasm)
  - Can we create a situation where this is not a good idea?
  - Losing jobs to automation
- Education
  - Free higher education – like in Europe
- Community resources
  - Idea of a “Touchdown Office” where one can use office space/work for period of time
  - Library resources are stretched and must line up for computer time
- Healthcare
  - Physical health needs
  - Accessing health services
  - Services not available immediately
  - Mental health services are inadequate
  - Neighbours sick - if they can’t tell people I should
  - Face discrimination while receiving help
  - Difficult to get help (friends) or to tell others they need help
  - Not receiving the right kind of help (e g Needed x-ray for shoulder but due to other issues was sent to a psychiatrist)
  - People choose not to seek out medical services because of past issues and treatment
  - Too many referrals and bouncing around

- Income Assistance
  - o When ministry raises rates - landlords will just increase rent and other interested parties will take money from it
  - o Promise made and people may get laid off due to different priority, keep asking why is the money needed
- Realities of Poverty
  - o Surviving--you get by and it builds character
  - o Dealing with a wide range of issues if you don't have a place to live
  - o The status quo has gone down over eight (8) years
  - o It can take up to 3 years to move into a place, depending on your economic level
  - o Issues that you have are magnified if you are in poverty
- Foster Care and MCFD
  - o Grandkids went to MCFD care
  - o Foster parents get \$900 per child
  - o Parents asked for child to be moved
  - o Separating children from their parents hurts children more than parents
  - o Children are removed when parents are in poverty
  - o People go to court to fight to have their kids back
  - o The value system of families is down the toilet
  - o Why not give money to parents instead of foster parents?
  - o People lost kids because they don't have enough beds
- Employment
  - o Lots of people working 4 hours a day because that is what they can find
  - o People are getting paid poorly
  - o Work on construction site/ floor cleaner is very limited
  - o Need money to train for and do other occupations
  - o Lots of smart, intelligent people but life gets in the way (want a time machine to go back and start again)
  - o Social enterprise to help people get jobs – broad range of social enterprise
- Education/training
  - o Access to training and education
  - o Support for people with learning disabilities
  - o Have different opportunities (Couldn't finish high school)
  - o Foreman gets paid \$32 (labourer \$15)
- Basic income
  - o If everyone got an amount like \$2,500 per month of basic income
  - o But all services would go up
- Family
  - o Families suffer disconnection
  - o There have been funding cuts- to programs when they have been useful in community
  - o Promises for more housing but to get the new housing you have to be married or have a job or even then there is no guarantee that you will get in

- Services and Supports
  - o Residential school survivors need supports – history of trauma
  - o Men should have their own centre (like women)
  - o There is NO place for men to gather (safe place) – men also suffer loss and have issues (we all are human)
  - o We should do this type of meeting weekly where we share what we like and don't like
  - o Poor support might be due to past experience or because of disability
- Children and Families
  - o Children in families dependant on welfare cannot get clothing allowances (1 dot)
  - o Children in families dependant on welfare cannot get bus fare to school covered (5 dots)
  - o Children in families dependant on welfare do not have access to sports programs because they can't afford the fees (it used to be reimbursed) (1 dot)
- Health Care
  - o Coverage for physio is only \$23 per visit but all physio therapists/chiro charge \$50 a visit (3 dots)
  - o Dental coverage is up to \$500 a year but only for extreme pain, extractions or fillings (no preventative dental care) (3 dots)
- Access to Ministry Services
  - o People can't get through to the ministry phone line
  - o Workers can be very rude and dismissive
  - o There is no way to complain
  - o 1-800-# workers often give misinformation
- Training and Education
  - o Can't get student loan
  - o All grants tied to student loans
  - o It is tough to pay back student loans
  - o Tuition costs are too high
  - o Education should be free for people with disabilities
  - o There is want to go to school but there are too many barriers
- Medical
  - o There are no family doctors
  - o Telling your story over and over again is hard
  - o It is hard to get support if you are covered under federal system
  - o After kids are 11 years old, they don't get anesthesia during dental procedures
- Housing
  - o A two bedroom apartment = \$2,200 a month
  - o Need federal, provincial, and local governments working together
  - o Vancouver is building bike lanes instead of housing
  - o Housing doesn't support people through life changes
  - o Deposit from housing provider to discard items (i.e. mattress)
  - o The system is not respecting seniors' capacity to pay
  - o Housing should be more affordable - based on needs of the people

- Many Indigenous families live together – need multigenerational housing
- Housing is not designed for people who need it - need multi-generational housing where families can be together as life changes
- A parent or grandchild should be able to move in and be cared for
- Affordable housing - Kith and kin is the solution
- Services and Support
  - Previous government got rid of advocates (for people with disabilities)
  - It is difficult for advocacy groups to get together and share information and best practices
  - Need government funding for these gatherings
  - No legal representation
  - It is difficult to get a lawyer
  - Caretakers for ill or elderly don't have any support
  - There is no respite and looking after your parents is not easy
- Ministry Services
  - Government needs to walk their own talk
  - Look at policies to make sure they help and don't create barriers
  - Feels like policy is being decided on a whim – i.e. you can get hearing aids but you can't get batteries
  - Lack of medical coverage for seniors – i.e. you can only get care aids under limited conditions
  - It is hard to get crisis grants and easy to get rejected—claim has to be unexpected (so if shoes wear out there is no grant available)
- Stigma and Judgment
  - It feels like racism
  - People feel a loss of dignity when visiting medical professionals or asking for support from the Ministry – people have to jump through too many hoops (too many forms)
  - The earnings and disability process is horrifying – you need to show bank statements
  - You lose all privacy/ dignity/ respect
  - The Ministry questions everything –it is a total invasion of privacy
  - Medical professionals speak down to people – there needs to be a shift in attitudes - people need to feel like we have a voice
- Families and Children
  - When you take Indigenous children out of their homes they lose their culture
  - Kids moving (i.e. between parents)
  - Family members staying with you
  - No accommodation (moving units is not easy) if an aging parent needs to move in
- Access to Ministry Services
  - There are barriers to accessing services -always a different worker
  - People are not treated well
  - Difficulty accessing services

- Online and by phone is the primary way to communicate but a lot of people lack computer literacy
- There used to be advocates but they don't exist anymore
- It would help more people get services if there were more supports (in person)
- It is hard to get help on both income assistance and disability assistance
- People are not supportive in the Ministry offices
- People don't know where to get help or resources
- Housing
  - People have to pay their damage deposit back to the Ministry (\$20 a month deducted)
  - Added extra costs – not all buildings run the same
  - No consistency/no accountability
  - Housing First is a good idea but it must link with services
  - Staff/supports are not always available
  - People need wrap around services and supports
  - Too often tenants forced to go out to get their own support
- Food Security
  - Food is expensive (support not enough)
  - Shelters should help with food
- Stigma/ Judgement
  - When you are poor you are constantly being mistreated by people
  - People receiving unfair treatment
  - I was being bullied and I had to complain
  - People were ordering people out of the library
  - Educational institutions won't let low income people in
  - Libraries will not allow low income people to visit on free days if they are carrying anything on their person
  - There is too much stereotyping against people in poverty
- Ministry Services
  - Many of the policies fell “heavy handed”
  - Being cut off of income assistance is harsh
  - People with disabilities have issues on PWD - mobility devices are hard to get (1 dot)
  - Shelter amounts are far too low – no one can live on \$375/ month (1 dot)
  - Welfare rates need to be raised (3 dots)
  - Income assistance and PWD rates are too low – they are way below the poverty line
- Housing
  - There is a lack of affordable housing (1 dot)
  - Slum landlords are taking advantage of people because they don't have other options
  - We need rent controls
  - Landlords throw away belongings/sell belongings
  - Things needed for health and safety are thrown out
  - Landlords exploit tenants in need

- Employment
  - o There are no real job opportunities (1 dot)
- Children and Youth
  - o Children are suffering – there are too many kids in poverty
  - o Kids feel neglected because their parents are overwhelmed
  - o Ministry staff sometimes feel like “bureaucratic bullies”
  - o Women staying in abusive demeaning employment because they know they will not get welfare
- Discrimination
  - o There is discrimination against people dealing with addiction issues and issues around mental illness
  - o Those with language barriers get exploited/ taken advantage of
  - o Those in poverty have basic rights taken away (1 dot)
  - o Refugees are unfairly deported (1 dot)
  - o Once on welfare you are automatically stigmatized people talk down to you
- Taxes
  - o Tax the rich
  - o Collect white collar fines
- ID
  - o Theft/fraud related to ID is a problem
  - o It costs money to replace ID
- Transportation
  - o Car insurance rates are high
  - o People can't afford the fees when their car is impounded
  - o Can't afford to lose their vehicle they need it for work
- Health
  - o There are long wait times for public health care
  - o Surgeries are always postponed
- Safety
  - o Their neighbourhood is unsafe
  - o High risk of violence (3 dots)
- Housing
  - o There is a lack of affordable housing options
  - o People need more government housing
  - o SROs = small rooms/no privacy and a lot of theft
  - o The shared washrooms and kitchens in SROs are unsanitary
- Services and Supports
  - o Organizations ask for doctors notes/forms and then deny/don't help
  - o It is hard to access free supports
  - o The demand for support is high we need more supports/ people that can help
- Judgment/ Stigma
  - o Employers take advantage/break rules



- Demand for support is treated poorly
- It seems to be an “us vs them” attitude
- Have and have nots for safety and healthcare
- Those in poverty are easily targeted with hate
- Society is clearly classified/ tiered/ segregated
- People are assumed to be criminals just because they are in poverty
- If you are in poverty, MCFD is quick to assume that you are an unfit parent
- Realities of Poverty
  - People prey on you and mooch off you
  - You need to ask for things for work - it takes time to get them from the Ministry and you are at risk of losing the chance at the job because you can't get timely supports
  - It's a cycle and you can't get ahead
  - When you are clean and working it feels good - when you are able to work \$600 comes up quickly
  - People are better off not working because the money gets taken away
  - Past declaration of income is hard because when your hours change you cannot get back on assistance
  - Nothing is accessible when you are poor
  - Everything is working against you when you are trying to get out of poverty
  - You need to lie to get ahead but “They can look at your bank accounts”
  - Depression, mental illness is working against you
  - People are frustrated by legislation and regulations - if you don't do what they say, you don't get your cheque
  - You are not able to do your best work because you are not sleeping
  - I don't want to live in an SRO – the living conditions are poor – there are stabbings/OD's/ people yelling
  - SROs are not good for addicts - you can get dope faster than food
  - Need to pay off tickets in order to get driver's license back
  - Was put in jail because I couldn't pay my tickets
  - When you get some money you want to treat yourself but you can't get out because bus fare costs too much
  - If you are homeless the DTES has everything you need - food/ outreach
  - The police let you sleep, there are always people around but your stuff can get stolen
  - People need to be here for the services but you can't leave your supplies to go anywhere because someone might steal it
  - Never enough money
  - Have to choose between bills, rent, food
  - People are living in constant crisis
  - Even with part time work there is not enough for everything (basic needs)
  - Standing in line outside of the welfare office is also degrading -everyone knows why you are there
  - People look down at you

- Bus drivers are disrespectful
- When people look down on you it starts to snowball - you feel a sense of futility - nothing makes a difference anymore
- Society sees you in a certain way. It's a downward cycle
- It is nice to be acknowledged
- It is difficult to put trust in people
- It is difficult to get ahead – sometimes you feel like you are ahead of the game but then things happen to put you behind
- You are unable to work because you have no place to sleep – it results in making poor choices
- When people see you are doing well they try to pull you down
- Housing
  - Rents continue to increase
  - There are no vacancies
  - Small spaces cost a lot of money - “I shouldn’t have to pay \$500 to live in a matchbox”
  - Many of the units have mice, bed bugs, black mold, roaches
  - The cost of living is higher in BC than in other Provinces
  - There are a lot of mental health issues with living in SROs
  - So many people, drugs, shady people in the buildings (SROs)
  - There are major issues with BC Housing
  - There is no one at the front door
  - Visitors have to show ID
  - There are no self-contained units
  - There are no supports
  - Housing needs to be tailored to what people need, not roping everyone together
  - People just can’t find housing (too much security deposit, rent is too high) (2 dots)
  - Income assistance rates don’t cover the cost of rent
  - The waiting lists for social housing are long
  - There is no enforcement of Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) (1 dot)
  - Enforcing visiting hours are against RTA
  - Charging people guest fees or requiring guests to show ID is also a violation of RTA
  - I was kicked out of housing for trying to resolve my own problems with my neighbour
  - Housing needs to be tailored to peoples’ needs
  - People need safe housing to heal and get well
- Food
  - The food lines are long
  - The quality is poor with low nutritional value
  - You are given small portions - it is like a child’s portion
  - Nutritious food is expensive to buy
  - Money doesn’t go far enough, food doesn’t last long – you are not able to eat nutritious meals
  - You end up begging for food - it’s degrading to go to foodbanks, etc.

- You have to ration food to make it to the end of the month because rent costs are too high
- You are constantly having to choose between rent or food
- Health Care
  - People get “kicked out” of hospitals even when they still need help
  - We need more doctors and nurses
  - We need free health care and education
  - There is no proper medical treatment because people think that everyone in the DTES is a drug addict
- Income Assistance
  - You are forced to get CPP early
  - You are cut off assistance if you don't apply
  - The Ministry deducts money which means you receive less
  - You are forced to do something that you don't want to do
- ID
  - It can take up to five (5) days to get copy of ID
- Access to Ministry Services
  - People are denied access to supplements
  - You need to get an advocate
  - Some Ministry offices say “no” more than others
  - You have no choice to get money instead of meal tickets
- First Nations
  - There is a lack of understanding of the lasting impact of Residential schools
  - People need to know what it was like
  - I wish everyone would go so they could understand – we need to talk about it more
  - People need to talk to about their experiences
  - Money needs to go to reserves to improve the quality of living
  - There needs more accountability/ responsibility with leaders
  - People need to stop being paternalistic toward the Indigenous community
  - Colonial tools of measurement don't take into account the challenges people face- it is not a linear path
  - There have been 147 years of segregation, ghettoization, racism
  - Question this process as colonialism
  - There is too much that divides rather than unites
  - Some just want to throw money at this problem (but money is cursed)
- Volunteering/making money
  - Bring back the volunteer stipend
  - People should be able to get recognized for volunteering
  - Volunteering provides more ways for people to earn money even if they can't get formal employment

- DTES
  - o The Downtown Eastside is a dumping ground, like Whalley is in Surrey
  - o There are no exit strategies – it is easy to get in but it is hard to get out,
  - o People need a safe place
  - o People are not accountable to the neighborhood
  - o There are too many non-profit service empires here
  - o People are serviced and researched to death with programs
  - o “Poverty porn” model of NGO’s, faith organizations government - if you tell your story you get rewarded- it has become an industry
  - o Pipeline to DTES – access to resources, food, drugs
  - o Opportunist – the charity model lacks accountability from service providers
  - o It is the service providers’ agenda – not the peoples’ agenda/ needs
  - o “Poverty porn” model of NGO’s, faith organizations government - if you tell your story you get rewarded- it has become an industry
- Services and Supports
  - o We need community based strategies-- a culture or paradigm shift
  - o We are not doing a good job at basic supports
  - o We need to feed, clothe, and house people
  - o There is too much emphasis on outputs as opposed to outcomes
  - o Indicators of success - logic should prevail
  - o The system is fragmented - are we going to have segregated poverty reduction strategies?- Metis, First Nations, Urban Aboriginal, Non-Aboriginal
  - o There are too many silos
  - o Too much segregation
  - o Competitive government systems – all competing for resources - city parks board, school board, police
- Realities of Poverty
  - o “My whole life is standing in line”
  - o People as a commodity – it is dehumanizing
  - o It is important for people to have goals and to learn new things
  - o When you are homeless you spend too much time standing in lines to get basic needs met
- Housing
  - o We need more density, newer, better affordable housing
  - o There are SRO’s in poor shape
  - o We need more affordable housing – that is safe and suitable in terms of the needs of the people who live there
  - o The quality of life in the SRO is poor
  - o They need a lot of maintenance
- Health Care
  - o There is too much power in hands of doctors
  - o Need to look at the social determinants of health

- Addictions and Mental Health
  - o People with addictions need access to recovery
  - o Drugs are seen as a criminal issue rather than a health issue
  - o Homelessness leads to mental health issues/ anxiety
  - o People turn to drugs to manage
- Social Isolation
  - o People have a sense of loneliness and isolation
  - o There are very few places to go to during the day
  - o You wander the street aimlessly during day and look for anyway to get out of it
  - o When you are broke and hurting you can't even do simple things – you want social places that you can go to during the day
- Income and Employment
  - o There are no jobs that pay high enough
  - o If you make \$10 an hour you still have to stay in a shelter because there is no housing
- Shelters
  - o There is too much noise and drugs
  - o The shelters are not safe but there is no housing
  - o At a shelter you can only sleep, there is no home base
  - o The shelter staff are not helpful
  - o There is no stability or foundation
- Stigma/ Judgement
  - o People who are poor are subject to mental and physical abuse
  - o There is a general lack of respect from non-impooverished people
  - o People are judgemental and disrespectful because they haven't experienced homelessness
- Realities of Poverty
  - o There is not a lot that you can do for \$1.25 per day
  - o People have to pan handle and sell drugs
  - o People need more stability – band aid solutions don't work
  - o There is nowhere to make a phone call
  - o You wait in line for food and phone
  - o There is only one thing that blocks the feelings of pointlessness and of worthlessness and that is drugs- it gives relief from that way of life -not enough people are honest about it
  - o I'm spending money for the "right" things but it does not go far enough to be self sufficient
- Homelessness
  - o Homeless people try to take care of each other if someone needs help
  - o Vancouver is not the place to come to if you are homeless
  - o Tend to build shelters instead of using money for long term housing
  - o There are no kitchens so I have to buy prepackaged food
  - o Money doesn't to good food

- If I had a kitchen I could make money go further
- Ministry Services
  - Income Assistance is not enough
  - Income assistance rates too low
  - The earnings exemptions are too low
  - More computer resources
  - Don't have a cell, can't make a phone call
  - People don't have ID for Government
  - More people need to be told that the Ministry will photo copy ID to verify it, I can't get anyone on the phone
  - My picture matched the computer image and I was able to get my welfare cheque
  - There is too much running around
  - Some people are giving up and not signing up for welfare
  - Staff are focused keeping people off welfare
- Realities of Poverty
  - I have no pay cheque so I am in the poverty line
  - I could start an electric bike business but I have no money –if I could get help I could build the business and hire people
  - People get tired of moving place to place with not enough rest - always moving
  - You can't get sleep, you have no motivation because you are exhausted
  - When you are staying in the shelter you live out of plastic bags
  - It doesn't feel like shelter workers care
  - Cheque cashing and loan places keep people in debt
  - They cash your cheque and front you more money so you are in perpetual debt
  - They charge you a high interest on the loan
  - It is difficult to get bank accounts especially on welfare
- Housing
  - The bottom line is that there is no safe affordable housing
  - All of the different levels of governments have been staying away from housing for too long
  - There were nine (9) people who died recently from lack of housing recently
  - Hard for people to find housing
- Mental Illness
  - There are a lot of people who are mentally ill and living on the streets
  - These people need to be picked up and helped
  - Right now nobody cares for them – we need more love in government
  - People overmedicate to deal with mental health issues
- Family and Children
  - More love in families is also needed
  - It is hard to have a healthy family and home when all of your energy and money is focused on where you will sleep, eat, etc....

- Education
  - o People are not sending kids to school
  - o There is discrimination between children
  - o Teachers can't give attention to the kids who need it most so they don't
- Addictions and Substance Use
  - o Many people are dying from opioids
  - o More needs to be done to prevent these deaths
  - o Healthcare, InSite injection sites, laced drugs, dispensaries
- Community Resources
  - o No frills and dollar stores are all great resources
  - o More affordable "second grade" stores for groceries and household items located close to the welfare office so when people leave the office they see these places
- Transportation
  - o There are barriers to accessing buses
  - o You pay more by zone/ distance
  - o Opportunities to access transportation outside of community
  - o The cost of transportation
- Stigma and Discrimination
  - o There is too much stereotyping of people in poverty (DTES) and people facing addiction
  - o People in government don't understand people in poverty
  - o There should be more self-governance for people in poverty
  - o People are living in tents because the government doesn't know what it's like to live in poverty
- Food Security
  - o I am in debt with the grocery stores
  - o It's hard to catch up
  - o Live on perpetual credit
  - o Sometimes they charge interest but it's beneficial if you are in a tight spot
  - o Grocery store credit - \$5 for milk is being charged at \$20
- Income assistance
  - o There are panhandlers at every corner, because income assistance isn't enough
  - o Income assistance has increased but the money is being spent on addiction and not being spent on food
  - o There are some dishonest people who are ripping off welfare
  - o It would be better if the Ministry issued three small (3)cheques per few weeks to help people budget/ manage their money better
  - o The cheque cashing places take a large portion from the income assistance cheques - \$4 to \$10 per cheque
  - o People have no money
  - o OAS not enough to do what I want to do
- DTES
  - o The DTES has lots of traffic

- It is very noisy which makes it hard to sleep
- There is not enough housing
- The police are overstepping their authority
- Sleeping outside
- Nowhere to put personal things/items
- Police and city workers throw things out, throw out everything
- There is a lot of discrimination towards people in poverty because they are from DTES
- The police use intimidating, stigmatizing, discriminating, threatening behavior
- I came to DTES from Prince George because of the death of my spouse
- Transportation
  - Discrimination on TransLink
  - People can't afford bus fare
  - The driver humiliates and embarrasses people
  - When you can't afford transit, you have to walk everywhere
  - I had a job at jobsite but I didn't have the money to get there
  - I was stopped by the transit police and got ticketed for \$175 for fare evasion
  - People can't afford transit passes so they have to sneak onto the bus to get them to destination
- Health Care
  - This is not enough coverage for some prescriptions
  - Lack of ID or improper ID is a barrier to accessing prescriptions
  - There is not enough pediatricians in the DTES – supports for childcare
- Education
  - There are not enough teachers in the DTES
  - There are not enough special needs supports in our school system
  - McDonald Elementary School in the DTES is not considered as important as the other schools
  - There is a 7 year old boy who requires assistance with education but there are not enough resources to help him
- Children
  - Indigenous grandmother raising two grandsons on low income
  - Low welfare rates cause child poverty
- Quality of life
  - My life is better now I have OAS
- Personal Story of Poverty
  - Worked as a metal recycler but stopped working in 2000
  - I went on welfare and was only able to afford living in an SRO
  - Certain buildings and restaurants turn us away
  - You feel stuck in the neighbourhood
  - You feel restricted in what you can do
  - I am 26 years old and have been homeless for half my life
  - I have been on my own since 12



- I ran away from home
- I was raised in a crack shack
- Because of addiction I wouldn't eat at all
- I am very underweight due to addiction and not eating
- There is discrimination against people on income assistance when trying to get housing
- You face this in the private market and bigger organizations
- Personal Story of Poverty
  - My own decisions; 10% drugs and 10% family, criminal record
  - Getting a job is not the whole solution
  - More support required beyond 120 days
  - 120 days is not enough time to address the root issues
  - We cannot meet the needs of people with current legislation
  - The average cost of a homeless person on the system is 50K
  - When you factor in all of the costs of life first responders, hospital, etc.; it is not efficient
  - We need to spend more time assessing individuals and building relationships - Immediately forcing people into work perpetuates the cycle
  - We need to deal with individuals as individuals
  - Many people start out ok and then someone hurts them and they don't want to re-live the experience of hurt by talking about it
  - Lack of ID makes everything more difficult
- Supports
  - Provide resources to allow people to dream big
  - All of the different services should be in one place
  - A team with compassion and empathy that shows respect would be able to help those in poverty
  - Need more one on one counselling
  - Programs should be daily with one on one support; Need all-encompassing programs; a place to go every day; we don't have these programs anymore
  - People need to address all of their issues first and not be forced into finding work
  - "JobStart" on commercial used to provide this support
  - Programs that allow for sharing and self-discovery
  -
- Education
  - People need access to Education
  - GED opens door to post-secondary education
  - Trying to go to university but I need two signatures for sponsorship- cannot get two people to sign
- Realities of Poverty
  - Why do we make the decisions we do; alcohol and drugs made me homeless, cannot hold a job any longer
  - Stories are similar but we are all individuals
  - Need to build a relationships first in order to help people

- Need to spend more time with people, people are not heard; people do not feel heard
- Education
  - Baby boomers are retiring there should be a lot of opportunity and jobs for younger generations
  - Tuition cap of \$7500 – not enough
  - People need to be educated and prepared for the work force, government spending on Opioid crisis but money should be spent on education
  - In DTES need to “clean up the peoples acts” through support before education
  - Channel people towards education before drugs
- Respect for People
  - It is about respect, two elders in my building, we care for them and cook for them
  - Need to be teaching people respect for people to treat each other with respect
  - Show them a different road, an opportunity, a new door
  - Assess people, see what they are capable of
  - Need settings where we can talk and get established in people’s lives
  - Need structure, daily not weekly
- Realities of Poverty
  - My cousin came 1 year ago (from Montreal), I came two weeks ago and saw my cousin sleeping on Hastings street, the skin was coming off his face, I offered to pay his greyhound to get home, he said no and I gave up
- Social Isolation
  - I feel alone, disconnected, no place to go
  - Do you feel connected to society as a whole? No
  - Need connections with people who can support each other
- Addictions
  - 50% of it is a self-choice
  - Alcohol is it a choice or disease? A choice allows one to run away; it is a hereditary disease; Can’t say there is a cure for drug addiction

## Question 2: What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?

- Transportation
  - Free bus passes for low income, children, PWD
  - Give free bus passes to all family members not just lead person on file
- Income
  - Guaranteed income (1 dot) --this could eliminate need for services like bus passes
  - Higher wages
  - Guaranteed Living Income (2 dots) --person with no restrictions with social programs

- Health Care
  - o More consistent and universal supports and programs for low-income people
  - o Better healthcare coverage for prescriptions, dental, optical, reproductive health and birth control
- Government Supports
  - o Raise welfare rates
  - o Double this rate and index to inflation (3 dots)
  - o Allow ownership of assets on welfare and PWD
- Housing
  - o Build affordable, safe and decent housing (2 dots)
- Education
  - o More money into education and supports around students (1 dot)
  - o Waive tuition fees
  - o Supports for people to better themselves and increase skills
  - o Dogwood, English language, skills training
- Childcare
  - o Affordable childcare
  - o More childcare
  - o More Affordable Day care
- Transportation
  - o Better cheaper transit options
  - o Free options
  - o Support for transportation, e.g. getting driver's license, bus fare
- Seniors
  - o More support for seniors (housing, adequate food)
  - o Services in mother language for seniors
- Addictions
  - o Recycling and deposit system on rigs
- Health Care
  - o Affordable Pharmacare programs
  - o End to MSP co-pay
  - o We need equal health care for all poor and middle class
  - o Stigma has to end when treating patients
  - o Better health care quality
  - o More time spent with patients
  - o More compassion by staff towards clients
  - o Preventative health care
  - o Options and alternatives to personal healthcare programs
  - o Not locked down to one place, especially when not working
  - o Medication support

- Housing
  - o End policies that enforce 2 year housing
  - o We need affordable long term housing policies
  - o Safe and welcoming long term recovery solutions
  - o Homes that are engaging and supportive
  - o More accountability from the landlords
- Homelessness
  - o Drop in and support centres for homeless men
  - o Showers, laundry, companionship at shelters
  - o Find an end to homelessness (2 dots)
  - o Healthy environment and a healthy home lead to good beginnings (3 dots)
- Mental Health
  - o More supports for veterans
- Food security
  - o High quality low cost food/grocery stores (1 dot)
- Access to Technology
  - o More access to internet/ tech
- Discrimination
  - o Address Racism and Discrimination against people in poverty (3 dots)
- ID
  - o Reduce barriers to get ID like social insurance or picture ID
- Employment
  - o Better, more jobs so people can afford housing
  - o Hard to know who to contact to help you with employment, better advertisement, more accessible outreach
  - o More opportunity to find jobs
- Outreach and Community
  - o Opportunities to express our voices (2 dots)
  - o More support and outreach
  - o Permanent outreach support – weekly (1 dot)
  - o Great to have the opportunity to bring ideas out
  - o Community Outreach programs
  - o Workers visit people living in poverty – access to legal advice, counselling
  - o Unified rallies and marches
  - o More meetings like this with advance notice
  - o Community Gardens that allow weed and beehives
- Services
  - o Services need to be the same in all areas of the city (hub)
- Youth Recreation
  - o Free admission for kids in poor areas to access festival and other events so they don't miss out on all stuff (movies, camps etc.) (1 dot)
  - o Making kids happy makes a big difference- Arts, Support, Ice rinks

- Police and Criminal
  - o Police education
- Support
  - o Runners (1 dot)
  - o Housing
  - o More money (1 dot)
  - o Clothing (1 dot)
  - o A good job
  - o Spiritual wellness and connection
- Training
  - o More practicums--hair styling, make up
  - o More programs for adults
  - o Free post-secondary education (1 dot)
- Youth
  - o Include the voice of children and youth
- Social Isolation
  - o No spaces for people to gather
- Housing
  - o Build more affordable housing (2 dots)
  - o City supports for social housing (1 dot)
  - o More inspections on SROs
  - o Building managers really have to renovate (1 dot)
  - o Floor reps
- Food Security
  - o Need to find different ways to access food than line ups
  - o Emergency foodbank – wasted two hours in line ups
  - o Since had been to emergency couldn't go again
  - o Emergency had no food now I have to wait until next week for food
- Health and wellbeing
  - o Homeless long distance runner wants to start running (culture of running)
  - o Honouring the circle
  - o Get physical activity
  - o Get indigenous people to put their own war paint on
  - o Get involved, positive attitude, health and wellbeing
- Income
  - o Increase IA rates, especially shelter portion
  - o Can only afford SRO on current rates
- Service and supports
  - o Government needs first hand experience of poverty--eg., with Transit, SRO, Housing, Shelters
  - o Should try to attempt to do an application if you don't have a phone/ internet
  - o Decision makers should experience life on the street

- Transit
  - o Sliding scale for transit (in Calgary \$\$/ per month)
  - o Lower transit fees or free transit
- Community support
  - o Strategies for helping each other out (i.e. if the food bank has extra food I want to hand out food to my building)
- Housing
  - o Everyone should be welcome to apply for subsidized housing (not just when I have a disability)
  - o New buildings to include higher percentage of social housing
  - o Discrimination at point of application for BC housing
  - o More social housing(2 dots)
  - o Rent control
  - o Ceiling on max rent (2 dots)
- Harm reduction
  - o Medicinal Injection programs
  - o Safe Heroin program
  - o People don't have to worry about money for drugs
  - o Quick and easy access to detox + treatment for addiction
- Social programs/supports
  - o Free public transit (1 dot)
  - o Free healthcare (1 dot)
  - o \$10/day childcare
  - o Monitor rent controls
  - o Control of building demolitions
- Advocacy
  - o More outreach workers (1 dot)
  - o More step by step guidance (1 dot)
  - o Cultural sensitivity training
  - o Trauma advocacy (1 dot)
  - o More connections amongst different resources (1 dot)
  - o More faith based outreach (2 dots)
  - o More awareness on available advocacy
  - o Mental health and trauma advocates
- Income
  - o Guaranteed liveable income (3 dots)
  - o Pilot project for L I V
  - o Living wages
  - o \$15.00 minimum wage (1 dot)
  - o Provide a livable income while ensuring that landlords and other services don't increase at the same time (1 dot)

- Income Assistance
  - o Raise the shelter portion of income assistance
- Prevention (1 dot)
  - o System needs to be more supportive
  - o More supportive for young, single parents and foster kids
- Education
  - o School system needs to teach kids about living in the real world
  - o School is disconnected from reality
  - o More apprenticeships in school (i.e. hairdressing program, metal work program)
- Youth
  - o Aging out of care requires a second system of support
- Drop in spaces (1 dot)
  - o Make available drop in offices for free
- Housing speculation
  - o Causing housing prices and rent increases
  - o Implement speculation tax
- Mental Health and Housing
  - o People with mental health issues should have supportive housing that resembles an apartment building (500 units/building x 100 buildings = 50,000 homes)
- National Approach
  - o Need solutions across the country (1 dot)
  - o Build capacity because other provinces have people moving to B.C./Vancouver
- Housing
  - o Renovictions –how to stop it?
  - o Rent controls
  - o Supportive housing – model like Europe – working for assistance, volunteer work dignity
  - o Stop rental increases each year
  - o Renovate all low income buildings (1 dot)
  - o Remove barriers for renters (4 dots)
  - o Remove having to pay for a pet to be housed (1 dot)
  - o Provide opportunities and housing outside of DTES (1 dot)
- Employment
  - o Work training/coaching program
  - o Coach assigned to you for 5 years
  - o Get rid of work BC and replace with something better
  - o Coach assists through process and follow up
  - o Like EI--pay for school and training with living wage
  - o Then EI after course
  - o Offering a different range of occupations based on skills and interest (4 dots)
  - o Provide cooking for disabled people
  - o Provide more experienced counsellors working with youth (2 dots)
  - o Provide youth with hope to transition to adult life

- Food
  - o Groceries, gardens
  - o Community gardens
- Community connections
  - o Need more people to promote and connect people to education and training services (1 dot)
  - o Have weekly meetings at service centres to share what we like and don't like
  - o Broaden social enterprise to provide work and training
  - o Expand training in DTES (only know of a few locations) (2 dots)
  - o Bring back coffee on Tuesday to get people to socialise and get to know each other
  - o Build communities
- Services for men
  - o Safe place for men
  - o Men to have their own safe place (like women) because men also have loss and issues and need a safe place (4 dots)
- Education
  - o Make it easier to get into post-secondary programs
  - o Province + feds step up with more support for training, schooling
  - o Educational opportunities should be more flexible
  - o Should be community based, not institutional
  - o Covering a variety of topics
  - o Public colleges and universities should be free for people with disabilities (7 dots)
  - o Informal education should be recognized (i.e. people learning from each other- expertise is not always academics, other people have knowledge to share)
  - o All ages K-12 and advanced education (combined education)
  - o Education should take into account an individual's learning style So they can participate and share their knowledge
- Affordable housing
  - o Rent based on true income of family unit; i.e. There are adults living in a unit with no income but the cost of housing goes up because of the number of people living there (7 dots)
- Transportation
  - o Better access to public transportation (3 dots)
  - o Bus passes – kids should get a free bus pass as long as they are in school and parents getting on a bus with kids should ride for free as well
  - o This is also a safety issue so women have access to transportation
- IA
  - o Earning exemptions reporting process is too invasive (3 dots)
  - o Shouldn't have to show bank statements etc. while still within the exemption limit People should just be able to report income until they reach the limit
  - o If I haven't gone over why do you care? Invasion of privacy
  - o Ensure welfare adheres to charter (rewrite welfare act) (8 dots)



- One welfare worker assigned per client
- No longer kicked off welfare when in dispute awaiting ruling
- Health Care
  - Free medical/prescriptions (4 dots)
  - Not everything is covered
  - Better coverage under healthy kids (general anesthetic not available after age 11)
  - Community development should be supported by government again – gathering groups together to talk about issues and best practices/ share knowledge (3 dots)
- Income
  - Guaranteed Annual Income (3 dots)
  - National Guaranteed Income
  - Social programs to remain
  - Government to provide incentives to BC corporations to provide living wage
- Housing
  - Strengthen Residential Tenancy Act
  - RTA stronger to protect tenants, help renters not landlords (3 dots)
  - We need rent control or else all welfare increases will go direct to landlords
  - Build more social housing
  - Cash money given by resources to help people in need (not food vouchers = demeaning)
- Children
  - More benefits for children on welfare
  - Children whose parents are on welfare should get same benefits as kids in foster care (clothing allowance) (4 dots)
- Mental illness
  - More help for the mentally ill (1 dot)
  - Open Riverview again
  - Get multiple agencies to help
  - Need more funding and resources to have more help
- Addictions and substance use
  - Decriminalize opiates
  - Methadone- when cut off someone at high dose it may push people to do crime to get drugs- consult with patients before making
- Income
  - Guaranteed annual income (9 dots)
  - GAI at cost of living with some room for savings
  - No conditions, no means testing, can work part time, go to school etc.
  - not penalized to move ahead in life
  - no need to go to welfare office for it, everyone gets it
  - G A I as each person's right- says you trust people
  - GAI adds trust and dignity to the system and acknowledges how close so many of us are to the poverty line
  - Raise the rate for minimum wage

- Increase wages (1 dot)
- Universal basic income
- Services
  - Proactive services (1 dot) --services given before people reach crisis
  - Individuals motivated to make a difference because it's the right thing to do
  - Shift peoples thinking
  - More free community supports leads to less wait time
- Housing
  - Landlords acting illegally should get harsher fines
  - Make sure leases protected from renovictions (no loopholes)
  - Stronger enforcement of eviction process
  - Provincial government should focus on people with empty homes and force them to rent units
  - Stop building luxury condos
  - Change affordable rent levels—a \$1900/studio is not affordable
  - Rent increase freezes (6 dots)
  - Build more affordable housing
  - Stop rezoning everything – negligible changes
  - Stop lying that more supply will fix market alone
  - Worry about the neighbourhood changes with new stock pushing rents up everywhere
- More progressive taxation scheme
  - Federal and provincial government needs to tax the upper brackets way more and tax low and middle income less
- Medical
  - Medical service coverage, especially for injuries, physio, dental
- Housing
  - Address housing conditions--enforce maintenance bylaws (5 dots)
  - Empower tenants to get things done
  - Ensure space is respected, safe, clean
  - More affordable higher quality housing (8 dots)
  - Needs to be safer/have more security
- Transportation
  - Free public transit
  - Stop fining people for inability to pay transit fare fine is higher than cost of transit
  - Stop interest on fines unpaid
  - Forgive peoples' fines, maybe with a means test
  - Raise the rates to help people save for things like vehicle etc.
- Health care
  - Fewer fees/costs for certain necessities like health
  - Coverage for all medicine/equipment
- Law enforcement/ justice
  - Less arrests/physical violence for petty crimes

- Police need better training on empathy/real life experiences
- Less secrecy/be accountable
- Criminal record negates schooling/degrees-- can't get employment even with training
- Record should be expunged after a certain number of years
- Justice system needs to be overhauled as prejudiced
- Need victim compensation services assessed case by case
- Services and supports
  - Programs for all age groups
  - Programs not just for youth
  - Some middle age programs
  - No age cap on programs (3 dots)
  - Job programs
  - No age restrictions – training, bridging, education
  - Summer jobs offered to “older” students
  - Bridge to gap on assistance to working poor
  - Increase earnings exemption to be more stable (1 dot)
  - More subsidies
  - More resources-- not just concentrated in DTES spread out in community
  - Free stuff not related to postal codes take people away from DTES
  - More even distribution of resources
- Transit
  - Free transit (4 dots)
- Housing
  - Less penalties re: housing subsidy
  - Make over housed pay extra in taxes
  - Affordable housing (1 dot)
  - Increase shelter allowance to what rent actually is
- Access to services
  - Make programs universal - no more income (means) testing
  - Don't keep people outside of welfare office (public degradation)
  - Bigger welfare offices, make appointments at office
  - Access to services with dignity online services, phone services (1 dot)
  - Faster service, more individual services
  - Access to the same programs regardless of where you live in the province
  - Don't force people into certain neighborhoods
  - No age restriction to access programs/resources
  - Rent and food paid for – no money involved
- Education
  - relieve student debts, free education, healthcare easier payback of loans
- Build community
  - Work together as humans/community (2 dots)
  - Take away stigma/preconceived notions/judgement

- Media change the conversation about the downtown eastside
- Communities shouldn't shut people out i.e. modular housing
- Have communities lift people up – distribute populations (1 dot)
- Create villages open to everyone
- IA
  - Increase “welfare” rates
- Affordable housing
  - Social housing in general
  - Build some social housing outside of DTES for people who want out
  - BC housing respect peoples liberty and freedom
  - More freedom in housing choices
  - Welfare needs to give shelter money to pay landlords because landlords won't take welfare checks (1 dot)
  - Should be a choice
- Medical coverage
  - All medications should be paid for (2 dots)
  - More counselling, doctors, nurses (1 dot)
- Education
  - Access to schooling for adults (2 dots)
  - Possibly need extra support to be successful
- Supports
  - Emotional support to cope with life
  - Safe place to heal
- Food Security
  - More food from the food bank (very little given)
  - More money to buy food
  - Put some nice No Frills instead of small grocery stores (where people have credit)
  - Fund grocery stores like Quest so they are bigger and offer more variety
- Social Housing
  - Decrease wait times for social housing
  - Make access to housing with less barriers
  - Investing money from residential schools into social housing, education, health care
  - Affordable housing should actually be affordable
  - Renovate or tear down SROs
- Public awareness
  - More general population awareness on residential schools, more change to talk
  - Addressing stigma against people living in poverty (1 dot)
- Supports/services
  - More supports – money in your pocket
  - Assess services one individual at a time not as a group or profile
  - Give community an active voice in awarding services- meaningful representation
  - All decision makers working collaboratively

- Income
  - o Guaranteed annual income (1 dot)
  - o Livable wage - \$18 an hour market basket measure
  - o Guaranteed annual income - liveable
  - o \$40,000 – \$50,000 with no claw backs
- Governance
  - o Strategies not programs
  - o Gradation strategy- preschool to grade 12
  - o Life cycle of individual needs within the community
  - o Evidence based needs of different populations
  - o Empowerment model not charity model – engagement
  - o Neighborhood and community land trusts in perpetuity
  - o Restructure Federal, Provincial and Municipal fiscal relationships
  - o Resource board governance by neighborhood
- Employment
  - o Train and employ local residents
- Services
  - o Better coordinated services – integrated, social housing
  - o Address homelessness with more money and supports
- Addictions
  - o More recovery programs and options
- First Nations
  - o Decolonize all levels of government including Indigenous and all government contractors by implementing United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Bartering Systems
  - o Have more bartering system markets all the time E.g. Kerrisdale, Granville Island
  - o Community Centre spaces be funded to have indoor markets e.g. Ray cam having market to encourage barter system selling honey for clothes
- Income assistance
  - o Must rise with inflation (index)
  - o Everyone who is on welfare should get same amount
  - o Administering welfare payments (on different dates/staggered)
- Mental Health and Addictions
  - o Better supports for mental health
  - o Do more for people who are mentally ill first--get them homes and medical help
  - o Get people homes first before asking them to look for work
  - o More safe injection sites
- Opportunities to make good choices
  - o Having more affordable businesses, grocery stores around so people see those first when they get cheques so they spend money on necessities first before anything else (3 dots)

- Usually it's just cheque cashing places and dealers outside offices
  - Self-governance of people in poverty
- Transportation
  - One price for all regions
  - No zones
  - Sliding scale for bus passes based on income
  - Handicap, kids under 5 or 12, Seniors don't pay
- Gentrification
  - Stop gentrification of neighborhood – killing the sense of community people don't feel welcomed (3 dots)
  - High salary= high end restaurants, push out small diners/restaurants = people have to keep going a few blocks more east = lose sense of connections
- Education
  - Change education system
  - Educate kids from home using lap top
  - Provide financial education in schools (1 dot) beginning at early age
  - Education is about how to carry yourself , carry your emotions, carry your money
  - Conflict resolution taught in schools
  - Teach soft skills
- IA
  - More money on welfare
  - Raise the rates
- Government
  - Politicians that care
  - Frustration that government and politicians aren't going to change anything
  - Need to address everything about poverty
  - Compartmentalize ministries and keep referring only
- Housing
  - Better housing options; I don't want to live in SROs
  - SROs report you missing if you're not there for 2 days
  - Lives in SRO and biggest problem are slumlords, bed bugs, leaky roofs, no concern for tenants, mold, no repairs
- Transportation
  - Some form of transportation; I want to work but can't afford transportation to get to work
  - Can't get bus pass when on regular income assistance
- Discrimination
  - Nobody wants to hire people when they find out they're from the DTES
  - People in poverty need everything they don't have and government does not address that because they discriminate
  - People want to be given a chance
  - Discrimination against people because of their income; methods required to fight that

- Government to address discrimination and racism
- Housing
  - Very long waitlists for affordable housing--15 years
  - More investments in quality, affordable housing so people can get out of SROs
  - Want no waitlist for housing
  - Housing should be top priority
  - Fix substandard SROs
- Addiction
  - Crack addiction; no access to supports to get off it; as soon as I get any money I spend it on crack even though I don't want to
  - Alcohol and drug issues, people are denied services (2 dots)
- Income assistance
  - Welfare rates need to be raised
  - Overhaul welfare system as it does not reflect the reality of the cost of living
  - Raise welfare rates; should reflect cost of living (more rent control)
  - BC ID is needed to apply for income assistance which is a barrier
- Education/Training
  - Better program (educational) funding
  - Job training limited to janitorial, construction; Expand job training and programs
  - Too many limitations (e.g. will pay for first aid but not for advanced first aid)
  - More employment and training opportunities
  - Government should provide resources to the DTES and have facilitators run training programs
  - Access to education for those on regular income assistance
  - Increase access to diversity of training and educational programs
  - Do not force people in poverty to pay for education
- Legal aid
  - More access to legal aid in the DTES
- Family Support and Education
  - Need to get families of the homeless involved – educate the family about drugs and alcohol and how they can help
  - Not drugs and alcohol but why they got here
  - Love only goes so far when they keep doing the same thing
  - Programs for re connecting families to offer support
- Realities of Poverty
  - Time in DTES is spent foraging for food and resources and waiting in line
  - Unreasonable wait times for a full time job to get the basics
  - It is nice to have food and clothing but how do you get them? How you present yourself to the world matters, but if you can't you are missing the basics (1 dot)
  - Can get transportation support while in some programs, but not after they end (1 dot)
  - Cards are stacked against you but this is a reflection of lack of resources
  - Poverty will never end but we can make it easier (1 dot)

- Not enough resources for the complex issues people face ( 1 dot)
- No one listening to the needs to find out how to support them ( 2 dots)
- Programs
  - Provide centralized programs (1 dot)
  - Need to get to know the person then it is possible to work together
  - Programs are fragmented
  - Must listen to and find needs of individuals, and design solutions for those individuals – everyone’s needs are different
  - More programs such as CAN programs that train people to advocate and empower community participation
- Addictions and drugs
  - Money should not be spent on opioid crisis, there should be help before they get there (2 dots)
  - Drugs are a million dollar industry and we cannot get money to better ourselves (1 dot)
  - Early intervention is needed – not legalizing marijuana, that is the wrong direction (2 dots)
  - Government is saying drugs are okay with their policies
  - Cops drive by dealers and do nothing (2 dots)
  - When someone is ready to get help, there needs to be support available (3 dots)
  - If a person has an alcohol or drug addiction and does not get help they will continue to have issues (1 dot)
  - Harm reduction is used to manipulate and discriminate (e.g. handing out 1 rig at a time)
  - Need separate supported housing for people with brain injuries, mental health issues and drug addictions where they can truly be supported
  - Not “sober” housing for people with mental health and addictions
- Inequality
  - Always the rich and poor/working man – this will not change (2 dots)
- Support
  - Focus on the ones who need the help and help them the way you would help a friend (1 dot)
- SRO Housing
  - Unfit for human habitation
  - SROs that act like half- way houses need BC ID; stop friends coming and don’t allow tenants to enjoy their right to pride and enjoyment of their home
  - SROs don’t care about the tenants, the cameras are for staff
  - If tenant has stuff stolen the cameras and police do not help the tenants
  - SRO have to ask front desk to use shower and bathroom
  - Because the people allowed in have mental health and addiction issues affect other tenant’s rights to use and enjoy their own home
  - They censor who tenants can bring into their home
  - Have to hand over ID before your guest is allowed in and hold onto it until your guest leaves – but not even police are allowed to do that



- They won't accept paper ID issued by a government office
- Fire in building, and the person's ID was not returned until 2 days after the fire
- SROs are infested with bugs, dirty pipe water so tenants can't drink the water
- Save-on-Meats caters to the building, but in half of the food there would be no meats with the same catering costs
- Tenant evicted for activity later proven unfounded
- Room and board accommodations not covered by tenancy agreements and they exploit tenants vulnerabilities by providing fruit and yogurt for breakfast to qualify as room and board
- Vermin and filth in SROs
- Government Services
  - Workers are babysitters not tenant supporters or advocates
  - "Connections Centre" model of services is good
- Housing
  - Infestations
  - Need strict policies so regular and frequent unit inspections are done
  - Staff spaces need to be cleared
  - Bathrooms are unbelievably atrocious
  - People with children are living in buildings, where tenants are using drugs
  - Separate families from drug users
  - There is a need for family housing – more respect needs to be given to families
  - Severe hoarding issues
  - Hold landlords accountable for run downs in infested buildings
  - People with active drug use often don't use the bathroom properly then creating an unsafe and filthy bathroom for others – separate these people who cannot live or manage their lives well enough
- Income Assistance
  - Income assistance when you need money, only an insufficient \$20 is provided with judgmental attitude – but people only have \$200 - \$300 for all their costs after rent is paid
  - After insurance from job runs out – there are no bridging funds and many hoops to jump through for a long time
  - Family income rates way too insufficient
  - If there is no money for food left – person or family is advised by phoning in, to stand in food line with children
  - Income assistance is not using the funds available for clients and then next year's program won't have the money
- Access to Services
  - Income assistance can only be accessed in person, 1 hour in the morning and 1 hour in the evening, otherwise calling in can have really long wait times and you often get bad attitude from the staff

- The staff won't advise people of resources, like yearly medical and hygiene – they hide information from the people who need it
- Call for additional support leads to long lists of questions about “why/how” persons let this happen
- Had a long time wait for PWD – even though person and 4 doctors show PWD required
- sit down, talk with the applicant, assist to complete the forms for PWD and tell the person if there is some information missing – not to cause 7 months to go by without getting back to the applicant
- Welfare does not need to tell people – if people don't know how to ask, how can they get it – Workers should be telling clients
- A list of services in paper for clients and web links access to Wi-Fi and internet to learn more about the list of options and services
- Services and Support
  - Create a place for families to drop in or visit when homeless parent has time with children
  - Create a women's focused family housing services, spaces that exclude fathers
  - Real issues when the father is the primary caretaker – the service will assist the mother but the father just “sits on the couch”
- Food Security
  - Services that require proof of Canadian status (address is required in Alberta but not BC) so many new immigrants are cycling through the food banks collecting many bags of food and somehow getting to the front of the line – So ID should be required as well as tracking the amount of food collected from the food bank
  - Family that drives Mercedes car loads up from the foodbank and then sell the food in their grocery store – need to stop this
  - More community gardens for food and allows children to learn or gain experience – decreases the dependence on food banks and hunger
  - Need more lunch programs
  - Free food often makes you sick
  - Food banks have expired food
  - People should have basic right to shelter and food
  - Food line ups – surviving on a couple of slices of pizza a day
  - Food prices are going up
  - Access to healthy food and monitor use to prevent abuse from the food bank
  - Should be able to buy good quality food and to spend some money on leisure to positively impact quality of life
  - Rates are too low to buy healthy food
- Income
  - minimum wage/living wage – like Ontario's pilot project
  - Livable wages
  - Increase minimum wage ( 1 dot)
  - Guaranteed livable income (4 dots)

- Transportation
  - o should have easier access to pass program
  - o Transit should be free of charge
  - o You can't get to work if you have no car and no money for transportation
  - o Need ID to get a driver's license – making this a very complicated drawn out procedure
  - o If a person has fines, then getting a license is more challenging and can even affect their chances at employment
- Services and Support
  - o Need more things for people to do, like drop ins
  - o Boredom leads to drug use and other issues
  - o Provide Wi-Fi – internet is being withheld even though the tenants are paying for it, they are excluded from using it at some places
  - o Provide pay phones on the street
  - o There is a need for a gym, community centre, and swimming pools for DTES – Raycon is the only place like it in DTES, Carnegie
  - o “ONE CARD your passport to recreation” for free access to all community centers in Vancouver
  - o Information about what is available for us, e.g. a community card that has all access
  - o Shelters kick people out at 6:30 am but then there is nowhere to go until 9 am, so need to address this
- Housing
  - o Staying in a tent is better than SROs
  - o No profiting of the tenants, people with low incomes
  - o Landlords should be required to clean their buildings not just staff spaces
  - o should be livable, safe and affordable standard of living - daycare, grocery store, make it feel like a home
  - o Landlord should not be allowed to exploit tenants by holding onto guest IDs and doing a room and board scam
- Transit
  - o Free transit
  - o Free transportation
- Police
  - o Stop police from accusing people who buy things from the street market
  - o Police hover at the edges of the market waiting for people to come out with the stuff they just bought, which is then taken by the police and put in their police vehicle and it is believed that the police take what they want
- Housing
  - o Affordable housing
  - o Rent freeze
  - o The waitlists for social housing are very long – some wait 15 years
  - o Very difficult to sleep outside

- It is also very difficult to live in SROs with bedbugs, no privacy and where your personal belongings go missing
- Living under control and surveillance is worse than living in the woods
- Keeping rent at welfare shelter rate
- Having your own bathroom and kitchen that is clean with no pests would improve the quality of life
- Create actual affordable housing
- Health Care
  - Low income means no access to dental benefits if employer doesn't provide coverage
- Realities of Poverty
  - You can survive but not thrive
  - You have to cut back on some basic necessities like paying hydro bill in order to eat
  - Juggling things to make ends meet
  - Wages are not keeping up the cost of living
  - Unable to afford cellphone which is needed to stay connected
  - No money for unexpected emergencies, expenses associated to children – unable to manage on current welfare rates
  - Need multiple jobs to meet cost of living in Vancouver
  - Women in abusive domestic situations are unable to leave due to unaffordability of living costs
- Services and Support
  - Having access to safe spaces like women's centres where they can provide food, games, movies, friends and have volunteering in place
- Housing
  - Safety issues with shared bathrooms
  - No kitchen or fridge in some places
  - Stability that comes with having your own safe place
  - Rooms are too small
  - Broken closets
- Shelters
  - only allow limited stays and are constantly moving
- Transportation
  - More affordable at times to drive to places than take transit
  - Bus pass for PWD makes a huge difference
- Services and Support
  - More mental health drops in centers
  - Create more accessible safe spaces
- Access to Services
  - Hard to access government services, like Welfare if no phone – there are also long wait times and no phone for them to call you back
  - Create accessible services to all
  - give you the run around, hoping people would give up

- Being able to access welfare not only through phone but also offices
- Restore individual case workers for income assistance
- Direct accessibility through case workers
- Switch to call centers that indicate priority is cost and efficiency – shift the priority to having dignity and humility
- There are too many rules from different parts of the government
- “almost like they want to keep you down”
- Too many rules and restrictions
- Child care
  - universal childcare
  - One income in two income households usually go for childcare
- Inequality
  - Inequality where rich getting richer
  - the wealth gap is increasing
- Housing
  - More affordable and social housing (1 dot)
  - More funding for co-op housing – disproportionately impacts low income members
  - Definition of affordable housing should be welfare rate housing
  - Need humane housing that is not like a prison or a cargo box
  - No one has anywhere to live – housing is the only thing to fix this
- Employment
  - Fulltime jobs with benefits that provide livable income
  - Employment opportunities and support geared towards folks that may not be very ‘employable’ (4 dots)
  - Create employment opportunities
  - Create opportunities for employment (clean up) with livable income
  - Live in clean neighborhood by creating incentives to clean the streets and creating employment opportunities (1 dot)
- Addiction and Mental Health
  - More support for mental health and addictions
- Services and Support
  - So many complex rules about income – claw backs for will and death benefits
  - I take a step forward, but then it’s taken back – there is a constant struggle
  - Government should provide
    - Free childcare (2 dots)
    - Free education (1 dot)
    - Free transportation (1 dot)
    - Bus pass for income assistance (1dot)
    - No earning exemptions for IA and PWD
    - Increase the rates for IA and PWD
    - Better extended health coverage for all (2 dots)

- Realities of Poverty
  - o Living allowance – \$375 is not enough to live anywhere when you need to pay for rent, transportation/ transit and food
  - o Not given an option to move homes as Prince Rupert is too expensive
  - o Individuals cannot sustain themselves
  - o Can't get beds because child tax is too much
- Education
  - o Need more training, current training is very limited
  - o Need access to Wi-Fi, education and affordable housing
- Income Assistance
  - o Realistic welfare allowance that is aligned with the cost of living
  - o Livable welfare rates to the cost of living including leisure, transportation, clothing, food, and housing (2 dots)
  - o Money cut from welfare when you get a job, but what if the job doesn't work out that means you'll have no income
  - o Need to stop clawing back welfare which creates anxiety – fear of being kicked off of welfare
- Employment
  - o WorkBC sounds great, but it is not – if you want to get help from us you need to get off welfare. There needs to be a better system that addresses inter-related needs like housing, food and education
  - o I signed up for upgrading course and sign papers, where money is shifted but I don't pay it and they question it – you'll get a T4 saying you got \$400 but we don't
- Food Security
  - o In Mt. Pleasant, a new development put in school and no longer low income school, so they lost the lunch program
- Discrimination
  - o Racism needs to be addressed because it affects what services or jobs people get
- Childcare
  - o Need more child care for people on welfare who are excluded from existing child care spaces because they assume the family is on welfare and has a childcare subsidy but not guaranteed access because you have to be actively searching for a job
- Government Supports
  - o Need government cooperation
  - o Too many committees try to strive to make changes, but do nothing – we want action
  - o Some live like this by choice but some want nothing more to advance in life
  - o Programs need to get organized and unite, where someone can make themselves take responsibility for the poverty plan
- Addictions
  - o hard to get out
  - o Easy to use safely but that makes it hard to stop
  - o Hard to keep a job and reintegrate into society

- Need more mental health supports for returning to work e.g. slow return to work to enable time and space to have ways that are able to honor our culture and to address the intergenerational trauma
- Income Assistance
  - Experience working at rape relief centre, saw issues in welfare – bad system with low rates that you can't live on
  - The big issue is that the goal is to have people get off assistance – fundamental issue because design of system and “success” is based on how many people go off IA
  - Needs to meet the cost of living
- Shelters
  - In Atira housing – need more men's shelters since there are already lots of resources for women
  - “it's a hard job being homeless”
  - Too much homelessness
- Personal Story (Falling through the Cracks)
  - Had the option to go to electrician school but then got injured
  - Living in house that got slated for demo
  - With injury, there was trouble accessing IA
  - Don't like to get EI
  - “try to move ahead and then get kicked back”
  - Injury but not covered for medical under union- catch 22, when you work and do all the right things
  - Housing and addiction is my biggest issue
  - Broke neck – took almost 2 year to get needed appointment
  - Poor medical system
  - Good childhood, nice house, good mother, and did not miss a meal for 18 years, I want that back
- Access to Services
  - Hard to find resources, along with information
  - Too many hoops for basic needs (food, clothes, and grants)
  - Crisis grants are so hard to get and ask a ton of questions – tragic incident needed to get clothes for winter
- Non Profit Services
  - Non-profits are making up for government scaling back service, but it is inconsistent, spread thin, and service may stop because they run out of money
- Transportation
  - No bus passes
  - Used to be annual \$45, but now monthly \$77
- Housing
  - Housing conditions in SROs are terrible, it is better to stay outside
  - The rent is too high
  - Landlords will not rent to you if you are on welfare

- Rent controls do not work
- The rent is increased \$100 a month
- Decent housing requires an increase to Income Assistance and PWD rates
- Renovations – means they ask for more money when the renovations are completed
- People are kicked out in the higher rent environment
- scared to sleep in room (SRO) because of the neighbors with mental health issues, you don't feel safe – however, not the persons fault they are suffering but it does scare people
- Money is not going to fix the harm - expensive child abuse/sexual assault, addictions from 10 years old that goes on for 20 years
- Discrimination
  - Native people cannot get hired in some places due to racism
  - This is all stolen land from indigenous people
  - Lots of discrimination against different people – not a kind society to women, indigenous people, Asian people, etc.
  - They never get paid same as men for the same job
  - Workplace racism making someone want to quit or be violent
- Women's Issues
  - Harder for women to leave abusive situation because of poverty– choose to stay because welfare is too low
  - Economic security is more important than physical safety
  - Regardless of decision MCFD can get involved with no money support to help women set up life to keep kids, but it is just that kids could get taken away
  - “Make it like it's the woman's fault” but don't recognize the forces at work, where it could be injury that stops someone from working, etc.
- Employment
  - Employment services help but currently inadequate
  - The time gap of not having a job makes it harder and harder to get hired
- Income Assistance
  - Welfare, IA access is hard but there is a stigma to access it – you feel bad to ask for help
  - Demoralizing to get income assistance
  - \$20-\$30 per month for food – no one can live off that
  - Being poor is a full time job
  - IA “ all or nothing” model – get kicked off and get nothing
  - Livable welfare rates would allow dignified participation in public life
- Housing
  - Damage deposit game—pay it to get unit rent but then have to pay it back – already such low rates plus that payback is needed
  - EI appoint – realtor – run rental with family members living there, where he is living without lease, no rights and no address. Police warned him about her doing illegal stuff but needs a place to stay
  - Housing should be a priority



- Addiction
  - o Stable reliable funding for detox programs is needed
  - o Insite has transportation to housing after detox
  - o But no housing to rent in Vancouver and you can't get income or work during 90 day recovery time
  - o Take IA cheque but then give 30% of cheque to living allowance and housing
  - o Once 90 days is up need to leave so recovery is not impacted if you live without housing, or job
  - o Location of detox in DTES issue and not issue at same time
  - o Is someone wants to use, the decision is made regardless of how easy it is to access drugs – they would transit an hour and a half if they had to
- Law
  - o Port Coquitlam RCMP was a bad experience – car door was kicked in and stuff was stolen, landlord and tenant issue with no help from the police
- Personal story of housing history
  - o Was in housing for 9 years and had issue with landlord for having too many belongings (hoarding)
  - o Also living in DTES was hard, stressful and make you angry enough to punch a hole in the wall making the landlord very unhappy, even though it was planned to get fixed – got evicted because of “health code violation”
  - o Hard to find new place to live – 5 years from hotel to studio apartment that was decent, also needed surgery at that time too
  - o There were issues with the shower – needed it for surgery recovery so had to miss the surgery which puts health in jeopardy, supposed to relocate me but went to Lookout
  - o Hard to be around people with mental illness – living conditions are not great so you end up in the streets instead for 5 months
  - o Now in SRO, where it feels like a prison cell and you share a bathroom, and it feels impossible to stay clean and healthy
- Homelessness
  - o Homeless people are trying to get out of province but don't have enough money and might even be dealing with some mental health or drug problems – they then turn to crime , many of them have disabilities
- Realities of Poverty
  - o Poverty is so hard to get out of – deep poverty
  - o Really sad to be poor and feel crappy
  - o People want to only help themselves
  - o Need to give more support and care to others
- Community Engagement
  - o Would like to see follow up meeting in DTES to share what solutions have come out of this meeting and what the plan for the next steps are
  - o See what strategy we will settle on

- Should have more meetings like this, every 6 months and create an outreach to share the information
- Give the strategy enough time to see results, and don't just scrap it if it doesn't work right away
- Shelters
  - Shelter workers need to be professional and kinder
  - There is often gossip and unfair triage process
  - Native shelter – you experience racism from your own people
  - Create shelters space for people with mental health issues, so they have private spaces (e.g. if they wake up screaming, not everyone hears them)
  - Feel like the best solution is to scrap the whole thing and start over
  - When staff are having a bad day they act as a judge, jury and executioner
- Police
  - Vancouver police department need to stop robbing dealer's drug money
- Services
  - Accessibility to services
  - Bring services, education, health promotion right to children's schools
  - Create a phone donation program
  - Provide phones
- Housing
  - Affordable housing for all - including social housing
  - More decent, adequate social housing (6 dots)
- Income
  - Guaranteed livable income (3 dots)
  - Need to up the wages for working class people
  - Basic income – would like to see this as a long term solution - will address dignity, stigma, etc. (3 dots)
- Food
  - Make it more affordable to get food
  - Food vouchers with no stigma, and give more dignity (1 dot)
  - Ensure food security (2 dots)
  - children are not getting nutritious food and it stunts growth and does not allow children to get ahead
  - Limited food bank access, other food bank are too far away, cannot spend the money to travel to get there, as well
  - When there is no food access, must ran handle
  - The foodbank is not nutritious and not fresh – usually only canned foods
  - Seniors need to have good food because of their health issues, like diabetes
  - Canned foods are heavy and harder to transport for elderly and seniors
  - No food vouchers anymore from the welfare office – buy what you want at Safeway and other grocery stores
  - Need an additional \$50 per month on top of welfare for food

- Weight of food is heavy and hard to transport on the bus
- There is no money for bus fare to get to a better food bank
- Food is all gone by noon – luck of the draw with food banks
- Health Care
  - Provide preventative dental for long term (1 dot)
  - Provide individuals with dental hygiene products
  - A prescription voucher should be provided and doctor should prescribe the generic, cheaper drug
- Transportation
  - Subsidize transit (2 dots)
  - Free transportation for people on welfare (1 dot)
  - Only people with disability get free transit, but disability is subjective
  - More night buses and trains for night shift workers
  - People can't live 3 zones away because it is expensive for a 3 zone bus fare
  - Transit system not good for people on welfare
  - Free or subsidized adult education to include transit fare ( 1 dot)
  - Transportation is an issue – stigma about getting on the bus for free
  - If I spent \$6 on bus fare than I would have less for food
  - No adequate transportation
  - Odd hours of work
  - Transportation cost is a big chunk of wage that you earn, especially, if you have a short work shift (6 hours)
- Employment
  - More on the job training
  - Provide basic communication device or plan so that employers can contact you
  - Having an address is important to employers
- Mental Health (1 dot)
  - Address the opioid crisis
  - Lack of address is a barrier for resources (detox)
- Housing
  - Housing that is affordable, decent and adequate
  - There are limited housing options
  - Often the landlord is exploitive
  - Educate people on their rights
  - Often people are discriminated against
  - Seniors and young adults don't get along
  - Broken promises on modular housing
  - "Nimby" – sign not to live near us
  - Prices are skyrocketing
  - Rent control needs to be stricter and need to avoid renovictions
  - Need more access to housing

- Health
  - o Childcare costs and health care costs are a big barrier to life in poverty
  - o Dental and prescription not covered
- Realities of Poverty
  - o It becomes a big cycle that keeps you in poverty
- Employment
  - o there is no full time jobs, only part time
  - o Minimum wage is too low
- Income Assistance
  - o Only get \$910 per month and have to pay \$350 for rent
  - o Claw back my CPP and damage deposit
  - o There could be other claw blacks
  - o Half of welfare income goes to rent which only leaves \$10 per day
- Seniors
  - o are scared of being robbed and are more susceptible to crime
- Stigma
  - o Dignity/social stigma
  - o Need to find some way to add dignity to being in poverty
  - o Individuals are punished for things they are not doing
- Women and Children
  - o No central database of women living in poverty and transition houses
  - o Children of these women are not getting support and are locked in a poverty cycle
  - o Create a safe environment for children (1 dot)
  - o Children will find themselves in the same system as their parents
  - o Supports for women with children e.g. fetal Alcohol Syndromes are missed
  - o Better support for children in drug filled apartments
  - o Children are vulnerable – how do we stop them from getting into drugs?
  - o Need to create a more supportive system
- Health Care and Medications
  - o Prescriptions need daily dispense because it can get stolen
  - o They are refusing to pay when prescriptions are stolen
  - o Hard to have supports in place when diagnoses are missed
  - o It is hard to balance appointments with the hospital, often you are 1.5 hours away and need to pay money for travel
- Homelessness
  - o Free sleeping bags for homeless
  - o Place to store sleeping bags – more space in shelters
  - o Shelters have high barriers
  - o Stop banning people from shelters
  - o Shelters should be open all day, not just at certain hours
  - o Can't keep a job or be clean with shelters
  - o Create more gender neutral shelters

- Create more women only shelters (1 dot)
- Food Bank
  - More nutritious foods at the food bank
  - Would like real food at food banks, not just cookies – need more fresh fruits and vegetables
  - PWD's might not be able to access food banks
  - Money that is paid to staff should go to food, get volunteers instead
- Income
  - Need more income
  - Everyone needs guaranteed income
  - Guaranteed basic income (2 dots)
  - Guaranteed income would allow people to raise their own kids instead of childcare ( 2 dots)
  - This is especially important for women
  - Conditions for income assistance could be eliminated if use guaranteed livable income to replace ( 1 dot )
- Employment
  - Create more full time employment instead of part time jobs
  - Some employers won't give full time jobs because they don't want to give benefits, so women are struggling with 3 part time jobs
  - Employers should pay for lunch and increase wages
- Housing
  - Faster access for housing for seniors
  - Safe affordable housing
  - Kicked out with no help finding a new place
  - Police don't look at video tapes to see what happened
  - The staff treat tenants unfairly and would give more things to the ones they like
  - The BC housing waitlist is about 25 years
  - 60 – 70% of women say they are running from abuse to take advantage of the system and get a home sooner
  - You need to have ID to get housing, but sometimes your ID gets stolen making it hard to get housing
  - On PWD you have housing but if your cheque is late then you can get eviction notice and have to pay \$6 to get it sorted out – fix this by sending payments straight to landlord
- Access to Services
  - Spending money within digitized systems is difficult
  - Hard to access services when things are electronic
  - Need more information on how to navigate the legal system, and increase education (1 dot)
  - People who cannot navigate the system lose their housing
  - More transparency within system

- Integrated services (1 dot)
- Many homeless do not have IDs which makes accessing services difficult
- Homelessness
  - Self-care for homeless individuals difficult
  - It is hard to make appointments when you live on the street with no address
  - You quit buying phones because they keep getting stolen
  - Don't get much sleep
  - Provide free storage lockers for homeless people
  - Theft of ID and belongings common
  - Shelter space with longer "stay times" would benefit women and families (1 dot)
- Mental Health
  - Abolish the mental health act and stop forcing mental health treatment
- First Nations
  - Give First Nations their land back, give back things in the museums
- Housing
  - Difficult to find stable home when fleeing from abusive relationship – hard to find housing while trying to care for children (1 dot)
  - Can't find housing
  - Rent prices are too high
  - Eventually you end up on the streets
  - Lack of comfortable clean homes
- Realities of Homelessness
  - No safe places to go
  - City by law and police destroy tents
  - Been through 7 tents – they cut it up in McLean Park
  - Needed the tents because it was raining and stuff would get damaged
  - Received \$20 crisis that helped
  - Need to hustle to make money
  - Need some sort of transportation for tent (e.g. stroller, cart, bike, suitcase, etc.)
  - Bed bugs even in shelters
  - Prefer tent instead of going to shelters
  - Drug dealers turn my home into drug dealing shack
  - Living on sidewalks due to cut pension, disability
  - Low mood levels, lack of clothing
  - The problem is government
  - Easier to sleep outside than worry about paying rent
  - Withdrawal from drugs and alcohol
  - Nobody wants to face the hot flashes, anxiety and night sweats
  - Problems with ID
  - Difficulty finding work
  - Stress from housing issues often causes relapse
  - Lack of sleep, poor hygiene

- No healthy food available
- Have to carry stuff with you all the time
- Walking all day long, feet are often sore and need fresh socks all the time since they get wet
- UGM is okay but get kicked out from 6 am to 9 pm
- My jacket is my tent and sleeping bag
- Need good rain and outdoor clothing but it is too expensive
- We want to be equal
- During the day homeless places are crowded
- Homeless are seen as second class citizen
- My clothing and backpack are dirty
- Need to live close to resources
- Always have to carry everything with you everywhere you go
- Homeless are my brothers and sisters, they understand what you are going through
- I stayed outside when I had room, because I had felt guilty
- My backpack is my home
- Keep one change of clothing
- When you sleep outside you lose some belongings
- Need a lightweight bag that turns into a tent
- ID is precious
- I am a soap stone carver but have no tools – can't keep them when homeless
- Hard to sleep because I am scared
- No family for support
- SRO Housing
  - Your landlord charges for guests during the day
  - The landlords do not take responsibility, and do not protect their tenants
- Women
  - Women are experiencing violence and cannot leave abusive situations
  - Multiple barriers are in the way
  - Women experiencing violence should be granted income to allow women to leave bad situations (4 dots)
  - Can choose where to live with their kids (1 dot)
- Childcare
  - Childcare is expensive and can cause you to go into debt
  - Childcare is not always available
  - Universal child care would be a big help ( 1dot)
  - Child care spaces dedicated to low income children
- Transit
  - Transportation to find housing is difficult
  - Transit may be offered for free but you can get ticketed
  - Give out free transit passes but they don't work with compass cards

- Income Assistance
  - o Income assistance rates are low
  - o Stigma is associated with welfare
  - o Hard to live with dignity
- Inequality
  - o Subsidies happen at wrong end of the spectrum
  - o Tax cuts with subsidies for home owners
  - o Subsidies should be offered to low income renters
- Health
  - o No dental care, extended health services, optical, and prescriptions
  - o All BC resident need health care (3 dots)
- Employment
  - o Employers are cutting back and putting people in lower wage jobs
  - o People stay in jobs where they are mistreated but because there are no other options they stay
- Education
  - o Cost of post-secondary is high
  - o Have to work full time to go to school--physically draining
  - o Hard to pay off student debt since all money goes to living expenses
  - o School is lacking life skills and lacks mental health supports
- Criminal justice system
  - o deeply connected to poverty
  - o People are criminalized for small things (transit and petty crimes)
- Stigma
  - o Being in the system is stigmatizing
  - o Being in facilities does not help people who are in crisis
  - o Limits a person's mobility
  - o Stigma is connected to isolation
  - o Creates a sense of difference
  - o Several levels of stigma/discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and status
  - o This related to stereotypes and leads to difficulties in accessing resources
  - o Mental health stigma
  - o Layers of stigma creates barriers, need stigma reduction
- Social isolation
  - o Hard to find support
  - o Limited ability to connect with people
  - o Lack of social networks
- Families
  - o Families cannot access housing or services
  - o Difficult with kids
  - o Hard for parents and families at shelters



- Legal and Police
  - o Access to legal services is difficult especially if English is not your first language
  - o Ticketing and enforcement doesn't make sense when people cannot pay
- Income Assistance
  - o Rates are not livable, don't have option to make these choices
  - o No other option, but to cheat the system
  - o Couples have challenges with income assistance and women may stay in bad situation because its affordable
- Services
  - o Need more sustainable solutions for people who cannot work
  - o More consistency in living assistance
  - o Support people in poverty
- Housing
  - o Revise Residential Tenancy Act
  - o Lack of rent controls
  - o Rent caps and create rent controls (1 dot)
  - o Rent geared to income (2 dots)
  - o Inability to stay in home community due to cost
  - o Hard to find housing
  - o High cost of housing but only have a low income
- MCFD and Health Care
  - o rules and regulations are an issue
  - o MCFD and health care services are not living up to the responsibility
  - o Hospital regulations and policies should be revised
  - o Ministry would rather take children away than work with families and keep them together
  - o Apprehend children simply because of poverty, not an abusive situation
  - o Don't properly assess assumptions about people and families
- Multiple Housing Ownership
  - o Revise legislation that banks use to give loans
  - o Creates landlords who are able to buy multiple homes
  - o More regulation needed for second and third homes
  - o Using a house to buy more houses, creates greater wealth for the already wealthy