# Assessment of Training Efficacy Through Qualitative Analysis Sadie Vernon

#### Abstract

Homelessness is a major issue in society that affects different populations, including families and children. Homelessness is caused by increasing prices in the cost of living, violence, and health problems of individuals. Homeless families can experience mental health problems, economic instability, and physical health problems. Children who experience homelessness also see impacts on their physical health and education.

This project focused on the training of students at Radford University to participate in a program to address the needs of homeless families with children from birth to five years old in the New River Valley (NRV) region in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Project Sprout is a prevention and awareness program for homeless families by training student advocates to provide information about resources and services to help prevent developmental delays. During the 2020 Covid pandemic Project Sprout was an inactive program for safety purposes. After a five-year hiatus the author worked with the program's founder to re-launch the program for the 2024-2025 school year. During the Fall of 2024 the author worked with Dr. Corey Cassidy and graduate student assistants to implement the training of student advocates for the program. To assess the quality of the training the author had students write reflections after completing the training. The author then assessed the reflections using NVivo in the Spring 2025 semester. The author found six main themes including the strengths of the program, students' motivation for becoming an advocate, students' abilities to recall information from the

training, and relate information to content in courses at Radford University. Other themes included the strengths and weaknesses of the training. Based on the themes the author concludes that the training was adequate in preparing student advocates to meet with families and support interprofessional learning. The author also found Project Sprout to be an effective prevention and awareness program for homeless families and children.

#### **Homelessness**

Homelessness is a national epidemic impacting every region in the United States of America. The New River Valley of southwest Virginia is no exception, impacting families, individuals, and children. The homeless population faces impacts on both physical and mental health and educational barriers, caused by the instability of homelessness.

# Homelessness Definition and Related Terminology

Before solutions can be provided, there is a need to clarify the definition of and terminology related to homelessness. Homelessness refers to an individual or group who is without a night-time residence and do not have a regular or adequate place to live, which includes a sheltered or unsheltered residence. Sheltered homeless individuals live in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens. Unsheltered homelessness refers to individuals who have a primary nighttime location in a public or private place not usually used for regular sleeping accommodation. Individuals and families can also experience chronic homelessness. Families and individuals who experience chronic homelessness have been continually experiencing homelessness for one year or more. These families and individuals may also have

experienced at least four 12-month episodes of homelessness in the last three years (Sousa & Henry, 2024).

## **Homelessness Demographics**

**National Demographics** 

In 2023, 653,104 Americans experienced homelessness (AHAR, 2023). There was a 12% increase (70,642 increase) in reported homelessness between 2022 and 2023. The homeless population in the United States represented 0.19% of the population, which was the highest rate since 2012 (Office of Policy Development and Research, 2023).

In 2024, the highest record of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on a single night was recorded. In the same year, 771,480 individuals were homeless as evidenced by their residency in an emergency shelter, transitional housing program, safe haven, or unsheltered locations in the United States. That year, the country also experienced record homeless levels for almost all populations. These populations include families with children, individuals, people with chronic patterns of homelessness, individuals living in unsheltered locations, individuals living in sheltered locations, and unaccompanied youth (Sousa & Henry, 2024).

Forty-six percent of adults aged 55 or older experienced unsheltered homelessness. There was a continued overrepresentation of Black, and African American, or African individuals who experience homelessness. Specifically, 12% of the U.S. population identifies as black, but 21% of the individuals who experience poverty identifies as Black and 32% of the homeless population identifies as Black. However,

this population decreased from 37% of all homeless individuals. It was also reported that 152,5835 homeless individuals experienced chronic patterns of homelessness (Sousa & Henry, 2024).

The largest increase in a single year was people in families with children. There was a 39% increase in individuals in families with children who experienced homelessness between 2023 and 2024. In a single night in 2024 almost 150,00 children experienced homelessness, which is a 33 percent increase over 2023. Children under the age of 18 were also the age group to experience the largest increase in homelessness between 2023 and 2024 (Sousa & Henry, 2024).

Commonwealth of Virginia Demographics

In the Commonwealth of Virginia between 2022-2023, the average number of homeless individuals, per 10,000 people, was 7.5, which was the fourth lowest in the country as the national average was 18. The state of Virginia is currently ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in the country for homeless individuals and 19<sup>th</sup> for homeless households. Children under the age of 18 account for 23% of the homeless population and families with children under the age of 18 account for 36% of the homeless population in the Commonwealth. Between the years of 2022 and 2023, there were 1,539 homeless children and 2,442 homeless families with children in the state of Virginia. The state has seen an overall reduction of 25% in the homeless population since 2010, although there has been a 4% increase since 2022. There has been a 38% reduction in the number of homeless households since 2010. However, since 2022, there has been a 3% increase in the population of homeless households (Department of Housing and Community Development, 2023).

# **New River Valley Demographics**

The United Way of Southwest Virginia conducted a community assessment of the New River Valley area. The assessment focused on the strengths and challenges that residents of the New River Valley community have provided. Major concerns, as presented by residents, included the lack of transportation and childcare. They were also concerned about the cost of housing, mental health, and substance misuse. The biggest concern that individuals had was housing (i.e. 79% reporting concerns in this area). The NRV's median home value is between \$147k and \$329k. Residents in the region own 53% of the homes and 59% of the housing in the region is affordable for individuals who make the yearly median income. However, half of the population in each locality earns less than this. Specifically, in Radford, Virginia, 40% of the population making the median income can only afford 14% of the housing units. Housing costs more than 1/3 of the total household income for 25% of the households in the region. In both the City of Radford and Montgomery County, half of the rental population struggles financially due to housing costs. People in these communities report that the two universities, Radford University and Virginia Tech, are primary causes of the excessive cost of housing, especially housing near each campus. It was also reported that the homeless population has recently increased in Radford and that there is a lack of emergency shelters, as well as a lack of aid for finding stable, safe, and affordable housing (United Way of Southwest Virginia, 2024).

#### **Causes of Homelessness**

Homelessness can be caused by racial disparities, health problems, domestic violence, unemployment, poverty, wages, and lack of affordable housing. The United States is currently experiencing an extreme housing affordability crisis. This significantly affects individuals living in poverty. As the gap of stagnant income and the increase in housing costs widens, more people are likely to become homeless. Communities had affordable housing during the 1970s, which allowed individuals or families experiencing a loss of housing to quickly find another home. However, the supply of low-cost housing decreased significantly during the mid-1980s. After this point the country continues to see a rise and rent. Lower-income individuals have also experienced slow wage growth during this time. Low-income households today use around half of their income to pay for housing, causing them to be at risk of instability and homelessness. Most homeless households report they are experiencing homelessness because they are unable to afford housing (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2025).

Households with low-income are typically unemployed or underemployed. This is normally caused by a challenging labor market, limited education, work history gap, or a criminal record. Unreliable transportation, unstable housing, and poor health are other factors of unemployment and underemployment. Those employed may experience stagnant wages and cannot keep up with increasing housing costs. Due to the stagnant wages over the past three decades and the decrease in available low-cost housing, more people are now at risk of becoming homeless (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2025).

According to National Alliance to End Homelessness (2020), health status is linked to homelessness, specifically acute physical or behavioral health crisis. Health

problems can cause homelessness but can also be caused by homelessness. An individual's health conditions can become disabling and can cause it to be difficult to support housing. Individuals who live in homeless shelters are more likely to have a disability than the general population. In 2024, 18.4% of homeless individuals reported having a mental illness and 14.5 percent reported conditions related to chronic substance abuse. Approximately 11,000 individuals reported having HIV/AIDs. In addition to HIV/AIDS, there were high rates of diabetes and heart disease reported by the homeless population, which was sometimes three to six times compared to the general population. Homeless individuals who have metal health and substance use disorders have a higher rate of immediate lifer-threatening physical illness and live in dangerous conditions (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2025).

Domestic violence is also commonly experienced by youth, single adults, and families who become homeless. For most individuals, domestic violence tends to serve as an immediate cause of their homelessness. Individuals who have survived domestic violence use homeless service programs to have a temporary safe place to stay after leaving an abusive situation. Survivors may also seek homeless service programs because of the lack of economic resources for housing after fleeing an abusive situation. Around 11% of all emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe haven beds were used for domestic violence survivors and their families in 2022 (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2025).

Overall, when considering the causes of homelessness, families experiencing homelessness often struggle to pay for housing because of low income. This can be caused by the loss of a job or a decrease in work hours. Unexpected medical bills or

conflict with family members that they are staying with may also be a cause of homelessness. Domestic violence and single parent households are also contributing factors to both individual and family homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2025).

#### **Effects of Homelessness on Families**

Families can be affected by homelessness through physical health, psychological strain, emotional strain, and economic stability. Due to the unstable living environment homeless families struggle to have access to nutritious foods, clean water, and a safe shelter. This puts families at risk for malnutrition, illness, and disease. Homeless families are also at risk of exposure to harsh weather conditions. These risks can affect the overall physical health of the family (Catholic Charities Terre Haute, 2023).

Homelessness also profoundly affects the family's psychological toll on families. Homeless families experience uncertainty and stress, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and mental health issues. Parents can feel a sense of failure and helplessness, leading to strained familial relationships. The trauma and the instability of their living situation can cause children to have a greater risk of developing emotional and behavioral problems (Catholic Charities Terre Haute, 2023).

Homelessness itself tends to have a significant economic impact on families as well. Due to the struggle to secure housing, families often have limited resources for other essential needs, such as healthcare and education. In addition, homeless families typically face stigma and isolation hindering their ability to seek and receive support

(Catholic Charities Terre Haute, 2023). Ultimately, homelessness becomes a vicious cycle.

## **Effects of Homelessness on Young Children**

Housing security is closely intertwined with a child's health. Children who are homeless increase the chance of having chronic diseases, behavioral health problems, developmental delays, hunger, malnutrition, and delays in literacy and learning than children who have homes.

Children who are homeless have difficulty accessing health care, they have inadequate nutrition and access to food. Homelessness also causes trauma, and disruption in family dynamics. Homeless children are twice as likely to get sick and go hungry when compared to children who have homes. Additionally, homeless children have learning disabilities at twice the rate and behavioral and emotional problems three times the rate of children who have homes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2024).

Children who are experiencing homelessness may also experience interruptions in their education. Students who are experiencing homelessness face barriers to their education, such as lack of transportation and frequent moves to different schools. These students also have enrollment difficulties because they do not have a fixed address. These barriers can lead to frequent absences and lower graduation rates of homeless students affecting the students' overall academic ability (SchoolHouse Connection, 2025). Due to frequent transfers to different schools, homeless students are sometimes held back from their age group, as well. This will impact the student's education and

relationships with peers. Children who are held back are likely to continue to be enrolled in special education services. Their peers and classmates are also likely to see them as inferior, which diminishes their educational experience (Bay Area Rescue Mission, 2020)

# Support and Services for Families who are Experiencing Homelessness

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program's mission is to provide around 1.4 million children and youth experiencing homelessness access to education. The program was established under the McKinney-Vento Act in 1987 to identify homeless students and remove barriers to their school attendance and success. Without the services and programs provided by the McKinney-Vento Act, students experiencing homelessness will struggle with school attendance or benefit from educational funding. The program also provides school stability, access, and support. By providing students with school stability, students can continue attending the same school when homelessness forces them to move. School transportation is provided to students to support school stability. To avoid educational disruption the program ensures students are immediately enrolled when students need to move schools. Under the program school districts appoint a local liaison to identify homeless students. The liaison provides support such as referrals to community agencies and training for school personnel. There is also funding to offer services to students and families (School House Connection, 2025).

In addition, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures the State Board of Education makes grants to local education agencies to help the enrollment,

attendance, and the overall success of homeless children and youth. The College of William & Mary School of Education was appointed by The Virginia Department of Education as the institution responsible for effective coordination of the Virginia Homeless Education Program, called Project HOPE-Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 2022).

Project HOPE-Virginia ensures the enrollment, attendance, and the school success of youth and children who experience homelessness by public awareness efforts across the state of Virginia and local school divisions. Customized programs are developed by school divisions to help aid the needs of homeless children in their area, which helps when enrolling homeless students. Project HOPE offers a wide variety of activities during the school year for children and their families experiencing homelessness. These events include mentoring, tutoring, parent education, early childhood education, summer enrichment programs, and prevention programs for domestic violence. The local McKinney-Vento program can also offer emergency services, referrals for health services, transportation, school supplies, and costs related to getting school records (Project Hope Virginia, 2025).

## **Project Sprout**

In 2012, Corey Cassidy, PhD, CCC-SLP, a faculty member in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Radford University (RU), worked with a group of graduate students in the Waldron College of Health and Human Services to create a program that might mitigate the developmental and education impacts of homelessness on families with young children. Project Sprout aims to prevent and

provide awareness for children between the ages of birth to five years currently experiencing homelessness in the southwest region of Virginia and their families. Project Sprout provides parents and caregivers with knowledge, skills, and resources related to the domains of early child development. Between 2012-2019, graduate assistants worked with Dr. Cassidy to create a training program and subsequently train undergraduate and graduate volunteers from multiple disciplines across the RU campus to communicate with the families while providing them with information, activities, and materials to support their children. The graduate assistants also trained the volunteers to engage, model play with the children in the areas of cognition, speech/language/communication, emergent literacy, and social-emotional development. Project Sprout did not run between 2019-2023 due to limitations that occurred during the COVID pandemic.

Over the course of the 2023-2024 academic year, Dr. Cassidy worked with two graduate students to update the training materials for Project Sprout with the intention of reintroducing the program in 2024. Dr. Cassidy is also connected with the Project Hope Liaison, housed in the Montgomery County Public Schools, who identifies eligible families, shares information with parents and caregivers who have young children and are experiencing homelessness, and refers them to Project Sprout. The Project Hope Liaison also gets releases from families interested in visiting student volunteers. Project Sprout is intended to serve as an interprofessional program to support knowledge and experience for students across disciplines. By engaging students in multiple programs, information, and the opportunity to work with families who experience homelessness will cross professional disciplines.

# **Project Sprout Recruitment and Training Program**

#### Recruitment

During the Fall 2024 semester, Dr. Cassidy's graduate students, along with the author of this Honors Capstone recruited and trained student volunteers from programs across the RU campus to connect and engage with families across the New River Valley. The training was conducted by the graduate student assistants and the author. The training took place on November 16, 2024, at RU and was three hours in length. The training included six modules that covered a broad spectrum of information to prepare the students to engage families. The content of modules was as follows:

Module 1: Demographics of Homelessness and Poverty

Module 2: Responsibilities of Advocates

Module 3: Key Areas of Child Development

Module 4: Early Childhood Milestones and Expectations

Module 5: Overview of Lessons and Referral Process

Module 6: Role Play Activities for Delivering Services

Nine student volunteers were trained and completed reflections (See Appendix A) to ensure the quality of the training. Once student volunteers begin to meet with families, they will be expected to complete reflections to assess their experiences as well as the efficacy of Project Sprout to serve as an effective interprofessional, awareness, and prevention experience for student volunteers.

**Training Outcomes** 

Ten student reflections were collected including the author's personal reflection of the training. The reflections were used to give students a chance to provide feedback to the program and trainers. The feedback will be used to make improvements to the training and update the training.

Qualitative Assessment of Student Reflections

During the Spring Semester of 2025 the author analyzed ten student reflections (including the author' personal reflection) using NVivo provided by the SMART Lab at Radford University. Dr. John Burnette, director of the SMART Lab assisted the author with coding the reflections and creating mind maps. The author first took each reflection and created codes; she then took those codes to identify any themes between student reflections. Once themes were identified the author then created mind maps, which included a major theme/question and smaller themes within the reflections. The author also attached quotes from reflections related to the smaller themes (see Appendix B).

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#### **Themes Based on Student Reflections**

The author identified six major areas of discussion within the student reflections. The author found themes related to the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout. The author also identified areas of reflection on how the training impacted on student advocates growth, application of training concepts to academic learning, and recalled Content from training session. Student advocates also reflected on the strengths of Project Sprout as a prevention and awareness program.

Recalled content from training session: this theme was based on the student's ability to recall information about poverty and homelessness impacts and demographics

Application of training concepts to academic learning: this theme identified the student's ability to relate information to university courses

Perceived strengths of Project Sprout: the students commented about the strengths of Project Sprout as a prevention and awareness program.

Training impacts on student advocates: students discussed how they will benefit from the training and becoming a student advocate

Strengths of training: feedback from students on positive characteristics of the training Suggested improvements in training: student feedback on areas of improvement for the training

#### **Discussion of Themes**

Seven students discussed in their reflections on the strengths of Project Sprout, including how the program empowers families through resources and education. These

resources provide information to families about appropriate childhood developmental milestones ensuring milestones are reached by their children. Two other students also mentioned the support Project Sprout provides to families as another strength of the program. Students also mentioned the personal and academic growth the training provided, specifically how it related to the improvement of their personal and professional development. The author also found from students that the training impacts including the opportunity to have hands on experience with children and community service engagement.

Additionally, students provided feedback on the advocate training sessions. The author identified that feedback was related to both the strengths and weaknesses of the training. Students felt that the training enhanced student engagement due to instruction provided by graduate student assistants and the author. Students also felt that the reflection questions and discussion helped students to apply the information and learn from other students in the training. Students reflected on how the training was efficient and effective through practical application in addition to interactive conversations. The author found that students felt prepared to meet with families after the training. However, some students discussed ways to improve the training, including adding more open discussion opportunities and hands-on practice activities. It was also suggested to alter training activities and reflection areas.

Students also related training concepts to academic learning in their majors or classes. Specifically, students found the information similar to content in lifespan and human development courses. Students found it helpful to view information from college courses through issues of homelessness. Other students connected the information

from social justice courses, Communication Sciences and Disorders courses, educational courses, child welfare courses, and psychology courses.

The author found that students were able to recall content from the training.

Students recalled information on the populations who are affected by homelessness, including any culture and children living in poverty. In addition, students discussed the associations of poverty, specifically of people of color and generational poverty.

Students mainly recalled information about the educational impacts of homelessness on children. This includes academic setbacks, barriers and accessing services because of the unstable environment.

# **Discussion of Project Sprout Training Outcomes**

Based on the themes identified through the qualitative assessment process, the Project Sprout team provided effective training to the student volunteers. Both strengths and limitations were identified that will lead to the implementation of an improved training process in future years.

#### Strengths of the Training

The major strengths of the training, including the reflections and discussions, allowed for students to be prepared to participate in the program and recall important information after completing the training. For instance, a student wrote "Children who are experiencing poverty do face barriers to success in school. When a child is in a stressful, and unstable environment. Its affect how focus and present they are in school." Another effective aspect of the training was to allow students to relate content to their fields of study and teach them about how homelessness can impact them as a

professional. One student specifically commented, "I think it helps me to connect to what I am learning in my classes a bit better. I think it is applicable to many different majors and very informative to many different people." However, the author did find a need for the training to include more hands-on activities and open-ended discussions to aid students' learning. For example, a student commented "I feel as though some role-playing situations about the materials/staging a talk with the "parent" would help prepare us for what to expect." Another student commented "I would suggest having more open-ended discussions rather than just reading off slides."

## **Limitations of the Training**

Limitations for this training included the experience of trainers and the number of students participating. None of the trainers had prior experience in Project Sprout or experience in similar programs. It was more difficult for them to discuss content of the training outside of information on childhood development. Another limitation to the project and training was that there weren't any student advocate and family meetings due to a lack of referrals. This limited the program to test the effectiveness of the training. The limitations of training based on student feedback include the lack of activities and open discussions during the training. The lack of these engaging activities negatively impacted students' experiences during the training.

## **Future Direction of the Training**

Students specifically commented on wanting to participate in more engaging activities, like hands-on learning activities and open discussions, during the training. One student specifically commented "think maybe some hands-on parts in the training session."

Therefore, the next steps will be to add and embed more open discussion opportunities and hands on learning activities within the training to enhance student advocate experiences as they train to become Project Sprout advocates. The training modules will continue to address the same content and update demographics and statistics of homelessness and poverty.

#### **Author Reflections**

In addition to supporting the training, the author was also participating in the Project Sprout training and learning the content for the first time. After completion of the training, the author completed the written reflection with the same guidelines as other student advocates. The author also identified themes in her personal reflection, including the ability to recall content from training, strength of Project Sprout, ability to relate information from past classes, and notes related to how the training has impacted the author's academic and professional growth.

The author was able to recall information from the training on the effects of homelessness on families, specifically the ability to provide positive interactions and learning opportunities for their children and access resources. The author also discussed the impacts of homelessness on children including behavioral, emotional, health, and educational barriers. The author also identified the strengths of Project Sprout in the reflection, specifically how the program can reduce impacts on families by providing information on resources and materials to help child development.

The author's reflection on the strengths and areas of improvement of the training were also discussed. The author felt that the training was interactive, and the pace of

the training was appropriate. The author then identified an area of improvement for there to be more organization of activities during the training session. The author also reflected on how the parts of the content of the training were reviewed from other university classes. The author then reflected on the meaningfulness of the experience to her professional growth. She discussed how she will be able to use the knowledge she gained to support future clients by understanding the barriers they face and resources that are available to them.

The project was an effective educational experience by having the author write a narrative about her research and present her research to students and faculty at Radford University Student Engagement Forum. The project expanded the author's knowledge on homelessness and poverty, including demographics and impacts on children and family. Additionally, the project allowed the author to learn about qualitative data analysis and conducting a research project.

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# Appendix A

#### Reflection 1



## Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

# Record your response here:

Demographics commonly affected are marginalized communities that are already prone to facing hardships due to their gender, race, or ethnicity. Additionally, individuals whose families have experienced homelessness are more likely to experience it themselves. Some families may have difficulties seeking resources due to social stereotypes and preconceived notions. They may also be unaware of the possible resources available. Children experiencing homelessness will seemingly encounter greater academic challenges due to an inherent structures. For example, if a homeless family has a child that is struggling with reading, they may not know the resources available to them to assist their child or they simply may be not

able to afford it. Strengths of Project Sprout include assisting local families by providing resources and education as well as education to the advocates. Establishing this rapport could potentially help them in the future. Weakness may include families not knowing how to recommend themselves to the project or they may not have an advocate to do it on their behalf.

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

Record your response here:

Much of the lesson was reviewed from previous lifespan or human development courses but it was helpful to view it under the lens of local homelessness issues so I could be better prepared and able to identify with the material.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?
What about the training sessions could be improved?
How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

Record your response here:

The graduate assistants were nice and down-to-Earth and the "viloe" was friendly and laid back.

I think some of the material/slides need updating along with some activities Other than that it

was fairly informative and helpful. If I were in charge, I would just alter some activates and reflection areas to better suit the pacing of the lesson.

#### Reflection 2



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

#### Record your response here:

- The impacts of homelessness on children
  - o Educational delays, social delays, low self esteem
- Who was affected
  - Children and families
- Children face difficulties in accessing services and struggle in school.
- Project sprout will help support children and families in poverty/homelessness

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

# Record your response here:

- Helping out the community and making a. change while also building my resume and learning more/getting experience with this style of work
- I learned that no two families or kids are the same and that everyone has a story that deserves to be listened to
- Connects with developmental psyc and other social justice/COSD classes

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?
What about the training sessions could be improved?
How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

## Record your response here:

- I liked how open and honest the info was
- The overall execution of slides/training
- I would suggest having more open-ended discussions rather than just reading off slides

#### Reflection 3



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

#### Record your response here:

The impact that homeless that has on families and children is great. It has vast affects on a child's health, family life, and education. Many families cannot afford health insurance; or any insurance, in general. I do think it is harder for any parents and families when it comes to getting access to services. Homeless does not discriminate. I do not really know what I can put as far as the strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout. I know you guys already tried to condense the training time down, but if I am honest, I kind of check out after a while. I don't know if that was because of my lack of sleep last night or because of the length of training.

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

#### Record your response here:

I think it helps me to connect to what I am learning in my classes a bit better. I think it is applicable to many different majors and very informative to many different people.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.

What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you? What about the training sessions could be improved?

How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

Record your response here:

I accidentally answered this in the first blank.

#### Reflection 4



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

• The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)

- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

## Record your response here:

- Higher in SWA than the mean average in VA.
- Many children and families effected, children facing lots of potential academic and developmental setbacks because of homelessness or poverty
- Project Sprout is here to help those families and children by reassuring and providing resources for developmental to close these gaps.
- Many children affected and possibly affecting specific ethnicities not shown in our slide's statistics.

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

## Record your response here:

- This experience can help build my resume as well as helping to learn more from parents and children especially with my future career goals in childrens school psychology.
- I learned more about effective communication as well as how to apply what I've learned to help families and explain it properly in a non-condescending context.
- This experience uses a lot of what I've learned in my psychology, developmental, and education classes

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.

What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?

What about the training sessions could be improved?

How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

Record your response here:

• The training was very interesting and fun! I was able to stay focused the entire time and

gain a lot from it!

• The frequent discussions and open group talks really helped me connect with my

partners and learn from more than just the slide alone, this provided me with many

diverse experiences and knowledge about it.

• I feel as though some role-playing situations about the materials/staging a talk with the

"parent" would help prepare us for what to expect.

• This training was very welcoming, and friendly while still being extremely

knowledgeable.

Reflection 5



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

## Record your response here:

Homelessness/poverty affects everyone of every age or culture. Families or individuals have a hard time getting services. Children also struggle in school and are more likely to drop out if they are homeless. Project Sprout should collaborate with DSS, NRVCS, NRCA, or women's resource center.

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

# Record your response here:

It was very informational but did not have a bunch of extra stuff. The activities were good to stay engaged. I don't see anything that needs to be changed or that would edit with the training.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?
What about the training sessions could be improved?
How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

#### Record your response here:

I am a social work major wanting to work with kids. This will give me extra training and experience. I am passionate about helping kids in any way. I learned more statistics about homelessness and poverty. This was a recap of my Human behavior course and my child welfare course. This will help me in my future career of working with kids

#### Reflection 6



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

Record your response here:

- The people that are affected by poverty or homelessness are children in poverty
- I think people in poverty might have hard time accessing service because they might be embarrassed or have their walls up.
- Children who are experiencing poverty do face barriers to success in school. When a child is in a stressful, and unstable environment. Its affect how focus and present they are in school.
- You mostly see people of color in poverty. There may be a couple white people in
  poverty but its more common to see people of color in this situation. Im going to say
  yes to does poverty discriminate.
- I think so far Project Sprout can help poverty.

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

#### Record your response here:

I like how this project is trying to help a problem, I think that's meaningful. This experience has contributed to my learning of myself by telling me I might end up enjoying working with younger kids, and planning. This does not connect with any of my career goals because I do not know what I want to do yet.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?

What about the training sessions could be improved? How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

Record your response here:

I like everything about the training session. I think maybe some hands-on parts in the training session. I don't have any examples.

#### Reflection 7



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?

  Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?

  Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

#### Record your response here:

1. Think it can sometimes be generational or run in families those who grow up in poverty, its harder to get out and may continue in poverty

- 2. I definitely think so. I think most of the time, they're not even aware of what resources are even available. Sometimes they know but don't have a way to get them/to them like not having a car for example. Kids definitely have a harder time too and often fall even more behind kids (living in poverty) don't have the same support or access to things.
- 3. I think it can be an excellent tool/resource for these families. Its free, quick, and provides resources for them and their kids to ensure their development milestones are being reached. It also helps give parents someone to talk to and vent which is a huge stress reliever.

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

Record your response here:

I think will definitely help my personal growth and allow me a way to apply what I have learned through my time at Radford/psych classes and use it to help improve others' lives. I look forward to being a part of this rewarding experience.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?
What about the training sessions could be improved?
How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

Record your response here:

I really enjoyed it! I think it was time efficient and effective. I liked how interactive/conversational it was, providing practical application examples the whole, way through which helped

I think it was good, no adjustments.

#### Reflection 8



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

## Record your response here:

- Homelessness can affect a wide range of people (children, teens, young adults)
- Families who experience homelessness cannot easily access certain services like schooling or other public resources

- Children who are homeless can face barriers in school with academics in social situations because of their circumstances compared to other students
- I think Project Sprout can help with the impact of homelessness because it gives connections to individuals experiencing homelessness
- A strength of Project Sprout is that it gives families an opportunity to meet advocates at a location they get to pick.
- It provides information to families on how to help their children develop at an appropriate rate by educating them and providing information

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

#### Record your response here:

- This experience means a lot to me since I work with kids.
- This will help me learn more about others and family dynamics
- It will prepare me for my COSD program
- Doing this will prepare me for graduate school.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?
What about the training sessions could be improved?
How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

## Record your response here:

- The training process helped show me how much impact I can have
- I liked that it was conducted by students because it made me feel more connected
- Knowing how many children experience homelessness responded with me and showed me how big of an issue this is
- I thought the training process was informative and well thought out, it makes me feel prepared to be an advocate.

## Reflection 9



Scholar Citizen Initiative: Critical Reflection

As a part of the Project Sprout advocate training program, please respond to the following questions in two short essays:

Please describe the impact of homelessness and poverty on children and their families and discuss possible solutions to the problem. In your response, please consider the following:

- The demographics of homelessness and poverty (e.g., who is affected?)
- Ethical, logical, and cultural aspects of the problem (e.g., Do families experiencing homelessness and/or poverty have a harder time accessing services?
   Do children experiencing homelessness and/or poverty face barriers to success in school?
   Does homelessness and/or poverty discriminate against race/ethnicity?)
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of Project Sprout (e.g., Do you think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of homelessness and/or poverty on children and their families?)

#### Record your response here:

 Anyone can be affected by homelessness children can be negatively affected by homelessness.

- Yes families experiencing homelessness/poverty have a harder time accessing services, children face barriers to success in school (trouble focusing, not well rested, behind peers). Yes I believe that children who are homeless/in poverty have more trouble learning in school, may not be able to focus in school, may have nowhere to focus outside of school (homework)
- I think Project Sprout will alleviate the impact of poverty homelessness by providing resources and support

Please discuss how your involvement with this experience has impacted you both personally and professionally. Please include the following points in your reflection:

- The meaningfulness of the experience to your personal and academic growth.
- How the experience has contributed to the learning of yourself and others.
- How this experience connects with experiences and materials from university courses, past experiences, and future personal, academic, and career goals.

## Record your response here:

This experience is meaningful to me because I would like the opportunity to make an
impact in my community. I believe this will benefit me academically by improving my
communication through interacting with a diverse range of people. This experience
connects with the childhood development course I am currently taking.

Please share feedback regarding the training process itself.
What about the training sessions did you like? What worked for you or resonated with you?
What about the training sessions could be improved?
How would you change the training process if you were in charge?

Record your response here:

- I liked some of the reflections and questions asked after the information was presented. I feel like this was good to apply the information we learned.
- Maybe more practice would be good during the training, but I feel like there was enough practice to be prepared
- I am not sure how I would change the training process, I thought that it was good.

# Appendix B









