WHY MIGHT SOMEONE SAY NO TO A HOME?

A study to better understand homelessness and design solutions.

BACKGROUND

When I was driving with my family to the park, I noticed lots of unsheltered people near a closed park, at bus stops and at stop lights. My mom and dad own halfway houses for unsheltered people so I wondered why people live on the streets instead of at houses like ours.

RESEARCH

Tucson Collaboration to End Homelessness found 2,218 people were living in shelters, transitional housing, or living without shelter in Pima County. This is partly because of the cost of housing and less programs to support homeless.

National Alliance to End Homelessness found that the cost of housing was the main reason of homelessness in 2025.

PREDICTION

I predict people choose to live on the streets because there are too many rules in halfway houses. I think this because my house has strict rules and so do my parents halfway houses.

Interview Form - Why Would Someone Say No to a Home?

Interview # (1–10): _____

1. What are common reasons someone might not choose transitional housing? Choose 3

- ☐ Rules feel too strict
- ☐ Not ready to follow program rules
- ☐ Mental health challenges - need more help
- ☐ Substance recovery challenges
- ☐ Needs help with rides
- ☐ Pets not allowed
- ☐ Relationship
- ☐ Afraid of new stuff
- ☐ No job
- ☐ Other: _____

2. What makes it hardest for someone to stay once they enter housing? Choose 2

- ☐ Following rules
- ☐ Don't want to live with strangers
- ☐ Mental health
- ☐ Substance recovery needs
- ☐ Money or job stress
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed
- ☐ Other: _____

3. What would help more people succeed in transitional housing? Choose 3

- ☐ More mental health support
- ☐ More flexible rules
- ☐ Help with rides
- ☐ Help getting a job
- ☐ Having your own space
- ☐ Pet-friendly options
- ☐ Allowed to stay longer
- ☐ Other: _____

4. What do you wish more people understood about transitional housing?

Interview Form

MATERIALS

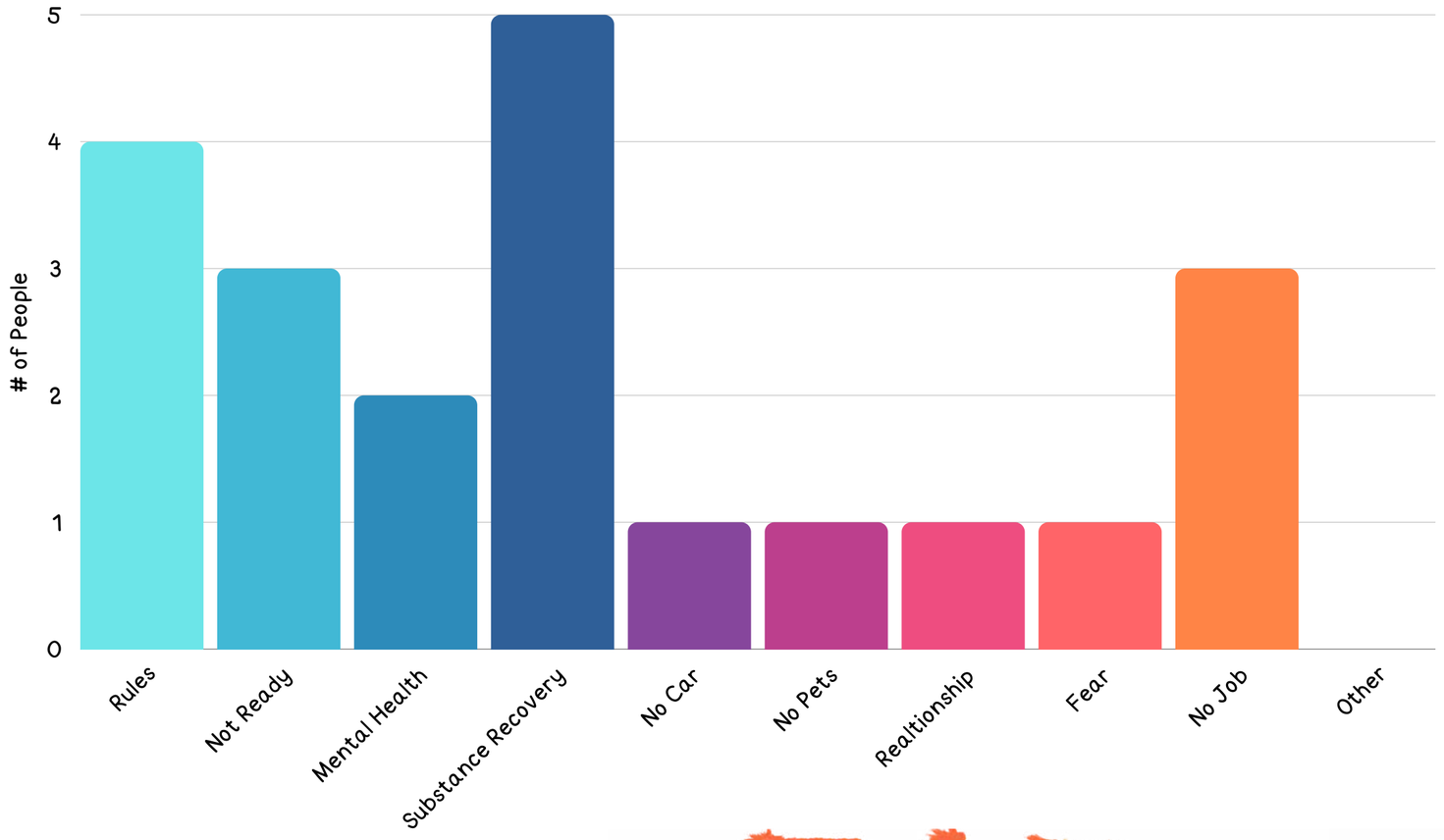
1. Paper or notebook
2. Clipboard
3. Consent Forms
4. Interview Forms
5. Pencil
6. Computer
7. Phone for pictures

PROCEDURE

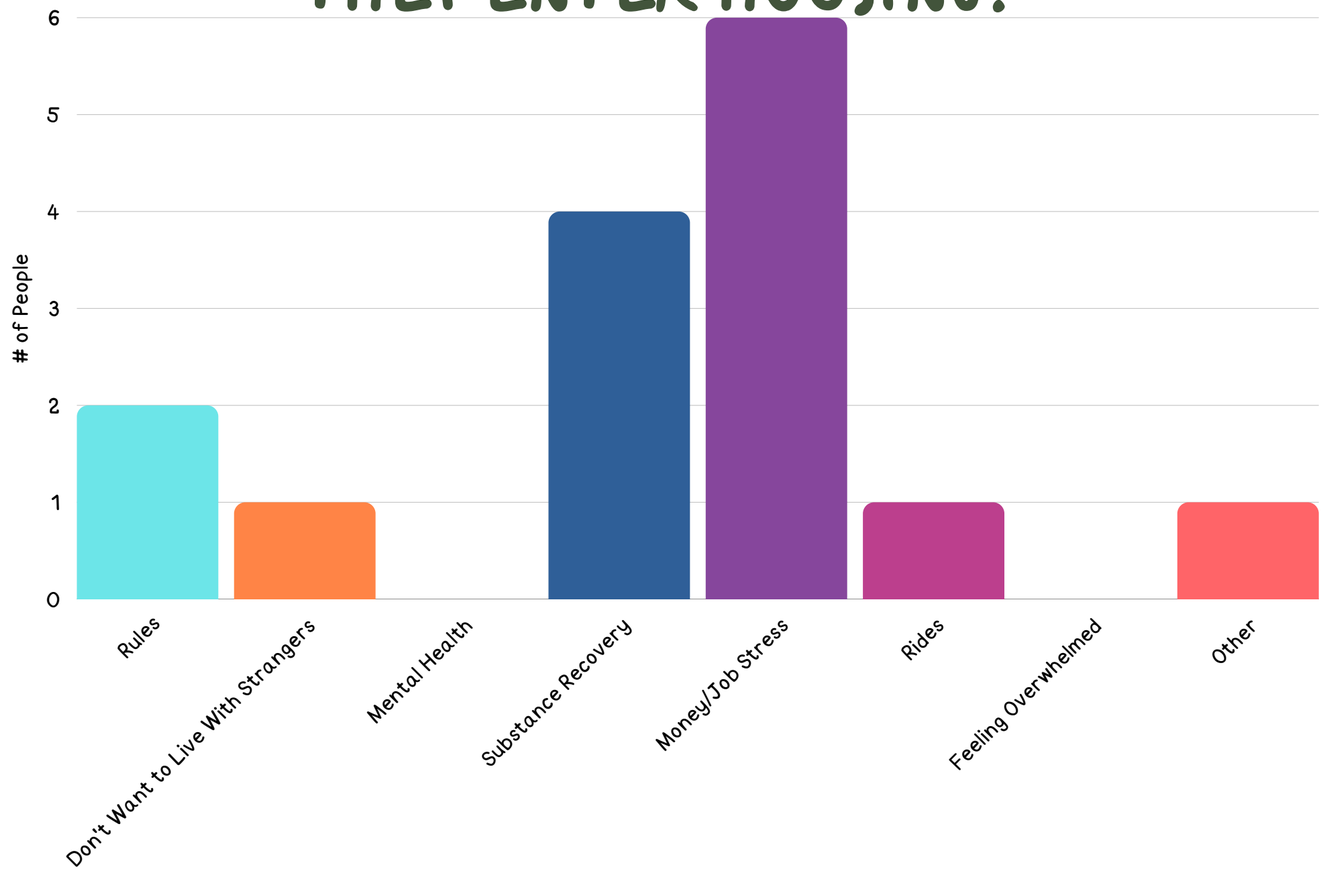
1. Design questions and determine who will be interviewed
2. Conduct virtual and in-person interviews and record responses
    a. I will conduct 7 interviews with helpers (staff) at 3 different halfway houses in Tucson.
3. Look at results and create charts/graphs
4. Draw conclusions and share results!

WHAT ARE COMMON REASONS SOMEONE MIGHT NOT CHOOSE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING?

People Chose 3 Options

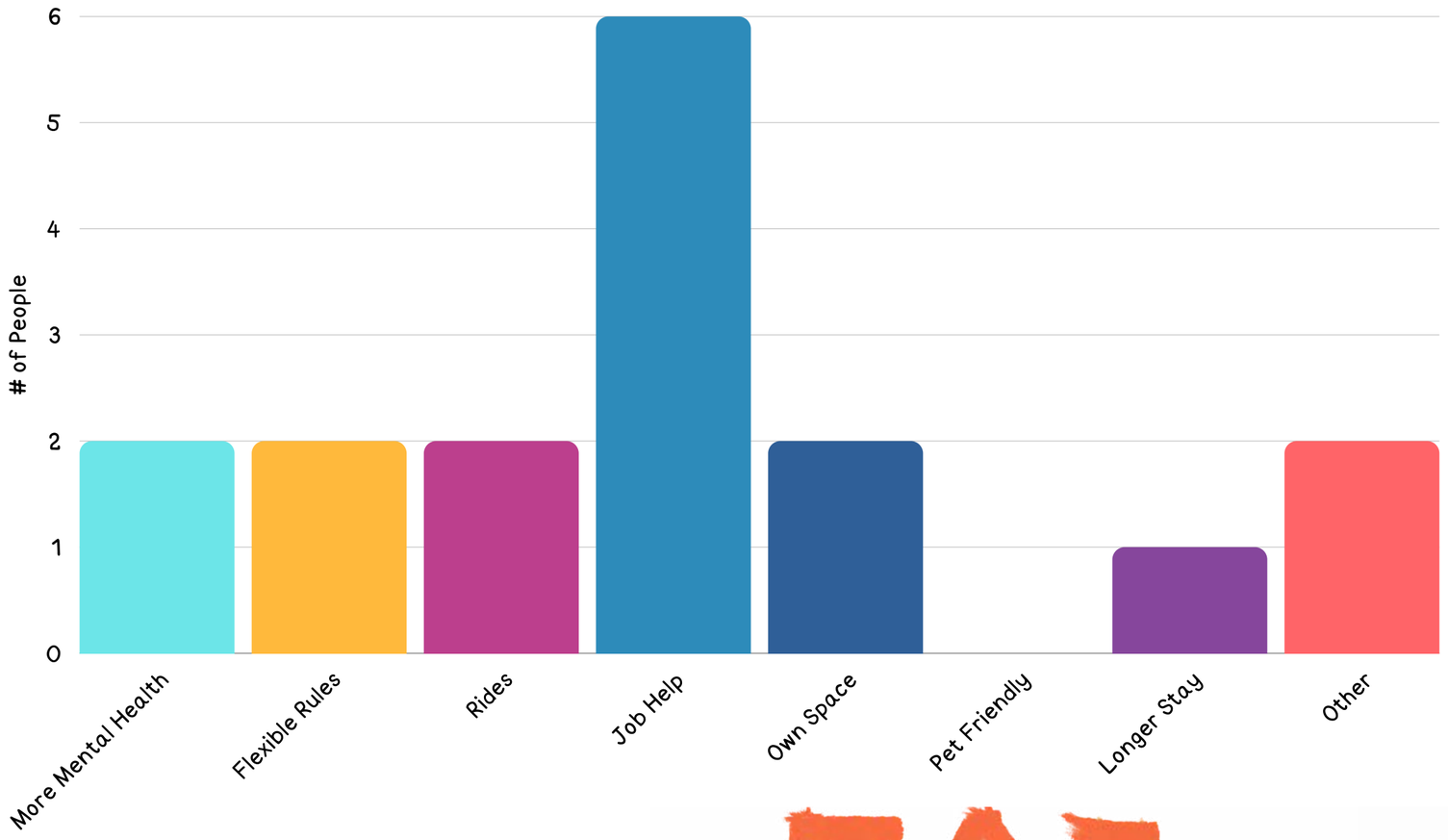


WHAT MAKES IT HARDEST FOR SOMEONE TO STAY ONCE THEY ENTER HOUSING?



People Chose 2 Options

WHAT WOULD HELP MORE PEOPLE SUCCEED IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING?



People Chose 3 Options

Interviewing staff halfway home #1

Interviewing staff halfway home #2

Interviewing staff halfway home #1

Interviewing staff halfway home #2

QUESTION 4: WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT TRANSITIONAL HOUSING?

- “There are rules and don’t get comfortable. It’s transitional and you don’t get to pick your roommates!”
- “Everyone is different and what works for one may not work for another.”
- “People are just people. They are all Gods children.”

QUESTION 4: WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT TRANSITIONAL HOUSING?

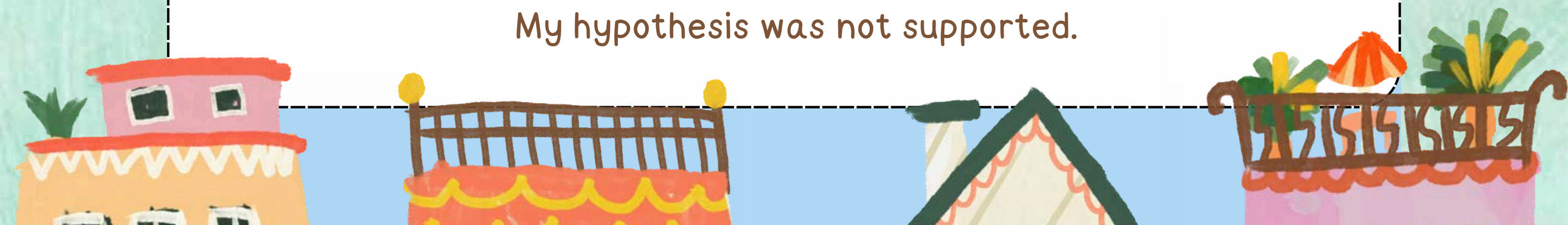
- “It’s not for everyone but some really need it. They aren’t ready to be on their own. “
- “Supporting safe housing is everyone’s responsibility. When people are fed, housed and employed, our communities are safer.”
- “Halfway houses offer great resources and can set people up for success.”

RESULTS

The results showed similarities in each data set. The reasons most people struggle to go into housing are **substance issues**, **lack of money/jobs** and not wanting to follow **strict rules**. I found that these are the same reasons why they struggle to stay in housing.

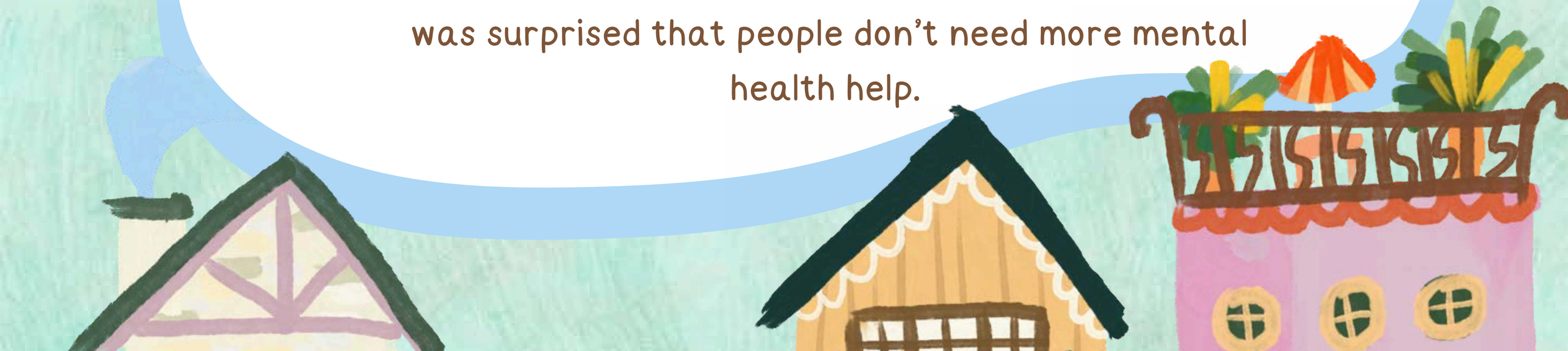
Having a job is the main way I found that help people stay in housing.

My hypothesis was not supported.



INTERPRETATION

I think this means that people who run halfway houses should focus on helping their clients find jobs and get substance abuse help. They should help people understand the rules so that they don't feel too strict. Pets and rides should not be focused on. I was surprised that people don't need more mental health help.



FUTURE IDEAS

- I want to share my data with other halfway house owners to help them make their houses better for people.
- I would like to study why someone becomes homeless in the first place.

REFERENCES

Tucson Sentinel

Tucson homeless population up slightly, but more people in shelters.

National Alliance to End Homelessness

State of Homelessness: 2025 Edition

THANK YOU