

Home Together

Increasing Equity and Access
for Vulnerable Pet Families
through Veterinary Social
Work

August 2025



Introduction

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Steve

Cat



Today's Session

- A Crash Course in Social Work
- Barriers We See & Interventions We Use
- The Home Together Program and it's Impact
- Pet Family Success Stories
- Gaps & Opportunities for Collaboration
- Challenges and Key Takeaways



What's **social work** got to do with **animal welfare**?

46%

Of surrenders to the Lost Dogs Home due to significant human life challenges

Funding: 3 Year grant from Petstock Foundation

Organisation: Lost Dog's Home

Pilot Program: Home Together Program



The fundamentals underpinning social work

Values



- Confidentiality
- Non-judgemental listening
- Equity
- Cultural safety and inclusivity

Approaches



- Trauma - informed
- Strengths based
- Identifying system gaps
- Connection to support & resources



The theories underpinning social work

Theories

- Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Behaviour as function
- Systems theory



Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Mythbusting common misconceptions

1

Myth:

People who surrender
don't love their pets

2

Myth:

People who are homeless
have lots of free time

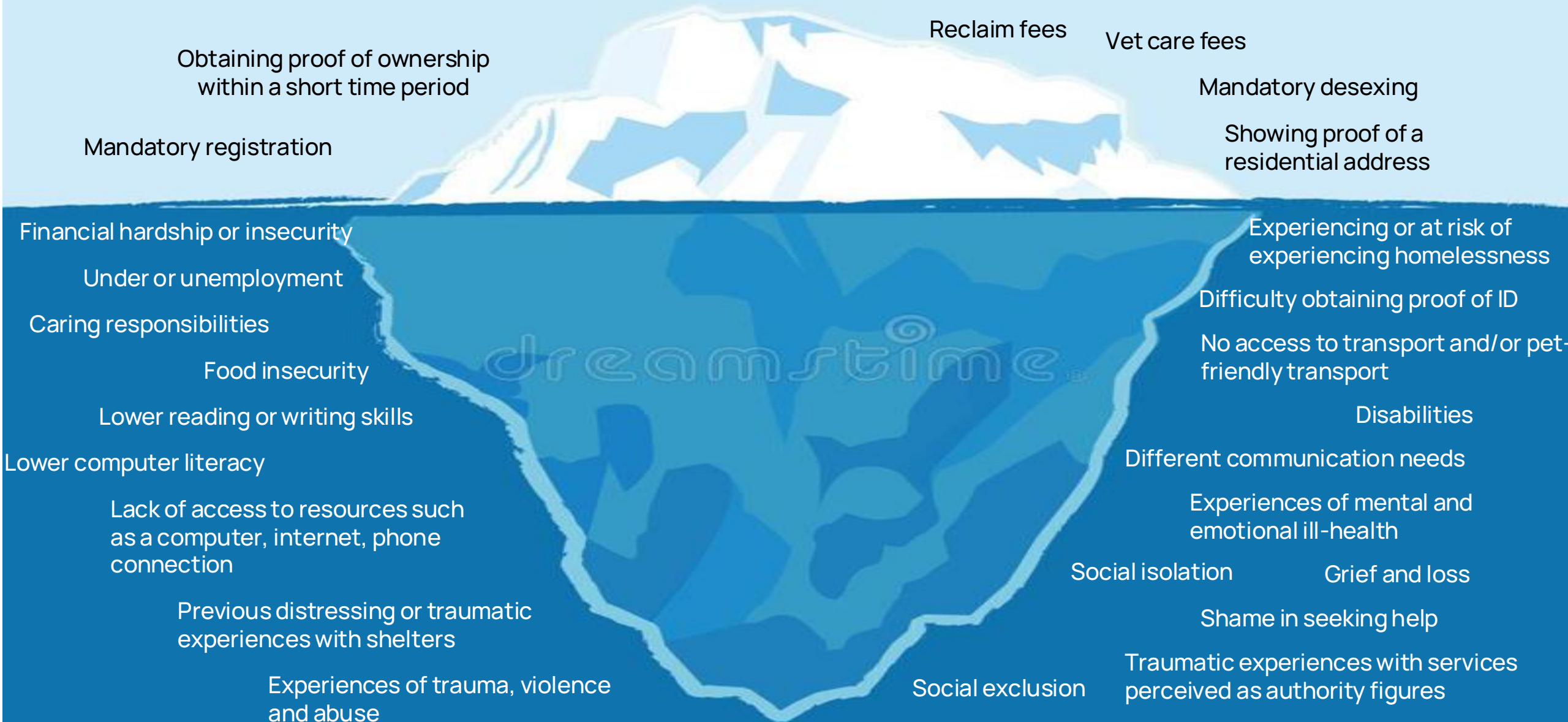
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Myth:

People who are
unemployed aren't trying
hard enough



Barriers: Seen and unseen



Interventions

Individual Support

- Emotional support and listening
- Providing information
- Planning
- Providing immediate pet-related material aid

Cross Sector Collaboration

- Financial assistance from pet charities
- No Interest Loans
- Pet behaviour assessments with crisis services
- Collaborating with Launch Housing to find emergency boarding for pets

Advocacy

- Communicating with vets, shelter staff, councils on client's behalf
- Developing relationships with services
- Developing relationships with stakeholders
- Advocacy campaigns: Pet Friendly Affordable Housing

Home Together Program

Impact so far

265 Pets families referred

386 Pets kept out of shelter

Over \$795K saved in shelter care costs

Thank u so much for your help, I don't know what I would have done without you

Katie thank you so much you have no idea the hell I've been going through you are my guardian angel god bless

I meant every word. I am supremely grateful that you have not only helped with this situation but also restored some of my optimism about my future dealing social services now I've needed to return to the disability support pension.

Pets and People

Shawn & Sampson



We are home now ❤️🐕
Thank you so much for your
help, support and understanding ...
you have been amazing. 🙏

Pets and People

Catie & Tiddles



Pets and People

Laura & Buddy



"I cannot express how thankful I am to Katie for her incredible kindness and support during one of the toughest times in my life.

I was in a difficult family violence situation and desperate to bring my baby boy, Buddy, home from the lost dogs home. Katie reached out to me with nothing but compassion and worked tirelessly to secure the funding needed. Her endless encouragement and understanding were a beacon of hope when I needed it most.

I will be forever thankful and grateful to her for helping reunite my family with Buddy and for being such a caring advocate."

Challenges that remain



Closing thoughts

Key takeaways & call to action

Building trust



Understanding barriers



Interconnecting animal welfare and human welfare



Keeping pets in loving homes

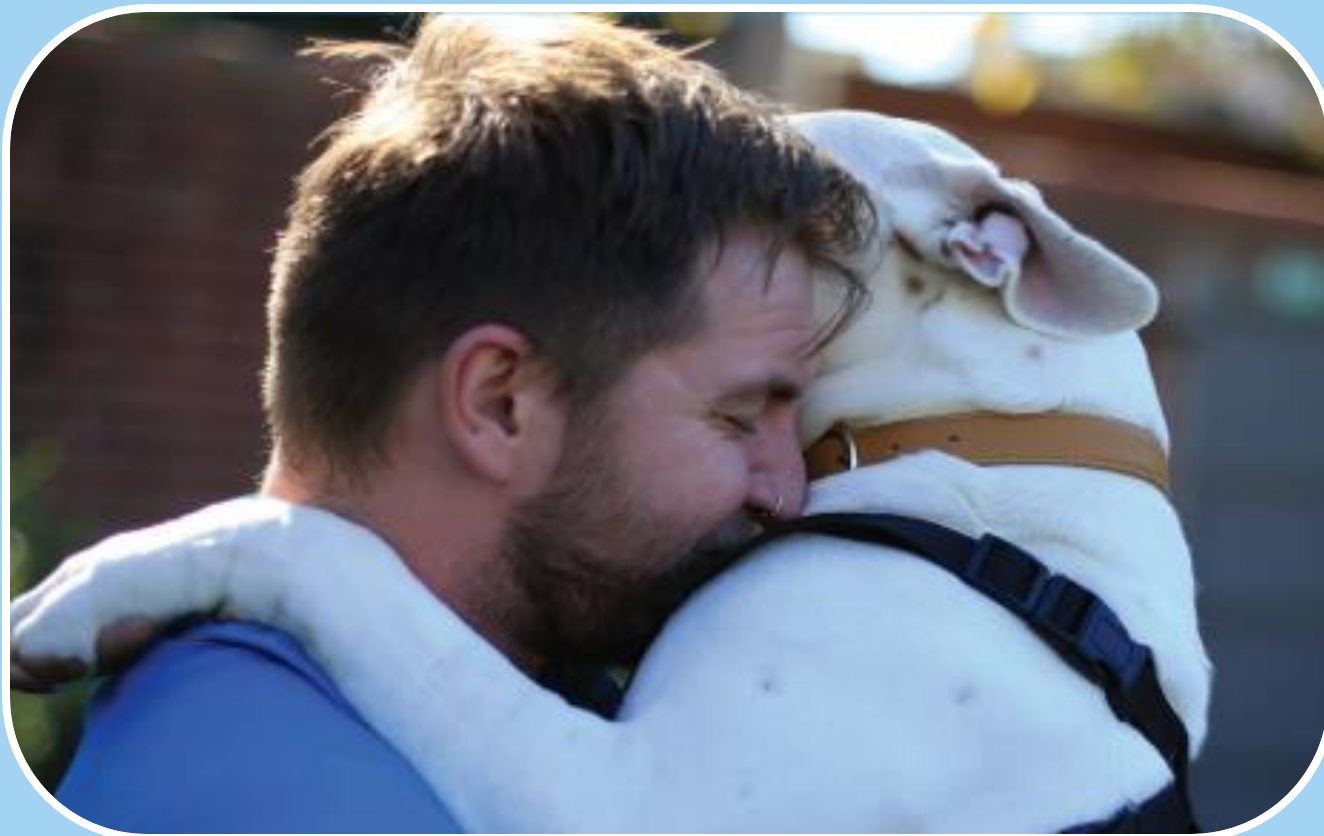


Systems must adapt for equity, not just equality



Small changes can make a big difference





Thank You & Questions

