**Introduction to Systems Thinking - D372**

Task 2

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A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated**Problem**

Homelessness is a problem for Middlesex County, MN.

**Symptomatic Solution**

Middlesex County simply builds more temporary shelters to battle homelessness.

**Fundamental Solution**

More public housing is needed to combat homelessness more permanently.

**Side Effect**

Every time another shelter is put in place, public support for public housing diminishes. Without support for public housing, homelessness is not solved.

[Figure 1 Homelessness Causal Diagram](https://ncase.me/loopy/v1.1/?data=%5b%5b%5b1,747,476,1,%22Homelessness%22,4%5d,%5b2,751,668,1,%22Public%2520Housing%22,5%5d,%5b3,750,280,1,%22Shelters%22,0%5d,%5b4,945,475,1,%22Public%2520Support%22,3%5d%5d,%5b%5b2,1,94,-1,0%5d,%5b1,2,89,1,0%5d,%5b1,3,106,1,0%5d,%5b3,1,121,-1,0%5d,%5b3,4,104,-1,0%5d,%5b4,2,76,1,0%5d%5d,%5b%5b806,180,%22Homelessness%2520Causal%2520Diagram%250AMiddlesex%2520County%252C%2520Minnesota%250AShifting%2520the%2520Burden%22%5d,%5b753,386,%22B1%22%5d,%5b756,580,%22B2%22%5d,%5b858,503,%22R3%22%5d%5d,5%5D)

**Analysis**

The problem is homelessness in Middlesex County, MN. It is growing and needs a solution. As you can see in figure 1, as it grows, the county puts up temporary shelters to address the problem (B1). This works in the short term and does indeed reduce homelessness, making this a balancing loop. The real solution needed is more public housing (B2). This is a balancing loop that would also reduce homelessness and have the added effect of being more long-term or even permanent.

When the county builds shelters issues arise. The public views these as not addressing the problem and stops supporting the idea of public housing altogether (R3). Public support leads to more public housing being built. However, as the county addresses the issue with temporary shelters, which has the negative side-effect of losing public support.

With each subsystem feeding off the other, the problem of homelessness is likely to persist. As homelessness grows, the county, without public support, will be forced to erect more temporary shelters, which will negatively impact public opinion, which lead to less public housing availability, which simply leads to more homelessness.

### References

H Kim, D. (1992). Systems Archetypes I: Diagnosing systemic issues and designing High-Leverage interventions. *The Toolbox Reprint Series*. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/applying-systems-archetypes/>

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