

The Line of Life

How have your background, experiences, and current situation either given you a head start in life or caused you to overcome barriers?

Life is unfair and certain situations are statistical indicators of privilege or barriers.

Definition of terms that will be used in this exercise:

Immediate Family:	Spouse/partner, children and other dependents. May include others who live in your household.
Family of origin:	Family with whom you grew up (in the same household(s))
Extended Family:	Anyone beyond the above 2 definitions that you consider family

Read each statement below. Circle the number beside each statement that applies to you.

The Line of Life Questions

1. I grew up in the country, small town, or suburbs.
2. I grew up in a neighborhood where gunshots were never heard unless people were hunting in the country.
3. I lived in the same house most of my childhood.
4. I am of European/Caucasian descent.
5. At a family reunion, everyone looks like me.
6. English is my primary language.
7. My parents are still married to each other.
8. I graduated from high school.
9. I always had food to eat growing up.
10. I've never had a check bounce or gotten a fine because of insufficient funds.
11. My family went to church growing up and I learned that God loved me as did the others in the church.
12. My extended family was emotionally close and supportive.
13. My parents always seemed to have time for me growing up.
14. I have gone to college.
15. I have graduated with an associate's or bachelor's degree.
16. I have graduated with a master's degree or higher.
17. When I have had a financial emergency, my family or friends were there to help.
18. I've always had medical insurance.
19. I have never witnessed physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in my primary family.
20. I have never been a victim of violence.
21. I have always had a reliable car to drive.
22. I have never been arrested (tickets don't count).
23. I've never been discriminated against because of my skin color.
24. Nobody in my immediate or extended family has ever struggled with mental health issues.
25. My parents paid for or helped to pay for my education.
26. I have never seen any immediate or extended family intoxicated.
27. At family celebrations, family members do not get intoxicated.
28. As a child under 12, I never had to stay home alone while my parents went to work.
29. I have family or friends with whom I can and do talk to when I'm upset.
30. I've never lost a job because I had an extended illness and was fired because of it.

After you've gone through all of the statements, count how many statements were circled.

We don't have a 'scale' that measures how likely you are to experience homelessness based on how many statements you DIDN'T circle. However, the more statements circled, the fewer obstacles you are likely to encounter that you can't overcome.

How do you feel about how many positive statements applied to you?

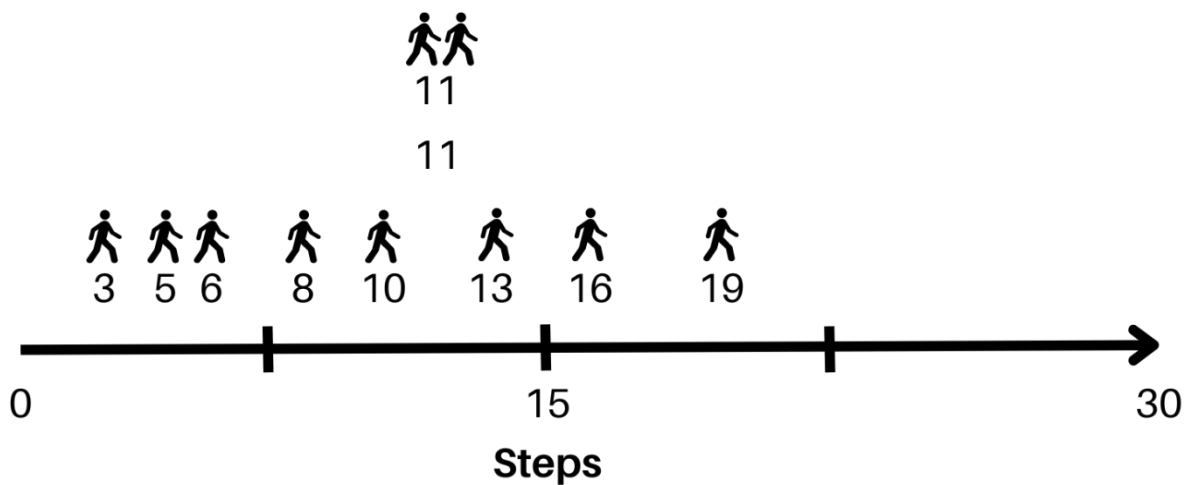
Now go through those statements again and consider how many of these statements would be circled by those who are experiencing homelessness.

There is NO NEED to feel guilty about growing up differently from others. This exercise is to point out how our background impacts our future.

****BONUS INFO****

We actually had residents currently in our shelter participate in this activity as well. Here are the results:

10 Residents completed the questions.



- 1 individual took 3 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 5 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 6 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 8 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 10 steps forward.
- 2 individuals took 11 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 13 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 16 steps forward.
- 1 individual took 19 steps forward.

As you can see, we are all on different walks of life. Home Sweet Home is grateful to have the generous support of people like you to help others facing obstacles in their lives. Thank you for helping us to provide Hope For All Who Enter.