

# **PATHWAYS TO THE STREET**

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# HOMELESSNESS & MUSICAL CHAIRS

- In thinking about the causes of homelessness, think about the game of musical chairs, with the **chairs connoting housing** and the **people left standing as the homeless**.
- Then ask **two questions**?
  - (1) What causes the chairs (housing) to be removed or in short supply?
  - (2) What causes some people (the homeless) rather than others to be left standing?

In an evidence-based world, the **answer** to these two questions **resides in the intersection between two sets of factors:**

- (1) the **structural antecedents** of limited or inaccessible housing (the metaphoric chairs) and
- (2) **personal, biographic deficits** which accentuate vulnerability to being left standing (the homeless)

So let us turn to the evidence based interviews conducted with over 250 OC homeless during the course of the cost study

# REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

(In Order of Frequency)

1. Securing or retaining jobs with sustainable wages: **40%**

2. Finding or retaining affordable housing: **36%**

Family issues (e.g., sexual violence, abuse, death): **28%**

4. Drugs/alcohol: **22%**

5. Mental Illness: **17%**

6. Physical Health: **13%**

7. Released from Prison/Jail: **7%**

# REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

(In Order of Frequency)

## STRUCTURAL ANTECEDENTS

1. Securing or retaining jobs with sustainable wages: **40%**
2. Finding or retaining affordable housing: **36%**

## BIOGRAPHIC DEFICITS/VULNERABILITIES

3. Family issues (e.g., sexual violence, abuse, death): **28%**
4. Drugs/alcohol: **22%**
5. Mental Illness: **17%**
6. Physical Health: **13%**
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# Reasons For Homelessness: Women

(Results from latent class cluster analysis – 3 cluster solution)

## PERCENT OF HOMELESS WOMEN PREDICTED TO BE IN EACH CLUSTER

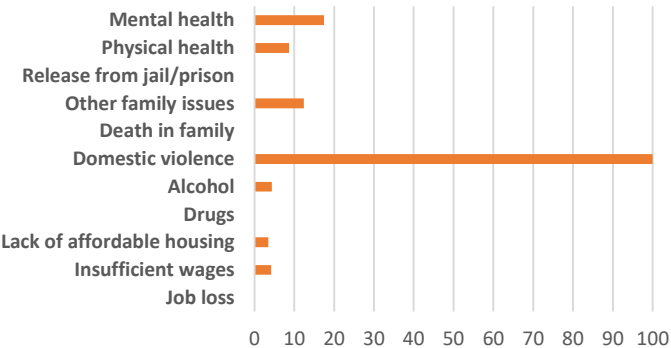
Cluster 3: Drugs/alcohol

5%

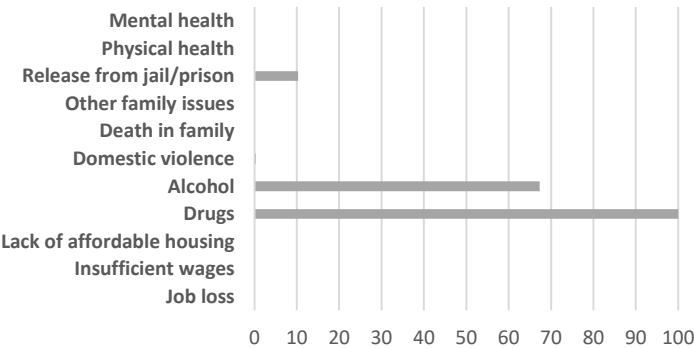
Cluster 2: Domestic violence  
21%

Cluster 1: Lack of affordable housing/job loss  
74%

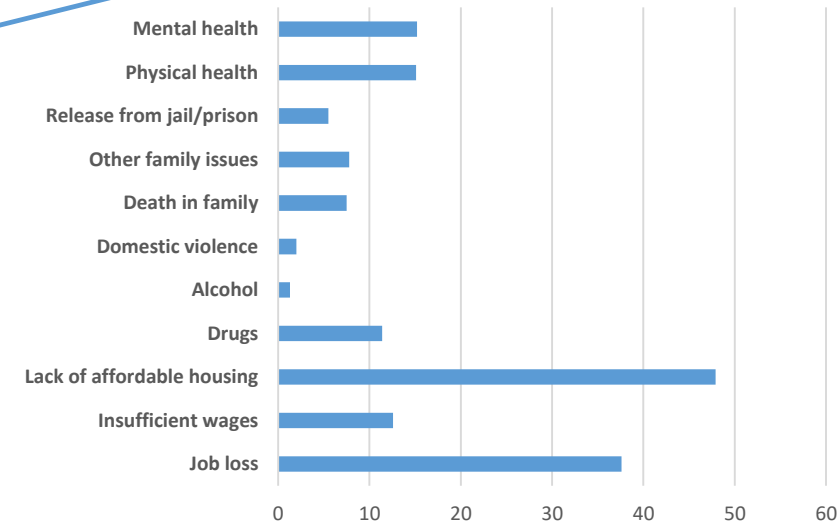
Probabilities of each reason, for Cluster 2



Probabilities of each reason, for Cluster 3



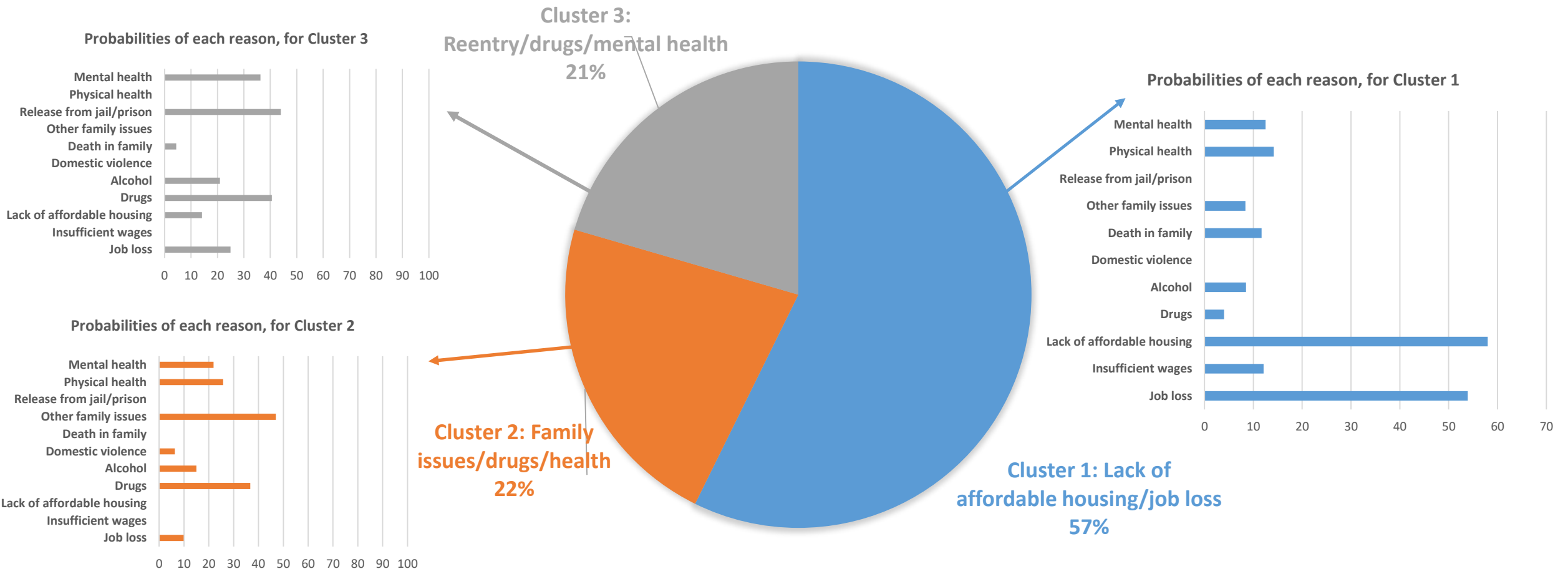
Probabilities of each reason, for Cluster 1



# Reasons For Homelessness: Men

(Results from latent class cluster analysis – 3 cluster solution)

## PERCENT OF HOMELESS MEN PREDICTED TO BE IN EACH CLUSTER



# WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR HOMELESSNESS?

## 1. STRUCTURAL ANTECEDENTS

### A. FACTORS AFFECTING EARNED INCOME

- Increase in unemployment rates
- Decline in real earnings of jobs
- Changes in labor market

### B. FACTORS AFFECTING HOUSING AVAILABILITY

- Limited availability of low income housing
- Changes in cost of housing

## 2. BIOGRAPHICAL DEFICITS/VULNERABILITIES

### A. LIMITED HUMAN CAPITAL

- Education
- Job Experiences and Record

### B. LIMITED SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Family Background
- Extent of Family Support
- Friendship Networks

### C. PERSONAL DISABILITIES

- Substance Abuse/Addiction
- Mental Illness
- Physical disability

**Homelessness exists in the gap between the availability and affordability of housing and the income available to access that housing, but the odds of falling into that gap increases with one or more biographical deficits.**



## 4 concluding factors to keep in mind when thinking about homelessness and its causes:

- Homelessness is a **situation** in which some people find themselves rather than a characteristic of the persons so situated. It is a **social condition** rather than a social type.
- Homeless people are people for whom there are no available or accessible housing slots because of the **intersection of structural factors and personal, biographic deficits or vulnerabilities**.
- If so, then homelessness is most generally a result of the **failure or breakdown of societal abeyance processes and systems** that exist to modulate the mismatch between available positions/slots/beds (too few) in different institutional arenas and the supply of claimants for those positions/slots/beds (too many).
- Thus, **homelessness will continue to persist until there is a functioning abeyance system for absorbing and accommodating surplus or out-of-place populations**.

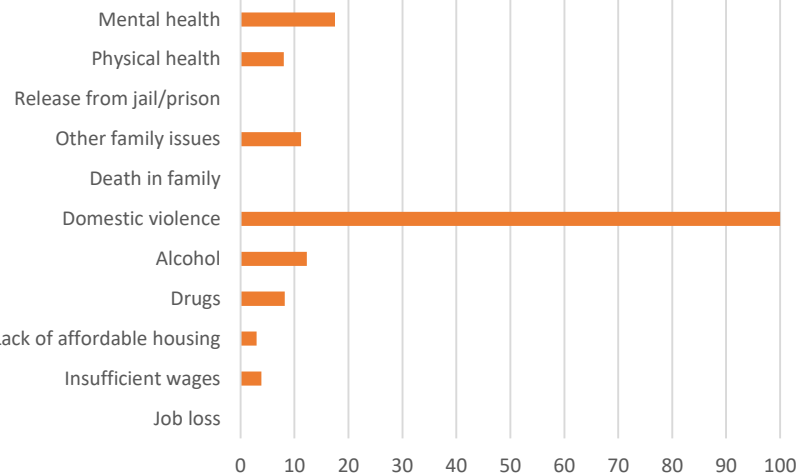
# Reasons For Homelessness: Women

(Results from latent class cluster analysis – 2 cluster solution)

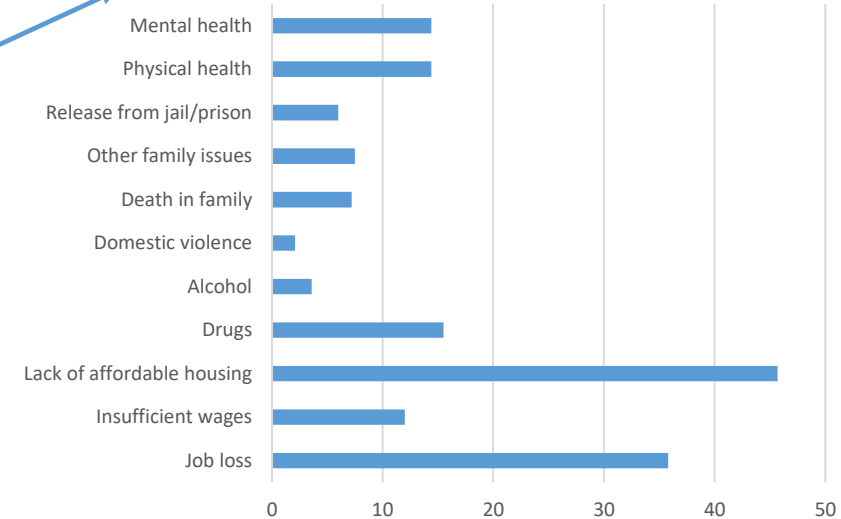
## PERCENT OF HOMELESS WOMEN PREDICTED TO BE IN EACH CLUSTER

**Cluster 2: Domestic violence**  
22%

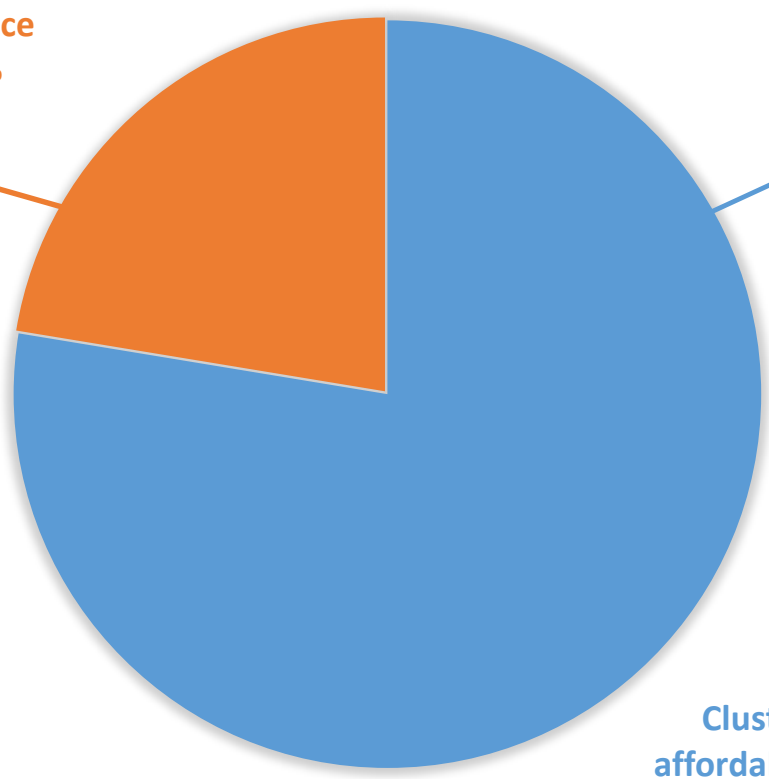
Probabilities of each reason, for Cluster 2



Probabilities of each reason, for Cluster 1



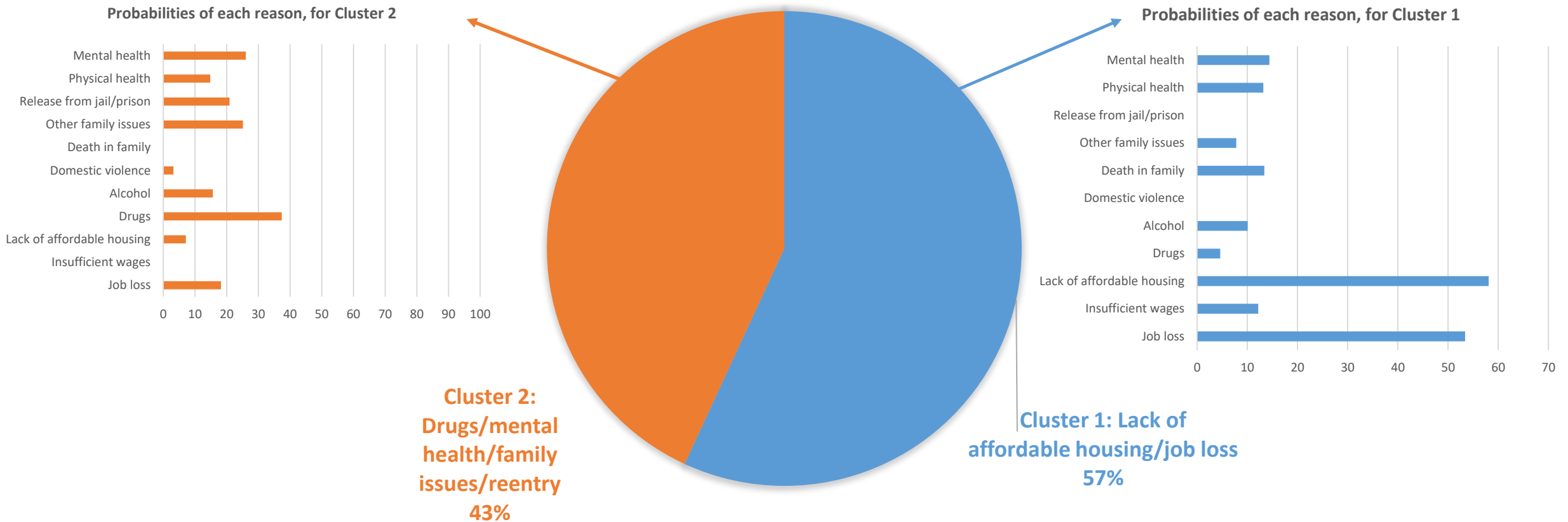
**Cluster 1: Lack of affordable housing/job loss**  
78%



# Reasons For Homelessness: Men

(Results from latent class cluster analysis – 2 cluster solution)

## PERCENT OF HOMELESS MEN PREDICTED TO BE IN EACH CLUSTER



# REASONS BECAME HOMELESS (CURRENT SPELL) BY RESPONDENT SEX

