"You Didn't Just Hand Us Off": The Innovative Partnerships Driving Successful Client Outcomes of Toronto's Rapid Rehousing Initiative

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Highlighting objectives

After participating in this presentation, learners will understand how to build partnerships across municipal departments and community agencies to better support housing outcomes and housing stability.

Research or practice-based evidence

Paula Goering, Scott Veldhuizen, Aimee Watson, Carol Adair, Brianna Kopp, Eric Latimer, Geoff Nelson, Eric MacNaughton, David Streiner & Tim Aubry, 2014, National At Home/Chez Soi Final Report, Calgary, AB: Mental Health Commission of Canada:

https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/mhcc_at_home_report_national_cross-site_eng_2_0.pdf

Mary Smith, Francesca Albanese and Jenna Truder, 2014, A Roof Over My Head: The final report of the Sustain project:
https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237077/a_roof_over_my_head_sustain_2014

Implications for practice

The initiative was part of a comprehensive response to move people out of congregate shelter and encampment settings and into appropriate physical distancing accommodations, like hotels. The program combines a Housing First and Rapid Rehousing approach. It focuses on people experiencing chronic homelessness who have low to moderate support needs, offering immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions, along with time-limited mobile follow-up supports.
Areas of needed policy change

Toronto's Rapid Rehousing Initiative (RRHI) is an example of innovation and partnerships among public sector and community partners. Policy makers and municipalities will learn how Toronto maximized the use of vacant and underutilized social housing units to provide immediate access to housing for people experiencing homelessness. While the RRHI was implemented quickly, it builds on years of research and policy development. Partners use a common assessment tool to support getting people into housing and providing appropriate supports to maintain it. The initiative highlights how a strong collaboration approach which is client-centred and utilizes each agencies strengths, leads to effective results.

The conference is hosted by the Ontario Housing First Regional Network Community of Interest (OHRFN-CoI). The OHFRN-CoI is supported by Evidence Exchange Network (EENet) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The OHFRN-CoI assists communities across Ontario to develop, evaluate, and improve Housing First programs based on the Pathways model tested, adapted, and shown to be effective in the At Home / Chez Soi Demonstration Project. For more information, visit www.eenet.ca/housing-first.