



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

AT HOME/CHEZ SOI PROJECT: WINNIPEG AT A GLANCE

What are we investigating?

We are looking for the best combination of housing and supports to help homeless people living with mental illness in Winnipeg. We specifically want to know what works and does not work for the Aboriginal population. We are also investigating the use of traditional healing and spiritual approaches and how it affects the outcomes of participants.

We are using a Housing First approach. This means first providing housing, then the individualized supports needed.

What we learn in Winnipeg will help inform related planning and policy development across Canada. Some of the questions we are hoping to answer include:

- Does Housing First work and for whom?
- Does Housing First work in this particular Winnipeg context?
- What are the necessary ingredients for Housing First success?
- What are the outcomes for people receiving Housing First supports through the project?
- How much does it cost to provide Housing First and how does it compare to the cost for the kinds of community services that exist now?

Who is participating in Winnipeg?

- People with moderate to severe mental health problems
- People who have been living on the streets and in shelters
- Over 170 participants are currently receiving housing and supports and over 230 participants are receiving the usual supports available in their communities.

How does it work?

- People are given a choice of apartments in which to live.
- Participants pay 30% of their income towards their rent. The rest is subsidized by the project.
- People receive regular visits from Housing First Teams at least once a week. They receive support with their mental and physical health issues and help with life skills such as developing connections in their communities and maintaining their housing.

What are we finding in Winnipeg?

- In a less than 1% vacancy environment, landlords in Winnipeg have been responsive to the project and supportive of participants and teams; communication, support, training, and emergency contacts are important elements
- Greater understanding of the complexity of trauma, health, and social issues that are the experience of homeless people in Winnipeg
- Many individuals have complex addictions and mental health issues
- Community integration, living independently, and sustaining tenancy requires (re-) learning of skills

Read more detailed early findings at www.mentalhealthcommission.ca, At Home/Chez Soi Project

What makes the Winnipeg project unique?

- We have a Lived Experience Circle and an Aboriginal Cultural Lens Committee that helps to inform the local project about Aboriginal practices and traditions.
- Extensive community partnerships, many in the Aboriginal community.
- Efforts to educate the community, participants, and service providers about Housing First and how it can be applied in Winnipeg.

Quick Facts about the national At Home/Chez Soi project

- Over 1030 participants are currently receiving housing and supports and 980 participants are receiving the usual supports available in their communities.
- In 2008, the Government of Canada provided the MHCC with \$110 million dollars for this research project.
- The project was officially launched in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver, in November 2009.
- This is a 5-year project and each participant is being followed for 2 years.
- The project will end in the spring of 2013.
- Work is underway to ensure that people who are receiving housing and supports in the project will have housing and supports in place once the research is over

What are we finding nationally?

- 70% of the study participants are men and 30% are women
- Most of participants are middle aged although approximately 10% are under the age of 25 and 10% are over the age of 55
- More than 90% of participants have at least one chronic physical health problem
- 82% of the participants were living on the street, 18% were staying in shelters when they entered the project
- Over 90% were unemployed when they entered the project and the average income in the month prior was only \$691 with over half earning less than \$400 in that month
- 72% of people housed have remained in the original housing provided through the project
- Participants identify the project as an opportunity to move forward in their lives
- Participants also identify the project as an opportunity to get involved in their community and with some participants pursuing educational and vocational opportunities

For more information: www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Contact: Nujma Bond: nbond@mentalhealthcommission.ca