



Yea MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA
TURNING THE KEY: Assessing Housing and Related Supports for Persons Living with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) has placed a priority on developing a National Housing Strategy and is undertaking a comprehensive national environmental scan to support its planning and policy work in housing. More specifically, the project *Turning the Key: Assessing Housing and Related Supports for Persons Living with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses*, will inform the MHCC on current housing and community resource needs (including clinical and non-clinical supports) for people living with mental health problems and illness in Canada.

The involvement of persons with lived experience of mental health problems and mental illnesses (hereinafter referred to as persons with lived experience) and family members is vital in making this project a well-informed, client centred and recovery-based housing initiative.

TYPES OF HOUSING FOR PERSONS LIVING WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AND ILLNESSES

People with lived experience may live in a variety of housing options and arrangements; for example, they may live with family members, own their own home, or may live in dedicated housing for persons with mental health problems and illnesses. Generally, there are three different types of dedicated housing options and these include custodial care, supportive housing, and supported housing.

Custodial care provides room and board, 24-hour supervision, basic assistance with activities of daily living and medication supervision.

Supportive housing is affordable housing linked to support services delivered on-site, recognizing that people may be accessing a variety of additional services and supports in the community.

Supported housing includes a full range of housing options which is permanent and independent and where the arrangement of individualized mental health support services are not linked to the housing and instead linked to the individual.

Persons with mental health problems and mental illness may also live in social housing. *Social housing* is rental housing integrated for a variety of mixed tenant groups, such as low income, single parents, and persons with disabilities. It is primarily operated on a non-profit basis by municipal corporations, private non-profit corporations or co-operative housing groups where some or all of the rental units are subsidized. This type of housing may have varying levels of mental service supports which are not linked to the housing.

COMMUNITY RELATED SUPPORTS HELP PERSONS FIND, KEEP AND MAINTAIN HOUSING

Community resources that people can access for support may be clinical in nature (including intensive case management, assertive community treatment teams, and crisis services as



described below) or more non-clinical, informal supports. This project will consider the range of community resources that support people in housing models.

Intensive case management promotes independence, recovery and quality of life through the coordination of appropriate mental health services. Constant and on-going support as needed by the consumer is provided. Intensive case managers also work with other services such as developmental services, criminal justice system, and addictions to coordinate services.

Assertive community treatment teams provide treatment, rehabilitation and support services that assist people with severe mental illness in their recovery and their desire to live in the community.

Community crisis services include: residential crisis services (often called 'crisis beds', 'safe beds' or 'respite beds'); short-term case management/transition planning services; telephone crisis services; walk-in crisis services; and mobile crisis outreach services.

HOW WE'RE FINDING THE INFORMATION

The information for this project will be gathered through strategies, such as:

- A National Housing Strategy Project Reference Network and Provincial/Territorial reference groups that were established for this project and represent key stakeholders, including people with lived experience and family members.
- A comprehensive International and Canadian literature review.
- Key informant interviews with government representatives, housing providers, mental health providers across Canada.
- Interviews, webinar consultations, and a blog with persons with lived experience from across the Nation.
- Mapping of the housing and community resources across Canada.
- Surveys with persons with lived experience, housing providers, and mental health providers.

ABOUT THE MHCC

The Mental Health Commission of Canada was established by the federal government in 2007 to focus national attention on mental health issues and to improve the health and social outcomes of people living with mental illness. It is based in Calgary, Alberta.

The MHCC has placed a priority on developing a National Housing Strategy and is undertaking a comprehensive national environmental scan to support its planning and policy work in housing. The development of the National Housing Strategy will be coordinated with the work of the National Homelessness Demonstration project of the MHCC.

ABOUT THE PROJECT COMMITTEE

The National Housing Strategy Project Committee (PC) is supported in its work by the MHCC Service System Advisory Committee and works collaboratively with the consulting group on the project. The PC is made up of mental health services providers and housing providers, and government representatives. The members include: Vicky Huehn (Co-Chair), John Higenbottam (Co-Chair), Carol E. Adair, Brian Davidson, Frankie O'Neill, Susan Lynn Hardie, Ken Ross, Reid Burke, Steve Lurie, and Gail MacKean (MHCC Senior Research Officer).



ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

- Community Support and Research Unit (CSRU) of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) – CAMH is Canada’s leading mental health and addiction teaching hospital. CSRU is a CAMH clinical program dedicated to promoting full recovery and community participation for people living with serious mental illness and/or substance use problems.
- Canadian Council on Social Development - is a national organization and a recognized authority on Canadian social policy and actively involved in promoting social policies and programs which protect the poor and disadvantaged.

TIMELINE

Blog and webinar consultations with persons with lived experience

Blog completed; Webinars March 2010

Complete data analysis

March 2010

Complete preliminary report

April 2010

Complete final report

June 2010

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the National Network for Mental Health blog website

<http://nnmh.ca/Default.aspx?alias=nnmh.ca/housing>

and the MHCC website

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/ServiceSystem.aspx> for:

- *Updates on the project*
- *Email inquiries and feedback form*

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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