



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

AT HOME/CHEZ SOI PROJECT: AT A GLANCE

What are we investigating?

We are looking for the best combination of housing and supports to help homeless people with mental illness in five Canadian cities: Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. What we learn will help policy makers better understand what needs to be done to solve chronic homelessness in Canada for people who experience mental illness.

Each city is using a Housing First approach. This means first providing housing, then the individualized supports needed. Each city is also investigating target sub-populations and issues:

Moncton- People in a rapidly growing small city with a shortage of mental health services with a focus on the rural population

Montreal- Outcomes for people related to vocational interventions

Toronto- People from different ethno-racial backgrounds

Winnipeg- Urban Aboriginal people

Vancouver- People who also have substance use issues

Some of the questions we are hoping to answer include:

- Does Housing First work, and for whom?
- Does Housing First work in various Canadian contexts?
- 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?

- People with moderate to severe mental health problems
- People who have been living on the streets and in shelters
- Over 1030 participants are currently receiving housing and supports and 980 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?

- 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

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

What makes our project unique?

- Most participants are living in private market rental housing – typically apartments
- Over 260 private landlords and property management companies are involved in the project and provide housing to participants
- This is the largest demonstration project of its kind in the world.
- The project is based on partnerships with other organizations and educational institutions and all sites have established strong partnerships within their communities.
 - Over 40 Principle Investigators and 12 Research Institutions/Universities
 - Over 200 service and housing leads across the project
- This project is being replicated in a similar way in other nations (e.g. France).

Quick Facts

- 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 participating in the project will have housing and supports in place once the research is over.

For more information: www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

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