



# Coming Home



Promoting Mental Health Recovery From Home

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# Benefits a house provides

- Safety > physical & emotional protection
- Security > freedom from danger or threat
- Comfort > easing the stress, consolation
- Peace > this is often relative
- Restoration > rest, self nurture, recovery
- Pride of ownership > this is mine
- Belonging > right fit



# Costs of maintaining housing

- Work > physical, mental (planning)
- Energy > many routine, seasonal & occasional tasks
- Financial
- Discipline > doing the work when I don't feel like it





# Housing as a Health Issue

- ‘Housing is an absolute necessity for living a healthy life and living in unsafe, unaffordable or insecure housing increases the risk of many health problems’ (Reference #1)
- ‘Homeless people experience a much greater rate of a wide range of physical and mental health problems than the general population’ (2)
  - High levels of stress
  - Exhibit poor coping skills, sometimes resorting to self harm, isolation and substance abuse
  - Have low self esteem, internalized stigma and self-loathing
  - Experience feelings of loneliness, worthlessness and hopelessness (3)
- Homelessness can reduce life expectancy by 20 years (4)



# Housing as a Health Issue (cont'd)

- The relationship between mental health problems & homelessness and access to housing is complex (5)
  - People with mental illness are predisposed to experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness
  - Poor mental health can be caused, triggered or aggravated by homelessness or inadequate, unaffordable housing



# Mental Illness and Housing

- Problems accessing housing due to:
  - Financial instability
  - Unmanaged symptoms
  - Discrimination and stigma
    - In the workplace
    - In access to housing
- Problems maintaining housing due to:
  - Financial instability
  - Unmanaged symptoms > revolving door
  - Discrimination and stigma



# Mental Illness and Housing (Cont'd)

- Homeless individuals often report severe mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder (6)
- Homelessness may be temporary, episodic or chronic
- As the period of homelessness increases, pre-existing and emergent mental health problems and concurrent disorders often worsen. (7)



# Components of Quality Housing

- In general (8)
  - Choice
    - Where you live
    - With whom
  - Stability
    - No time limit
  - Cost
    - Should be (including basic utilities) less than 30% of income
      - Often a choice must be made between housing and food.
  - Support
    - Supports should be available if you move





# Recovery and Home

- Without a home to provide an element of stability and control – a safe place to call their own – facing the daily challenges of life is nearly impossible. (9)
- Good housing can help rebuild and maintain independence, daily routines, confidence and social networks. (10)
- Research shows that people living with mental illness who live where they want to are more likely to have a job, social supports and a higher quality of life than those whose housing does not meet their needs. (11)
- Housing isn't just about a house – it's part of a path to safety, security, connectedness and acceptance



# Housing First

- Traditionally housing was provided after a certain level of recovery was achieved (adequate life skills, managed symptoms or sobriety)
- A new paradigm showing significant promise is to provide a home first and adding the necessary supports and treatment to maintain housing and continue recovery.



# Recovering to 'Come Home'

- Recovery is the personal process that people with mental health conditions experience in gaining control, meaning and purpose in their lives. Recovery involves different things for different people. For some, recovery means the complete absence of the symptoms of mental illness. For others, recovery means living a full life in the community while learning to live with ongoing symptoms. (12)
- Recovery involves changes in the way individuals with mental health conditions think, act and feel about themselves and their lives. (13)



# Housing Supports for Recovery

- Provided by Mental Health Services of Renfrew County

- Crisis Stabilization Beds > Hotel model
- Assistance to find housing
- Supports to maintain housing (Case work / Housing Support / ACTT)
  - Life skills
  - Assistance to do some of the actual hands on work
  - Work with agencies to resolve obstacles
    - Legal Clinic, RC Housing, Landlords, OW, ODSP.
  - Crisis support when things go wrong
- Rent Supplements > making up the \$ shortfall to keep housing
- Hoarding > Lisa, my colleague will present on that

# References

- 1/ Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.thecanadianfacts.org/> page 29
- 2/ Social Determinants of Health page 30
- 3/ Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada: Homelessness and Access to Housing. (2014, February 14). Retrieved from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2014-11-e.htm/> page 2
- 4/ Housing and Homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/housing-and-homelessness/> page 1
- 5/ Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada page 1
- 6/ Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada page 2
- 7/ Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada page 2
- 8/ Housing for People with Mental Health and Substance Use Problems. Retrieved from <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/factsheet/housing-for-people-with-mental-health-and-substance-use-problems/> page 1

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- 12/ Recovery. Retrieved from <http://ontario.cmha.ca/mental-health/mental-health-conditions/recovery/> page 1
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