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Poster Abstract

Successful independent living through collaboration and engagement

Katherine Salinas, Mainstay Housing, Canada

Volletta Peters, Mainstay Housing, Canada

Correspondence to: **Katherine Salinas**, Mainstay Housing, Canada, E-mail: ksalinas@mainstayhousing.ca

Abstract

Since 2011 Mainstay Housing have worked in partnership with addiction service agencies to provide permanent housing to women with long history of homelessness, mental health and complex substance use concerns. This program has seen a housing retention of about 75 % over a three-year period (independent living, congregated and scattered). Drawing on this experience, the presentation will explore the successes and challenges in providing permanent housing within a trauma-informed, housing first model.

Research has shown that women who experience homelessness coupled with complex substance use concerns face significant barriers to maintain permanent housing. We will discuss the support models we have found to be successful, which include trauma-informed, women-centred, harm-reduction, and creative strengths-based approaches. We will explore how gender is an important consideration in meeting the needs of this population.

We will further discuss strategies on increasing successful tenancies by fostering self-direction and personal responsibility as it relates to housing individuals living with complex mental health and addictions challenges. We will present the team focus on supporting shared clients/tenants to gain insight into their health concerns, support tenants to develop skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about their housing, and substance use, and engage as citizens within the community. This integrated approach has been successful in reducing clients/tenants reliance on the health care system and building community capacity.

The presentation will also explore the challenges of working with private landlords who may have limited understanding of the challenges faced by the population, and the stigma which often accompanies this. We will discuss strategies to mitigate the stigma toward tenant-members from external landlords.

Keywords

supports in partnership for people living with complex addiciton issues

PowerPoint presentation

<http://integratedcarefoundation.org/resource/icic15-presentations>