Participant Perspectives on Housing First and Recovery: Early Findings from the At Home/Chez Soi Project

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Introduction

• **Context:** *At Home/Chez Soi:* federally funded, mixed methods RCT evaluating *Housing First* in five Canadian cities

• **Aim:** To better understand how receiving housing prior to treatment impacts engagement and envisioned recovery for previously homeless individuals with mental illness
Methods

• Semi-structured interviews with recently housed participants within the five research sites (n=27)

• Analysis of early findings

• Constant comparative method leading to theme identification
Results

- Housing- Reclaiming Identity/A Different Future
  - Majority of participants
  - Housing viewed as an opportunity to “get back on track”
  - “Housing gives me the freedom to work on myself and get my life back together”

- Demoralization, Adjustment Problems, and Social Isolation
  - Subgroup of participants
  - Continued struggles with addiction and trauma
  - Adjustment difficulties associated with housing
  - “I don’t know how to feel about (being housed)...it’s been a long time since I’ve been indoors.”
Conclusions

• Housing - central to recovery for most HF participants

• Choice of housing facilitated autonomy and the ability to focus on the future and one’s recovery

• **Implications**: Important to explore how participants envision the role of housing in their lives to identify those who require early attention and support