

# A NATIONAL STUDY OF TERTIARY PREVENTION MODELS FOR YOUTH EXITING HOMELESSNESS

DECEMBER 2020



“The best laid schemes,  
...Gang aft agley.”

– *To A Mouse* by Robert Burns

What a year this has been! We started with the wonderful news from the MTS team that our collaboration could move forward with the plan to advance prevention practices related to housing stabilization and, hot on the heels of that news, found ourselves mired in a global pandemic. Research operations dropped into crisis mode, I was pulled into crisis response at the hospital, with two small children to home school thrown in the mix.

Fast forward to August when our REB protocol resurfaced and finally was approved! With some quick pivots to get approval to proceed and work virtually, we were finally getting started in September. This is a summary of what we have been able to accomplish since that time.

- Sean



## A short reminder about the project

This initiative was developed to (i) identify the best practices in stabilizing youth trajectories out of homelessness – the models of support around the various housing arrangements that youth access, and (ii) apply an intensive knowledge mobilization effort related to this topic – including testing a leader-leader mentorship model.

This is a collaboration between colleagues in Thunder Bay, out of Lakehead University and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care who lead the northern and Indigenous-focused arm, and CAMH in Toronto covering more generally focused sites and services.

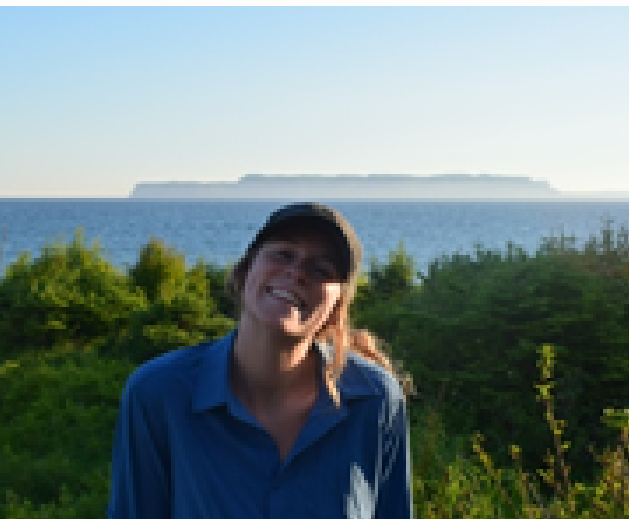
The collaborators are: Sean Kidd (CAMH) PI, Chris Mushquash (Lakehead U) Co-PI, Vicky Stergiopoulos, Nina Vitopoulos, Nicole Kozloff, Alex Abramovich (CAMH), Tyler Frederick (ON Tech U), Mardi Daley (LOFT, CAMH), Tina Bobinski, Hugette Carty, Skylar Paytayash, Beth Koostachin (DAFC), Kwame McKenzie (Wellesley Inst), Jeff Karabanow (Dalhousie), Skye Barbic (UBC), Debbie Schatia (Covenant House TO), Julia Vanderheul (LOFT).



Some good news, related to the MTS project, surfaces out of the murk that has been 2020:

After being cancelled and then restarted, we found out in February that we were successful in our application for a project grant from CIHR to fund a sizable trial of HOP-C in Toronto. There is a great synergy between HOP-C 3.0 and the MTS project in terms of connecting teams, initiatives and moving this conversation forward nationally.

Since we started we have had three people come on board to get our MTS project off the ground! They are:



#### **Grad Student Thunder Bay Lead: Jessie Lund**

Jessie is a third-year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at Lakehead University supervised by Dr. Christopher Mushquash. Her research interests involve the psychological and social outcomes associated with traumatic events. Her dissertation examines the interrelationships among executive functioning, substance use, and adverse childhood experiences in First Nations adults seeking treatment for substance use. Jessie has collaborated with Dilico Anishinabek Family Care on a number of projects, including a cultural adaptation of HOP-C for Northwestern Ontario and the By Youth For Youth Project. For the past year, Jessie has also worked under clinical supervision at Kwae Kii Win, a Managed Alcohol Program, where she has provided therapy to Indigenous adults facing chronic homelessness and alcohol use in Thunder Bay.



#### **Grad Student Toronto Lead: Tim De Pass**

I am a second-year graduate student at the University of Toronto within the Counselling Psychology program. Prior to this, I worked as a research assistant and subsequently a housing worker. In my spare time I enjoy watching basketball and reading. I joined the team in September and have enjoyed my time on the MTS project so far. I am excited about what we have done to date and the direction of our work in the new year.



#### **Core Research Analyst: Olu Dada**

Oluwagbenga (Olu) Dada is originally from Nigeria, where he obtained his BSc and MSc degree in Biochemistry. In 2017, he relocated to Canada and enrolled for another master's at the University of Toronto. He carried out his project research on the epigenetics of schizophrenia and suicidality at CAMH under Dr. Vincenzo De Luca's supervision. Olu completed his program this year, and he is a recipient of the prestigious Cleghorn award. He volunteers at Hospice Toronto and Bob Rumball center. Driven by his passion for mental health and peer mentoring, Olu recently joined the MTS project, serving in the capacity of the core RA for the study. His hobbies include singing, watching movies, soccer, and boxing.



#### **Administrative coordination: Kathryn Hum**

Kat is a Research Manager in the Schizophrenia Division at CAMH. She will provide administrative support for this study (e.g., coordination of invoice payments etc.). Please feel free to contact her at [Kathryn.hum@camh.ca](mailto:Kathryn.hum@camh.ca).

## Youth Leadership Advisory

We held our first meeting with a youth leadership advisory, coordinated by youth lead Mardi Daley, who will provide guidance on intersecting youth leadership roles across projects including MTS. The initial membership includes Cheyanne Ratnam, Asante Haughton, and Karleigh Darney.



### Activities to Date

#### 1. Literature reviews

The two literature reviews, designed to assess the state of the field regarding housing stabilization, have kicked off! Furthest along is the academic literature review led by Tim De Pass that is well underway, having identified approximately 30 papers for the review that will look to be finalized in coming months. As well, with leadership from Jessie Lund and Olu Dada, the grey literature search protocol has been developed and the search itself commenced this week. More soon on that!

#### 2. Logistics

The Lakehead University REB review is well underway, following CAMH approval, with Jessie Lund shepherding the process with the support of Chris Mushquash. The contract with DAFC has been established to facilitate the flow of funds to the north site and we completed the contract with York University for the Homeless Hub to be our digital platform for the project. As well, Olu Dada has established the REDCap platform for online consents and interviews for when the case studies start.

#### 3. Case Study Site Identification

As a starting point, Sean has engaged the national youth homelessness learning community (a network of service and systems leads connected with A Way Home Canada). While people's appetite for an online survey-based method of engagement is not what it might be in normal times, reaching out directly to service leaders has been much more successful. Sean has had a series of meetings with numerous leaders of a wide range of services – with initial mapping of case study sites led by Toronto well-underway. We are targeting winter 2021 for our first, albeit fully virtual, case study on the southern end – led by Olu and Tim. In Thunder Bay, Chris and Jessie have begun connecting with Indigenous networks to start identifying possible sites, with the goal of Winter 2021 to begin the first Indigenous case study as well.

## Parting Words

It's fantastic to have this collaborative effort emerge and build momentum out of this complicated and difficult year. Indeed, the amount that has been accomplished really speaks to the dedication and skills of everyone involved. If we can do this during a pandemic, just wait and see where we can get once we all get a chance to roll up a sleeve, get a poke, and move on to what hopefully is a better normal than before.

All the very best and I hope you and your loved ones stay well and find some rest over the holidays!

Sean

