

The At Home/Chez Soí Project:

Year Two Project Implementation at the Vancouver, BC Site – Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This report follows an earlier report which examined how the Vancouver site mobilized research, housing, and service provider teams to recruit, house and support participants in the first year of project implementation. The current report documents implementation of housing and support interventions in the second year of project implementation, including the second round of intervention fidelity assessments. It describes the continuing and emerging strengths and challenges faced by the housing and intervention teams as they implemented their programs from January 2011 to January 2012. A semi-structured interview guide was created in consultation with the National Qualitative Working Group. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in January and February of 2012.

The Fidelity Assessment team and all stakeholders interviewed noted a number of improvements in how services are implemented over the past year. The end of participant recruitment, along with time and experience, have allowed teams to develop more coherence and maturity which is reflected in both participant well-being and in the quality and diversity of external partnerships.

Respondents identified a number of strengths and challenges inherent in providing housing and supports to formerly homeless adults with mental illness. Key **strengths** include the development of partnerships with a wide variety of external agencies; collaborative, shared models of working together; and healthy team cultures that allow space for creativity, reflection, and innovations. Several **challenges** that have been ongoing since the beginning of the project include consistently engaging a small group of participants in housing and support services and maintaining stable staffing levels on the ACT and ICM teams. Emerging challenges have predictably included (re)-engaging participants in work and educational endeavours and a variety of housing and re-housing issues. A number of implementation issues were identified in relation to evictions, planned moves, and choice moves as well as participant choice and housing fit.

A range of factors that can either facilitate or serve as barriers to stable housing and recovery were identified. Key themes included characteristics of the parent service organization; participant experiences of isolation and loneliness; involvement in the criminal justice system; family reunification; and substance use.

Meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness and mental illness continues to be a challenge. While all teams have engaged peers to some degree and the Peer Coordinator has consistently advocated for peer engagement throughout the project, there is an overall lack of structure and accountability for including peers.

Finally, two landlords/building managers who are involved in the Vancouver At Home Project were interviewed and described the importance of tenant-building fit as well as the challenge of leaving the “homeless lifestyle” for some participants.