

Housing stability after the house is built.

What is this research about?

Homelessness is partly caused by a lack of affordable housing in Canada. Several cities have made attempts to implement plans to end homelessness. There is still a lack of coordinated funding. The federal government spends about \$135M on homelessness. The ten largest communities receive 80% of the money. The remaining 20% is split between 51 communities. Smaller communities frequently lack the funds needed to create stable housing. Despite limited funding, there is an increasing need for housing. The needs of those experiencing homelessness are complex. Those who are chronically homeless are more likely to suffer from mental illness or addictions. Even those who do not face mental illness or addictions may need help with crisis intervention, employment and/or food security. It is timely to understand the approaches that can help people live in stable housing.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Stable housing for those who have been homeless requires support. Finding and coordinating services from different agencies can be a barrier to maintaining stable housing. Organising care, and navigating services, has become more important in the provision of supportive housing.



KEYWORDS

Homelessness, service provision, supportive housing, coordination

ARTICLE SOURCE

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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers attempted to address how efforts to increase housing stability in Calgary are managed and experienced. A majority of those who work on the research team have backgrounds in service delivery. Their researchers used an environmental scan to gather information about trends, events

and relationships. The researchers also held openended interviews. Expert participants were chosen from three areas: service providers, policy makers and service users. The results were analyzed to select key themes from the different sources.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

Those that experience homelessness found it hard to navigate support services. This was due to complex service delivery that included different sectors and levels of government. The researchers found three themes regarding housing stability. First, having stable housing means addressing individual needs. Additional supports are necessary for people to experience stable housing. What you need to know: Stable housing for those who have been homeless requires support. Finding and coordinating services from different agencies can be a barrier to maintaining stable housing. Organising care, and navigating services, has become more important in the provision of supportive housing. Housing stability after the house is built. Second, finding support was a major challenge for service users

and service providers. This meant searching for a variety of programs that those experiencing homelessness may need. Third, there are a number of different agencies that provided support for those who have experienced homelessness. Some of these supports included: housing, health & mental health, addictions, tenant, home care and legal. Service users typically accessed services from a variety of sources with different funding mechanisms. The work of navigating multiple sources of support was a challenging part of achieving housing stability. Challenges in organizing services from different sources led to the increasingly important role of case managers and service care coordinators. They can be central in helping people access the programs they need.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

Policy makers may consider creating platforms for linking services that are available to those experiencing homelessness. Multi-year federal, provincial and municipal funding will add to the ability of service providers to connect and coordinate services. These coordinators also require a scope beyond community health. Service providers may be able to establish clearer networks to promote their services. Through clear communication and coordination of services, those who have experienced homelessness may be able to access the kinds of supports that will add to their housing stability. Affordable housing is in great demand. When government or non-profit agencies build housing, it is important to consider location. These actors may wish to create affordable housing units where additional mental health, addictions, employment and other support services are available.