

**IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION REPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION OF
CANADA'S AT HOME/CHEZ SOI PROJECT: MONCTON SITE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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THREE PAGE SUMMARY

This report documents the findings of the evaluation of the implementation of the At Home / Chez Soi program in Moncton. It provides a summary and synthesis of the information collected from the different groups of stakeholders of the program, namely the consumers, landlords, service staff, and key informants comprised of housing staff, program managers, consulting psychiatrists, co-lead investigator, and site coordinator.

What is Working Well in Implementation?

- Overall, the findings of the current evaluation highlight the successful implementation of the At Home / Chez Soi program in Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick. There was consensus among the program stakeholders that the key components expected of a Housing First program modeled on the *Pathways to Housing* program were in place.
- The development of a growing pool of landlords who in large part expressed commitment to the program and its participants is evidently a critical ingredient to helping participants establish stable permanent housing. This commitment of landlords appears to be present even in the face of challenges encountered in housing some of the program participants.
- There was also consensus among the different groups we interviewed that the program is delivering timely and effective multidisciplinary support to participants. The establishment of strong partnerships with government departments and community agencies in the not-for-profit sector is a notable strength of the program.

What is Not Working Well in Implementation?

- Despite this early implementation success, there is a realization by program stakeholders that program capacity needs to be developed in a number of areas, namely addictions treatment, vocational and educational support, peer support, education related to food preparation and nutrition, and psychiatric consultation.
- Consumers in the program, who had established housing stability, expressed an interest in finding productive and meaningful ways to use their time. In order for the program to respond to these important emerging needs, it will require moving services from being less reactive in nature to being proactive and recovery-focused.
- Key informants, staff, and consumers raised the significant workload of staff as a concern. The combination of undertaking a new professional role and the team taking on a full case load in a protracted period of time has contributed to this heavy workload.
- Key informants and staff highlighted the importance of consumers having access to transportation. Despite the significant efforts taken by program staff to accommodate consumers with rides, it was still perceived by staff that they were not able to meet all of consumers' needs in this area.

- Although the program has been successful in developing a relatively large pool of landlords (i.e., currently over 30) committed to the program, managing the relationship between landlords and the program and landlords and program participants is an ongoing challenge.
- In addition to the importance of keeping the lines of communication open with landlords, staff reported a need for better communication with both the legal and the health care systems.

Cross-cutting Themes / Issues

1. The program theory behind the At Home / Chez Soi program in Moncton described by program stakeholders in this evaluation corresponds well to the *Pathways* model as presented in the literature and in the training provided by *Pathways* staff for this project. Perceived core ingredients of the program in Moncton included facilitating access to affordable housing, offering choice in housing and support, providing consumer-centered support, and adopting a recovery orientation in establishing goals and working with consumers.
2. The success of implementing a supported housing approach such as the At Home / Chez Soi program rests heavily on the quality of relationships among program staff, between program staff and consumers, and between the program and landlords. The psychosocial interventions delivered in supported housing require strong working alliances among all of the program stakeholders for them to be effective.
3. The delivery of services and supports to consumers in the context of the At Home / Chez Soi program has proven to be challenging and demanding work for program staff. It requires flexibility, openness, and a willingness and comfort with extending beyond traditional roles for which staff are trained within their professional disciplines. The complex needs of consumers in the At Home / Chez Soi program can also place heavy demands on program staff especially in the initial stages of participation in the program.
4. The evaluation findings highlight the important role that community partnerships have played in the successful implementation of the At Home / Chez Soi program. From the outset, the program has been able to develop strong and supportive partnerships in the community. The creation of committees for participation by community partners are important structures contributing to the success of these collaborations.
5. Consumers receiving services from the program appear to be an untapped resource who could make important contributions to the supports being delivered by the program.
6. The relatively small size of Moncton and the addition of a rural arm make the study at the Moncton site unique and distinct from previous research on Housing First and from other sites in the At Home / Chez Soi project. A notable advantage is that the smaller size of the community makes it easier to integrate new and innovative services. A disadvantage is the relative ease with which information can circulate among landlords about consumers and among consumers about the services they receive from the program.

Lessons Learned

1. There is recognition among key informants and program staff of the importance of further program development to achieve longer-term anticipated outcomes of the program. In particular, key informants and program staff highlighted the need for extending program capacity so that more targeted interventions can be delivered to consumers in the areas of addictions treatment and vocational / educational support. The expertise available from MHCC, *Pathways*, and other At Home / Chez Soi sites and resources available from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) can assist the program to develop capacity in these areas.
2. As previously described, the program has successfully built very good relationships among program stakeholders that include program staff, consumers, research staff, landlords, and community agencies. Ensuring that the relationships continue to be positive will be an ongoing challenge for the program. The continued planning of events which have contributed significantly to effective relationship-building is recommended.
3. The Mental Health Commission of Canada has invested significantly since the beginning of At Home / Chez Soi in the training of program staff. The program has been fortunate to have personnel from *Pathways* involved in the training and providing technical support. This training and support have been particularly vital for the Moncton staff because the services, including the ACT model, have not been provided previously in New Brunswick. It will remain important that training and the receipt of technical support continue to be a priority.
4. The At Home / Chez Soi program has developed strong collaborations with relevant ministries in the provincial government and with community agencies from the not-for-profit sector in Moncton. The creation of a Local Advisory Committee, Regional Directors' Committee, and Non-Profit Sector Committee appears to have played an important role in developing these collaborations. It will be important to continue to solicit the input of partners for further program development through these committees.
5. A fundamental value of the Housing First philosophy of *Pathways* is the empowerment of consumers. As presented in this report, consumers provided a fresh and distinct perspective on the program that included several suggestions for improving services. Therefore, it is recommended that the program develop a systematic process for obtaining consumer feedback and input for program improvement purposes. In addition, it is recommended that the program develop a peer self-help group as another means of empowering them.
6. There is recognition by everyone involved in the program of the importance of landlords to its long-term viability since establishing stable housing is a foundation for the delivered support. The rapid and effective response of the

program in most instances when informed by landlords of concerns about tenants has been crucial to keeping them supportive of the program. It is critical that this timely and effective troubleshooting continue to be part of the support provided to consumers. As well, it is recommended that the program continue to make efforts to educate and inform landlords about the program by continuing to hold periodic meetings with them.