



Pat's Place Program Evaluation Report

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1.0 Overview

For more than twenty- five years, Family Service Toronto's Seniors and Caregivers Support Services (SCSS) has been working with seniors who are experiencing abuse in their later years. Through a combination of counselling supports, group work and educational sessions, the team has touched the lives of thousands of clients. Working with seniors to help them stay safe in their living situations, dealing with the inherent anxiety, depression and trauma that abuse generates in those experiencing it and working with clients to live free of abuse has been at the core of the work. Finding a safe haven for people to go so they could get some time away from the abusive situation is not easy since the shelters that serve women and children may not be appropriate for seniors. While they provide remarkable services for women and children fleeing violence, they are often not able to accommodate seniors because of mobility issues, care needs and/or high utilization by the primary target groups.

In 2008, Family Service Toronto (FST) was approached by the Rotary Club of Toronto with an offer to fund a safe haven for seniors experiencing abuse. They were particularly interested in focusing on seniors who were not eligible for home-based supports but who could not afford to purchase private supports such as homemaking, personal supports and accompaniment services. The SCSS team was thrilled to accept their offer of support and they developed Pat's Place.

Pat's Place provides up to 60 days of housing, rent free, to seniors living in an abusive situation. As soon as the doors were opened, demand for supports outpaced the resources available. In addition, some seniors who need the supports of Pat's Place cannot be housed at the location because their care needs exceed what can be provided. In 2016, FST applied to the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy's Innovative Solutions to Homelessness funding stream to test an expansion model for Pat's Place. In July 2018 FST received funding to focus on parts of the original application including continuing to house people at the current Pat's Place, searching for one other site to house seniors who required more care than the current location can provide, conducting an environmental scan of similar housing sites across Canada and developing an evaluation framework for the program. This report outlines the results of the nine-month work associated with this contribution.

2.0 Situating the issue

Elder abuse is recognized as a pervasive and growing phenomenon in Canada which requires the urgent attention of organizations supporting elders, health care providers, policy makers and, most importantly, the general public. According to an international systematic literature review conducted by Yon et al., one in six seniors ages 60+ will experience a form of elder abuse worldwide.⁽¹⁾ This means approximately 141 million seniors experience abuse around the globe on an annual basis.⁽¹⁾ In 2016, approximately 10,300 seniors ages 65+ were victims of a violent crime in Canada.⁽²⁾ Among these victims, 34% were victimized by family violence with most of the abusers being the senior's own child, spouse or another relative.⁽²⁾ In addition, police records indicate that between 2006-2016, a total of 188 seniors were murdered by a family member, 45% by the senior's child and 35% by a spouse.⁽²⁾ Professionals who work in the area of elder abuse believe these statistics are only the tip of the iceberg as many seniors are reluctant to report abuse due to shame, stigma and fear of retaliation by their abusers.

2.1 Program Description and Housing Model

FST has been operating Pat's Place since 2008 to accommodate seniors facing homelessness due to abuse. Designed as a temporary transitional housing unit, as opposed to a shelter, it can house one person for up to 60 days or two related people (e.g. a couple). It is located in an apartment unit rented by FST in a confidential location in Toronto. The apartment building is fully accessible for people with mobility issues and is close to transit, grocery shopping, health care resources and socializing opportunities. Besides providing a physical location of safety, Pat's Place is also designed to provide people with emotional supports and solution-focused counselling to help them gain skills to move forward with their lives. Anyone can make a referral to Pat's Place, including the senior themselves. Because Pat's Place houses people for a short period of time, if an external organization makes a referral, they are asked to support the person before, during and after their stay if the senior is in agreement with this request. Working in partnership with another organization to support people living at Pat's Place means that more work can be done in the time available. Often the referral organization has an established relationship with the senior and has been working with them for some time, prior to their move to Pat's place.

To be eligible to utilize Pat's Place, people must be 55 years of age or older; currently experiencing some form of abuse, which includes emotional, physical, verbal, financial and/or sexual abuse; must be able to live independently without needing a staff member on site 24 hours a day; must be physically and mentally capable to tend to their basic needs (e.g. grocery shopping). From 2008-2018, FST has successfully provided housing at Pat's Place to 74 seniors (50 females and 24 males) experiencing elder abuse. Among these clients, 17 were between the ages 55-64, 53 were 65+ and four did not disclose their age. While most clients did not specify any accessibility issues, 14 expressed mobility concerns. Eighteen clients were referred internally by FST while the other clients were referred by various external organizations or services, such as community support agencies for seniors across Toronto, acute care hospitals, drop-in services for homeless or close to homeless women, grassroots ethno-cultural organizations and home and community care services. In terms of financial status ten clients had financial support from the Ontario Disability Support Program, twenty were receiving income from the Canadian Pension Program, four from Ontario Works, six from another employment source and 34 clients did not report a source of income.

2.2 Service Provision at Pat's Place

Service provision at Pat's Place is strengths-based, trauma-informed and client directed. Psycho-education is a key part of the work done with seniors before they move to Pat's Place and during their stay. It is not unusual for seniors to be reluctant to step outside of the abusive relationship, even for a short period of time. Staff provide psycho-education on the impact of elder abuse, helping them to understand their situation better. The dynamics of power and control and the impact this has on relationships are reviewed and an emphasis is placed on helping seniors to understand they are not at fault in the abusive relationship. This is often key in helping the senior decide to move to Pat's Place and/or helps them to clarify what they wish to do upon leaving the unit.

Safety planning is also a key focus of the work at Pat's Place. FST does not use a specific tool to complete safety planning as each person's situation is unique and their planned

trajectory upon leaving Pat's Place varies. Typical areas of focus include developing plans in a variety of domains of the person's life. These are outlined in the following sections.

2.2.1 Emergency Plan

This plan allows for clients and counsellors to discuss the importance of preparedness. Focus is placed on the steps that a client can enact if a crisis occurs when their abuser(s) contact them, or they feel unsafe in a relationship. Having items in a bag, such as personal identification, contact information, medications and other personally important products are key parts of an emergency plan. Developing a way to leave a situation (e.g. calling for a taxi, taking public transit, calling emergency services) and knowing where they may go are also discussed. Plans may be written down or developed orally. They are reviewed on a frequent basis, as the situation changes and evolves.

2.2.2 Plan for a Safer Environment

In this plan, emphasis is made on taking every step necessary to increase environmental safety. Clients are encouraged to remember to check if their doors are locked, keep a physical copy of the emergency plan close if no one else will see it, inform someone whom they trust about their location and their emotional state, be aware of their legal rights and call emergency services if needed. If clients have restraining orders in place, people are always encouraged to have extra copies available and to keep one with them. Calling crisis support services if there is a need to speak to someone immediately is encouraged as well.

2.2.3 Emotional Plan

In this plan, counsellors encourage the client to seek as much support as they can receive in order to cope with the experience of being abused. Building a new life after living through abuse requires courage and supporting seniors through their journey is an important role a counsellor at FST plays when working with Pat's Place clients. Clients are provided with the necessary resources and services related to managing their emotions and most importantly establishing strategies to live a life free of abuse. Focusing on self-care strategies is also an important part of this type of planning. Identifying what clients like to do, such as physical, emotional and/or spiritual care activities, and developing a plan to re-connect with these aspects of their life and/or enhance their engagement with them is discussed.

2.2.4 Financial Plan

In this plan, the importance of financial safety and security is emphasized. Clients are encouraged to safeguard their financial resources in order to plan an independent life. Gathering all banking information and changing passcodes for banking related matters is encouraged. Clients are provided with resources and information related to protecting themselves from financial risk, such as changing powers of attorney if indicated, shutting down bank accounts to which an abuser has access or limiting their access, and other issues specific to the individual's situation are discussed.

2.2.5 Future State of Pat's Place

FST recognizes that there is a need to expand the number of units and the mix of care settings available within the Pat's Place model because of the high demand for service and the fact that the physical and mental health status of seniors varies greatly. While some people can live independently in the current Pat's Place unit, those with care needs cannot. As part of this project, we had hoped to be able to pilot test the provision of services in a retirement home or supportive living arrangement. However, due to a variety of factors including low vacancy rates in these types of settings in the Toronto area, the need to sign a lease agreement for a minimum of one year and the short-term nature of the contribution (nine months), this was not possible. To mitigate this, and to prepare FST for possible future expansion, an evaluation framework was developed with the goal of understanding the unique features of Pat's Place and key issues to consider in sustaining and growing the model.

3.0 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework for this project was developed using a combination of methods including a review of the literature and in-person interviews. The literature review was targeted to identifying current intervention models and barriers to accessing services specific to elder abuse. Key informants were interviewed including past clients of Pat's Place, staff in community agencies, members of the Pat's Place Advisory Committee and FST staff who work with people accessing Pat's Place. A participatory research process was used with these key stakeholders to understand the progression, successes and challenges of Pat's Place. This approach allowed the adaptation of the methodology and questions to gain in-depth information on individual experiences.

In addition, FST's Theory of Change assumes that greater resilience and stability can enhance overall well being amongst our beneficiary groups, including people who are experiencing abuse. FST has employed tools to assess the impact of receiving services and supports on clients' lives. This includes capturing change over time as the client accesses services, while identifying and examining factors that contribute to personal resilience. This evaluation framework has included the theory of change and considered FST's newly piloted resilience tool to help assess the resilience of future Pat's Place clients.

Key objectives of this evaluation framework included determining the impact Pat's Place had on past clients, determining if there is a need for Pat's Place services in the future and to determine if there is research support for a specialized housing model for seniors.

4.0 Methodology

Previous clients of Pat's Place were invited to take part in one-on-one interviews to discuss the usefulness and impact of the services provided by FST and how Pat's Place can be improved. Participants were contacted by the research assistant and/or the counsellor who worked closely with them during their stay at Pat's Place. Three female clients agreed to participate in one-on-one interviews and a fourth female client was interviewed by phone.

As the three participants who were interviewed in person did not speak English, an interpreter was present during the interviews. The FST outreach counsellor for the Pat's Place project acted as the facilitator of the interview and the research assistant documented the

interaction. An explanation on consent and confidentiality was provided at the beginning of each interview in English, which was then translated to Vietnamese by the translator (**Appendix A**).

The fourth participant was an English-speaking client who was interviewed over the phone by the counsellor. The counsellor provided an explanation of consent and confidentiality at the beginning of the phone interview. All four participants were asked 13 questions (two close-ended and 11 open-ended) (**Appendix B**).

In addition to client interviews, three team members who worked on the development of Pat's Place were interviewed to learn about the development, challenges, successes and overall perceived impact of Pat's Place (**Appendix C**). Two referring counsellors from external agencies were also interviewed by phone for information on the referral process to Pat's Place (**Appendix D**). They were selected because they have referred many clients to Pat's Place. Their experience working with these clients before and after housing them at Pat's Place was also included in questions asked during the phone interview. Over 60 community agencies in Ontario were invited to share their knowledge on elder abuse. Eight of these agencies responded and filled out a questionnaire on existing housing models for seniors facing abuse and the challenges or barriers that prevent seniors from reaching out for support (**Appendix D**).

The literature review that was conducted focused on key words relevant to the topic area (**Appendix E, Table 1**). Ten papers were located, and eight studies were determined to be relevant to the development of the evaluation framework.

Lastly, The Connor - Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC 10) measures resilience at the level of the individual and views resilience as consisting of both internal and external factors.⁽³⁾ The scale is considered a valid and reliable tool to assess resilience, as it was used successfully in adult samples. FST is currently piloting this resilience tool with our clients and plans to use it to test the resiliency of future Pat's Place clients.^{(4), (5), (6)}

5.0 Key findings

5.1 Housing options/models to Support Seniors Experiencing Abuse

Consultations were conducted with service agencies in Toronto to determine how they were supporting seniors facing homelessness due to elder abuse. A cross section of different types of organizations were asked to contribute their thoughts and ideas. Three of the eight service providers reported that housing was a key concern for seniors facing abuse. The agencies also explain that many seniors are unable to afford suitable housing away from their abuser, especially when the abuser had stolen from the senior's pension or savings. Most shelters do not offer programming specifically for older women facing abuse or their staff members' primary skill set is focused on supporting younger women and their children. The special needs of older women are not as well understood.

One community-based organization which recently integrated with a major hospital in Toronto reported their strategic plan focuses on taking a person-centered approach to supporting clients. This approach involves regular counselling with clients who are experiencing elder abuse and providing them with referrals to help them find stable housing. They also connect them to resources such as Pat's Place, transportation supports, meals on wheels and other services relevant to client needs. Interviews with a woman's shelter and a drop-in centre for homeless women that work with older women fleeing abuse revealed that they have beds dedicated to this population but do not have a formal housing model. Most of their work focuses on connecting women to resources, including Pat's Place as it provides a longer stay than they are able to offer.

There is very limited literature available on housing options for seniors experiencing abuse. The most helpful document, developed by Atira Women's Resource Society in British Columbia, consists of a number of promising practices for housing this population.⁽⁷⁾ Based on their work operating Ama House, a transitional home specifically developed in 2004 to support the needs of older women fleeing abuse, this resource utilizes an intersectional analysis to challenge assumptions and stereotypes about older women and provides a comprehensive overview of what women who are older say they need to address their unique needs and

circumstances. Many of the promising practices identified such as focusing on relationships and relationship building with older women, using an individualized, women-centred approach, focusing on safety, facilitating access to health care, developing strategic partnerships to help women get the services they want and need are already in place at Pat's Place. The only significant difference between this housing model and Pat's Place is that Pat's Place provides supports not only to women but also to men and trans-identified people.

5.2 Lack of Awareness of Elder Abuse and Possible Services

Among the agencies interviewed for this report, the respondents identified elder abuse as a significant social issue, based on their experience working with seniors. They related their struggles in connecting seniors to services that address this concern. Literature in this area supports the anecdotal evidence provided by front-line professionals. Edwards explains that emergency shelters are the first service that seniors should reach out to for support, however, many older women refrain from accessing such resources due to lack of awareness.⁽⁸⁾ Two agencies that were interviewed echoed these results, stating that many seniors are uninformed of the services available to them. Lastly, some seniors do not have a regular family physician or do not meet with their doctor often, which may prevent them from expressing their issues and receiving the appropriate information or referrals they need. A study completed by the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) corroborates the findings by Edwards, stating that there are 20+ agencies in Canada serving elders experiencing abuse, however individuals lack knowledge on the existence of these resources.⁽⁹⁾ Some seniors also believe that if they access these services they will be stripped of their autonomy and independence, which makes them reluctant to seek support.

5.3 Gender-based Barriers

While services for male seniors facing elder abuse exist, there is also a knowledge gap among men on the supports available to them. Edwards states that "societal and self-imposed expectations of male behaviour may have a negative effect on the ability of older men to seek help."⁽⁸⁾ In 2007, Kaye et al. reported that since acts of violence are commonly committed by

individuals who identify as males and since males are less likely to be viewed as victims, they tend to avoid reporting their abuse.⁽¹⁰⁾ Additionally, with women and children statistically having a higher risk of experiencing violence, the majority of services, or outreach for services, are directed towards them. This has consequently led to a gap in service availability, or the lack of awareness of these resources for senior men in abusive situations.⁽¹⁰⁾ There is also very little current literature addressing these gender barriers and how to prevent elder abuse among both men and women. The need for increased research on the incidence of elder abuse and issues specific to men experiencing abuse in their later years is needed in order to provide adequate support to male seniors who are experiencing abuse.

5.4 Concerns within Specific Communities

Certain issues are present in specific ethnic communities which can become a barrier to access services. For instance, Ploeg et al. conducted focus groups with diverse groups in Ontario, specifically with Indigenous, Latvian, Farsi-speaking, Chinese, Punjabi and LGBTQ+ communities.⁽¹¹⁾ The researchers used a criterion-based sampling strategy to select participants from members of these communities who had previously participated in another study.⁽¹¹⁾ In addition, these diverse groups were consistently mentioned by the Ontario Elder Health Coalition in their report on elder abuse. The study reports that Indigenous and Latvian seniors saw nursing homes as a sign of abandonment or neglect, stating: “in our culture...we look after our own.”⁽¹¹⁾ They believed that placing their seniors into nursing homes was a sign of rejection by their family and by society. Members of both the Chinese and Latvian communities expressed that the lack of respect for seniors by their children or grandchildren is a form of abuse on its own, as it is traditional for their children to care for the seniors.⁽¹¹⁾

Several of the service agencies that were interviewed identified language barriers as a significant reason why seniors do not access supports, where they are available. Some seniors may prefer to communicate their concerns to a professional who can speak their native tongue; while these services may exist, they may be hard to find or many seniors are unaware of these community-specific resources.

5.5 Systemic Barriers

Some marginalized groups express their fear with systemic barriers that they perceive as preventing them from leaving their abusive situations. In the same study by Ploeg et al., participants from the Farsi-speaking group feared they would lose their sponsorship or refugee status if they left their abuser, citing the government and their policies as reasons for silently suffering.⁽¹¹⁾ Some senior women from the Chinese community expressed that they were expected to cook, clean and care for their abuser, who was often their adult child or grandchild, because they did not want to lose their sponsorship.⁽¹¹⁾

5.6 Gaps in Elder Abuse Detection and Underreporting

Although the literature suggests that elder abuse is a significant concern, official statistics show that seniors continue to have a lower rate of family violence than any other age group. This may be the result of underreporting, which is often the reason abuse against seniors is overlooked. Underreporting of cases of elder abuse is likely a result of the barriers preventing seniors from reaching out for help. This includes a reluctance to acknowledge their abuse, the lack of resources or support to leave the abusive atmosphere and their fear of the abuser.⁽¹²⁾ Several service agencies stated that seniors who are dealing with mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, refrain from accessing programs available to them to avoid potential stigma related to their mental wellness and/or their abusive living situations. In 2009, the prevalence of abuse and neglect among elders was between 4-10% however, only 20% of these incidents were reported to a professional that could help them.⁽¹²⁾ These barriers may be the reasons for the lower rate of elder abuse when compared to abuse among other age groups.

Another concern is that law enforcement officers often lack the training to communicate with seniors to detect signs of elder abuse. Kurkurina et al. state there is a knowledge gap pertaining to the investigation and reporting of elder abuse.⁽¹²⁾ Most law enforcement officers have not been trained on how to communicate with seniors dealing with abuse or where to refer them for support and as a result, seniors lack awareness of the options available to them.⁽¹²⁾ As Kurkurina et al. suggest, enforcing community-oriented policing, may allow civilians

to feel more comfortable trusting police officers in such vulnerable circumstances, which may also help increase the number of reported cases of elder abuse.⁽¹²⁾

5.7 Experiences of Former Pat's Place Clients

Because Pat's Place has been operating for ten years, contact with many past clients was not possible because they have moved and did not provide FST with follow-up contact information or they have died. As a result, FST was able to reach only six former clients, of whom four agreed to the interview. These clients' contact information was provided by a counsellor with client permission. Three of these four participating clients were of Vietnamese descent, while the fourth client was English-speaking, and did not provide their nationality. Three participants lived at Pat's Place over two years ago while one former client was a resident at Pat's Place in 2018. Two clients were referred to FST by a friend, and were then connected to Pat's Place, while the other two clients were referred to Pat's Place by an external counsellor.

All four participants expressed that they felt an immediate sense of safety when they moved into Pat's Place as this provided distance from their abuser. One client stated, "I had the key to my place. I was able to sleep at night without worrying and knowing no one will enter my apartment in the middle of the night." This sense of safety was accompanied by feelings of happiness and relief as they had left an abusive home and were living comfortably at Pat's Place. A separate client explained that as a result of being abused she was homeless for some time. Being connected to Pat's Place and FST was a "life-changing" experience for her. Moving into a new place can come with its doubts and hesitations, especially for an older person who is dealing with a traumatic past. Another client reported that she was anxious moving to Pat's Place and living alone for the first time. While this new journey involved mental preparation, she eventually adapted and developed a sense of independence.

Past clients also spoke about the positive changes they found in themselves after moving to Pat's Place. This included becoming more independent, regaining trust and increasing self-confidence. One client said, "Before moving to Pat's Place, I had sleepless nights and was scared, worried and depressed. I cried all the time and struggled with my past. I now feel independent as I learned to go out on my own and am comfortable trusting others and

myself again.” Another participant reported that she was always very quiet but after living on her own in Pat’s Place, she gained confidence in her abilities to communicate with others. By discovering their sense of independence and confidence, the participants no longer associated their future with their past abuse because, as one client states, “Pat’s Place allowed me to gain hope and feel better about my future.” All four respondents made what they described as positive changes in their lives. These included things like finding a job, moving on to stable housing and re-establishing connections with the community. In addition, they all expressed, in their own ways, that they wanted to be able to motivate others in similar situations by being their advocates and connecting them to appropriate professionals or agencies, such as FST.

The clients credited FST staff for the positive changes they were able to make. The staff were reported to be supportive, reassuring, trusting and readily available to provide them with necessary supports. One client felt she could discuss her past experiences in confidence with the staff, which allowed her to regain trust in herself and others. Having dealt with a traumatic past, the clients found the staff to be a positive aspect in their lives. This was a new type of relationship for them as they had lived in negative environments where they received little support for many years.

While Pat’s Place was well regarded by all participants, three past clients did identify barriers pertaining to culture and language that can prevent individuals such as themselves from accessing some resources. One client reported that she initially had trouble communicating with her support worker, along with neighbors and shopkeepers living near the Pat’s Place residence because she spoke little English. Others stated they were not familiar with the local area and had difficulty accessing information due to lack of knowledge on the available resources. The clients recommended an accessible tool that will help them navigate resources for seniors in their neighborhood and seek out support in the future with ease.

All four clients expressed that most seniors, particularly women, who are being abused will tolerate and remain silent for fear of being abandoned or shamed. This is especially the case if the perpetrator of the abuse is a family member; this was also supported by the literature. In addition, there is a lack of awareness about the services offered to seniors dealing with elder abuse within certain marginalized communities. Should they discover the

appropriate support for them, they fear what their community would think of them. The clients expressed a need for further education and awareness on elder-based violence, especially among minority populations where abuse is largely silenced.

5.8 Perspectives of Staff Working with Pat's Place Clients

Three FST staff members who were closely involved in the early development of Pat's Place were interviewed to better understand the successes and challenges encountered with the operation of Pat's Place. They explained that Pat's Place has met the goal of providing clients with a safe and secure environment where people can take time away from abusive relationship to reflect on how they want to move forward with their lives. Over time, staff also became more comfortable and knowledgeable about working with the population served by Pat's Place and the challenges often presented. The single most significant challenge identified is securing stable funding for the existing Pat's Place unit. Secondary to this, and as important, is the need for additional housing units for Pat's Place to meet the demands for this type of support. Demand for this service is consistently higher than the single unit available.

Staff also identified the critical importance of working in partnership with other service agencies to support Pat's Place. These organizations act as referral networks, work alongside FST to support clients when they move into and out of Pat's Place and offer complementary supports to increase the amount of work that can be done within the limitations of a 60-day stay in a safe, supportive environment. Another major concern is helping clients find alternate housing after their 60-day stay at Pat's Place, which continues to be difficult due to the lengthy waiting lists for rent-geared to income housing and the cost of market rent units in Toronto and surrounding areas.

The two counsellors who referred the previous clients for interviews were also interviewed about their experience working with these clients before and after they spent time at Pat's Place as well as their perceptions of the program. They stated that Pat's Place is a unique service in Ontario that provides a confidential and private space for seniors experiencing abuse. Both counsellors also stated that clients often must wait to move to a shelter, which is why Pat's Place is preferable. Due to their situations, the four past clients that were interviewed

for this project received priority social housing after their 60-day stay. Because waiting lists were somewhat shorter outside of Toronto, they each moved to another jurisdiction, away from their communities and familiar resources.

5.9 Information Sharing of Elder Abuse and Pat's Place

Family Service Toronto has reached out to 462 service providers supporting seniors within Ontario. The aim of this outreach was to establish partnerships and share strategies to better support seniors fleeing from abusive situations. By developing these connections, FST hopes to create public awareness on how to better support seniors fleeing from abusive situations. At the present time, the FST counsellors have facilitated six workshops. During these workshops, staff were also provided with resources on elder abuse and Pat's Place, which they can disseminate to the public. Overall, these workshops were well received by both staff and clients.

5.10 Knowledge Product Support Mechanism – Resource Package

Based on feedback gathered from former Pat's Place clients and support from the literature, a resource package was developed to provide Pat's Place clients with contact information about potential programs and services that can benefit them. This includes: housing services, senior programs, legal services, healthcare facilities, grocery stores and food banks near the Pat's Place residence, immigration and settlement services, recreational facilities and financial assistance services. Please **refer to the attached PDF file** to access the Pat's Place resource package.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Summary

While there was a relatively small number of participants who agreed to be interviewed, many of the past clients did not maintain contact with FST or were deceased. With a small sample size, the results are specific to this unique population and are not generalizable to all seniors affected by elder abuse. However, it is evident from the literature, and the feedback from the clients and the service agencies, that there is a need for additional awareness and support for seniors who are facing elder abuse. Specifically, it seems that perpetrators of the abuse are often a family member (e.g. a spouse or adult child) and therefore seniors who face abuse require a safe and secure support system that protects them from their abuser. As a confidential residence, Pat's Place can ensure this.

Participating clients spoke positively about living in Pat's Place and the support they received from the FST staff. This allowed them to live independent lives and begin the process of dealing with the trauma they experienced. During their 60-day stay at Pat's Place, their ability to gain confidence in themselves, trust others (e.g. their support worker), navigate resources on their own, look for new housing and seek out employment suggests that this transitional period was worthwhile and resulted in important personal growth.

Overall, based on the four clients' feedback and the reports received by the Pat's Place team members, as well as the two counsellors working with Pat's Place clients, it is evident that Pat's Place has proved to be beneficial and has achieved positive client outcomes.

6.2 Study Challenges and Limitations

While conducting the program evaluation for Pat's Place, there were several challenges encountered. One major challenge was trying to conduct one-on-one interviews with as many previous Pat's Place clients as possible. While four clients were successfully interviewed, the aim was to find more to be able to generalize from the results. However, many former clients lost touch with FST after moving from Pat's Place. A number of factors account for this including

some have moved on to other cities, others no longer need supports because their lives stabilized during their stay at Pat's Place and some people have died.

6.3 Key Deliverables and Future Recommendations

To continue supporting seniors living in abusive situations, FST must work on continued outreach for the program and education on elder abuse among diverse communities. This will require building on partnerships with other organizations and having staff hold information sessions and workshops on elder abuse awareness and Pat's Place beyond the life of this contribution. There is also an opportunity for FST to work with people who have used Pat's Place or seniors who are concerned about this issue, to develop peer based educational sessions and discussion circles. Lastly, based on recommendations from clients for further information on available resources, FST will develop a resource package to provide clients with the contact information of organizations, services and programs that can be beneficial for them during and after their stay at Pat's Place.

FST does not currently use a standardized risk assessment tool with people who are interested in Pat's Place. This is an area that FST will explore further to determine whether any tools currently exist that could be of assistance. If there is no viable tool in the literature, FST will determine the feasibility of developing a risk assessment tool for Pat's Place, using feedback from clients' information in the literature. This work will be done in conjunction with an academic partner, pending interest and available resources. Currently, Elder Abuse Ontario uses a safety planning toolkit to detect elder abuse among older adults and FST can potentially use this as a key source to begin developing their own tool in the future.⁽¹³⁾

Moving forward, FST will use a standardized resiliency scale, known as the Connor Davidson RISC – 10 to assess the resiliency of future Pat's Place clients. It is hoped that this tool will be able to demonstrate change over time in people's resiliency as they are able to live in an environment free of abuse and plan for their future. **(Appendix F)**.

7.0 Conclusion

Based on the feedback received from former Pat's Place clients, interviews with staff members and external service providers and the literature, there is a continued interest in temporary housing such as Pat's Place. This housing model can be used for additional short-term housing for seniors fleeing from abuse. Going forward, the recommendations on safety planning, the development of a resource package, further community outreach and the use of a tool to measure client resilience should be implemented.

8.0 References

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO

For People. For Change.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Study Name: *Environmental Scan Report for Pat's Place*

What is the purpose of this study?

Family Service Toronto (FST) has been providing Services for Seniors fleeing violence, abuse, exploitation and fear from Home since 2008. We have received a contribution from the Employment and Social Development Canada to expand our Services and Programs to better meet the needs of Seniors, like you, who are experiencing abuse.

To understand Senior's needs we are conducting focus groups or individual interview with current and previous residents of Pat's Place, to learn more about your experiences, what you found helpful and what improvement you can recommend and how we can make the services and programs for Senior's experiencing Abuse better.

What are you being asked to do?

If you choose to participate, you will be placed in a group of up to ten people who are or have previously lived at Pat's Place. We will ask you a series of questions related to your experience and the difference Pat's Place has made in your life. These questions will guide the conversation and allow for additional information to be shared. A facilitator will facilitate the discussion while taking notes. The discussion will be audiotaped for the purpose of verifying the notes made and filling in any gaps. The focus group/individual interview will take approximately one hour.

Who can participate in the study?

You may participate in this study if you:

- Are you currently living in Pat's Place?
- Have you previously lived at Pat's Place?

Potential risks and discomforts

During your participation in this focus group or individual interview, you will be asked questions related to your experience at Pat's Place. It is possible that you may experience feelings of discomfort because of the questions. If you are feeling this way and/or would like to speak with someone following your participation, please let your facilitator know or call the Toronto Distress Centre at 416-408-4357 for 24/7 phone support.

Potential benefits

Your participation in this Focus Group may provide you with a better understanding of your role as a Senior who experienced abuse or exploitation, your own needs, strengths, supports and other resources that are available. You may find it helpful to learn about services and supports offered at Family Service Toronto and/or the wider community in Toronto.

As well, by participating in this Focus Group, you are helping us to better understand how we can meet the needs of residents who have lived at Pat's Place in deliverance of Services and accessibility programs and Support. This may aid us in improving future services offered by Family Service Toronto.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. This means that you have agreed to participate after thinking about the information provided to you and have made the decision yourself.

If you start participating in the Focus group or individual interview, you may stop at any time, for any reason. You may also choose not to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with during the time you are part of the report.

Your participation, or any decision you make to not participate after starting in this interview, will not affect your ability to access programs or services at Family Service Toronto in any way.

Confidentiality

All information collected, including notes and audiotapes, as a part of this report will be securely stored. In our reporting, we will not use your name or any other identifying information. Any lists or documents containing names and will be stored on a secure, encrypted database at Family Service Toronto, and accessible only to the research staff.

All related documents will be stored in a locked cabinet in a secure room at Family Service Toronto, or on a secure network drive. All data will be destroyed seven years after the completion of the study.

Compensation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You will not be compensated for your time. TTC fare can be provide, if needed, to help you participate in the study.

Sharing the Results

The results from this report will be shared with our funder (Employment and Social Development Canada), on the Family Service Toronto website and with other community partners. We will also share the results with different academic audiences through presentations and written reports. As a participant in this report, you can also see the results of the study on our website or by contacting the project coordinator listed below.

Questions about the study?

If you have any questions about this study, please feel encouraged to ask your facilitator or contact Sarah Hassan, Counsellor at 416-977-0559 ext. 282 or at sarahha@familyservicetoronto.org. You may also contact Lisa Manuel, Director, that reviewed this study. Lisa can be reached at 416-595-9230 ext. 316 or at lisama@familyservicetoronto.org.

Legal Rights and Signature

I, _____, consent to participate in the *Environmental Scan Report For Pat's Place* focus group conducted by Family Service Toronto. I understand that notes will be taken, and the session will be audiotaped.

I understand the nature of this report and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form.

My signature below indicates my consent. My consent can be withdrawn at any time, for any reason. If I choose not to continue with this project, I understand that this will have no impact on my ability to continue participating in programming at Family Service Toronto.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Interview Questions – Former Pat’s Place Clients



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO

For People. For Change.

1. How did you find out about Pat’s Place?
2. What were your initial thoughts of the apartment when you moved into Pat’s Place?
3. Were you aware that you had to leave after 60 days of a stay?
4. Were you aware of the eligibility requirements for Pat’s Place? (ex. Living independently)
5. What was your experience with Family Service Toronto’s staff while you were at Pat’s Place?
6. Was there anyone else who supported you during your stay at Pat’s Place?
7. What did you like about Pat’s Place?
8. Did you experience any challenges while you were at Pat’s Place? If so, please explain?
9. Did you experience any barriers when accessing services at Pat’s Place?
10. Based on your experience, are there any changes you can recommend for Pat’s Place to meet the needs of elders experiencing abuse?
11. What has been different about your life since leaving Pat’s Place?
12. From your experience, how can others experiencing abuse be better supported?
13. If you could tell a politician about way to support elders who have been abused what would you say?

Appendix C: Interview Questions for FST Team



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO

For People.For Change.

- 1) What would you say are the overall objectives of Pat's Place?
- 2) During its developmental stage, what needs were identified that led to the creation of Pat's Place?
- 3) Based on your knowledge, in what ways has Pat's Place improved as a service over the years?
- 4) Based on your knowledge, in what ways can Pat's Place continue to improve?
- 5) What makes Pat's Place unique from other agencies that assist seniors?
- 6) Pat's Place has a wait list of interested potential clients – how can we reduce the wait time?
- 7) Do you think the location for Pat's Place's is secure and accessible?
- 8) May you please describe a situation where you found Pat's Place to be successful and beneficial in the services it offers? (include an example, if possible)
- 9) May you please describe a situation where you faced a challenge with Pat's Place and the services it provides? How did you resolve this issue? (include an example, if possible)
- 10) How would you navigate elder abuse without Pat's Place?
- 11) What additional feedback can you offer about Pat's Place and the importance of its ongoing service? What can be changed/updated?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Counsellors and Service Providers



FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO

For People. For Change.

Background information:

1. What agency do you work for, and what is your job title?
2. Have you heard about Pat's Place? And if so, what is your understanding of Pat's Place eligibility and accessibility process?

Needs Assessment and Referral process:

1. How often do you see elders experiencing abuse at your work?
2. What are the most common presenting issues of seniors seeking support for elder abuse?
3. What are some key phrases you look for to identify elder abuse?
4. Based on your experience, are there any challenges with seniors accessing services or programs at your agency? And if so what are those challenges?
5. Other than Shelters, do you know of any other agency that offers similar services like Pat's Place?
6. Based on your experience, what is the time frame for seniors experiencing abuse to be housed?
7. Have you encountered any challenges housing Pat's Place Clients?
8. With regards to housing, where do you send clients applications to? And what types of advocacy is involved? Please explain.
9. Do you have any comments, recommendations or feedback for Pat's Place?

Appendix E: Table 1 – Literature Search

Table 1: Search terms used to find relevant papers discussing elder abuse among seniors in Canada (ages 55+ and 2007 and onwards; English language literature)	
Concept A (Outcome)	Concept B (elder)
1. abus* (keyword)	6. elder* (keyword)
2.hous* (keyword)	7. senior* (keyword)
3. neglect*	8. male seniors
4. threat*	9. female seniors
5.homeless*	

Appendix F: Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC-10)

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC-10) ©

*Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you over the last **week**.*

	Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time
	(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1. I am able to adapt when changes occur.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I can deal with whatever comes my way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over →

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6. I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I am not easily discouraged by failure. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Staff only

Date: _____ Program: _____

Counsellor/Reviewed By: _____
(Print Name)

Session: 1st 2nd 6th 12th Other: _____ Last Session

Counsellors Notes (if required):
