

# Tertiary Prevention for Formerly Homeless Youth: A Model for Making Housing Live up to its Promise and how Relevance for Indigenous Youth is Achieved -

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# Partners and Funder

- Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, The Wellesley Institute, CAMH, LOFT Community Services, Covenant House Toronto, SKETCH
- Ontario Local Poverty Reduction Fund

# Objectives

- Discuss tertiary prevention for youth in the transition from homelessness to housing – the HOP-C model
- Describe youth in this transition in Thunder Bay – resources and challenges
- Discuss efforts to develop HOP-C North

# The Framework

- Tertiary prevention
  - The idea of leverage
- System dynamics and the importance of transition points

# Context & Rationale

- The particular dilemma of transitions out of homelessness:
  - Sector disconnects
  - System emphasis on crisis
  - Provider overselling
  - Very poor outcomes for most

# A Common Experience

- “At 17 ended up homeless, and I came to the shelter, and it was crazy from 18 to about 21. I was like having a place, and not having a place, and moving in with a partner and it not working out and having to leave and start from scratch.”

# Context & Rationale

- A complex problem that requires a systems approach
- “Systems Approaches” often best devised from the bottom up
- Needs in a critical time:
  - Brass tacks and a steady presence
  - Mental health supports
  - Thoughtful peer support
  - Creative engagement and seamless services

# Tertiary Prevention HOP-C South

- Main components:
  - Outreach case management
  - Mental health supports – wellness group, individual, family
  - Peer support – group, entertainment, participatory action
  - Collaboration across organizations in an unconventional space

# Test of Feasibility

- Eligibility: 18-26 years old
- At least 6 months of homelessness (non-consecutive)
- In stable housing for less than 12 months
  
- Intervention lasts 6 months per person
- Client led: Choice about what components they access and how much
- Only encouragement is to have some contact with case management

# Feasibility in Toronto

- 28/31 completed
- Complex engagement of a complex intervention
- Self-reported outcomes variable
- 22 sustained or improved re housing; 9 made gains in education; 19 sustained or improved work situation
- Positive reports from youth
- Capturing where keeping steady is a good outcome

# The next step

- A trial in Toronto
- A partnership in Thunder Bay

# Dilico Anishinabek Family Care

- First Nations governed organization
- Representative of 13 First Nations
- On-reserve & urban service delivery
- Integrated Cultural Service Model
  - Mental Health & Addictions
  - Health
  - Child Welfare
- Internal Research Advisory Committee

# Thunder Bay

- 30+% Indigenous
- Youth leaving Care a priority
- Pregnant and parenting youth
- Substance-using
- Youth transitioning from Northern/Rural
- Youth experiencing racism
- Youth identity

# HOP-C North Arm?

*Participant quote:*

*“It’s like, when I was, like, couch surfing before I was even in HOP-C, like, oh, there’d always be a friend who would be like, hey, [respondent], you messed up. Okay. But then HOP-C, you have workers, and workers, and workers telling you things, alternative ways to do things. It’s like, you don’t have to stick in the same pathway, you can make it your own.*”

# HOP-C North Arm?

- Varying levels of support
- Youth driven, youth centred, inclusive
- Access to cultural engagement, learning and activities
- Services provided in “unconventional” spaces
- Peer opportunities

# Uptake

- 18 involved youth
- 10 females
- 8 males
- 8 accessing clinical counselling
- Active open & closed groups
- 1 Peer Mentor

## Participant Demographics

<b>Mean Age</b>	<b>18.8 years, range was 16 to 24</b>
<b>Living</b>	About half (n= 8) identified they were born and raised in Thunder Bay, 6 identified they were born on a reserve, and 1 from another city.
<b>Mean highest level of education</b>	Grade 9.8, range was 8 to 12.
<b>Mean income per month</b>	\$1016, range was \$103 to \$5000. Most participants indicated their primary source of income was from Dilico (including the CCYS program) or Ontario Works.
<b>Employment</b>	Most indicated they were not currently employed (n= 14).
<b>Volunteering</b>	No participants indicated they volunteered at this time.
<b>School</b>	6 participants indicated they were currently in high school. No participants indicated they were currently in post-secondary school.
<b>Children</b>	Seven participants reported having children. The average number of children for these participants was 2.4 Of the total number of children of participants (15), four children were currently living with the participant at the time of the initial interview.
<b>Mean Age first homeless</b>	The mean age participants reported they first experienced homelessness was 14.66, with a range of 6 to 18.
<b>Mean number of times housing was made unstable</b>	4.5 times, with a range of 2 to 10. Participants indicated that housing had been a challenge for them (including homelessness), ranging from 2 months to 4 years.
<b>Housing When Homeless</b>	When stable housing was a concern for participants, most (n=14) indicated they would stay with friends or family members (couch surfing). Four participants stated they would go to a foster home, 1 stated they had slept on the street, and 4 reported they have stayed in shelters.
<b>Health Concerns</b>	Nine participants indicated they had been to the emergency room in the last 6 months. Of these participants, 6 had used an ambulance, and 3 were kept overnight. Seven participants indicated a visit to the hospital had been for mental health concerns.
<b>Legal Concerns</b>	Three participants reported they had been incarcerated in the last 6 months (range of time from 10 days to 3 months).

# Challenges & potential solutions

- Housing availability
- Urban system design different
- Financial supports requirements
- Unfamiliar territory
- Food security
- Referral process
- Addictions
- Parenting

# Participant Feedback

- Overall useful
- Accessibility of services
- Program flexibility
- Increased autonomy
- Social learning via groups
- Cultural services
- Individual counselling
- Peer relationships

Participant quote:

*“It gives more options for all of us, it’s not just a single thing you can do. It’s more ... It’s either you want to do it or you don’t want to do it. It’s like, you have it there, it’s always there, you can ask for help, call for help, and they will give you help. But if you’re not going to ask for it then they’re still there for you.”*

# Next steps

- Continuation of HOP-C program beyond research
- SSHRC - Youth for Youth Connections Grant
- SSHRC - For Youth by Youth Guide Development
- In Thunder Bay...building on opportunities for youth at risk for homelessness

For discussion