

“Housing First” Pathways to Housing Calgary

Presenter: Dr. Pam Thompson
Director, Pathways to Housing

Fast Facts about Calgary's Homeless

- **Total number counted up to July 2009 = 4,500 people, up 13% from May 2008**
- 140 individuals surveyed as part of a Calgary Homeless Foundation survey¹ found the following:
 - **95% self-reported substance use**
 - **32% self-reported mental illness**
 - **148 ER visits in the past 3 months**
 - **308 inpatient visit in the past year**
- Many have a “dual diagnosis” which is both a mental illness and addiction disorder

¹ Gicomin, Marina, & Tanasescu, Alina. “Assessing Vulnerability in Calgary’s Homeless Population.” *Calgary Homeless Foundation*. PowerPoint. 2009. 8 June, 2009. <http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/injuryprevention/docs/prof_only/cipc_event09_homelessnessafety_mg&at.pdf>



Current Housing and Service Programs: A series of steps

3 unwarranted assumptions:

a. referrals work

b. skills learned are transferable

c. need treatment **before*** housing

(assumes clients need to be “housing ready”)

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | | | Permanent Housing |
| | | Transitional Housing | |
| | Drop-in, Shelter / Safe haven | | |
| Outreach | | | |



Core Beliefs



Housing is a basic human right,
not a reward for clinical success



Housing First Highlights

- Represents a major paradigm shift in the approach to treating the homeless with mental illness and addictions
- Research has proven the models to be the most effective approach to re-housing and supporting homeless individuals
- More cost-effective than the traditional 'continuum of care' model
- Pathways to Housing is a Best Practice & Evidence Based Model
- 'Housing First' programs are adaptable, and can be designed to meet the unique needs of different communities and clients in need of support

THE ALEX

pathways to housing

Mission

Ending homelessness for persons experiencing mental illness by providing permanent housing and empowering personal recovery.



Values and Goals

- Enable clients to obtain independent, stable housing
- Support maximum re-integration in the community
- Prevent hospitalizations
- Prevent contacts with EMS, Police and Corrections
- Enable clients to acquire a meaningful, productive role in the community
- Reconnect clients with their families
- Invite client participation in program development
- Commitment to transparency and collaboration in all aspects of program planning and service delivery





Background

- Program launched in November 2007
- First program to be initiated by the Calgary 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness
- Based on the Pathways to Housing program in New York, NY started in 1992
- Program founded in NY by Dr. Sam Tsemberis a psychologist originally from Montreal
- Pathways New York program represented the beginning of the 'Housing First' model in the USA which is now considered an Evidence Based model



Program Design

- Intake 60 clients from December 2007 – July 2009
- A second team was started in June 2009 to house another 60 clients
- Average 4-5 client intakes per month
- Referrals from hospitals, community & justice agencies
- Housing in a variety of open market apartments scattered throughout Calgary
- No more than 15% of any building can contain Pathways clients
- Followed regularly by interdisciplinary team 24/7



Our Clients...

Average Length of Homelessness Prior to
Entrance into the Program

8 years

% of Clients with a mental illness

100%

% of Clients with a past or present addiction

95%

How our program works...





Client Requirements

- Desire to be housed
- Meet terms of a lease
- Agree to pay 30% of income or social assistance toward rent
- Agree to a visit by a member of the team once per week





Our Team...



Elements of the Model

- Pathways team seeks to provide a comprehensive package of services including:
 - Community outreach
 - Psychiatric care
 - Medical & nursing care
 - Vocational/educational assessment & support
 - Budgeting/Money Management
 - Crisis intervention
 - Case management
 - Addiction management
 - Targeted groups (recreation, addiction, health & wellness, Supported Employment, etc.)
 - 24/7 On Call support





On Call Support

- A pathways staff member is on call 24/7, 365 days a year to assist clients, landlords, hospital & CPS/EMS/Fire
- Program staffed 6 days/week with a minimum of 2 evening shifts/week
- If a Police/EMS/Fire dispatch call involves a pathways address, the on call pathways staff can provide the responder with information about the client and/or respond to provide assistance
- Pathways staff can immediately access client information through the electronic web-based case management software



Evidence-Based Practices

- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- Harm Reduction
- Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT)
- Illness Management and Recovery (IMR)
- Supported Employment (SE)
- Family Psychoeducation





Measuring Success



Research

Photo Credit: Jeff Miller / ASM-Medison University Communications



The Evidence – Outcomes

- Review paper: The Effectiveness of Housing and Support for Homeless, Mentally Ill Clients published in 2007:

“significant reductions in homelessness and hospitalization and improvements in other outcomes (e.g. well-being) resulting from programs that provided permanent housing and support, ACT, and ICM.”

Nelson, G., Aubry, T., (2007). A Review of Literature on the Effectiveness of Housing and Support, Assertive Community Treatment, and Intensive Case Management Interventions for Persons With Mental Illness Who Have Been Homeless. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 77 350-361.



The Evidence: Housing Outcomes

- A study in New York from 1993-1997 compared housing tenure for clients in the linear residential treatment approach vs. Pathways Housing-First model
- After 5 years:
 - 88% of the Pathways clients remained housed
 - 47% of the clients in the linear residential treatment approach remained housed

Tsemberis, S., Eisenberg, M. A., (2000). Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals With Psychiatric Disabilities. *Psychiatric Services*, 51(4), 487-493.



Outcomes

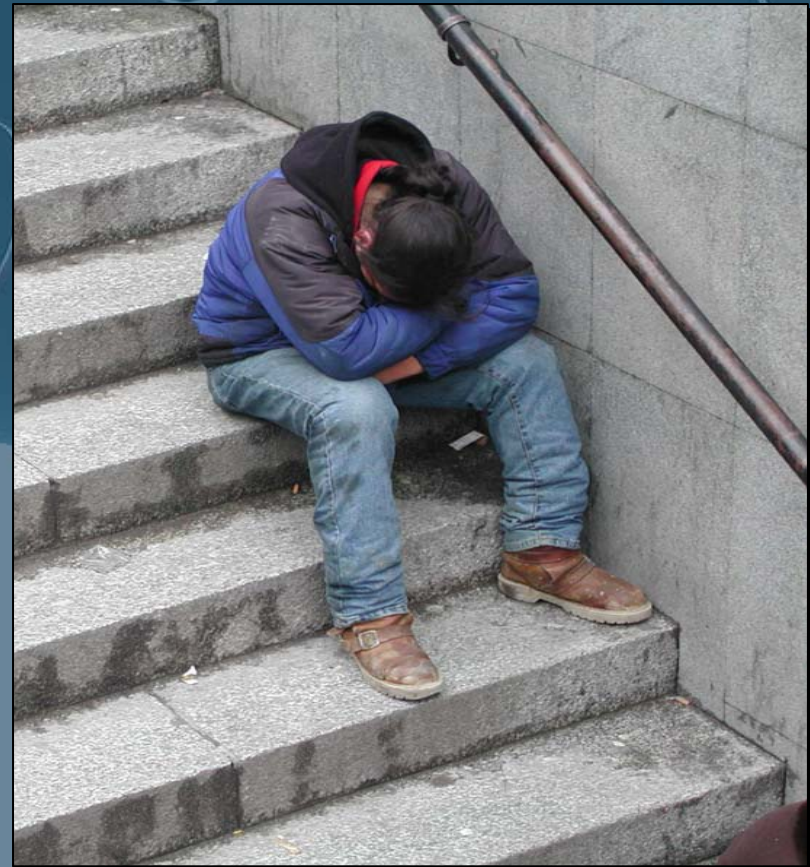
- Over 16 years, Pathways to Housing, Inc. (NY City) has had an 85% housing retention rate among clients
- After 2 years, the Calgary program has a 95% retention rate
- Significant reductions among clients 12 months pre and post program acceptance:
 - Psychiatric Hospitalizations – 75% reduction
 - Recidivism - 46% reduction
 - Police Contacts – 65% reduction
- Decrease in psychiatric symptoms among clients
- 40% of clients who had an addiction at intake are currently engaged in relapse prevention
- 'Housing First' programs are in over 30 US states and starting in many cities across Canada





Pathways to Housing – Cost Reduction

- Average cost of homelessness in Calgary \$134,000/client per year¹
- Pathways costs \$34,000/client per year
 - Including housing, 24/7 support provided by the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team & Administration
 - Key partners have recognized the value of this kind of collaboration for both the client (comprehensive service delivery) and the system (cost savings)



¹ Reported by the Calgary Homeless Foundation



Community Collaboration

- **Alberta Government**
- **Health System** - Alberta Health Services, Emergency Medical Services, Community Health Services
- **Justice System** – Calgary Police Service, Corrections, Crown Prosecutors, Parole/Probation
- **Pro Bono Law Alberta** – created the relationship between Davis LLP and Pathways
- **Davis LLP** - providing pro bono legal support to the program and its clients
- **University of Calgary**
- **Community Agencies**

Pathways Diversion Court



An important piece to solving the 'homelessness puzzle'...



Collaboration Outcomes

- Innovative approach to resolving criminal and legal issues for clients facing barriers
- Promotes client recovery and rehabilitation
- Reduces burden to front line staff (Police, Corrections, Courts etc.)
- Reduces costs to the Justice System
- Reduces recidivism
- Promotes collaboration and efficiency between multiple Justice and community agencies



Summary

- 'Housing First' represents a major paradigm shift in the approach to treating the homeless with mental illness and addictions
- Research has proven the model to be one of the most effective approaches to re-housing and supporting homeless individuals
- Housing First programs are cost-effective
- Pathways to Housing is an Evidence Based model in the USA





More Information

For more information on the program see our website:

www.pathwaystohousing.ca

Or Contact:

Dr. Pam Thompson
Program Director
(403) 266-8881



Acknowledgements

- Video produced and provided for use in the presentation by the Calgary Police Service Multi-media Unit
- Pathways to Housing New York – Dr. Sam Tsemberis
- Calgary Homeless Foundation