



# Housing First Program Fidelity: Is It Housing First?

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# Pathways Housing First Fidelity Scale\* 5 Principles of Housing First Programs



Consumer Choice (in housing and services)



Separation of Housing and Services



Services Provided to Match Needs of Consumers  
(direct or brokered)



Recovery Focused Practice Philosophy



Program Operations



\* Evidence compiled from multiple studies across  
programs, sites, and researchers

# Fidelity is a set of principles and practices used to define the Housing First Program

AIM: Common definition and shared understanding

However, application of practices vary across service providers

1. Housing Type: *scattered-site, single site, clustered, rooming house, apartment, private, shared, etc.*
2. Rent Subsidy: *client's share (30%-100%); duration of subsidy (6, 12 or more months)...*
3. Lease rights: *tenant based, landlord based, master lease. Own lease) etc.*
4. Service variations: *frequency, staffing, types, etc.*





## Applying principles to practice

**PURPOSE:** Understanding and applying program principles to guide program practice and improve outcomes, e.g., what does client driven mean?

A. *“Does ‘choice’ means people do not have to accept any services?”*

B. *“If the apartment is a mess can we ask the client to change his behavior if housing and services are separate?”*

C. *“After the second relocation, should we offer the client another apartment? How many chances does one person get?”*



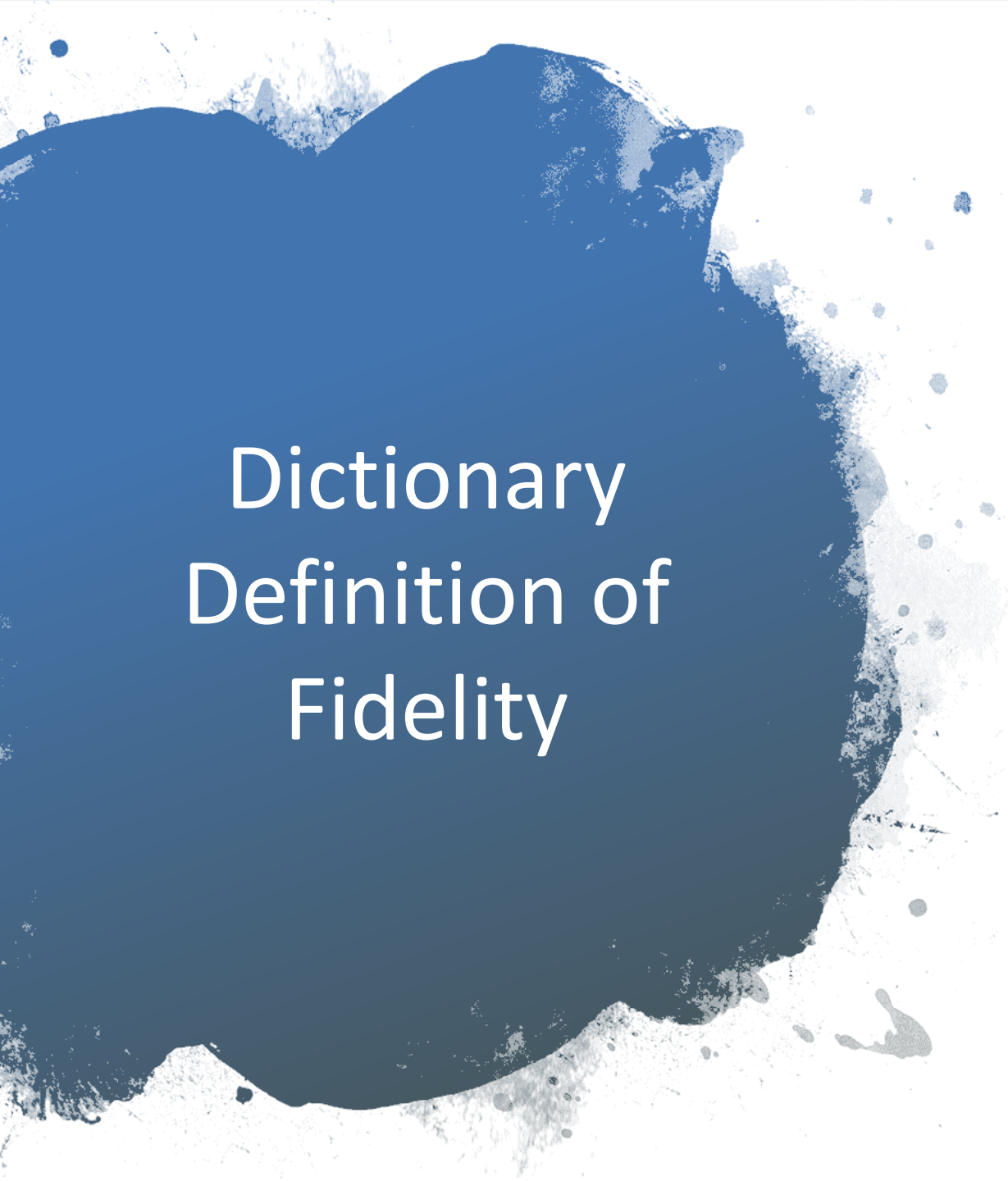
## Program philosophy questions

- *QUESTION AS PROCESS:*
- *1. What is the mission of housing first? Housing stability or recovery?*
- *2. Is scattered site housing our only housing option?*
- *3. Can abstinence based drug treatment be part of a HF program?*
- *4. Is it the responsibility of the case manager to make sure the apartment is in good shape?*
- *5. Must services include a peer specialist?*



## Why Program Fidelity?

- **WHEN IT WORKS:**  
Understand and apply program principles and practices & make improvements
- **WHY IT MATTERS:**
- Goal is to maximize outcomes (ending homelessness and supporting recovery)



# Dictionary Definition of Fidelity

- 1. The degree to which something matches something else;
- 2. Being faithful, loyal to something;
- 3. Accuracy in details

*Talking fidelity off the beaten path*

*Q: is this Housing First?*

*A: Is this a car?*

- *Dictionary definition of car:*
- *a passenger vehicle designed for operation on ordinary roads and typically having four wheels and a gasoline or diesel internal combustion engine. See also hybrid.*



# Is this a car?

- Is this housing first?
- *Access is an issue,*
- *Need for documents,*
- *Higher scores gain easier access,*
- *For most there is no immediate access to ...*



# Is this a car?

- Is this housing first?
- *Philosophically TOP down rather than client driven*
- *Shared beliefs,*
- *Shared meals,*
- *Shared accommodation,*
- *Shared everything*



# Is this a car?

- Is this housing first?
- *Rent supps or no rent supps?*
- *Is the place safe, decent, affordable?*
- *Do they have 24/7 response capacity?*





Is this a car?

- Is this housing first?
- *Is agency culture compatible with HF philosophy of Harm reduction, trauma informed care and motivational interviewing?*

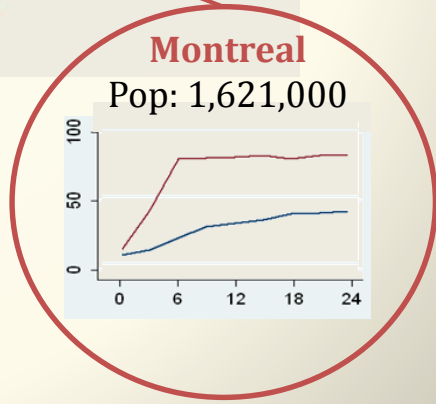
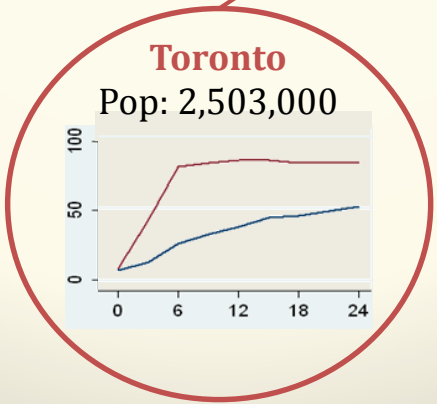
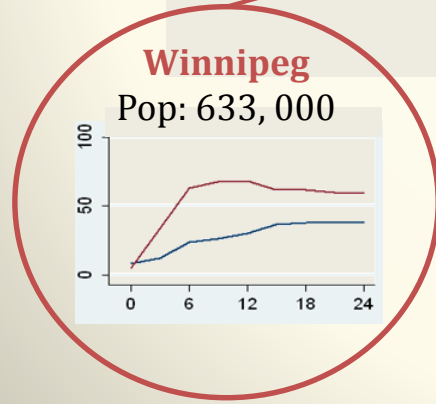
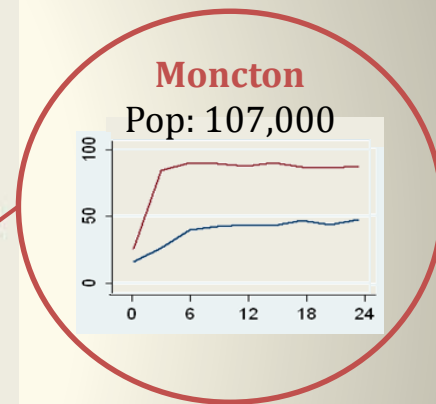


Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# Housing First in 5 Cities (N=2,215)

## Different sizes and populations



What we know...



# Fidelity & Outcomes

Higher program fidelity is associated with:

- Increased housing stability
- Increased quality of life
- Decreased drug/alcohol use
- Reduced use of acute care or emergency services



### Western and Northern Europe:

- Netherlands
- Portugal
- France
- Ireland
- Sweden
- Denmark
- Norway
- Finland
- Germany
- Belgium
- Italy
- Spain
- Czech Republic
- Scotland
- England

Dissemination  
Europe

## Key Point

**Fidelity is fundamental to obtaining good client outcomes**

- **Higher fidelity to Housing First is associated with improved outcomes.**

