



Expanding an Integrated Harm Reduction Approach Across Canada's Largest Shelter System

CAEH 2022

Presentation Summary

- Overview and context
- System response
 - Identifying needs
 - Data-driven approach
 - Enhanced supports
 - System-wide integration

Take aways:

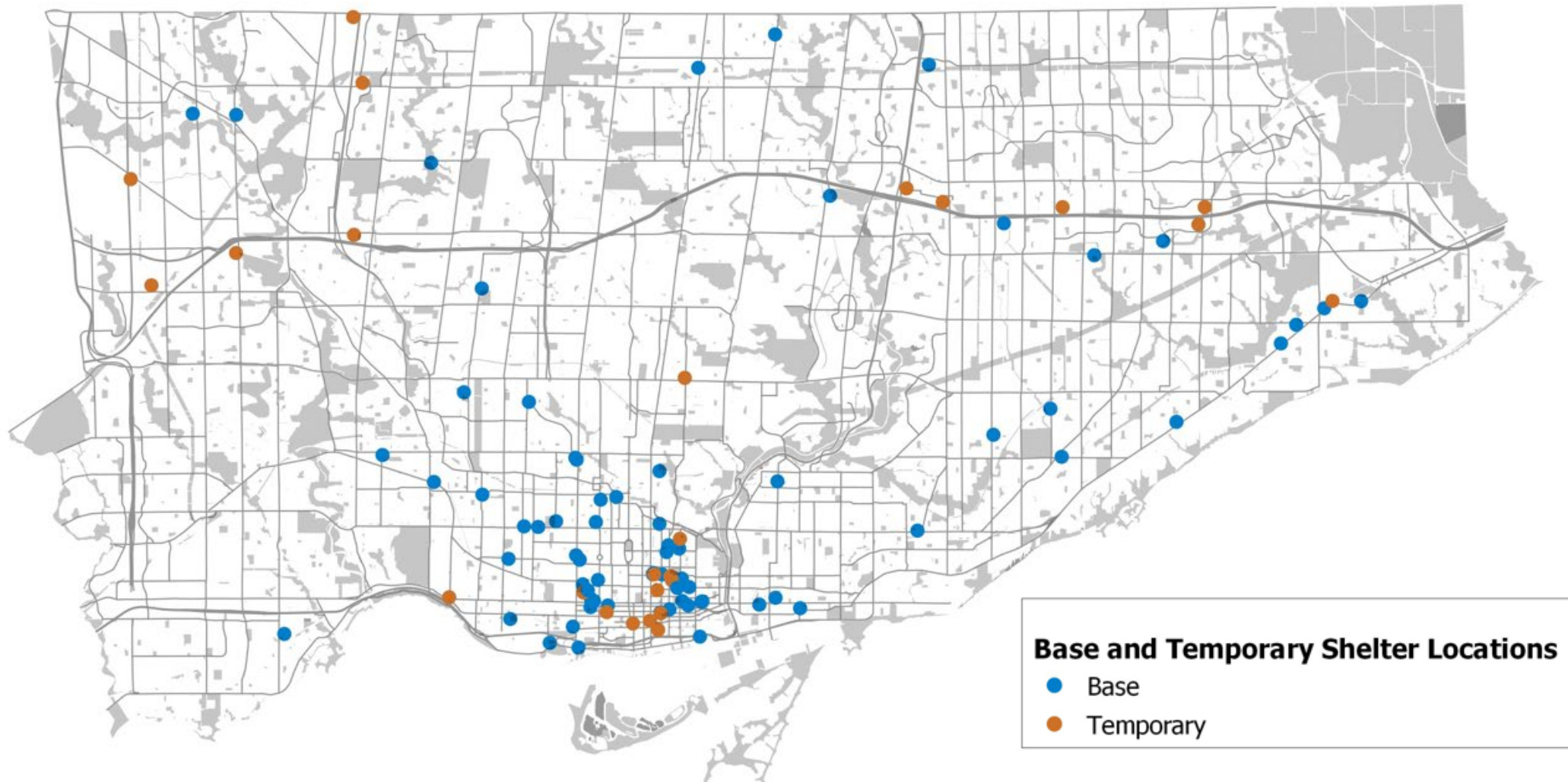
- Assessment process and tool
- Data approach
- Programmatic examples
- 10-point plan guidance document
- Shelter standards for harm reduction



PARKDALE
QUEEN WEST
Community
Health Centre

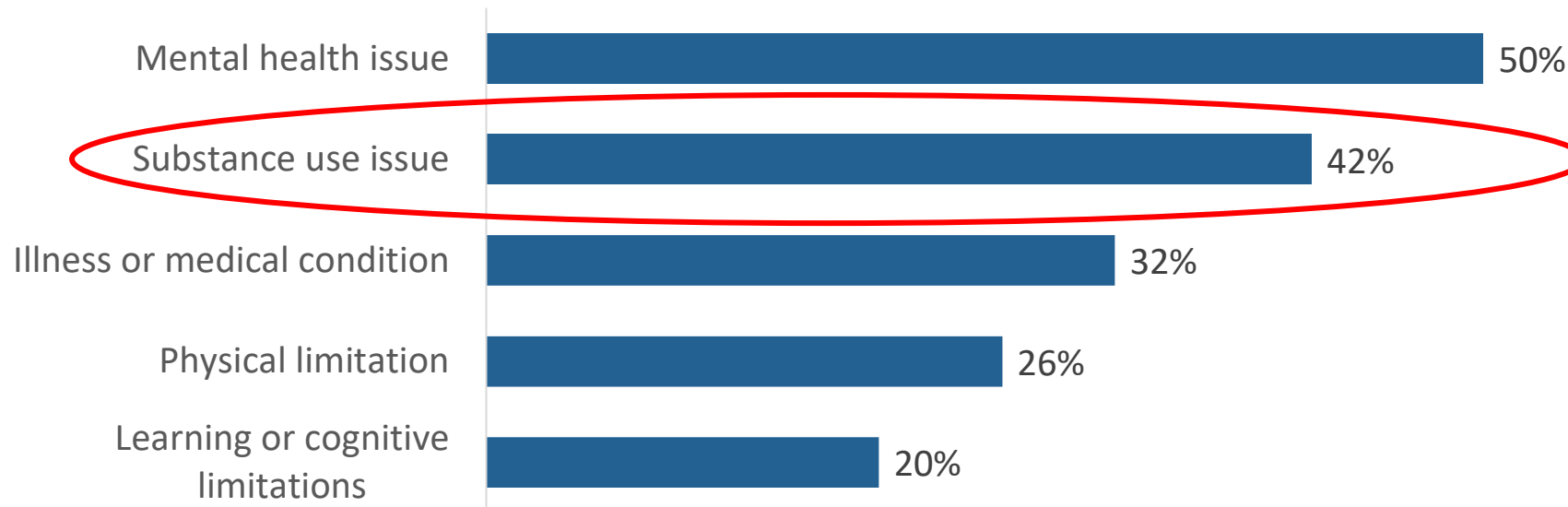


Shelter and overnight service locations



Substance use among those experiencing homelessness

76% of respondents to the 2021 Street Needs Assessment identified having one or more type of the following health challenges



Source: 2021 Toronto Street Needs Assessment Survey Results

The Overdose and Drug Toxicity Crisis

- The drug poisoning crisis and the increasingly toxic supply of unregulated drugs continue to be urgent public health issues in Toronto and across Canada
- 560 confirmed opioid toxicity deaths in Toronto in 2021
 - 87% increase compared to 2019
 - More than 25% of deaths are among those experiencing homelessness, compared to 11% in 2018
- Drug toxicity is the leading cause of death among those experiencing homelessness
 - 221 people experiencing homelessness died in 2021
 - 60% of these deaths were due to drug toxicity, up from 30% in 2019

Shelter Harm Reduction Evolution

Shelter Harm Reduction Framework - 2018

Defines harm reduction and its relationship to SSHA's Housing First approach

Aims to foster dignity for people who use substances across housing and homelessness services

Toronto Shelter Overdose Action Task Force - 2020

Mobilized by community partners

Response to increased risk of overdose due to the pandemic

Toronto Shelter-Hotel Overdose Preparedness and Assessment Project

Integrated Prevention & Harm Reduction Initiative 2020-21

Multi-pronged effort by the City and community agencies to address opioid-related deaths in temporary Covid-19 shelters, hotels and other priority sites

Directive & 10-pt Plan - 2021

Update to existing measures to expand harm reduction and overdose preparedness and supports more broadly across all shelter, respite and hotel program providers

Shelter-Hotel Harm Reduction and Overdose Preparedness Assessment Project

- Harm Reduction sector response to anticipated drug poisoning incidence & deaths during pandemic
- Process: Onsite assessment led by teams of harm reductionists
- Approach: collaborative to address shared concerns, brokering harm reduction resources and cross-sectoral relationship building
- Outcomes: recommendations for improving onsite harm reduction and overdose prevention and response supports and services in immediate, medium and long term





Shelter Harm Reduction and Overdose Preparedness Assessment

Site and Assessment Team Details

Date:

Site Name and Operator:

Site Address:

Assessment Team:

Site Representative(s):

Resident Representative(s):

Harm Reduction Sector Representative(s):

Site Basics:

Site type: Traditional Shelter Respite Shelter Hotel Supportive Housing

Number of residents: _____ Number of beds: _____ OR Number of rooms/units: _____

Gender(s) served (including proportions) _____

Priority population group(s) (eg. Indigenous, youth, 2+SLGBTQ): _____

Staff positions on site: _____

Organizational Policies & Protocols

Organizational policies or protocols include:

- A commitment to a harm reduction approach to drug use
- The requirement for all client service staff to employ a harm reduction approach to drug use
- A commitment to destigmatizing drug use – example: _____
- Non-punitive responses to drug use onsite
- Protections from discharge on basis of drug use and/or drug selling (in and of itself)
- Clear directive for not engaging CAS on basis of drug use alone (if applicable)
- Clear directive for police non-engagement related to drug use alone
- A client-led wellness check system that respects client autonomy and privacy (while balancing safety concerns)
- An overdose response and naloxone administration directive, covering inside and outside incidents
- Other: _____

Client INITIAL intake protocol includes at minimum, UNIVERSAL orientation to the site's:

Overdose Prevention

<p>If I use alone I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Let someone that I trust know where I am<input type="checkbox"/> Find out if someone nearby has a naloxone kit or keep mine close at hand<input type="checkbox"/> Have someone agree to check on me ___ minutes after I have used<input type="checkbox"/> Keep my door unlocked so that someone can help me if I need it<input type="checkbox"/> Consider using a supervised consumption site or having someone spot/observe me while I use	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Other ideas that might work for me:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>My Overdose Prevention Plan</p> <p>The Works 416-392-0520</p> <p> TORONTO Public Health</p>
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Overdose Prevention / Safety Plans

WE CARE ABOUT YOU AND WANT YOU TO BE SAFE

IF YOU WANT US TO CHECK ON YOU IN 10 MINUTES, CALL US

YOU CAN CALL US AT THE FRONT DESK OR NOTIFY ANY STAFF MEMBER AND REQUEST A ROOM CHECK.

IF YOU DO NOT ANSWER THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR, WE WILL COME IN AND CHECK ON YOU.

WE ARE A HARM REDUCTION SHELTER

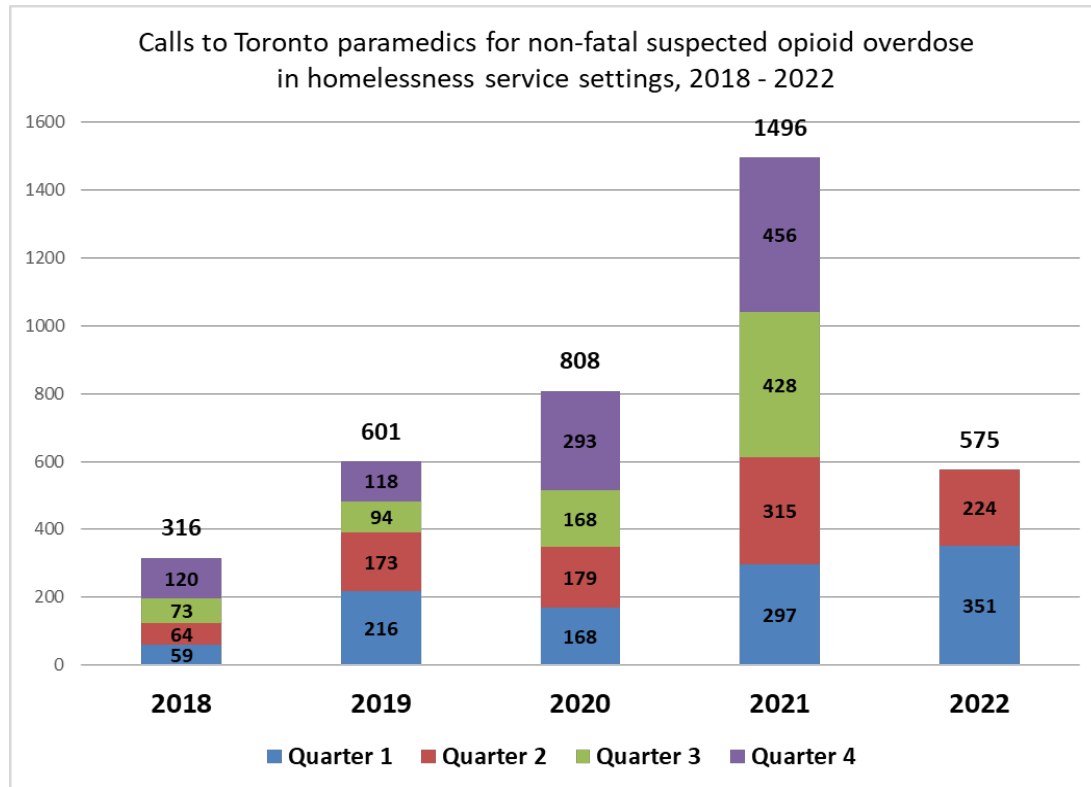
Wellness Checks

NEED HELP WITH AN OVERDOSE? KNOCK HERE!

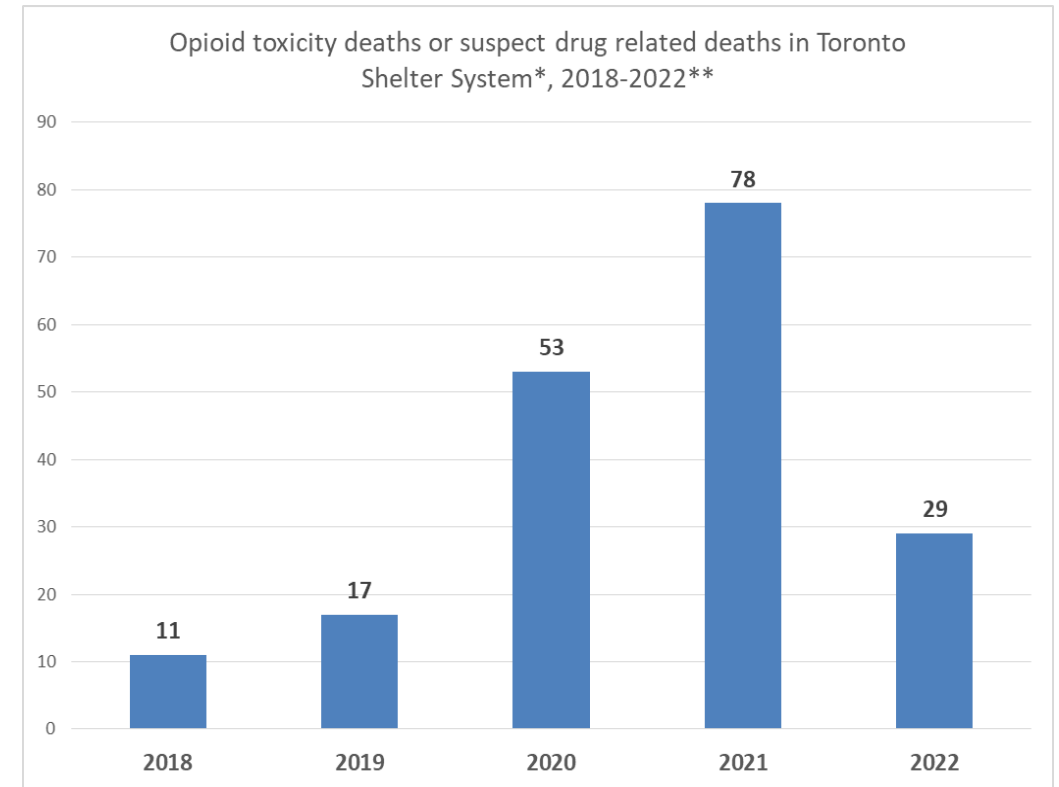
I am trained in overdose response and have naloxone!

Door knob hanger

Overdose in Toronto shelters



Non-fatal overdose calls to paramedics from Toronto shelters continue to increase - 85% increase in 2021 compared to 2020



Fatal overdoses in Toronto shelters also continue to increase - 47% increase in 2021 compared to 2020

*Based on location of primary incident (includes deaths that occurred in hospital)

**2022 data is preliminary

Integrated Prevention and Harm Reduction Initiative (iPHARE)

A multi-pronged effort by the City and community agencies to address opioid-related deaths in Toronto's shelter system

6

- Shelters with onsite supervised consumption services (UPHNS)

23

- Shelters with embedded harm reduction staff supports

12

- Shelters with intensive mental health case management outreach

3

- Shelters with onsite peer witnessing programs

1

- Mobile harm reduction service for shelters

iPHARE Teams

- Six local harm reduction and health agencies partnered with identified shelter operators to provide on-site low-barrier harm reduction support seeking to increase harm reduction capacity in shelter and respite settings

Interventions & Services

- Overdose response
- Harm reduction workshops for residents and shelter staff
- Access and distribution of naloxone & harm reduction supplies
- Integrated Peer Support
- Resident groups, drop-in's and recreational activities
- Substance use safety planning
- Collaboration with partners for linkages to support,
- Referrals and streamlining OD response



Supportive environment



Overdose prevention information and education station



24/7 Low barrier access to harm reduction supplies

Mobile Harm Reduction Services

- Multi-pronged partnership comprised of PQW, ICHA, and TNG
- Provides onsite harm reduction support and services
- Collaboration with partners to provide clinical and Peer intervention
- Oxygen administration in OD events
- Assistance with UPHNS applications and information
- Provides onsite "in situ" harm reduction support for shelter residents self-isolating for emerging public health needs
- Keeps individual and community safe where they already are

Peer Support and Engagement

Why peers?

- Lived experience → expertise
- Openness, trust, respect and comfort
- Integrated approach to health and social care
- Recognizing community members for their crucial role

Integrated Peer Support

- 1) SafeSpot
- 2) iPHARE Peer Program
 - 92 residents received training
 - 27 residential peers hired

Mobile Peer Support



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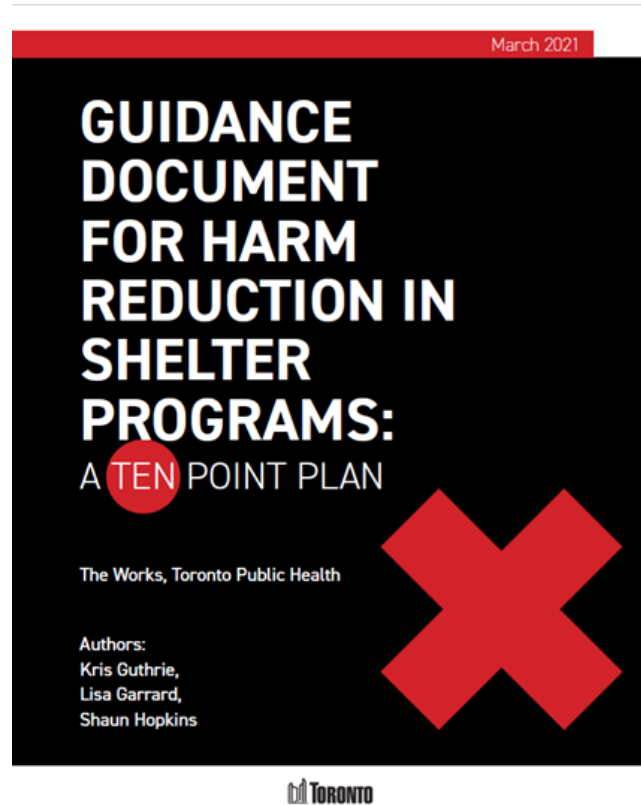
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Mobile Peer Support



10-Point Plan



- ✓ Harm reduction policy
- ✓ 24/7 access to harm reduction supplies
- ✓ All staff trained in harm reduction and overdose response
- ✓ Clients cannot be discharged / service restricted for substance use
- ✓ Involvement of people with lived/living experience in shelter Harm Reduction Advisory Committee, overdose prevention initiatives
- ✓ Overdose preparedness, prevention and response
- ✓ Assess and create safe physical spaces
- ✓ Grief and loss supports for staff and clients
- ✓ Looking at ways to expand
 - ✓ Safe supply and managed alcohol
 - ✓ Mobile services and supports
 - ✓ Supplemental services

Shelter Harm Reduction Directive

- Developed in alignment with 10-Point Plan
- Updates existing measures and requirements for all shelter operators
- Working to support implementation
- Building on partnerships with community-based health and harm reduction providers, shelter operators and people with lived experience
 - Advisory Group – 10 members with lived/living experience
 - Implementation Work Group