



Saskatoon Crisis
Intervention Service

“35 Years of Community Service”

103-506-25th Street East • Saskatoon, SK • S7K 4A7 • Phone (306) 986-1333

JOURNEY HOME – A HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

**Presenting to the National Conference on Ending Homelessness
Montréal November 3, 2015**

Andrea Cowie

Housing First Worker

Background

Saskatoon Plan to End Homelessness

- 2012- guided by United Way of Saskatoon
- Homeless count- identified 380 individuals
- April 2014-Saskatoon's First Housing First Participant is housed

Agency Profile

Saskatoon Crisis intervention Service Inc.

Mobile Crisis Service – 24 hour crisis response

Crisis Management Service

Police and Crisis Team

Agency Profile.....

Journey Home - Housing First Program

- Just expanded to a 4 person team (1 team leader and 3 caseworkers)
- 31 Participants housed since March 2014
- 20 of these participants identify as First Nation or Metis.
- All but 2 of our participants have substance abuse problems.

Housing” Situation immediately prior to Program Entry date

Acute psychiatric facility	1
Couch surfing	7
Detox unit	2
Incarcerated	2
MH respite	1
Shelter	6
Street/living rough	9
Treatment Center	2
Medical Ward	1
Motel.....	1

Intensive Case Management

- Goal is to help individual maintain housing by achieving an optimal level of functioning and quality of life through developing plans, addressing mental health & health needs, engaging in meaningful activities, and building community and social relationships
- Brokerage / Service coordination approach. Utilize our agency's well established relationships with Psychiatry and Mental Health Services

Intensive Case Management....

- Client-Centered, Recovery-oriented, and Trauma informed approach
- Each Housing First worker case manages his/her own caseload, although we take a team approach
- Caseload size ~ 12-15 participants to one case manager
- Weekly team meetings and constant communication amongst the team

How it works

Intake and assessment

- using a common assessment tool - VI-SPDAT – Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Assessment Tool.
- Our program works with participants assessed as having the highest acuity and most vulnerability.
- Centralized Intake

Engagement phase

- Relationship building is key!
- Meeting the participant where they are at.
- Connecting with existing service providers and supports.

How it works.....

Housing search

- Participant choice in type and location of housing, based on affordability and availability.
- Different Housing types to meet the participant's need.
- Scattered Site Housing.
- Relationships established with Rental Companies – Guarantee of rent payment and repairs to any damages incurred.
- Housing Locator

How it works.....

Furniture shopping and Move in day!!!

- Furniture and house wares chosen by participant, and purchased by program prior to move-in day.
- It is critical to have a flexible budget that can cover initial housing costs.

The first 3 months after move-in are critical, and where we provide the most intensive supports.

How it works.....

Connecting Participants to Financial Resources

- Navigating various financial assistance/disability programs.
- Provide trustee services to participants who require and request the service.
- Provide rent top-ups as necessary.
- **Example:** paying rent while participant is incarcerated and awaiting release.

How it works.....

Service coordination / brokerage

- Connecting to appropriate community supports and services (mental health, medical, dental, psychiatry, spiritual/cultural – ie: Elders, education and training, employment, justice, Child and Family Services.
- ALWAYS participant driven.
- Creating inter-disciplinary teams in the community.
- Critical to establish and maintain good relationships with other agencies and service providers.

How it works.....

On-Going in-home Support

- Frequency and level of support is guided by participant needs and wants.
- Varies tremendously – can include life skills, cooking and cleaning, hoarding...
- Home visits with participants are deliberate – focus on establishing and supporting Housing Stability.

How it works.....

On-going support to landlords and property managers

- Frequent check-ins. Addressing issues as they arise.
- **Example:** cleaning and painting a hoarded apartment in order to maintain the relationship with the landlord.

Supporting community re-integration

- A return to citizenship – volunteering, voting, getting adequate ID
- Encouraging and exploring pro-social relationships and activities.

Closing

Lessons Learned:

- Reflecting on a team approach for participants with extremely high needs.
- In a period of building up Cultural and Peer supports.
- Importance of a program budget that allows for coffee, tobacco, lunches, top-ups etc...