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# **Sustaining and Scaling Up Housing First: Research in Action**

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**November 2, 2016, 1:30-3pm, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness,  
National Conference on Ending Homelessness, London, Ontario**

# Two Parts to the Presentation

- **1:30-2:15, Sustainability of programs at the 5 At Home/Chez Soi sites – research funded by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)**
- **2:15-3:30, Scaling up of Housing First (HF) in 6 communities – research funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Partnerships for Health Systems Improvement (PHSI) and done in partnerships with MHCC**

# Part I: At Home/Chez Soi Program Sustainability Research Questions

- **Outcomes** – For the 5 At Home/Chez Soi sites, to what extent are the funding, program fidelity, and expansion/dissemination of HF sustained in the short-term, and do these outcomes vary by site?
- **Processes/influences** – Factors that promoted sustainability outcomes

# At Home/Chez Soi Program Sustainability Research Methods

- **Qualitative Interviews – 121 interviews with key informants, program staff, and program participants**
- **Data Analysis – Thematic analysis**
- **Self-report Fidelity Assessment – done with 9 programs (Vancouver ACT, Winnipeg ACT and 2 ICM teams, Toronto ACT and 2 ICM teams, Montreal ICM, Moncton ACT)**

# The Sustainability Process

- The process of striving to maintain the At Home/Chez Soi (AHCS) programs was marked by considerable stress and uncertainty on all stakeholders at all levels
- There was considerable staff turnover during this period as staff were worried about losing their jobs
- Resolving sustainability issues at each site took considerable time and effort and went on over a period of years

# Program Sustainability Outcomes

## Programs Continuing Post Demonstration Project

- **Moncton – ACT becomes FACT**
- **Montreal – Diogene ICM (other ICM and ACT teams discontinued)**
- **Toronto – Two ICM programs and one ACT program all continue**
- **Winnipeg – Two ICM programs and one ACT program all continue**
- **Vancouver – Rain City ACT continues (ICM program discontinued)**
- **9/12 programs continue**

# Program Sustainability Outcomes – Self-reported Fidelity

Dimension	Vancouver ACT	Winnipeg ACT	Winnipeg ICM – Wi Chi Win	Winnipeg ICM – Ni Apin	Toronto ACT	Toronto ICM	Toronto ICM Ethnoracial	Montreal ICM	Moncton FACT
Housing Process and Structure	3.29	3.00	2.86	3.29	3.5	3.64	3.79	4	2.14
Separation of Housing and Services	4	4	3.71	4	3.71	4	3.71	4	3.71
Service Philosophy	2.99	4	3.83	3.83	3.83	4	4	4	3.79
Service Array	3.89	3.62	2.73	3.28	3.56	3.4	3.6	3.51	3.44
Team Structure	3.44	3.61	3.44	3.45	3.67	3.22	3	4	2.83
Average Across Dimensions	3.52	3.65	3.31	3.57	3.65	3.65	3.62	3.90	3.18

## Program Sustainability Outcomes – Dissemination/Expansion

- Moncton – lack of rent supplements has precluded expansion
- Montreal – beginning of some new HF-like programs
- Toronto – lack of expansion, opposition from supportive housing providers
- Winnipeg – several new HF programs, including ones for women, youth, and Aboriginal people
- Vancouver – expansion in suburban areas, e.g., Fraser,  
/8 Abbotsford



# Factors Influencing Sustainability – Multiple Ecological Levels

- **Broad contextual factors – research evidence, alignment with policy**
- **Community factors – Support or opposition, partnerships, champions**
- **Organizational factors – leadership, training and technical assistance (TTA)**
- **Individual factors – staff changes, turnover, and capacity**

## Factors Influencing Sustainability – Broad Contextual Factors

- The research findings played an important role in sustainability at most of the five sites

***"There's been a huge impact. I think all of those sector groups have recognized that At Home/Chez Soi demonstrated success with the Housing First approach. And that overall it had very good results for the participants who were stably housed; for cost savings for the bigger system; and for better matching services to the needs of those folks. So I think the research definitely demonstrated that..."***

# Factors Influencing Sustainability – Broad Contextual Factors

- **Alignment at federal (HPS) and provincial levels with policy shift**
- **Moncton – shift to FACT, but no mechanism for rent supplements (lack of partnerships between Dept. of Health and Dept. of Social Development), province struggling with deficits**
- **Montreal – eventual alignment with federal HPS policy**
- **Toronto – alignment with poverty reduction strategy**
- **Winnipeg – established End Homelessness Winnipeg in 2015; new programs supported by provincial Housing and Community Development, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and the City of Winnipeg as Community Entity for HPS**
- **Vancouver – BC is creating new ACT teams**

# Factors Influencing Sustainability – Community

- **Opposition by congregate, supportive housing providers**
  - Montreal – emphasis on social housing
  - Toronto – large network of supportive housing providers
  - Vancouver – preference for congregate housing in policy initiatives

# Factors Influencing Sustainability – Community and Organizational Factors

## ■ Leadership

- Montreal – Diogene HF team lead has played a leadership role
- Toronto – Leadership from Toronto AHCS team, Paula Goering, MHCC, connection with Deb Matthews
- Winnipeg – Multiple, shared, collaborative leadership, including leaders from AHCS
- Importance of leadership of peers and people with lived experience (e.g., Vancouver MPA re: housing procurement and working with landlords)

***“Her past experience working in the Ministry, her ability to leverage relationships that she had with government officials, and her understanding of the importance of involving key individuals early in the sustainability conversation ...”***

# Factors Influencing Sustainability – Organizational Factors

- Need for ongoing TTA

***“One of the things that we’ve made sure we’re going to have is the new staff coming in ...they’re going to have to go through getting the HF training to make sure they’re up to speed and even offer it back to some of the original staff because it’s been awhile and we want to make sure that everybody is in compliance with what it is we’re trying to do with the program.”***

# Factors Influencing Sustainability – Individual Factors

- **Staff Changes, Turnover, and Capacity**

***“When we lost our housing coordinator, some relationships that we built with landlords [were lost]. She had all the information. So the minute there was an issue, we would contact her, she would let us know who could deal with it. When this whole transition started and we lost that key person, we lost a lot of connections.”***

# Lessons Learned

- **What worked well?**
  - 3/4 of the programs continued
  - Overall, fidelity to the Housing First model among those programs was good
  - Research findings were important for sustaining programs
  - Ongoing IKT and sustainability conversations with local, provincial, and national stakeholders were important
  - Sustainability worked well when it was aligned with local and provincial policy
  - Leadership and local partnerships for HF were important
  - There is a need for ongoing TTA
  - Facts, values, strategy, persistence (Ralph Nader's recipe for successful advocacy)



# Lessons Learned

- **What worked less well (or what we learned as we went)?**
  - **Loss of staff**
  - **Some provinces struggled with funding and inter-ministerial cooperation and had other policy priorities**
  - **There was opposition to program expansion from congregate, supportive housing providers**

# Experiences at the Sites

## Sam - Moderator

- **Moncton – Tim**
- **Toronto – Vicky**
- **Winnipeg – Scott**
  
- **Open discussion with the audience**

# Part II: Scaling Up Housing First

*Transforming Treatment Services and Housing for  
People with Mental Illness in Canada: A Systems  
Approach to Integrated Knowledge Translation  
(2013-2016)*

# Partnerships for Health Systems Improvement (PHSI) Research Project

- **CIHR-funded Action Research: Intervene & Evaluate HF Implementation**
- **Intervention led by Pathways to Housing**
- **Funded by MHCC (in combination with wider TTA initiative)**
- **Project start converged with HPS Policy shift**
- **Partnered with 6 communities across Canada**
- **Surrey/Fraser Valley, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Waterloo, York Region, & Halifax**

# Community Partners

- **Surrey, B.C.: Becky Doherty, Fraser Health Authority**
- **Saskatoon, SK: Brenda McAllister, Saskatoon Health Region; Shan Landry, United Way; Shaun Dyck, Supportive Housing Initiatives Partnership**
- **Winnipeg, MB: Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council; Shannon Watson, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority**
- **Waterloo, ON: Marie Morrison, Region of Waterloo**
- **York: Christine Hill-Cabellero, United Way**
- **Halifax: Jim Graham, Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia; Sue LaPierre, United Way; Trevor Briggs, Capital Health**

# HF Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)

- On-site Training
- Follow-up Support
- Webinars
- Communities of Practice
- Regional Events
- Fidelity Assessments



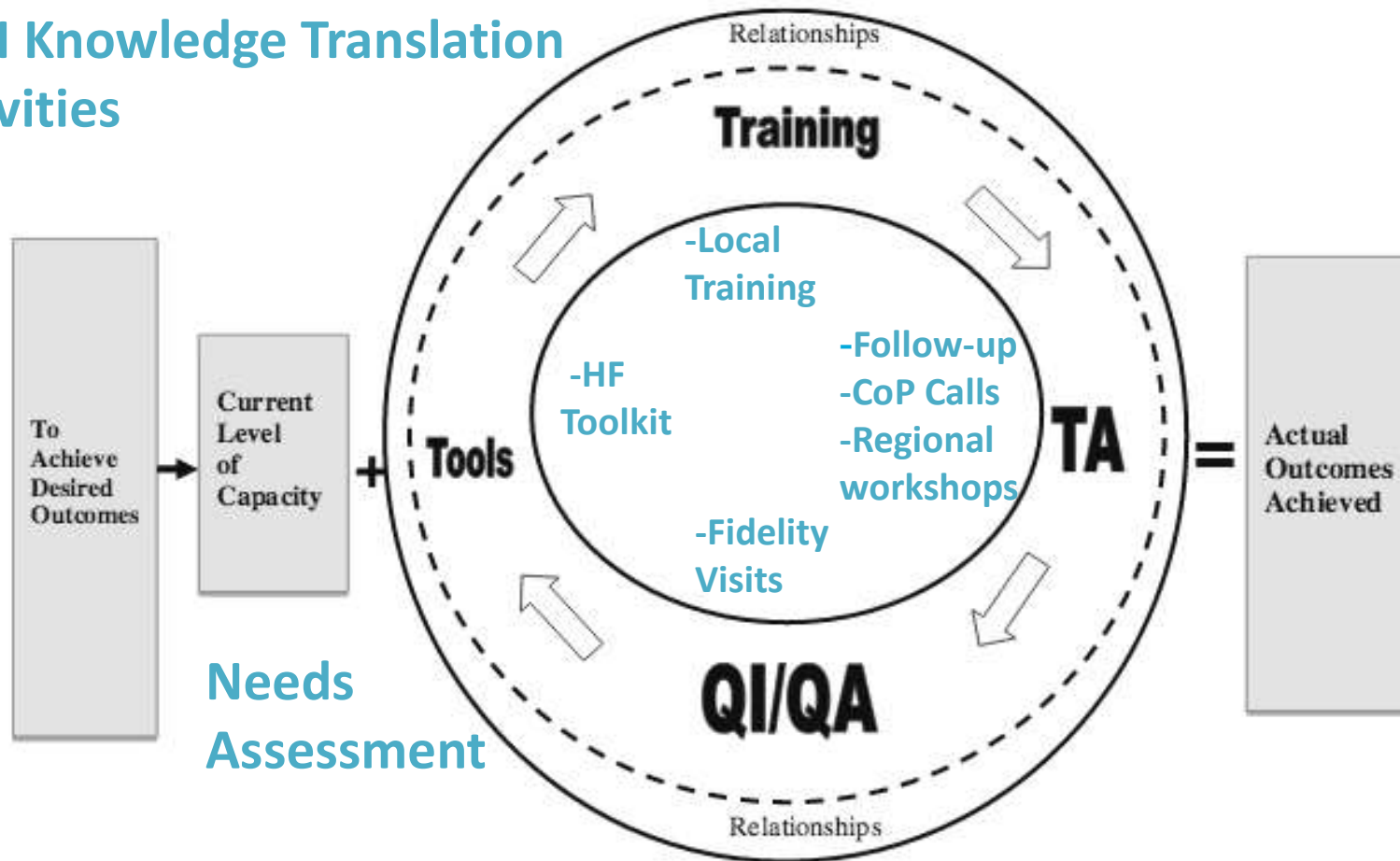
# Knowledge Translation and Implementation Theory

Wandersman et al.'s (2008) Interactive Systems Framework notes the importance of three systems for scaling up a program:

- Knowledge synthesis and translation (At Home Chez Soi Findings)
- Support system (Training and Technical Assistance Team)
- Delivery system (HPS communities implementing HF)

# Knowledge Translation Activities

## PHSI Knowledge Translation Activities



Activities of the support system (Wandersman et al., 2012)



# Factors Influencing Implementation – Multiple Ecological Levels

- **Outer context (of delivery system):**
  - Community factors – Support or opposition, partnerships, champions
  - Broad contextual factors – policy, funding, etc.
- **Inner context: organizational factors** – leadership, culture of program
- **Individual factors** – knowledge, skills, values perceptions re: HF

# Implementation Science

Fixsen et al. (2010) distinguish between several stages of implementation:

- **Exploration** – engaging stakeholders, feasibility, framing the problem and solutions
- **Installation** – obtaining funding, finding space, securing host organizations, service partnerships, hiring staff
- **Initial implementation** – early stages of implementing the program
- **Full implementation** – integration of services into organizations and systems

# Research Questions

1. What contextual factors influence Housing First implementation?
2. Where are communities now?
3. How does training and technical assistance contribute to Housing First planning and implementation?

# Research Methods

## Multiple case study approach taken

- Initial training needs assessment focus group
- TTA workshop evaluations
- Field notes
- Program fidelity assessments\*
- Key informant and focus group interviews\* to evaluate the process of TTA, the impacts, and the factors influencing the impacts on the communities

\*Informed final case studies.

# Interim Case Study: Waterloo

- Housing services divided into housing supports, addiction supportive housing, and mental health supportive housing
- STEP Homes supports adults who are homeless. Consists of 12 programs through 10 different agencies
- Region of Waterloo plays a convening role
- Registry Week completed in 2014 as part of 20 000 homes campaign
- Pilot of pathways HF model in 2014 involving rent supplements added to current supportive housing for 48 consumers
- Pilot involved new collaboration between housing and mental health sectors

# Interim Findings: Exploration

- **Problem and solution framing** – An important part of exploration was framing the problem and solution in terms of homelessness and housing, rather than some other manifestation of homelessness, such as street crime
- **Many paths, one journey** – Because each community has different stakeholders with different histories of collaboration and different degrees of readiness for change, there is no single prescription for how to move forward (community-led, govt.-led, HPS-led)

# Interim Findings: Exploration

## Challenges

- Lack of alignment of planning bodies
- Resistance to HPS policy shift, seen as “top down”
- Lack of history of collaboration among some partners, especially housing and health

## Facilitators

- Having already initiated a planning process
- The new HPS mandate
- Previous experience with HF
- Importance of convenors

# Interim Findings: Installation

- **Resource acquisition** – Obtaining resources for mental health services teams and rent supplements were a major focus of this stage of implementation
- **Host agency** – Who would serve as the host agency for the program was an important issue
- **Client prioritization** – How to prioritize and select clients for the HF program



# Interim Findings: Installation

## Challenges

- Restrictions on use of HPS funding
- Obtaining rent subsidies
- Partnerships with mental health system
- Challenges with multi-agency hosts
- Lack of experience in client prioritization

## Facilitators

- HPS policy shift
- Congruent provincial policy
- Host agency culture



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# What Role Did TTA Play?

## Themes related to the effectiveness of TTA activities

- **Addressing resistance and misunderstanding**
  - “We are already doing HF.”
  - “We can’t do HF here because... (e.g., we have low vacancy rates).”
  - “HF will not work for some people.”
- **Playing the convenor role** – helping to catalyze partnerships
- **Balancing divergent approaches to TTA** – Pathways and other consultants in the same communities

# Final Case Study Activities

## TTA and Research Activities Conducted After the Interim Case Studies:

- Regional network events
- Program fidelity assessments at all sites
- Key informant and focus group interviews to evaluate the process of TTA, the impacts, and the factors influencing the impacts on the communities



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## Where Are the Communities Now?

**All made significant progress in implementing Housing First**

- **Fraser Valley – several new or enhanced ACT and ICM HF teams; centralized intake**
- **Saskatoon – new ICM HF team; centralized intake; rapid housing team**
- **Winnipeg – sustained AHCS HF programs; several new HF teams; centralized intake**



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## Where Are the Communities Now?

- **Waterloo – enhanced HF program, now using rent subsidies; centralized intake**
- **York – early stages of implementation of ICM HF program**
- **Halifax – new ICM HF program in early stages of implementation**





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# Emerging Lessons

## WRT to Scaling Up Housing First:

- Multi-pronged TTA (including evidence re HF)
- Local evidence of success (e.g. evaluation data)
- Leadership (e.g. organizations, individuals)
- System approach to HF planning/implementation
- Taking advantage of timing and policy windows
- Strong host agency and practitioners

# Experiences at the Sites

## Tim - Moderator

- **Halifax – Jim**
- **Waterloo – Marie**
- **Winnipeg – Shannon**
- **Saskatoon – Jordan**
- **Training and technical assistance leader – Sam**
  
- **Open discussion with the audience**



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# Acknowledging Our Colleagues

- **Paula Goering – Co-Principal Investigator (PI) on both projects**
- **Myra Piat – Co-PI on sustainability research**
- **Vicky Stergiopoulos – Co-PI on scaling up research**





## PHSI Co-investigators

- Tim Aubry, University of Ottawa
- Jino Distasio, University of Winnipeg
- Steve Gaetz, York University
- Myra Piat, McGill University
- Jitender Sareen; University of Manitoba
- Sam Tsemberis, Pathways to Housing

## PHSI Decision-makers

- Sue Goodfellow, Streets to Homes
- Donna Pettey, Canadian Mental Health Association/Ottawa
- Tim Richter, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness



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# Further information

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