

**The Maple's Learning Journey:
Incorporating Feedback and Expertise
from Women Exiting Homelessness into
a New Program Design**



Who is Trellis?

Trellis operates dozens of programs serving children, youth, families, singles, and communities in five major streams of work, all supported by clinical and Indigenous service teams. Each stream is based in our practice foundations:

1. Anti-Oppressive Practice
2. Trauma Informed Practice
3. Relationships First

The goal is to provide an integrated continuum of service experiences rooted in common values and approaches.



What is The Maple?



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING... (PLUS)

The Maple is a 25-unit building providing PSH services. The Maple encourages residents who are interested, ready and able to transition to less intensively supported living environments.

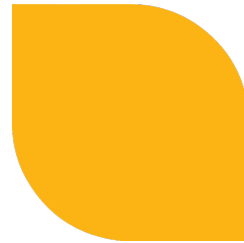
HARM REDUCTION

The Maple provides housing and supports for female-identified people working on safety and recovery.

The Beginning

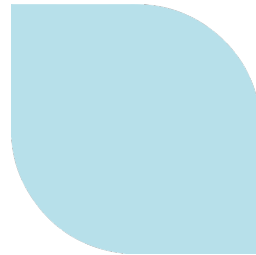


April 2020
Trellis is Formed



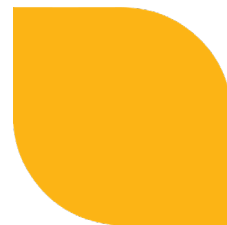
October 30, 2020

Trellis successfully began the transition of The Maple from its previous operator



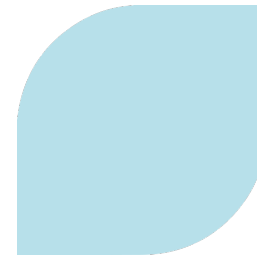
Winter 2020-21

Early decisions to implement common space renovation, on-site therapy access and access to smudge.



Summer 2020

Program planning and design, including a literature review. Singles PSH is new for Trellis, but the organization has substantial related experience



Fall 2020

Trellis leaders get to know staff and clients, and the Impact and Evaluation Team conducts interviews with new and legacy staff.



Winter 2020-21

Development of measurement tools based on quality of life indicators.



Learning in Partnership

Learning Evaluation Partners project

- Identify evaluation framework
- Identifying key learning areas or “domains”
- Developing theories of change
- Data sources: Maple site visit, staff and client interviews
- Collating findings and areas for further learning

Formation of evaluation process

Calgary Homeless Foundation, Alberta Health Services evaluation team, Trellis evaluation team, and the Maple along with 6 other new initiatives

Key Learning Areas

- **Reconciliation** – At the time the Maple launched, 85% of residents identified as Indigenous
- **Building Natural Supports** – Navigating safety, community integration, and natural supports connections
- **Trauma Informed Practice** – Building spaces, policies, and attitudes that facilitate growth
- **Developmental supports** – How best to support healing and skill-building
- **Active Reflection and Integration** – Building a culture of learning at the Maple
- **Health Systems Coordination** – Building relationships with key players in health and justice services



FOUNDATIONS:

- **Anti-Oppressive Practice**
- **Trauma Informed Practice**

Central practice models informing all domains, but especially:

- Reconciliation and Culture
- Trauma Informed Care

Practice intentions

- Keeping power-sharing and cultural safety at the forefront
- Place TIP principles of safety, connection, and coping at center of service delivery

Anticipated challenges

- Power-sharing in a group environment
- Non-Indigenous staff striving to provide culturally safe services and access to traditional healing

“

Gaby and Jess came to do stew and bannock on the weekend and the women really like that. We recently printed sheets and put them on every floor saying “what program do you want to see?” All of it is Indigenous. Dream catchers, beading, opportunity for a sweat.

It would be lovely to say there’s a smudge every day from 8-9, but there’s a lot of worries about – I don’t think we have an Indigenous staff.

- Staff interviews

”

Implementation: Developmental Relationships

Successes:

- Peer led and/or supported programs/activities that promote connection to culture
 - Smudging
 - Cooking
 - Crafts
 - Community volunteering
- Circle Keeper
- Barrier free participation: Allowing for all to participate

Challenges:

- Balancing crisis management with planned programming
- Consistency in staff support positions
- Different teachings around smudge





...I'd go for a 15 minute walk or something and then I'd come back, and then I'd smudge night and day and there were some clients here that were taking part of that and I found that really freaking cool. And it just felt good to be able to do that for other people and let them know that they can smudge too if they wanted.

“They're actually making a room where you can smudge and stuff like that, but you need to learn how to smudge and do it actually right instead of touching it when you're under the influence. And a lot of things, bad spirits, bad energy comes through not doing spirituality right in this building... there should be an Elder that should smudge the place always.”



- Maple residents

Change this year...



84% stable or improved

In Culture & Belonging domain of Matrix

39% of residents report

“The Maple helped connect me to my culture.”

...exploring feedback

Explore the impact of how measures are constructed, how staff see culture, and how the residents see the role of the Maple in supporting their connection

“

Something the ladies have communicated to me in the past: this is supposed to feel like a home and it doesn't. A lot of people were feeling lonely and isolated, there weren't any community activities.

- Staff interview

”

Implementation: Trauma Informed Environment

Safety

- Secure building
- Staff supported – TCI trained

Coping

- Empowerment & Sense of control
- Psychological Healing

Connection

- Voice is shared through shared experience
- Common spaces



**Two residents have successfully moved out of
The Maple and into scattered site housing.**



We can always talk and laugh and just kind of connect that way. And they're caring, they feed us... And it's just something, it's just to get me back on my feet. And it's nice to have supports because I never had supports growing up.

When I talk to some of the staff, I'm able to let things out that I've been holding for a long time. So that's one of the things I really appreciate, the staff.



- Maple residents

“

Well, the safety, that's what keeps me... me being homeless, it wasn't safe for me and it's a home for me. I've never had a home, my own home. But it makes me feel comfortable, a comfortable home.

...it's a safe place.

- Maple residents

”

FOUNDATIONS:

Reflective Practice

A learning and feedback informed organization

- Data-driven
- Committed to continuous growth

Practice intentions

- Create space and time to step back from crisis and reflect
- Grow safety to acknowledge missteps and propose new strategies
- Develop self-awareness and resilience

Anticipated challenges

- In unpredictable environments, finding consistent time for reflection, especially as a group, can be difficult

“

...that's so essential for us all to get together and talk about "this is how we want things to look in this building." Empower all to make decision and not just fall on one person.

- Staff interviews

”

Implementation: Reflective Practice

Successes

- Alignment between case managers and support staff
- Therapeutic debriefing
- Learning and Evaluation Partnership

Challenges

- Communication across shifts
- Often working in 24/7 can make the constant alignment challenging

Future Strategies

- Leveraging clinical support for reflection
- Leveraging cross-agency support to provide coverage that allows for teambuilding time



Central practice model informing several domains, especially:

- Natural Supports
- Developmental Relationships

Foundations of the model

- Connection is a basic human need (and right)
- Lack of connection has concrete negative health effects
- Non-professional connections are typically stronger and longer-lasting than professional connections – thus we prioritize these “natural” supports

Anticipated challenges

- Tension between connection and safety
- Difficulty accessing and restoring natural supports relationships

FOUNDATIONS:

Relationships First: The Family and Natural Supports Framework

Early interviews found...

“

Children aren't guests, they're a child... I think that should always be allowed, for kids to see their moms. A lot of women, their children are also homeless or not in a good situation. We have had children turned away because visiting hours are over. That is shifting... children are allowed any time (24/7). Guests who are banned from the property - we'll reexamine why.

Trellis, you can sign in whoever you want until it's a problem. Until it's a problem, it's not a problem.

”

- Staff interviews

Implementation: Natural Supports

Successes

- Guest policy changes - November 2020
- Opportunities for the resident to engage with social supports.
- Community dinners and brunch
- Weekly activities

Challenges

- Building safety means maintaining some limits on guest access
- Natural supports do not always want to engage



Early Interviews found...

“ It seems like for a lot of clients, when they’re doing well they’re able to reach out and make those connections, but when they’re not doing well, and for some people that’s all the time, they really need other people to reach out to them and hold their hand through the process...

...but that’s putting expectations on the natural support. Who knows what their situation is.”

- Staff interview

”



*I started to feel comfortable in community spaces
this week.*

*I like it when the Maple Team.... put on community
events*

*I like it when the Maple Team.... hangs with me in
kitchen, plans activities*

- Maple residents



Change this year...

81% stable or improved

In Support Network domain of Matrix assessment



61% report

“The Maple helps me stay connected to important people in my life.”

Implementation: Developmental Relationships

Successes:

- Reduction in differential between staff positions, so residents can access any staff they have a relationship with for most supports
- Team education and support around harm reduction

Challenges:

- Some residents prefer not to engage with the team



Change this year...



88% stable or improved

In Self-Care & Daily Living and Physical Health domains
of Matrix assessment

78% of residents report

“The Maple is helping me learn how to take better care of myself
and my health (self-care, medication, appointments, hygiene)”

83% of residents report

“Because of the Maple, I can keep myself safe when using
drugs or alcohol.”



I like it when the Maple Team...

...Help me with medication, appointments, goal setting, and allowing me to vent.

...Helps with my hair and makeup, cooks with me, helps me clean my apartment.

...is aware of what I need to learn and helps without asking.

- Maple residents





*I don't like it when the Maple team...
...tries to parent*

...Doesn't check on me.

*...is busy with each other compared to the team
and the people that live here.*

- Maple residents



Implementation: Health Care Coordination

- Alberta Health Services
- Calgary Police Service
- Crisis Response Team
- PACT



Year-over-year change:

55% drop

In EMS access

52% drop

In ER visits

39% drop

In police interactions



Learnings... and what to learn next

- Learning Partnership - Clarifying our approach to focus our learning
- Cultural programming needs to be resident led
- What feels like a home? Investing in relationships and community

For the future...

- Reflective practice – growing staff capacity
- Continued amplification of resident voices



“

It's where, you might have a roof and stuff over your head, but it's also learning who you are and boundaries of what you know. Things and decisions into your life and how you can go about appropriately asking for the help that you need from others or just learning how to relive all of them pretty much.

- Maple resident

”

Questions?

Crystal Scott, The Maple

cscott@growwithtrellis.ca

403-835-8928

**Victoria Maldonado,
Impact & Evaluation**

vmaldonado@growwithtrellis.ca

403-472-0367

