

What's in a Name?

Exploring the divide between
VAW services and homelessness supports for women

Deserving and Less-Deserving

- Cultural constructs of women in crisis
- Internalizing messages of worth and worthlessness
- Institutional Responses

The Big Question:

Homeless?

Abused?

Differentiated Systems' Responses

- Community Responses: philanthropic responses, awareness campaigns
- Individual Programs: Frontline and Management response
- Navigating Systems: Child Welfare, Income Supports, Subsidized Housing, etc.

What is our hesitation to change this divide?

Our Model

- Martha House VAW Shelter: apartment-style accommodation, 40 beds
- Mary's Place: Individual and Shared rooms, 25 beds
- VAW support services on site: VAW counselling, Legal Advocate, Family Court Support Worker, Child Witness program, Wellness programs
- Second Stage Housing: 30 scattered units, 20 permanent units
- Homelessness Supports on site: Housing Case Managers, Rapid Re-housing, SOS (Housing First)

Fluidity between Services

- Applying a gender lens, we see the links between homelessness and gender-based violence
- Services are tailored to client: take the best from both streams to support client
- Staff in all programs are trained and use both approaches:
 - Ie. Danger Assessment Tool, Safety Planning, SPDAT/VI-SPDAT, Housing-based Case Management

Innovation for Serving Women

- We use the best of both approaches
- Many clients flow between program streams, are eligible for both
- Innovation in Housing: Landlord relationships; buildings occupied by women-headed households
- Innovation in VAW services: after addressing safety risks, apply a housing-based case management approach to service delivery; evaluation tool in VAW through SPDAT.

Future

- Who do we collect data on women's homelessness in our country?
- More robust invitation to women with lived experience to inform how we respond to women in crisis
- Funders require community agencies to collaborate; we need collaboration across all levels of government and inter-ministerial levels