



AN EVALUATION OF THE VAT FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING APPLICANTS

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Evaluation of the VAT

- BC Housing
- RFP early 2016
- Evaluation team
 - Tim Aubry, John Ecker, Whitney Howard, Eric Macnaughton, Sam Tsemberis
 - Familiarity with VAT

Why the VAT?

- **A review of screening tools for prioritization**
- 17 tools were identified
- The VAT demonstrated the most **promise**
 - **Strengths-based**
 - **Easy to use**
 - **Client-centered**
 - **Reliable and valid**



Why this evaluation is important?

- An **external evaluation** has been conducted on the VAT in terms of its **reliability and validity** BUT...
 - There have **not** been any external evaluations conducted on its use in **Canada**
 - We do not have any record of its **relation to housing outcomes** **nor its use within service provision**
 - We do not have any feedback from **clients**



Goals of the Evaluation

- Determine to what extent the VAT has achieved its objectives
 - **Is the VAT doing what it is intended to do?**
- Identify lessons learned in using the VAT
 - **What do administrators of the tool think of it?**
 - **How are clients reacting to be assessed by the VAT?**
 - **How is the VAT being used to place clients into housing?**
- Inform stakeholders whether the use of the VAT should be continued in the allocation of housing



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Evaluation Questions

- **Targeting**

- What populations are being housed by the VAT (e.g. people who are homeless, people at risk of being homeless, and people with a range of support needs) and what is their demographic profile?
- Are the chronically homeless being targeted and housed?
- Does the VAT create any barriers to people seeking supportive housing? If so, what are these barriers? If there are any barriers, are they specific to any sub-populations?

Evaluation Questions

- **Efficiency**

- Does the VAT allow for efficient data collection, entry, and reporting for housing providers and BC Housing staff?
- Is the VAT user-friendly from the perspective of BC Housing, City of Vancouver, non-profit supportive housing providers, and tenants (i.e. is it brief, easily administered by non-clinical staff including outreach workers and volunteers and worded in way that is easily understood by applicants)?
- Do applicants feel that the VAT asks for too much information or too many questions? Is the VAT perceived as positive or negative process with applicants?

Evaluation Questions

- **Effectiveness**

- Is the VAT effective in assessing eligibility of applicants for supportive housing?
- Is the VAT effective in assessing the support needs of applicants for supportive housing?
- Are housing providers using the VAT to inform decisions around housing placements?
- Have sites that used the VAT received appropriate information about applicants who were assessed to match them to appropriate housing and supports?
- What is the value of VAT as a common assessment tool?

Evaluation Questions

- **Consistency**
- Is the VAT being used consistently among housing providers and across the supportive housing sites?
- Does the VAT produce consistent results even when different staff members conduct the assessment or the assessment is done in different locations?

Evaluation Questions

- **Impact** (The positive and negative changes resulting from the VAT, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended)
- What are the impacts of the VAT in terms of:
 - o Housing people who are homeless
 - o Creating a workable tenant mix at housing sites
 - o Housing stability/stable tenancies
 - o Tenant satisfaction with housing and supports
 - o Improved tenant outcomes e.g. sense of well-being, health, income, and social/community engagement
 - o Creating a fair and transparent process around who is selected for supportive housing
- What are the lessons learned with the VAT?
- What could be improved regarding the VAT training?

Methodology

- Mixed methods design
- The numbers (quantitative)
 - Administrative data for seven buildings
 - **VAT scores**
 - **Demographic profiles** (age, gender, Aboriginal identity)
 - **Support needs** (assigned support level)
 - **Housing status** (homeless, SRO, at-risk)
 - **Length of stay in housing** (one building)



Methodology

- Mixed methods design
 - The words (qualitative)
 - **Logic model development**
 - **Steering committee**
 - **Qualitative interviews with:**
 - Stakeholders,
 - Building managers & assistant managers
 - VAT assessors
 - Clients assessed on the VAT



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Methodology

- Quantitative analysis strategy
 - **Average total VAT scores and individual item scores**
 - **Demographic differences?**
 - Relationship of VAT scores and age, gender, and Aboriginal identity
 - **VAT scores and support level**
 - Relationship of VAT scores and support level assignment
 - **VAT scores and pre-housing status**
 - Relationship of VAT scores among homeless, SRO, and at-risk clients
 - **VAT scores and housing tenure (one building)**
 - Relationship of VAT scores and length of stay

Methodology

- Qualitative analysis strategy
 - **Detailed notes taken during the interviews**
 - **Thematic coding of data**
- Allows for an opportunity to “**make sense**” of the quantitative data to a greater degree
 - How do the quantitative findings fit within the context provided by the qualitative findings?

Methodology

- Checking in
 - **Advisory committee meetings**
 - **Interim reports provided**
 - **Asking the necessary questions**
 - **Open dialogue**



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Preliminary Results

Logic Model

Needs That Program Intends To Address	Intended Inputs	Intended Activities	Intended Outputs	Intended Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determining in a systematic way a homeless person's vulnerability to continued instability in order to provide tailored housing placements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trained VAT assessors - Program materials (VAT tool) - VAT data maintenance / analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VAT assessment - VAT data entry - Assess eligibility and needs of applicants - Inform decisions around housing placements to ensure applicants are placed in housing with appropriate supports - Inform decisions around housing placements to ensure a workable tenant mix is created at supportive housing sites relative to the supports available at those sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of VAT assessments - # of housing placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing stability/stable tenancies - Improved tenant outcomes (sense of well-being, and social/community engagement) - Tenant satisfaction with housing and supports - Provide consistency among service providers and non-profits with a common assessment tool - Create a fair and transparent process around who gets housed in supportive housing

Preliminary Results

- Logic Model
- **Needs That Program Intends To Address**
 - Determining in a systematic way a homeless person's vulnerability to continued instability in order to provide tailored housing placements.
- **Intended Inputs**
 - Trained VAT assessors
 - Program materials (VAT tool)
 - VAT data maintenance / analysis



Preliminary Results

- Logic Model
- **Intended Activities**
 - VAT assessment
 - VAT data entry
 - Assess eligibility and needs of applicants
 - Inform decisions around housing placements to ensure applicants are placed in housing with appropriate supports
 - Inform decisions around housing placements to ensure a workable tenant mix is created at supportive housing sites relative to the supports available at those sites



Preliminary Results

- Logic Model
- **Intended Outputs**
 - # of VAT assessments
 - # of housing placements



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Preliminary Results

- Logic Model
- **Intended Outcomes**
 - Housing stability/stable tenancies
 - Improved tenant outcomes (sense of well-being, and social/community engagement)
 - Tenant satisfaction with housing and supports
 - Provide consistency among service providers and non-profits with a common assessment tool
 - Create a fair and transparent process around who gets housed in supportive housing



Preliminary Results

- **VAT Scores from 792 clients**

- Average VAT score = 20.34
 - Standard deviation = 5.67



- This indicates clients were scoring on the low to moderate end of the scale

Preliminary Results

- Individual items

Item	Average score (s.d.)
Survival skills	2.06 (.96)
Basic needs	1.84 (.89)
Indicated mortality risk	1.65 (.93)
Medical risk	2.38 (.99)
Organization/orientation	1.86 (.92)

Preliminary Results

- Individual items

Item	Average score (s.d.)
Mental health	2.45 (1.05)
Substance use	2.45 (1.20)
Communication	1.72 (.87)
Social behaviours	2.03 (.90)
Homelessness	1.88 (.86)

Preliminary Results

- Clients were scoring the **highest** on the **medical risk**, **mental health**, and **substance use** items.



Future Directions

- **Report release**
- **Recommendations**
- **Next steps**



Questions

- Contact details:

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