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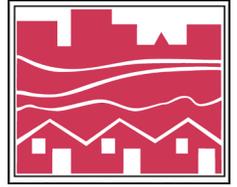
Proceedings:

"Preventing Eviction and Managing for Successful Tenancies"

A Workshop by
The Institute of Urban Studies

for

The Mental Health Commission of Canada's
At Home / Chez Soi Project,
Winnipeg Site
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The Institute of Urban Studies is an independent research arm of the University of Winnipeg. Since 1969, the IUS has been both an academic and an applied research centre, committed to examining urban development issues in a broad, non-partisan manner. The Institute examines inner city, environmental, Aboriginal and community development issues. In addition to its ongoing involvement in research, IUS brings in visiting scholars, hosts workshops, seminars and conferences, and acts in partnership with other organizations in the community to effect positive change.

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Introduction:

On Nov.10 2011, the *Institute of Urban Studies* conducted a workshop on **Managing for Successful Tenancies**. The goal of this workshop was to develop an eviction prevention strategy for the *Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home / Chez Soi* Winnipeg Site. The objective was to bring together project staff and others who have experience in housing a range of individuals and learning from their experience about what it takes to successfully keep participants of *At Home/ Chez Soi* housed.

Sixty-five people from 29 organizations participated. The Institute of Urban Studies facilitated the workshop with assistance of Masters City Planning students from the University of Manitoba.

The quality of the comments and knowledge displayed by attendees was impressive, so it is unfortunate that all comments cannot be reviewed here. Rather, the focus will be maintained on synthesizing these comments so as to support the creation of an eviction prevention strategy. The IUS acknowledges and thanks the participants for their thoughtful contributions to this report.

Background:

At-Home / Chez Soi is a demonstration project of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The project is designed to test the '*Housing First*' model of service delivery in five Canadian cities: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Moncton, Toronto, and Montreal. Winnipeg partners include Manitoba Health and the Institute of Urban Studies.

Housing First is a social service model for housing homeless people. *Housing First* stands in contrast to the traditional *Continuum of Care* model which progresses a homeless individual through emergency shelters and transitional housing, to permanent housing. *Continuum of Care* models operate on a 'housing readiness' criterion that requires individuals to meet standards of abstinence or of program fulfillment before being housed. *Housing First* is based on the idea of housing as a basic human right, and does not require abstinence from alcohol or drugs on the part of the homeless individual; rather a *harm-reduction approach* is used. The model advocates that a homeless individual's primary need is stable housing. Once housing is achieved, services can be provided to individuals to assist with challenges of alcoholism, addictions, and mental or physical health disabilities; as well as provide educational and employment services.[i]

The *Housing First* model has been highly successful in the United States. Typically, 85% of individuals in a *Housing First* program maintain stable housing. Overall homeless populations in the United States have dropped 30% since 2005, attributed partially to *Housing First* programs.[ii] As well, many studies in the U.S. and Canada show that the *Housing First* model is cost effective.

The *Housing First* model is considered best practice by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.[iii]

At Issue:

Evictions and multiple re-housing are common problems in *Housing First* programs and can cause increased pressure on the program. Winnipeg. The Winnipeg demonstration site of the *At Home / Chez Soi* program continues to find ways to maintain stable housing for participants. It has been discussed within the Winnipeg Site, that an **Eviction Prevention Strategy** to help individuals become successful tenants and remain in their housing, would be beneficial to the Winnipeg portion of the demonstration project. The purpose of the workshop on **Managing for**

Successful Tenancies was to explore what such an **eviction prevention strategy** might look like.

Methods:

The goal of the **Managing for Successful Tenancies** workshop was to begin to develop an eviction prevention strategy for the *Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home Chez Soi* Winnipeg Site. By bringing together staff and others that have experience in housing a range of individuals, and learning from their experience about what it takes to keep participants of *At Home/ Chez Soi* housed successfully, the researcher hoped to be able to identify common barriers to successful tenancies, as well us strategies with which to address those barriers..

Sixty-five people from 29 organizations participated. Over 500 comments and suggestions were collected on the topics of 'Breaking the Eviction Cycle' and 'what is required to keep people housed?'

Participants were asked:
- How do you, in your work, define a "successful tenancy?"
- What factors contributes to *housing instability*?
- How do we break the **eviction cycle**?
- What role do landlords, caretakers and property managers play in contributing to successful tenancies?
- How do you engage with **_clients_** in supporting successful tenancies?
- Can we highlight some **_successes_** in keeping people housed and **_challenges_**?
- How can different stakeholders and sectors work together to contribute to successful tenancies?
- What is the **single most important** consideration for keeping people housed?

Participants were divided into four large groups for consultations. The comments ranged from macro level socio-economic issues, to the housing policy environment, to specifics about housing units. The comments contained many areas of overlap as participants in the four groups often identified similar issues. There was a high level of convergence with the background literature. It was clear that the professionals who participated were aware of the problems, best practices, and likely solutions.

This high level of convergence in the comments collected, allowed for a 'self-suggesting' organization of the data: first by scale, and secondly by crosscutting themes. The most prominent crosscutting themes were 'relationships' and 'challenges faced by clients'. The 500 plus comments were sorted, duplications removed, and similar statements grouped together. This left more than 250 comments grouped into seven 'self-suggesting categories. Comments can be reviewed in Appendix B.

Large scale (systemic) issues raised included racism, the lack of federal funding for housing, low social assistance rates and EIA, historical trauma, economic factors, market forces, and the cyclical nature of some government run programs. As important as these are, they are not addressed here as being outside the scope of an eviction prevention program.

There was also a great deal of information gathered about the overall nature of the *At Home* program and its underlying philosophy and stance towards clients. Many of these comments intersect with information from the precedents and are worth discussion in the context of an eviction prevention program.

Findings Overview:

As this report will show, a set of best practices are available for developing an eviction prevention program operating under a *Housing First* model. This would likely include:

- **Identification** of at-risk individuals,
- **Monitoring** -- including regular home visits, especially over the first three months,
- **Developing indicators** -- likely including: changes from baseline mental health, isolation or loneliness, isolation from Aboriginal family or culture, hoarding or extreme cleanliness problems, arrears in rent or bills, and 'fit' of client to unit and neighbourhood,
- **A Communication System** -- empowering tenants, case-workers, landlords, friends, and family to contact help 24/7. This creates capacity for early intervention with problems.
- **Partnerships** -- improved relations among service providers, landlords, First Nations Home communities, and other stakeholders,
- **Education** – life skills for tenants, and information for landlords and community members,
- **Responsibilities** -- of the tenant as part of the education component. Building participant ownership regarding responsibilities, consequences and life outcomes.
- **Crisis Planning** -- for tenants and landlords as part of the education component,
- **Services** -- more flexible and holistic services; include daily programming, and 24 hour supports, and,
- **Engage the 'Circle of Support'** -- using the concept from Mainstay Housing in Toronto, and building a client's support network by engaging family, friend, and community.

Literature Review:

Introduction:

There is a large literature on eviction prevention. However, very little of this is within the context of *Housing First* programs, particularly in the Canadian context.   It is worth noting here, that there are significant differences between types of eviction prevention programs. The vast majority of these programs are aimed at tenants who are able to maintain housing on their own, but are in short-term crisis – usually financial. Appropriate programs for these tenants focus on temporary financial assistance (e.g. rent-banks), as well as assistance with addressing the bureaucracy of assistance programs and the legal eviction process.

In stark contrast to this, stand eviction prevention programs operating under a *Housing First* model. In this case, the tenant is new to housing; often having been homeless for years or even decades; and often with concurrent challenges of mental illness and addictions. For these new tenants, an eviction prevention program is addressing a completely different set of challenges, and, in the case of *At Home / Chez Soi*, the 'rent' is not at issue as it is paid by the program.

Of the more than thirty *Housing First* programs across North America, the present authors could find only one eviction prevention program operating specifically within the *Housing First* model (the Mainstay Housing program in Toronto). Other programs may discuss eviction prevention in a general sense as a goal, but for the most part, little formalized programming appears to be in place. Because Mainstay uses a *Housing First* model this program is considered comparable to the Winnipeg At *Home / Chez Soi* program for the purpose of this report.

The following section reviews the literature on eviction prevention programs in general, followed by a description of the *Housing First* oriented eviction prevention program operated by Toronto Mainstay Housing.

General Eviction Prevention Literature:

Cycles of Homelessness:

The 2006 report *Cycles of Homelessness: Understanding Eviction Prevention and its Relation to Homelessness* is a major report for the Government of Canada's *National Homelessness Initiative*. The study responded to three research questions: [iv]

1. What are the characteristics of tenants served with eviction notices?
2. What are the key points of intervention in the eviction process?
3. What are the best practices of eviction prevention models for populations at risk of homelessness?

The study found there are three distinct groups of people who face eviction, each requiring different approaches. These are the 'stably housed', the 'at –risk of housing stability' and those 'in need of multiple supports to achieve housing stability'. The study notes that those who are high-need require multiple services rather than the simple strategies most commonly used in eviction prevention programs.

The study also identified groups who stood out as being more likely to face eviction: Single Parent Families, newcomers, seniors, Aboriginal people, people with mental health issues, and working poor households - especially income assistance recipients.

The report builds a framework for understanding intervention. It details eight steps on the eviction cycle and concludes that **intervention with problems is only possible early in the cycle**. The study finds that tenants tend to not seek help until late in the cycle, by which time it is too late. The conclusion suggested is to **educate tenants** and **build indicators that trigger early intervention**.

The report also reviews and assesses eviction prevention best practices based on five criteria. Best practices identified include:

1. Information & advice for tenants and landlords
2. Conflict resolution & mediation services
3. Legal representation
4. Emergency financial assistance
5. Third party financial management

Important findings include:
- Intervention with problems is only possible early in the cycle,
- **Threat of eviction** may be **a useful indicator of crisis**. Eviction or even the threat of eviction often indicates that the tenant may have additional problems beyond 'making the rent'.
- '**Good-ness' of fit** between tenant and the unit is an **indicator of risk** of eviction and homelessness
- Information on eviction prevention, for both tenants and landlords, must be targeted to the appropriate risk group.

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CMHC: Cost Effectiveness of Eviction Prevention Programs (2005):

This 2005 report is not specific to the *Housing First* model, but again, highlights some relevant information. Thirty-two eviction prevention programs in eight Canadian cities are reviewed and cover a wide range of initiatives. The report's primary focus is on economic causes of evictions, and finds that most evictions are due to 'small arrears'. The CMHC also reports that most evictions are believed to be preventable because they are based on small problems that grew out of control including: simple misunderstandings between tenants and landlords, cultural or linguistic barriers, late rents, temporary financial emergencies, and illnesses affecting tenant incomes.[v]

The report also reviews the costs of eviction to tenants, landlords and the public. It finds these substantial, and that preventing evictions is significantly more cost effective, but that it is difficult to quantify the public costs because of unknown usage of public services.[vi]

Several of the conclusions of the report may inform the development of an eviction prevention program in a *Housing First* context. The report found that the "top factors of success in preventing evictions" are:[vii]

- **Direct outreach** to tenants
- **Early intervention** before problems grow too large
- Multiple and **complementary services (holistic)**
- Landlords prefer programs that pay rent directly to landlords

Case Studies:

Toronto Community Housing (TCH):

Toronto Community Housing has extensive experience housing tenants with higher needs, and has several policies that can inform a *Housing First* eviction prevention program. It should be noted that changes to THC's eviction policies and programs are currently underway in response to the LeSage report of May 2010. Policy documents include:

- *Policy on Eviction Prevention (2002, reviewed 2011))*
- *Eviction Prevention Policy Guidelines (2008)*
- *Promoting Successful Tenancies: Best Practices for When Our Tenants are Vulnerable (2009)*
- *Toronto Community Housing's Mental Health Framework (2009)*
- *LeSage Review Implementation Plan (2010)*
- *Community Management Plan (2010-2012)*
- *Eviction Prevention Workplan (2010)*

Toronto Community Housing is a landlord, not a service provider. That said, as a social housing provider, a very high percentage of its tenants have higher needs. Seven percent of TCH tenants have a serious mental illness, 28% have a physical disability, and 39% of households have at least one senior.[viii] TCH "houses twice as many people with serious mental illness as all of the Toronto supportive housing providers combined".[ix] They receive no special support funding, and no specialized staff supports.[x]   In light of these challenges, TCH's strategy is to connect vulnerable tenants with supports, and help tenants maintain successful tenancies.

TCH has found that the top indicators of a vulnerable tenancy are:[xi]

1. rent arrears
2. hoarding or housekeeping issues
3. anti-social behaviour

The *Eviction Prevention Policy* is based on tenant education, early intervention, communication, and individual payment plans. These policies are used primarily for rent arrears problems, but again, overlap significantly with information collected on developing an eviction prevention program under a *Housing First* model. The *Eviction Prevention Policy* consists of:[xii]

- **Tenant Education**:
    - A *Tenant Handbook* includes **basic information** on managing a home, paying rent, who to contact for repairs, local services, and information on the Tenant Participation System and rights and responsibilities;
    - Helping tenants understand **responsibility and impacts** of when they don't meet a responsibility;
    - **Train staff in eviction prevention** strategies;
    - Staff may also connect the tenant with legal clinics, or other agencies.

- **Early Intervention**:
    - Focuses on **identifying tenants that need support**: people with mental illness or disability, history of arrears, or a complex rent or income profile
    - **Monitoring of at-risk and vulnerable tenants**
    - **Intervene early**
    - Advise tenants of community resources
    - Obtain a tenants consent before referral to community support agencies
    - **Create an Intervention Strategy** with the tenant: what they need to do, on paper. Includes the point where TCH seeks eviction.

- **Good communication**: Necessary before issues escalates. The program requires documentation of all communication.

    Standards for Interaction with the tenant include:
    - A minimum of three points of direct contact with tenant that give the tenant chance to respond
    - Focus on making the tenant aware of problem
    - Advise tenant on options
    - Record all interactions.

Toronto Community Housing's Mental Health Framework (2009)

As a useful example for the At Home Chez Soi project, the "recommended mental health role for Toronto Community Housing is firmly rooted in its mandate *as a social housing landlord:* to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income households and to create community conditions that minimize risk and promote resiliency. It includes three functions":[xiii]

- To accommodate people with mental illness – a legal obligation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- To support successful tenancies, as defined by the *Residential Tenancies Act*
- To foster an environment that promotes recovery and health.

The Framework recommends an approach to promote successful tenancies based on evidence based practice on "the most effective ways to promote housing stability among people with mental illness, addictions, or an inability to stay housed in the past. The elements include:"[xiv]

- The ability to **choose one's own housing**, de-linked from support,
- **Flexible and intensive supports**, based on trusting and respectful relationships (this support includes regular visits within the home, and the availability of evening and weekend support),

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- **Collaborations among agencies**, particularly between housing and service providers,
- **Connections with community services**, to help participants get involved in community activities and be able to contribute to the community,
- **Social activities**, including communal meals,
- Stable funding,
- Consistent and non-judgmental interactions with housing staff.

The Framework also recommends the use of peer support among tenants as well as assisting tenants to build connections to their non-professional support networks: family and friends. The Framework is supported by ten recommended strategies, listed below.[xv] Many of these strategies are common to other programs, and considered best practice.

1. **Early identification and crisis prevention** - use everyday management practices to identify at-risk tenancies and establish supports before crises happen. (E.g. Have caretakers able to identify early symptoms such as hoarding),
2. **Access to supports** – help tenants who need and want support to get it,
3. **Someone to call in a crisis** – ensure tenants and staff know whom to call when problems arise,
4. **Hope** – inspire hope among tenants and staff that recovery from mental illness is possible,
5. **Self-determination** – entrench opportunities for self-determination,
6. **Connection** – increase opportunities for connection among tenants, engaging the power of tenants to help each other and themselves,
7. Internal resources and coordination – invest in new and align existing resources to drive implementation of the Mental Health Framework,
8. Advocacy – rally the mental health sector to advocate for increased resources and more effective service delivery for Toronto Community Housing tenants,
9. Equipping staff and tenants – equip staff and tenants to fulfill their roles, and foster an environment that promotes recovery and health,
10. Monitoring and evaluation – monitor the implementation of this framework and evaluate outcomes.

Mainstay Housing (Toronto) Eviction Prevention Program:

In 2005, Mainstay Housing conducted a workshop on 'breaking the street / hostel / hospital cycle and recovering from homelessness'. The result was a course aimed at service providers and a *Participant Guide* suitable for tenants, landlords, and service providers. The guide is called *Beyond the Key to the Front Door: A guide to helping tenants keep their homes.* The course has been taken by more than 500 participants. Knowledge gained from the course participants was integrated into the Guide in 2007.[xvi]

The primary lesson emphasized by Mainstay Housing is, "People who have been homeless a long time need to assume a new identity as 'householders.' They need to recover from homelessness."[xvii] Mainstay indicates that for those who have been homeless for a period of time, becoming a good tenant is a learned experience. For individuals who have been homeless, there is a process of healing and learning. "Recovering from homelessness means: Learning new skills, coping with challenges, and assuming a new role - the role of the tenant."[xviii] In addressing these needs, Mainstay emphasizes the need for hope, the use of tailored services for each client, recognizes 'mistakes and failures' as part of learning and recovery and that relationships are needed for positive outcomes.[xix]

The Guide identifies five key preventive measures to ensure successful tenancy. The following review of the key measures is from the Guide.[xx]

1. **Choice:** Offering choice of housing improves tenancy success. Placement of clients into unwanted housing doesn't work. The Guide identifies strategies to help tenants with choices and to work within the housing system.

2. **Orientation at Move-In:** Orientation has three components: the **tour**, the **responsibilities** and the **skills**. The guide also provides strategies for service workers in leading tenants through the orientation. Of particular importance is the recognition that there will be a transition period for a tenant to become successful with housing, and that sometimes this takes years.

   The **tour,** introduces the tenant to the home and is used because you can't assume everyone knows:
   - How to work appliances
   - Where the thermostat is
   - How to use the garbage chute
   - Where the emergency exits are
   - The neighbourhood: transit stops, local shops, community resources

   The **responsibilities,** explain the tenant's role in maintaining the home as well as the landlord's responsibilities.
   - Where, when and how to pay the rent
   - What to do in a fire
   - What changes can be done to a unit, and what can't be done
   - What cleaning products will damage surfaces
   - When an electrical outlet is overloaded
   - How to use a toilet plunger
   - When (and whom) to call for a repair
   - How to separate garbage from recycling

   The **skills,** teaches tenants independent living skills including cooking, cleaning and banking.

3. **Regular visits to the home:** Because the problems that can threaten a tenancy often evolve over weeks or months. Problems need to be identified early and solutions enacted. The first visit needs to be in the first week the tenant moves in. Further visits should occur regularly depending on the needs of the client. Strategies are given for developing and using indicators of threat to tenancy.

4. **A system for paying rent:** this is the single most important factor in successful tenancy. Having a system to pay the rent is easier for everyone. And, for individuals who have been homeless, **paying the rent is a learned responsibility**.

5. **Good Communication,** between landlord, tenant and agency. So the tenant knows who to call when there are problems. So landlords' understand what a service provider can and can't do. So there is clarity of responsibilities. Good communication often includes written agreements between the landlord, tenant and agency outlining responsibilities, protocols for problems, and consequences. Mainstay Housing's Guide provides a checklist of items to discuss with a landlord.

Tools Used by Mainstay Housing:

A comprehensive application and interview process is used to determine what the new tenant needs to access and maintain their housing.[xxi] Mainstay asks prospective tenants what will work for them and uses a **Successful Tenancy Action Plan (STAP)** to provide tools a tenant can use to keep housing.

Successful Tenancy Action Plan has key characteristics:[xxii]
- Individualized
- In writing
- Describes specific triggers (and consequences)
- Solutions oriented
- Defines roles and responsibilities of tenant, support and housing provider
- Whom to contact when there is a problem
- What constitutes "a problem"
- Timelines
- Results can be measured.

Engaging the Tenant: Mainstay works from a belief that the tenant knows what the problem is, and how to solve it.[xxiii] They work with a tenant to find solutions and to build the life-skills necessary to solve problems.

Engaging the Circle of Support: Identify who makes up circle of support: case workers, the landlord, family, and friends.[xxiv] Mainstay tries to build the support networks tenants will need to ensure successful tenancy. This builds on the communication component, and the early intervention component.

Mainstay Housing has a **process to intercede** when complaints are received about a tenant. This allows for dialogue with the tenant and **fast problem solving.**

Discussion:
Common Themes from the Literature, Case Studies and the Workshop:

1.   Learning Process:
Recognition that 'becoming a tenant after being homeless is a learned experience' was much discussed in the workshop. Giving clients the freedom to make mistakes and fail as part of this learned experience was referred to several times. This is also recognized by *Mainstay Housing's Eviction Prevention Program* and its policy *of Engaging the Circle of Support.*

A particular strength of Mainstay's Program is its acceptance that clients go though a transition period where coping behaviours occur. Behaviours such as staying at a new residence only part-time, sleeping on a balcony, or using only one room of an apartment are accepted as coping mechanisms that do not threaten tenancies.

The aspect of 'time to recover' is recognized by Mainstay Housing (Toronto), which argues that it takes years to recover from homelessness. This was also captured by the workshop which notes that the time to make a transition to responsible tenant can take over two years. The workshop also identified the problem that many social workers are in the "NOW" business where they do not have the capacity to work for long-term change. Workshop participants also noted the prevalence of futureless thinking among the homeless, "Live for moment, party, drink. Who cares?"

2. Early Intervention:
Early intervention when problems occur was discussed by all groups at the workshop. Emphasis of the comments was on **proactive approaches** to dealing with issues before they become problems; and the use of intervention as a first step, not the last resort. Also emphasized was the need for **crisis planning** for both the tenant and landlord. This includes having action plans and tools in place for landlords and tenants to mitigate crises.

The Cycles of Homelessness report concludes that **intervention with problems is only possible early in the cycle.** The CMHC report comes to similar conclusions. Toronto community Housing has a policy on early intervention that seeks to **identify tenants with higher needs** and **monitor** those who are vulnerable or at higher risk.

Clearly, early intervention is the best way to resolve problems or complaints when possible. But this requires that case-workers are aware of problems so that they can be dealt with. This in turn requires: Identifying clients with higher needs, monitoring those who are vulnerable or at higher risk, developing indicators of threat to tenancy, and having relationships with landlords in place.

3a. Indicators:
Indicators were more difficult to identify as workshop participants recognized that each client has a unique set of circumstances, problems, and individual factors that could be used as indicators. Every client is different. That said, there were some indicators strongly identified. **Changes from baseline mental health** is one. Noticing such changes requires case-workers to know the tenants well, visit regularly enough to note change (also noted at the workshop), and/or have good communication systems in place for when a landlord, friends or family notice changes in health. This type of policy is captured in Mainstay Housing's '*Regular visits to the home*' policy as well as TCH's *Mental Health Framework* strategies.

Workshop participants identified **isolation / loneliness** as a precondition to problem behaviours and therefore should be investigated as a significant indicator. Isolation is less strongly captured in the literature, although again Mainstay housing partially captures it in the '*engaging the circle of support*' policy. TCH emphasizes social activities and building connections between tenants. Of note for the Winnipeg Site is isolation from Aboriginal culture. Separation of an aboriginal person from their family or culture (for instance moving from a Home Reserve to a urban area) should be investigated as a possible way to identify individuals who are at higher risk or may need supports.

3b. Indicator: Rent:
The *At Home / Chez Soi* program pays participant's rents, eliminating 'problems with paying rent' as an indicator. Yet rent as an indicator should be kept in mind, especially for those tenants of the program who continue to maintain a home after project completion. Late rent, rent arrears, or threat of eviction is an indicator that a tenant is experiencing additional difficulties (beyond just paying the rent), and suggests the need for support (e.g. financial planning/household budgeting).

3c. Indicators: Monitoring
Recognized at the workshop as 'always be involved, maintain contact' and 'important to visit in first week'. This is also an important component of Mainstay Housing's eviction prevention program. It is especially important when a client is first housed. Mainstay recognizes that mental illness or problem behaviours often develop over time. Regular visits can allow for identification of emerging problems.

Reports from Case-Workers of the Winnipeg At-Home demonstration project suggest that contact is not being maintained at a high-enough level. Those clients who participate under the ACT

stream do receive regular and frequent visitations in their homes. Although visits are at times limited to medication dispensing at the doorway without entry to the home. All others receive lower levels of visitation. Several factors have been brought to the attention of the IUS. First, some service agencies feel that clients should come to them. Although this is more efficient for the agency, it makes it impossible to check on the client in their home and therefore identify emerging problems such as hoarding / housekeeping issues, or conflicts with neighbours. Secondly, and far more importantly, it is reported that caseloads are far too high. There simply has not been enough time for caseworkers to consistently visit clients in their homes. There are reports of clients going three months without a visit in their home. Lastly, staff turnover at the service agencies has resulted in difficultly with long-term monitoring and effective relationship building with clients.

3d.   Indicator: Fit of Housing to Client

An important insight raised in the workshop was the 'correct fit' between clients and housing to ensure successful tenancy. This critical criterion was not fully fleshed out by participants; however, 'correct fit' was also identified by the Cycles of Homelessness report as an indicator of risk of eviction and homelessness.

3e.   Indicator:

Other indicators mentioned include cleanliness and hoarding, both also identified by TCH.

4.   Choice:

Mainstay Housing has recognized the importance of 'Choice, not placement'.[xxv] Mainstay has found that placement of clients into housing the client doesn't want doesn't work. It is important for the tenant to make choices about their housing so they 'meaningfully participate in all aspects of their tenancy as they move through their journey of recovery'.[xxvi]

TCH emphasizes, "The ability to choose one's own housing, de-linked from support".[xxvii] That is, that supports continue regardless of where a client chooses to live. This continuity of support is important.

The workshop captured this idea as 'client empowerment and sovereignty' which was discussed in a variety of circumstances including making choices in selecting housing. Workshop participants also reported the desire of clients to get a fresh start, a new chapter in their lives by moving to a better neighbourhood.

It is recognized that the extremely low vacancy rate in Winnipeg profoundly limits the options the program can pursue and the choices available to clients.

5.   Service delivery:

Provision of holistic, multi-disciplinary, flexible supports was discussed in the CMHC report and TCH's *Mental Health Framework* and is echoed in the workshop comments. An important problem identified in the workshop was the need for 24 hour supports, so tenants and landlords can get help when a crisis occurs. This is especially necessary after regular business hours but currently lacking.

An important component of supports often overlooked and addressed in the workshop, is 'daily programming'. Boredom was suggested in the workshop as a precursor to problem behaviours. Daily programming appears in the case studies, as TCH's *Mental Health Framework* "Social activities, including communal meals".

Support services require a way to contact them. This is clear in other eviction prevention programs. As TCH strategy states, "Someone to call in a crisis – ensure tenants and staff know whom to call when problems arise". But this communication system should also extend to landlords, and the family and friends of tenants; as they are likely to notice changes in behaviour, or be around when crisis occurs.

6.   Family Supports:
The comments from the workshop recognized the importance of having family supports, community supports, and visits from family and friends. Mainstay Housing uses the tool of *Engaging the Circle of Support*. This involves identifying the wider support network of the client and helping to build the necessary contacts and support network.

7.   Advanced planning for Crisis:
Workshop participants noted the need for **Crisis Planning** for both tenants and landlords. Plans should include: contact numbers, after-hours support, emergency funds (for damage deposits, rents, repairs, moving costs, etc.) Landlords and resident managers need to be able to contact the tenant's support network **fast**! – allows for early intervention, before problems get out of hand.

8.   Education:
Education is a very strong theme in both the literature and the workshop. Emphasis at the workshop was on teaching basic life-skills including budgeting, conflict resolution, daily living skills, knowledge about the unit, and day to day planning. Knowledge of rights and responsibilities, and as well as of available benefits / programs / services was also deemed important. There was also recognition that low levels of literacy are a problem for understanding leases and accessing services.

Mainstay Housing captures this in its policy on 'engaging the tenant' as well as the Orientation at Move-in. TCH has included education in its Mental Health Framework and has gone as far as creating a *Tenant Handbook* providing basic information (although this does not teach life skills). Both also include info on who to contact when the tenant needs help.

An important point noted in the workshop is that education needs to extend to the greater community – landlords, resident managers, other residents, service workers, case workers, and the neighbouring community – not just tenants. Landlords were distinctly identified in the workshop as having education needs regarding what to expect of new tenants, avoiding stigmatization, building capacity to identify emerging problems, and who contact when problems occur.

9.   Responsibility:
Responsibility of the tenant was addressed in both the literature and the workshop, usually involving an education component, and importantly, the consequences of failing to meet responsibilities. The workshop emphasized personal responsibility on the part of the tenant, and understanding of the rules and consequences of actions. Tenant responsibility forms part of the Tenant Education portion of TCH's *Eviction Prevention Policy*.

Landlord responsibilities were also identified in the workshop as important. These responsibilities include respect of tenant rights and privacy, as well as maintenance of the property.

10.   Relationships:
Fostering good relationships between the multiple players and organizations of the program, as well as with the surrounding communities was identified by all participants of the workshop as critical to success. Communication among services was identified as a challenge. This is also

complicated by the tenant right to information privacy, which makes it difficult for to share information between service agencies, case-workers, landlords, family and other support networks. Relationships also crosscut all other categories of information. A key insight raised is that each relationship is different and must be understood differently.

Good relationships with landlords were repeatedly cited as critical and that landlords should be viewed as a partner to success. Proactive development of this good relationship was considered the best course. Multiple strategies were suggested including providing education and capacity building for landlords before the placement of clients, and improved communication networks between landlords/resident managers and case-workers/service providers. Workshop participants noted the current lack of communication between support workers, tenants, and landlords; as well as the need to improve working relationships with other organizations (esp. Residential Tenancy Branch, Employment and Income Assistance, Child and Family Services, and the Winnipeg Police Service) to overcome flaws in the system of supports.

Working with clients to ensure their good relationships with neighbours, landlords, resident managers, support workers, and personal family and friends was deemed an important goal. This goal is captured in Mainstay Housing's tool *Engaging the Circle of Support.*

Partnerships with First Nation home communities was brought up at the workshop to bridge support/service gaps and build important connections. The importance of an Aboriginal person maintaining contact with their culture was emphasized.

More consistent contact between tenants, landlords, and support workers was cited as **the critical factor** in keeping the program successful.

Conclusions / Recommendations:

It is clear from the literature, case studies and information gathered at the workshop that a set of best practices exist for the development of an eviction prevention program operating under a *Housing First* model. This would likely include:

- **Identification** of at-risk individuals,
- **Monitoring** -- including regular home visits, especially over the first three months,
- **Developing indicators** -- likely including: changes from baseline mental health, isolation or loneliness, isolation from Aboriginal family or culture, hoarding or extreme cleanliness problems, arrears in rent or bills, and 'fit' of client to unit and neighbourhood,
- **A Communication System** -- empowering tenants, case-workers, landlords, friends, and family to contact help 24/7. This creates capacity for early intervention with problems.
- **Partnerships** -- improved relations among service providers, landlords, First Nations Home communities, and other stakeholders,
- **Education** – life skills for tenants, and information for landlords and community members,
- **Responsibilities** -- of the tenant as part of the education component. Building participant ownership regarding responsibilities, consequences and life outcomes.
- **Crisis Planning** -- for tenants and landlords as part of the education component,
- **Services** -- more flexible and holistic services; include daily programming, and 24 hour supports, and,
- **Engage the 'Circle of Support'** -- using the concept from Mainstay Housing in Toronto, and building a client's support network by engaging family, friend, and community.

Much of the present work has been informed by the programs based at Mainstay Housing (Toronto). Mainstay also conducts workshops on eviction prevention for organizations working with homeless persons. It is recommended that the Winnipeg Site draw upon this experience and **consider hosting the workshop "Beyond the Key to the Front Door" in Winnipeg.**

Finally, and in light of the pronounced differences between programs aimed at addressing a short-term issue faced by otherwise long-term tenants; and the type of programming being discussed here for homeless persons facing mental health issues and new to housing; that perhaps **a different term should be developed other than "eviction prevention".** The authors suggest instead either, **"managing successful tenancies"** or **"stabilizing tenancy".**

These elements sketch out the beginnings of an eviction prevention program for the Winnipeg site of the *At Home / Chez Soi* demonstration project. These ideas are now returned to the participants of the *Managing for Successful Tenancies* workshop for further feedback.

Appendix A: Resources

Guide to Keeping Housing:

Toronto's Mainstay Housing's guide *Beyond the Key to the Front Door: a guide to helping tenants keep their homes* is available at:

> http://mainstayhousing.ca/publications/index.htm

Tenant handbooks:

Toronto Community Housing's *Tenant Handbook* available at:

> http://www.torontohousing.ca/faq/community/tenant_handbook

Reports:

Reports from Toronto Community Housing are available on their *Eviction Prevention* webpage:

> http://www.torontohousing.ca/eviction-prevention/resources

Informative reports include the *Mental Health Strategy*, the *Eviction Prevention Policy*, and the *Toronto Community Housing's Implementation Plan – LeSage Review (2010).*

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Appendix B: Data from the
Managing Successful Tenancies Conference

Grouping 1: large scale issues outside of the context of the At Home program or eviction prevention program

All large scale issues raised were barriers to success. These are systemic problems and not about the tenant

Society / system Level:
- **Discrimination:** stereotypes, racism, mental health stigma & fear,
  - Ageism: bias against youthful tenants for fear that they'll party all the time.
- **Policy**:
  - Lack of federal and provincial policies & action on housing. No new social housing in last 30 years.
  - Low welfare rates
  - System is inflexible – policy driven, not people driven
  - Punitive approach of system
- Cultural norms – against accommodating visiting family members
- Historical trauma – residential schools, 60's scoop, limited rights of Indian Act
- **Economic factors**:
  - recession,
  - poverty,
  - unemployment, underemployment
- **Market forces:** rent increases; low vacancy rates pushing up rents, condo conversions, rent hikes following renovations, sales of residences, condemnation, waiting lists for single bedroom units.
  - Lack of affordable and diverse housing stock generally.
  - Lack of attention on need for housing in rural areas
  - Reliance on fringe banking (pawn shops/money marts) to cover damage deposits
- **Demographic**:
  - Need to address health issues of aging homeless population
  - Reserve to urban migration putting pressure on housing market.
- Cultural safety – Identify and rethink the power dynamic
- "Poverty industry" a barrier
- Justice system that is punitive not reformative.
- Problems with confidentiality. (Privacy of clients trumps when service providers wish to give information to landlords.)
- "Gang takeover" in neighbourhood (it attracts more issues); bringing the street home

Problems with other Programs:
Many issues were identified of conflicts with or between other programs. EIA, CFS were viewed as highly punitive, forcing clients to remain in poverty, instead of working for a better future.
- Minimum wage too low
- Increased provincial/federal support desperately needed (Welfare, EIA and portable housing subsidies)
- Punitive aspects of CFS: Youth transitioning out expected to fend for themselves. Loss of a child results in forced move to smaller residence.
- Punitive aspects of EIA: Change of family/household size reduces residence size. EIA only gives you one damage deposit. Living common law can result in clawback of benefits.
- Hospitalization or long-term treatment programs leading to loss of housing.
- Incarceration leading to loss of housing (for other members of the family).
- Lag time before being eligible for programs. Eg: Clients released from prison can't immediately access income and housing supports, and can't apply in advance.

Recommendations:
- Change federal, provincial policy, or tri-level policy on housing. We need safe, affordable, appropriate, and good quality housing stock
- Update funding formula for welfare, EIA and portable housing benefit to meet rising rental amounts.
- Develop a rent-bank to help with damage deposits
- EIA mobile I.D. clinics so people can have easier access to getting I.D.
- Mobile banking services for people without access to safe banking.
- Need for a directory for landlords to post affordable vacancies.
  - (The Winnipeg Rental Network is working to develop)

Grouping 2: comments referring to the overarching philosophy of the At Home project

There was a great deal of information gathered about the overall nature of the *At Home* program, and its underlying philosophy & stance towards clients. Most of these comments will be familiar to those who know *At Home*. *Although not all comments received were relevant to informing the development of an eviction prevention program, the comments can inform it.*

Philosophy / Guiding Principles:
- 4 essential elements of well being: housing/food/friend/ and community. We need to address these elements for successful tenancies.
- Have hope and understanding, unconditional support and compassion
- Understanding the process of change. Recognize that a person's readiness for housing is on a spectrum.
- The importance of making mistakes; recognize the spectrum and process of learning. Don't always protect the client from learning experiences. People need to be given the opportunity to fail, it is a process. Recognize that achieving successful housing is a transition. Build an understanding system. People move through phases and need different services each phase. Service milestones on continuum of service. Scales of success are different for everyone
- Have action plans and goal setting
- Recovery not a short term process!! Time to make transition can be long (well over 2 years).
- Shift in policy to be people-driven and flexible
- Holistic approach to services
- Be consistent. Be persistent and be creative
- Understand the historical (multi-level) trauma
- Don't be quick to negatively respond/end the relationship – take smaller steps
- Respect privacy. Home visits to tenants help, but it's important to respect privacy.
- A harm reduction approach that accommodates peoples' addictions
- Protection from exploitation / coercion.
- Not blaming the victim.
- Human rights respected. All parties respecting rights of others.
- Working from a place of respect. Remember that we're working with real people.
- Recognize cultural definitions of homelessness / mobility.
- Security of tenancy
- Individuals are treated as a typical tenant (same opportunities, reduced stigma, do not stand out from other residents)
- Have a housing plan
- Proactive about good news, Measuring success
- Clear articulation (mapping) of responsibilities needed

Approach to Service Provision:
- Multidisciplinary approach to meet diversity of client needs; have staff with different skills –provide a "one stop shop."
- Service providers must be flexible within our roles, "do what needs to be done." – helps to build trust. Be willing to do new/unexpected things; expand to broader sectors
- Bring a team together to identify the gaps in a clients support/programming. Work together; Teamwork and Collaboration.
- Identity gaps in the system: what isn't available?
- MHCC Difficult Case Review Panel has been successful. Provides fresh eyes/input, it is connected to expertise and can make immediate fixes (phone call)
- "Always be involved"; Maintain contact; Adjust level of contact as needed
- Early intervention and proactive approaches to dealing with problems.
- Positive reinforcement
- "Strength-based approach"
- There should always be someone to stand for them- Advocate
- Getting a tenant into a unit ASAP isn't always best (unfamiliar / uncomfortable with a neighbourhood)

Approach to clients:
- Client centered; relational enrichment. Person centered service, case by case for planning and decision making. Partnerships / programs dependent on the client, each person needs a highly tailored program

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- Tenant empowerment and sovereignty are essential.
- Meaning of success is unique to each individual, success defined by the individual. Have tenant identify problem(s) and solutions.
- Inclusion of clients in decision making. Respecting choices of the client. Right of client to make choices, can't force mediation. Requirement of consent from tenant
- Lower client/support ratio
- Help clients to learn the system

Grouping 3: comments about the At Home services / program

The greatest number of comments was on service provision and about the clients themselves, (groupings 3 and 4).

Community:
- Importance of having family supports and community supports, visits from family, friends. People will have natural supports, not just professional, so build relationships and connections.
- Celebrate the success/milestones – Sharing circles to engage people
- Support group / building trust
- Developing community for new tenants with events
- At Home program participants have formed networks amongst themselves for support.

Case Management:
- Intensive and adaptive case management
- Have action plans and goal setting. Plan for long-term success. Don't think short term.
- Advanced planning for crisis prevention
- Case by case health assessment and services
- Needs based support, assessment of support needs (drug / alcohol)
- Treatment of symptoms: manage mental / addictions   (use a report card)
- Monitor / assess / flag (for report card). Recognizing patterns and changes. First 30 days are critical!! Monitoring crucial. Then next milestone is 3 months. Then it's a bit easier.
- Frequent contact necessary. Weekly contact meetings, ongoing troubleshooting. Ensuring follow-through. Visit with the tenant in their home the first week they live there. Consistent contact between tenants, landlords, support workers
- Listen to clients/tenants. Clearly understanding the clients' goals.
- Building relationships with tenants and earning the tenants trust
- Identify and recognize (exploring) the client's gift. Look for the opportunities. Build new skills. Going from "zero" to leadership
- Recognize the problem, look for causes.
- Have consistent, pre-determined meeting times and days, meet them at a convenient location
- Working with tenants to set goals
- Build rapport / trust with tenants to find problems with landlord
- Don't take things personally
- Showing up on site when something happens.

Program:
- Meeting program criteria – many fall through the cracks
- Need for practical resources
- Early eviction prevention plan. Intervention should be a first resort, not a last one. Being pro-active in dealing with issues. Eviction protection plans. Provide crisis planning – for landlords
  - Indicators: cleanliness, hoarding, **changes from baseline**. Early intervention & indicators.
  - Mediation / eviction. Who should be at the table? Right of tenant to decline mediation and choose participants: Probation officer, landlord, social worker, service provider
- Transition from high to low support – recognize a continuum
- Flexible programming that offers people options: they may not be ready now for independent living but may be in the future.
- Not rushing – choices should be available to tenant
- More options, choices in housing and programming. Tenants need to have a range of options, flexibility and freedom to choose.
- Consistency in service delivery
- Many tenants need advocates, or training on how to advocate for themselves.
- Info sharing – among agencies is critical.
- Recognition of language and literacy abilities

- One on one outreach programs
- Be transparent in the service provided. As support workers we need to be clear and honest about the role we play, and the services we provide. Be honest with clients when they do something wrong
- Build self-esteem of clients so that they can say 'no' when they are asked to do something that they know they shouldn't. For example so they can say no when friends/family want to stay with them
- Statute of limitations for tenancy history (permanent record) – pardoned or given a clean slate?
- Share information with people on the ground and learn from each other (cross workplace sharing of best practices)
- Identify and support volunteer positions
- Taking the tenants skills that they have learned on the street and show them how to use them off the street.

Financial:
- Direct rent payments
- More financial support for contingencies, Quick response fund – for emergencies
- Allocate funds weekly/biweekly instead of monthly

Supports:
- 24 hour support for landlord and tenant.
- After-hour care and supports need to be in place for success.
- Service is required at peak periods (check days, weekends, full-moon), which are times not supported by health-care workers
- Make supports accessible
- Supply supports in long-term housing
- Expand financial and material supports
- Have supports (training, financial resources, networks) for professionals involved in housing

Education:
- **Life skills:** budgeting/money management, groceries, laundry, daily living skills, organize and instill routine, review rental agreements with clients, day to day planning, independent living training, organize/maintain units, cleaning and maintenance. The "what" and "how"
- Tenants need to know how to access support services. Help navigating the (mental health) system
- Needs of education for tenants and service workers
- Teaching harm reduction practices
- Giving tenants information about who to contact when they need help
- Fight stereotypes: through greater public education and awareness.

Services:
- Day and daily programming or activities to stave off boredom
- Keep client involved with recreation and work
- Home cleaning service

Housing:
- Requirement to share with a roommate is a problem of policy and availability
- Housing typology is too limited for Aging and life stages
- Increase alternative living arrangements (semi independent/communal)
- Decentralize housing. Increase diversity of housing options / types of housing

Recommendations:
- Develop a storage service for clients (EIA only provides 3 months storage)
- Educating others about issues, not just tenants (landlords, other residents, community).
- If you say that you're going to do something for someone (a client or landlord) then do it.
- Develop peer mentors for long-term tenancy
- Pre-planning for tenant moving (make sure everything is ready and they have what they'll need).
- SCOPE moving service (a community enterprise moving service with more affordable rates. Moving costs can be exorbitant for some)
- Develop more models where the support workers help with building repairs to make housing our clients more attractive.
- Develop a clearinghouse where all agencies get together to purchase furniture, and have buying power when working with moving companies and storage options.
- Practical solutions like SCOPE are more cost effective than providing services such as mental care.

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- Identify and support volunteer positions – requires senior management support/commitment. If participants are on disability get them involved with the volunteer benefit (to get them more money and increased involvement with others).

Challenges:
- No references is a problem
- Some supports require religious / faith commitments
- "Landlord slamming" is a problem. Personal responsibility on the part of the tenant is important.
- Relationship breakdown: family / other tenants / care-taker
- Many social workers are in the "NOW" business where they do not have the capacity to work for long-term change
- Lack of capacity in having front-line staff trained and knowledgeable of housing addressing housing instability
- Lack of communication between support workers/ tenants/ and landlords. Support workers are not given enough notice about tenants' eviction.
- Multiple issues, interrelationships between them
- Dealing with addictions - Social stigma, unsympathetic legal system, other authorities

Grouping 4: comments related to the tenant

The greatest number of comments was on service provision and about the clients themselves.

Success, capacity and aspiration of clients…
- Emotional attachment to home, sense of ownership, feeling safe and secure. A sense of 'home', pride in residence.
- Feeling of "belonging" in community, becoming part of the community, welcomed in building and neighbourhood
- Transitioning from negative to a positive outlook. Moving away from a dependency mindset
- Hope for the future
- Tenant sovereignty. Sense of freedom / independence (ability to live alone)
- Empowerment and knowledge lead to good decisions
- Stays in one place (stable residence)
- Confidence of the client
- The client is happy and successful
- Personal growth = opportunities. Moving from housing to employment.
- Improved social interactions
- Awareness – ability and willingness to use support services

- Understanding of tenancy guidelines, understanding the rules
- Understanding rights / responsibilities = empowered landlord and tenant
- Understanding of consequences of actions
- Respect for property
- Behaviour modification / consequences

- Capacity to maintain the unit, keep it clean
- Pays bills on time, rent money goes to rent instead of other purchases
- Learning by doing
- Good basic life skills: Budgeting, Conflict resolution skills

...v.s. Challenges
- Mental health: symptoms of illness: hoarding / cleanliness
- Cognitive impairment: FASD, autism
- Addictions, alcoholism, solvent abuse, in and out of treatment
- Social isolation and loneliness: inviting the party home, bad visitors
- Disconnection from supports, inability to connect with client or unwilling to accept help
- Health decline
- System dependency
- Lack of confidence
- Hard to house client, out of options
- Financial instability, Cannot afford rent, Moving/Mobility Costs, Bankruptcy

- Measures are often received negatively by the tenant, it's a "psychic blow" to the tenant. Can lead to a hostile response, including vandalism.
- It's an emotional situation, can take courage on part of tenant to resist eviction or deal with it.
- Short-term thinking – futureless thinking on part of tenant: "Live for moment, party, drink. Who cares?"

Client Knowledge:
- Lack of awareness of rights and responsibilities
- Literacy issues – can't understand notices; may be ashamed to seek help
- Inexperience (e.g. lack of life skills due to age or culture)
- Lack of knowledge about unit upkeep or being a good neighbour.
- Lack of knowledge of available benefits / programs / services
- Inability to mediate; lack of conflict resolution skills. Lack of anger management skills

Socially unacceptable behaviours, 'unsocial' behaviours:
- Violence, prostitution, dealing, noise / disturbances, sexual harassment, complaints about tenant, breach of parole or house rules, relationship violence, threatening behaviour, arson, incarceration/criminal activity, gang involvement, conflict with neighbors/ property manager/ landlord
- Cleanliness, lack of self-awareness, lack of awareness of cultural norms
- Property damage, changes to the unit, pets

Recommendations:
- Social isolation is a critical factor and early indicator

Grouping 5: comments about the housing itself.

Comments regarding the housing itself were more straight-forward and easier to compile. Themes were location, choice, quality and safety. An important insight raised was the 'correct fit' between clients and housing to ensure successful tenancy. This critical criterion was not fully fleshed out by participants. However, 'correct fit' was also identified in the literature as an indicator for successful tenancy or eviction.
- Having choice of housing and neighbourhood is important for client sovereignty
- Location of the building is as important as the building itself, especially a neighbourhood that is a positive influence
- Place should have a sense of community
- Affordability
- Access to transportation (bus stop)
- Quality of housing, maintenance / upkeep
- Safety of housing.
- Nearby accessible resources – programming, supports, clinics, drugstore, food-store are important.
- Have safety nets (supports) at the housing
- Amenities of building (eg laundry)
- The place of residence is functional (fulfills tenants needs)

Challenges:
- Lack of choices for location; dangerous/bad neighbourhood
- Bedbugs; Infestation
- Poor housing stock; poor maintenance by landlord
- Lack of emotional investment in home or community
- Location – unsafe social environment
- Poor locations (far away from bus stops, support services, grocery stores)

Grouping 6: comments specific to property owners / resident managers

Relationships with landlords are critical. Landlord should be viewed as a partner to success. Landlords have an interest in attracting stable long-term residents.
- Plan for varied landlord/resident manager awareness/capacity to deal with clients.
- Provide crisis planning – for landlords
- Engage landlords and resident managers and provide pre-placement information, education, training, and capacity building. Including:
    - o Understanding of program. Manage expectations and be realistic.

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- Landlords and resident managers need to be able to contact the tenant's support network **fast**! – allows for early intervention, before problems get out of hand.
  - Enhance landlords' and resident managers' professionalism.
  - Knowing the role of the service worker. What they can and can't do.
  - Respecting clients' boundaries/rights/privacy.
  - Consistency in dealing with clients.

- Ensure ongoing communication by building a positive communication network between tenants, support workers, resident managers and landlords.
  - Landlords and resident managers need to be able to talk to the tenant's support network, know about resources, and how to contact.
  - When communicating with landlords At Home needs to have a plan or goal in mind (don't waste landlords' time).
  - Ensure that At Home is realistic and follows-through with what it tells landlords it will do.

- Creating realistic expectations / agreements between tenant and landlord
  - Realistic expectations (eg level of understanding / literacy) (clients desperation to get a home will sign anything)
  - Clear understanding by clients of what rules are and consequences. "post the rules"
  - Possibly engaging in client / landlord contracts re behaviour.

Challenges:
- Landlord personal beliefs can be very negative – Stigma and racism
- "There is no accountability for landlords"
- Landlords want assurances for rent payments
- Some landlords won't take EIA tenants.
- Caretaker may not share property owners' positive attitudes
- Threatening behaviour by landlord
- Respecting boundaries
- Failure of landlord / caretaker (eg maintenance)
- Condemned buildings

Recommends:
- Foster positive relationships with landlords' and resident managers'.
- Develop a comprehensive education program for landlords' and resident managers'.
- Provide crisis planning – for landlords
- Develop a communications network for landlords' and resident managers'.
  - Eg: present to Professional Property Managers Association
  - Provide 24 hour support for landlords, they need to be able to contact support services at any time when there is problems.
- Recognize when landlords are "Going above and beyond."
  - Incentives & rewards program for landlords who work with tenants.
  - Highlight good landlords, instead of focusing on problems.
- Have landlords involved in eviction prevention program (it is valuable for them to be involved – less time with empty units).
- Develop a basic repair/yard maintenance program/business that employs clients and builds positive relationships with landlords (Based on RAY's STEP program).

Grouping 7: comments specifically addressing issues of relationships

Fostering good relationships across the multiple layers/players/levels of the program was identified by all participants as critical to success. Relationships also crosscut all other categories of information. A key insight raised about relationships was that each relationship is different and must be understood differently. As well as seeing the 'system' of connections between the players in the program, it was also important to recognize the different types of connections. Although these different connections were recognized by participants, the nature of the connections was rarely fleshed out.

- Info sharing between service providers – regular communication
- Bell Hotel: Good model of multi-jurisdictional partnership
- Specifically build partnerships for buildings / tenants

Community Relations:

- Good will of community is important for placing clients.
- Tolerance of neighbours/community, impacted by communication of the program as well as actions of the clients.

Landlord and resident manager relations:
- Relationships with landlords and resident managers were oft cited as a critical component for success. Proactive development of this good relationship was considered the best course. Multiple strategies were suggested including providing education and capacity building for landlords before placement of clients; and improved communication networks for the landlords/resident managers' use.
- Landlords must have good relationships with <u>both</u> the client and the At Home project. The nature of these two relationships will be different. Suggestions included:
    - Organizing (weekly) activities that foster relationships of clients / landlords
    - Presentation by At Home to Professional Property Managers Association
    - Means/venue to connect landlords (PPMA)

Client Relations:
- Clients have the largest number of relational connections to be maintained, yet were often cited as more difficult. Relationships included with neighbours, landlords, resident managers, support workers, and personal (family and friends).
    - Personal boundaries and relationships with others
    - Positive relationships with other tenants in the building.
    - Relationships with other tenants.

Support Workers:
- The relationships of support workers with clients and landlords/resident managers were often spoken of.
- Support workers need to have a relationship built with clients (tenants) first.
- Just go and "hang out"; engage clients in their environment; connect in an informal setting – "go to them"

Relationships with other service organizations:
- Need to engage government and non-profits for social service/housing provision
- Good relationships with RTB – residential tenancy board
    - Willingness to mediate
    - Informal mediation too
    - Measured response to complaints
    - Ethical conflict resolution
- Build better working relationship / process with EIA
- Build better working relationship with CFS
- Build better working relationship with police / prison
- Good connections with health resources.

Top items:
- **Consistent contact between tenants, landlords, support workers were cited as the critical factor in keeping the program successful**

Challenges:
- NIMBY reactions from neighbours
- Relationship problems with community – social skills, bad habits, negative attention

Recommendations:
- Improve working relationships with other organizations (esp. RTB, EIA, CSF and police) to overcome flaws in the system of supports.
- Partnerships with First nation home communities – bridge support/service gaps, build connections
- Be willing to engage clients in an informal setting.

Appendix C: Endnotes

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xix   Ibid, p.10.

xx   Ibid, p. 17-28 passim.

xxi   Peters, Volletta. "Eviction Prevention: Leveraging the strengths of people with complex needs". PowerPoint presentation delivered at the Supportive Housing for Persons with Complex Needs: Professional Development Conference, St. John's, Newfoundland, 27 May, 2008. By Volletta Peters, Director of Tenant and Member Services, Mainstay Housing, Toronto. Slides.7-9. http://nlhhn.org/pastevents.htm

xxii   Ibid, p.9, 31

xxiii   Ibid, p.11.

xxiv   Ibid, p.13.

xxv   Mainstay Housing, 2007. page 17.

xxvi   Peters, Volletta, 2008. Slide 6.
xxvii   Connelly, Joy and Adair Roberts, 2009, p.3.