

Title: Homelessness in London, Ontario: Assessing the sustainability of Housing First in light of a shift to models of prevention

Background: Housing First (HF) is internationally recognized as an evidence-based model for the development of programs that target homelessness. In London, Ontario, there are a handful of HF programs and research has investigated their efficacy. However, HF is only effective for "managing" homelessness, whereas prevention is also needed. Through a recent update of Canada's national funding for homelessness, municipalities are seeing an increase in resources to prevent homelessness. With additional funding on offer, research needs to move beyond questions of HF efficacy and instead ask how to fully evolve a system of both responsive and preventative models.

Objectives: (1) Assess the long-term sustainability and integration of HF, and (2) identify priority areas for homelessness prevention in London to create a policy plan for funding new prevention activities.

Proposed Methods: The study will begin with semi-structured interviews with community stakeholders (N=12): City of London project managers; service providers from HF programs; and members of the London Homeless Coalition. Emergent themes pertaining to HF sustainability and homelessness prevention priorities will be used to develop a policy plan. A second round of interviews with stakeholders will be conducted to validate and gauge attitudes about the proposed plan. The plan will then be revised to produce a final strategy for homelessness prevention.

Future Applications: My proposed research will produce a context-specific strategy for homelessness prevention in London, identifying the most effective allocation of funding available. This research will contribute to knowledge about HF sustainability and the relatively new body of literature on homelessness prevention.