

**FINAL REPORT ON THE FINDINGS OF THE
SECOND IMPLEMENTATION
EVALUATION FOR THE MONCTON SITE OF
THE AT HOME / CHEZ SOI PROJECT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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THREE PAGE SUMMARY

This report documents the findings of the second evaluation of the implementation of the At Home / Chez Soi program in Moncton. It provides a summary and synthesis of the information collected from different stakeholders of the program, namely landlords, service staff, and key informants comprised of housing staff, program managers, and the site coordinator.

Overall, the findings of the second implementation evaluation highlight the continued successful implementation in large part of the At Home / Chez Soi program in Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick. There was consensus among the members of the team conducting the second fidelity assessment, program managers and staff that the key ingredients expected of a Housing First program modeled on the *Pathways to Housing* program were present in the program. In particular, the majority of program managers and staff viewed the process as implementing a program that assisted a large majority of its participants to establish stable housing and begin the process of recovery and community integration.

The second fidelity assessment indicated that the program in Moncton had effectively addressed a number of issues raised in the first fidelity assessment. However, the second fidelity assessment also identified the presence of a number of challenges that continued to be faced by the program. Notable program areas requiring further development included the integration of substance abuse treatment into services delivered by the ACT team, the use of individualized service planning focusing on recovery goals, and the addition of a peer specialist to the ACT team.

Cross-cutting Themes / Issues

1. Overall, the second fidelity assessment conducted in January 2012 confirmed that the At Home / Chez Soi program is continuing to implement at a high level of fidelity a *Housing First* approach modeled on the *Pathways to Housing* approach. As well, the results of the second fidelity assessment reflect program development in the direction of improved fidelity in a number of areas particularly as it relates to the breadth of services offered to participants by the program. In general, the findings emerging from the second fidelity assessment corresponded with the perceptions of the program shared by key informants and program staff.
2. Despite this high level of program fidelity and successful program development and improvement, the second fidelity assessment identified a number of areas in which the program could be improved. Noteworthy program areas requiring further development included the integration of substance abuse treatment into the services offered by the ACT team, goal-planning with participants that would direct services to be more recovery-focused, and the addition of a trained peer specialist as a member of the ACT team.
3. According to key informants and program staff, a large number of program participants are experiencing, many for the first time, a sense of stability in their lives. This stability has been the result of their acquisition of secure and comfortable housing, improvement in functioning, and support from the program. As a result of this stability, participants are achieving vocational goals, engaging in program activities, and developing new social

relationships. Challenges do remain for some participants, particularly those with substance use issues and those having difficulty adjusting to their new housing situations.

4. Overall, a majority of interviewed landlords perceived the program positively despite having encountered difficulties with some participants as tenants. Some landlords viewed the program as being very supportive in response to concerns or problems they encountered with participants as tenants. Other landlords reported a lack of responsiveness from the program when they reported problems encountered with program participants.
5. Program sustainability has created feelings of anxiety and uncertainty amongst participants and staff. Although participants have been informed that the ACT team will be sustained, the major concern is the continuation of housing subsidies. The program staff have been respectful of participants concerns around housing and are being transparent in communicating information about program sustainability. Although uncertainty exists, the Site Coordinator and staff have undertaken significant efforts to address the sustainability issues related to housing subsidies for program participants.

Lessons Learned

The following lessons learned refer to recommended actions intended to address the issues described in the previous section:

1. The second fidelity assessment, key informant interviews, and focus groups with program staff, highlighted the continued need for the program to further develop program capacity in the area of addictions treatment. As suggested in the previous implementation report, it is recommended that the program work on implementing “integrated treatment strategies”, an evidence-based approach that combines mental health and substance abuse services in one setting (SAMSHA, 2010a). As well, it is recommended that training on motivational interviewing continue to be offered with staff and include supervision follow-up to this training that can assist staff to develop their skills in this area in working with participants.
2. Although the program was assessed as having improved its implementation of person-centered planning in the second fidelity assessment, it remains an under developed service area. It is recommended that a service planning process should be taken to systematize the service planning process with participants so that it’s feasible, individualized, and integrated into the services delivered to program participants. To assist the program to implement these recommendations, it may prove worthwhile for program staff to receive training and follow-up consultation on person-centered planning. As noted in the second fidelity assessment results, the service providers on the rural team can be an important resource within the program from which to draw to address this issue.
3. The second fidelity assessment also identified the lack of a peer specialist position on the ACT team as an ongoing implementation deficit for the Moncton program. However, as described by the key informants and program staff, the program has made important progress towards addressing this issue by identifying five potential peer specialists and providing them with training. It is recommended that the program now work towards integrating these trained peer specialists into the ACT team.

4. The second fidelity assessment highlighted the progress made by the program in the provision of vocational / educational support by having a vocational specialist as a member of the ACT team. As suggested in the first implementation report, it is recommended that the vocational specialist continue in the direction of implementing “individual placement and support (IPS) or supported employment” that includes supporting program participants to work in the regular job market. As noted in the first implementation report, the Montreal site of At Home / Chez Soi is implementing IPS and it can continue to serve as a useful consultation resource for the vocational specialist on the Moncton team.
5. The addition of one 1/2 day of psychiatric consultation was assessed as a program improvement in the second fidelity assessment. At the same time, they indicated that the amount of psychiatric consultation was insufficient relative to the needs of participants. As well, one of the psychiatrists was only available to see participants at the hospital where she worked. Moreover, the amount of available consultation time by psychiatrists precluded them being able to do home visits. Therefore, it recommended that the program work towards increasing the amount of psychiatric consultation available to the program.
6. As described in the second fidelity assessment report, the acquisition of a “transitional” apartment building has served as a way to engage and work more closely with participants who have experienced multiple evictions and difficulty living independently in their own place. In line with the direction suggested in the fidelity report, it is recommended that the program work with these individuals with the goal of assisting them to return to independent housing. It is also noted that it is possible that some of individuals in transitional housing will choose to live there on a more permanent basis. As well, it is recommended that a formative evaluation be conducted focusing on reviewing best practices regarding transitional housing in the mental health field, identifying the needs of the participants living in the program’s transitional housing, and evaluating the extent transitional housing is responding to these needs.
7. Interviews with landlords suggest that the program has cultivated positive and committed relationships with a large proportion of them who are renting to program participants. At the same time, similar to the findings of the first implementation evaluation, landlord interviews identified a number of challenges that they had encountered. These challenges have included a lack of information about the program, difficulty contacting the program when encountering problems, and a perception that some participants are not receiving sufficient support. Given these challenges communicated by the landlords, it is recommended that the program continue to make efforts to educate and inform landlords about the program by continuing to hold regular meetings with them. These meetings can serve to provide information about program participants, harm reduction, recovery principles, and the Housing First approach. The model developed by Kloos, Zimmerman, Scrimenti, and Crusto (2002) for working with landlords and property managers can serve as a useful guide for this work. As well, it is recommended that the program develop a brief and common language information pamphlet on the program for landlords that includes contact numbers of program staff that landlord can contact if necessary.