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**‘At Home/Chez Soi’ Follow-Up Implementation Evaluation: Toronto Site Report
Executive Summary**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report follows an earlier implementation evaluation report, focusing on the enrollment process, context, relationships, structures and resources during the early implementation phase of the At Home / Chez Soi Research Demonstration Project at the Toronto site. The present document outlines successes, challenges and important changes made to the At Home / Chez Soi project during later phases of implementation, including changes in fidelity to the model. It also provides additional insights into the program theory as it relates to client recovery. Early fidelity and implementation findings from the participant recruitment phase of the research (August, 2010 to April, 2011) will be compared with later fidelity and implementation (November, 2011 to May, 2012).

The report includes 4 parts. Part I gives a brief introduction and contextual description of the characteristics of the Toronto site of the At Home / Chez Soi project. It also outlines the research objectives and five guiding research questions of the later or follow-up implementation evaluation.

Part II details the methodology, including the qualitative methods used for data collection for this report. The interview guide was developed by the national team in consultation with the site and interviews were conducted in May and June of 2012. The final sample consisted of 28 participants (9 individual interviews and 19 participants divided into 4 focus group sessions).

Part III discusses the findings of fidelity reports and implementation evaluation interviews and is organized into 4 sections; A) developmental evaluation issues, B) Housing First theory of change, C) Landlord/caretaker issues and D) issues regarding sustainability and the future of the project. The developmental evaluation issues theme is further divided into four sub sections. Sub section i) describes the maintained and emerging strengths. Any noted changes in the fidelity descriptions and scale under HOUSING CHOICE AND STRUCTURE, SERVICE PHILOSOPHY and SERVICE ARRAY are discussed in this section. Then service provider perspectives on maintained and emerging strengths follow. Service provider strengths are noted in the categories of service provision, partnerships and collaboration and management level support.

Sub section ii) describes the recurrent and emerging implementation challenges or trouble spots. A summary of the fidelity reports is included as well as any noted changes that have taken place since the first fidelity report. HOUSING CHOICE AND STRUCTURE as well as PROGRAM STRUCTURE were two categories that showed weak team scores in the *housing availability* and *contact with participants* criteria. The service provider perspective on challenges is described next and divided into structural, service provision and cultural challenges. Structural challenges are include staff retention, frequency of meetings, communication on research activities, collaboration and communication, budget shortfalls and the complaints process. Challenges in service provision include: safety concerns, travel, educational/employment resources and frequency of contact. Cultural challenges specific to Toronto's diverse context and ethno racial population are also discussed here, including those identified by service providers in the Housing First Ethno racial ICM .team, Toronto's Third Arm.

Sub section iii) addresses other emerging implementation issues and focuses on the innovations and adaptations that have been made to the project in this later phase. These include innovations and adaptations made in: communication, protocols and policies as well as the service provision.

Sub section iv) elaborates on issues that were identified from the first implementation and fidelity reports. This section focuses specifically on the housing domain and recurrent issues that have persisted and been mentioned in the first implementation and fidelity reports. The topics include: lengthy housing processes, landlords and lack of supported housing options. In addition to the previously identified housing issues this section includes new issues that have emerged in this later phase of the project. These issues include: tenancy management, client contact with housing team, unit damage, successful tenancies, resources and re-housing.

Section B) of the findings focuses on Housing First theory of change. This area describes what was learned about client outcomes in first year vs. second year. Key informants and focus group members observed that in the first year clients were focusing on enrollment into the project, stabilization or abstinence issues. In the second year respondents observed a number of themes such as: employment, relationships and engagement in treatment and housing. Next, this area describes what was learned about those who benefit most and least from Housing First. Respondents observe that factors affecting how clients benefit include: clinical factors, degree of insight and willingness, positive relationships and housing history and the availability of choices. Finally, the critical ingredients of Housing First are discussed and include: resources, support and project model factors.

Section C of the findings describes landlord / caretaker issues and this is seen in a separate report that is attached to Appendix A. The report outlines findings from 16 interviews with landlords and caretakers associated with the project. The interviews focused on the reasons for landlords and caretakers' involvement in the At Home / Chez Soi project and implications for their continued cooperation. Interviews also discussed landlord experiences with similar programs as well as with At Home / Chez Soi tenants vs. non-program tenants. See Appendix A for Landlord Experience with the At Home Project.

Section D of the findings reports on issues regarding sustainability and the future of the project. This section addresses sustainability, participant concerns and strategies at the Toronto site level. The issue of sustainability is woven throughout the report as it has been one of the most pressing topics for service and housing teams over this last year. Respondents elaborate on how it is affecting their clients, themselves and the project. Topics covered in this section include the issue of communication, consistent messaging, transitional planning, job security and managing client anxiety. Further in this section are the opinions of what service teams consider the legacy and impact of the At Home / Chez Soi project. Respondents discuss where they think the project falls short and reiterate their opinion on the inextricable link between further funding and successful project outcomes. A series of project recommendations follows, including project and service provision level suggestions given by service providers and fidelity team members.

Part IV of the report concludes with a summary and some general themes extracted from fidelity reports and service provider perspectives.

The report aims to inform further project modifications so that services are more effectively designed for the diverse and vulnerable population that experiences homelessness and mental illness in Toronto. It is often argued that programs change, adapt, and improve over time, and that program staff members are more proud of the programs as they gain experience in implementing them (Patton, 2008, 2011). To capture the trends that have emerged over the last year of the project, this report aims to capture diverse perspectives and provide helpful recommendations that can inform planners and policy makers implementing Housing First programs in Canada.

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