HOMES *for* THE 'HARD *to* HOUSE'

A Model for Effective Second Stage Housing

The 'Hard to House' (H2H) Model

NAVIGATING SECOND STAGE HOUSING: THE H2H MODEL

The following 'Hard to House' (H2H) model is designed for use by service providers interested in offering second stage housing opportunities to individuals exiting a correctional setting. It offers a starting point for service providers to begin the process of creating or improving housing services by outlining promising practices and feedback from others obtained through SLSC's research findings from a national survey, regional site visits, and a comprehensive literature review. The research report is available by contacting the SLSC Head office at (613) 233-5170 or by email at info@stleonards.ca.

The H2H model presents four main principles for initiating a promising practices approach to second stage housing. These include:

- **Establish** common values and objectives
- **Strategize** procedures for getting started
- **Consider** physical structure and support components
- **Learn** from the experiences of others

The principles are followed by **promising practices** on: funding, staff, resident support needs, conflicts and resolutions, choosing an appropriate housing program design, zoning/building design, Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) issues, availability of programs and use of program space, stakeholder relations, and creating long term success. In conclusion, there are some considerations and recommendations derived from the development of the model.

SLSC acknowledges that there are a significant number of sub-groups within community corrections such as women, seniors, aboriginal peoples, and people with mental and physical health concerns that range from moderate to serious, whose needs reach beyond the scope of this research. The H2H model can serve as a template which provides inspiration for programs and structure while taking into account the needs of individual sub-groups. The information can be tailored by the experts—those working within community corrections who best know their clientele and their community.

A Note from a Service Provider:

Second Stage Housing permits a resident to focus on establishing the connections and supports they will need in the community. Making housing a priority allows for the supportive advocacy that is often needed to secure appropriate housing and adequate income, while supporting participation in the new community to ensuring that psychiatric, medical and other essential services are in place and that the resident is already using them before moving…As a direct service provider, this research is important for those who are committed to prioritizing housing for ex-prisoners, and committed to building healthier and safer communities. This research based approach will provide a value add to individuals and agencies planning and preparing future strategies based on proven programs.

- Richard Brown, Executive Director of St. Leonard's Place Peel

PRINCIPLE ONE:
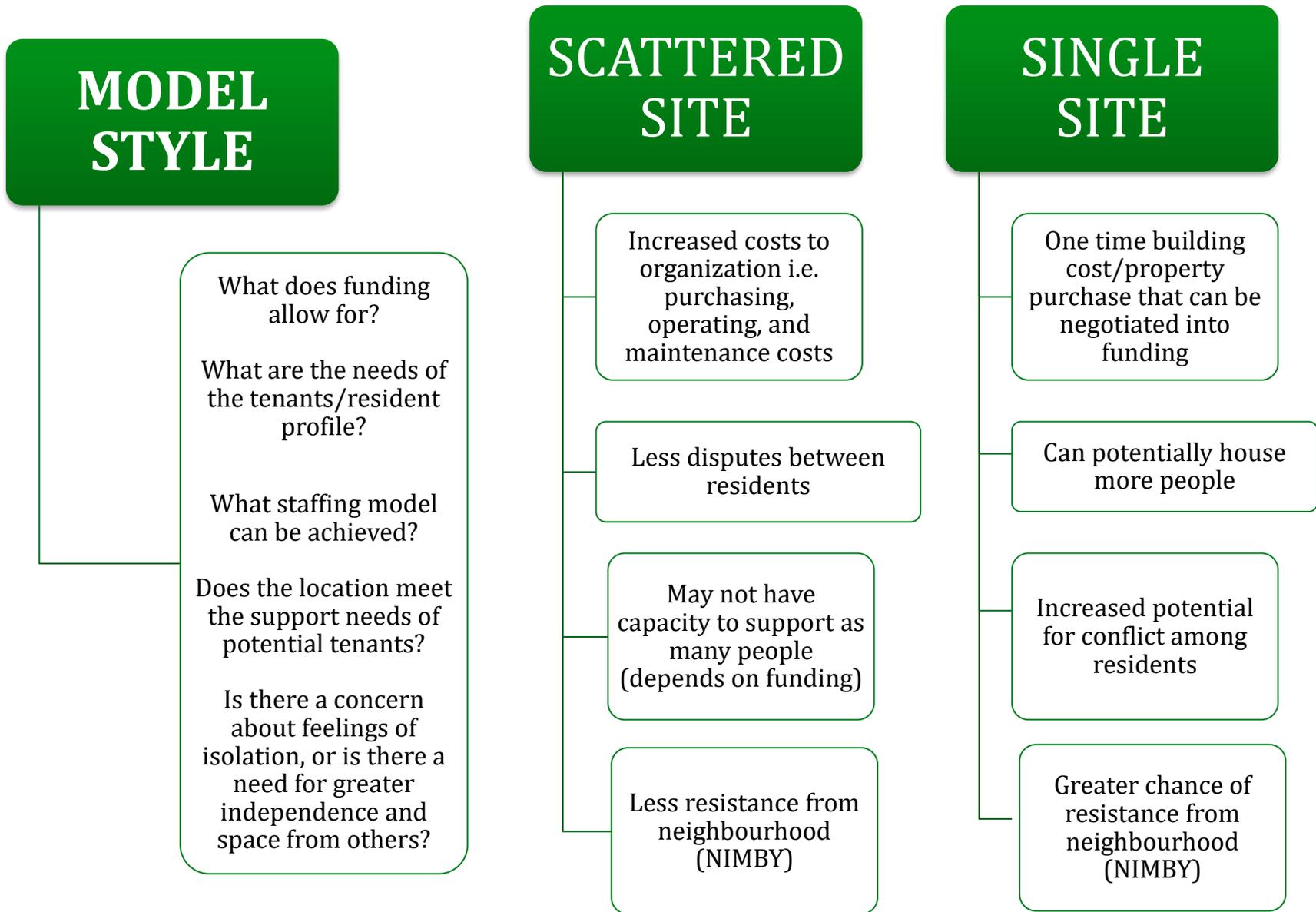## ESTABLISH COMMON VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Common Values

- Everyone should have the right to a home
- No judgement of the past
- Do no harm to others, to oneself, or to the home

Common Objectives

- Support community safety
- Provide safe, supported, and affordable housing
- Establish a sense of pride of ownership in the residents
- Increase options for successful discharge practices from correctional settings (e.g. CBRF/institution)

PRINCIPLE TWO:
STRATEGIZE PROCEDURES FOR GETTING STARTED

MODEL STYLE

- What does funding allow for?
- What are the needs of the tenants/resident profile?
- What staffing model can be achieved?
- Does the location meet the support needs of potential tenants?
- Is there a concern about feelings of isolation, or is there a need for greater independence and space from others?

SCATTERED SITE

- Increased costs to organization i.e. purchasing, operating, and maintenance costs
- Less disputes between residents
- May not have capacity to support as many people (depends on funding)
- Less resistance from neighbourhood (NIMBY)

SINGLE SITE

- One time building cost/property purchase that can be negotiated into funding
- Can potentially house more people
- Increased potential for conflict among residents
- Greater chance of resistance from neighbourhood (NIMBY)

ZONING AND BY-LAWS

Most programs are zoned as residential; finding properties without a zoning variance can help avoid conflict with neighbourhood prior to opening

Know where city service lines etc. are in relation to property lines

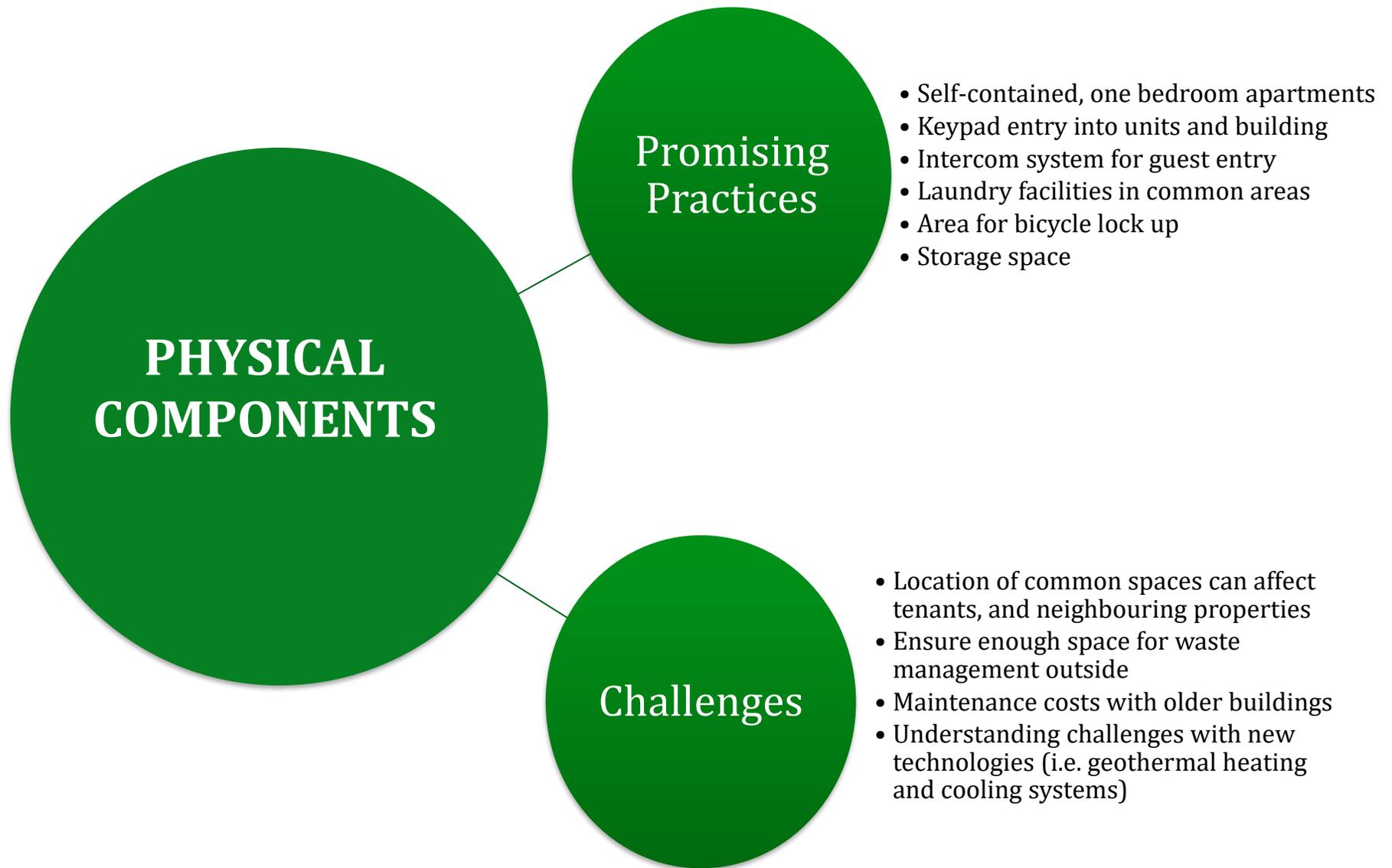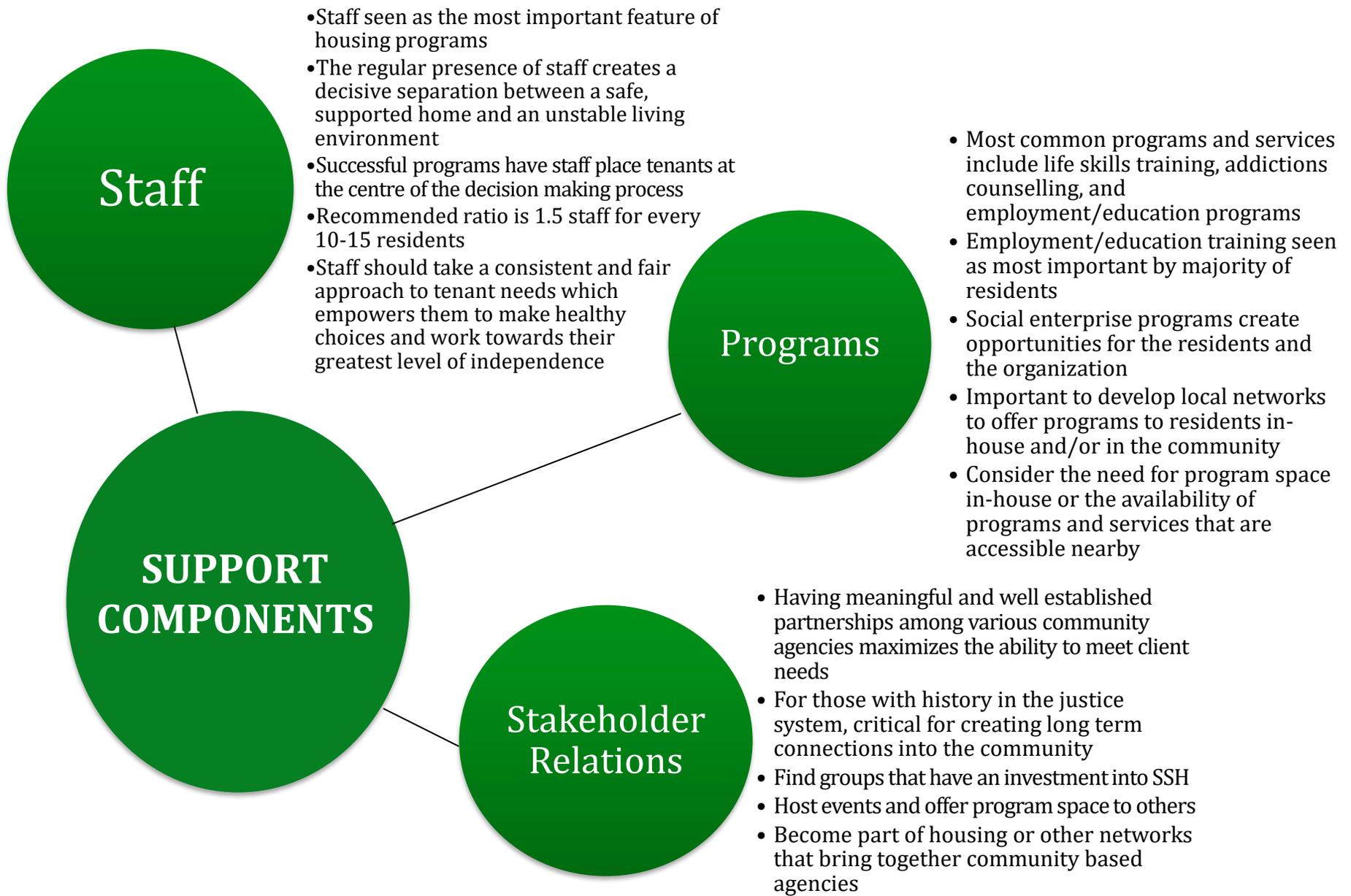Consider hiring a project manager familiar with local zoning and by-laws

FUNDING

Nearly all models are paid for through a combination of federal, provincial, and organizationally-financed funding

Units can be subsidized through government funding, and rent is paid by tenants as direct deposit through provincial income supplements or rent geared to income

Subsidized units can provide organizations with an opportunity to have the building self-sustained through rental revenue

Consider local options for furniture donations or building materials; set up fundraising committees

Aim for at least 5 to 7 year sustainability

Factor in necessary funding for maintenance, and an appropriate staffing model

Not In My Backyard (NIMBY)

Find other community members and organizations who support the initiative, make them advocates

Host community information events, ask for community concerns, and provide solutions for concerns

Pay attention to language, avoid negative associations

Consider media training for staff

Bring feedback from communities where similar programs are operating successfully

Be available and responsive to neighbours

PRINCIPLE THREE:
CONSIDER PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT COMPONENTS

PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

Promising Practices

- Self-contained, one bedroom apartments
- Keypad entry into units and building
- Intercom system for guest entry
- Laundry facilities in common areas
- Area for bicycle lock up
- Storage space

Challenges

- Location of common spaces can affect tenants, and neighbouring properties
- Ensure enough space for waste management outside
- Maintenance costs with older buildings
- Understanding challenges with new technologies (i.e. geothermal heating and cooling systems)

Staff

- Staff seen as the most important feature of housing programs
- The regular presence of staff creates a decisive separation between a safe, supported home and an unstable living environment
- Successful programs have staff place tenants at the centre of the decision making process
- Recommended ratio is 1.5 staff for every 10-15 residents
- Staff should take a consistent and fair approach to tenant needs which empowers them to make healthy choices and work towards their greatest level of independence

SUPPORT COMPONENTS

Programs

- Most common programs and services include life skills training, addictions counselling, and employment/education programs
- Employment/education training seen as most important by majority of residents
- Social enterprise programs create opportunities for the residents and the organization
- Important to develop local networks to offer programs to residents in-house and/or in the community
- Consider the need for program space in-house or the availability of programs and services that are accessible nearby

Stakeholder Relations

- Having meaningful and well established partnerships among various community agencies maximizes the ability to meet client needs
- For those with history in the justice system, critical for creating long term connections into the community
- Find groups that have an investment into SSH
- Host events and offer program space to others
- Become part of housing or other networks that bring together community based agencies

PRINCIPLE FOUR:
LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS

Lessons From Service Providers

Be aware that building and opening procedures are always delayed. Wait until occupancy permits are in hand before giving people a move in date.

If a pet friendly building is desired, consider allowing pets after a period of stable tenancy to ensure that pets will not be a burden to the resident and will not create additional maintenance costs.

Set up direct deposit for tenants, and if needed, have a support worker added to the lease to be notified of conflicts to help residents retain their tenancy.

Take precautions against bed bugs - consider bed bug removal as a social enterprise opportunity.

Be vigilant in choosing the right contractors, project managers, architects, etc. who will understand your vision and support your cause. Be sure to take the time to understand new technologies (e.g. geothermal heating/cooling systems).

Try not to shortchange your vision. Have a solid operational plan and commit to it during negotiations and discussions with contractors.

Avoid shared accomodation. Residents and staff reported high degrees of dissatisfaction with double occupancy apartments due to the support needs of residents.

Promising Practices

For Second Stage Housing Development

Promising Practices

PROMISING PRACTICES FOR SECOND STAGE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The following sections are a compilation of promising practices that emerged during regional site visits. Addressing promising practices also helps to identify challenges and issues with providing second stage housing in Canada, and highlights solutions and perspectives on how to address these issues more effectively.

Promising practices were investigated in the following areas:

- Funding
- Staff
- Resident support needs
- Conflicts and Resolutions
- Choosing an appropriate housing program design
- Zoning/building design
- Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) issues
- Availability of programs and use of program space
- Stakeholder relations
- Creating long term success, and
- Considerations and recommendations for others who are trying to create or improve second stage housing opportunities for those who have a history with the justice system

Staff and residents discussed their experiences with second stage housing, and offered their knowledge of community based options and challenges in addressing the risk of homelessness for ex-offenders. Their recommendations are integrated into each of the chapters, which are prefaced by excerpts from interviews with program managers or executive directors offering their advice in response to the question: *What would you recommend to others who are looking to create or improve second stage housing opportunities in their community for people who have been involved with the justice system?* Their feedback provides valuable insight and highlights the key elements around what is important in creating housing services for individuals that are working towards successful community re-entry.

FUNDING

Don't compromise, because you'll end up shortchanging yourself and you'll pay the price for not having the resources in place to do the job as well as you would like to do. Understand what the model is that you need, and try not to shortchange yourself so that you are ready coming out of the gate. Stand firm and stand tall in the face of those who would have you compromise and say "no, this is what I need to do the job. It has to be like this". Look after your own best interests because not everyone will look out for them. Give yourself enough time to make the arrangements you need to make the right decisions. Doing this is a full time job, and it's hard to manage the everyday details in addition to the new work. Think about the number of beds you need to run the staffing model you have in mind, and consider how to make that work within the funding budget.

Most organizations financed certain components of their project such as purchase of property or staffing/case management costs, and otherwise appealed most commonly to provincial and/or federal funding streams for additional support. Government funding was typically sought for costs such as: subsidizing units; construction; mortgage; and operating subsidies so that a rent-geared-to-income approach could be used. In some instances organizations financed their own purchase and renovations to an existing property, and appealed to federal funding or local municipalities to provide case management and support staff.

Nearly all of the sites visited have direct deposit set up with provincial income assistance programs such that the tenants' pay rent through the available shelter subsidy for the province. For programs where meals are included, some organizations have tenants sign over their total shelter and food allowance and then provide tenants with a personal needs allowance. Depending on how much of the program has been funded this system allows for some programs to generate revenue which goes back into the direct operating costs of the building.

In addition to government funding, some organizations had other suggestions and creative methods for generating money. Some set up fundraising committees to help with the expense of maintaining older buildings—which can be a major cost that requires a long term reserve fund to be prepared for emergency costs. This was suggested especially for scattered site models where older duplexes and triplexes were purchased which require more overall maintenance.

Some organizations were able to capitalize on social enterprise opportunities to generate income, others saved on costs by having tenants participate in work projects on site. Others sought donations of construction materials from box stores and local companies (e.g. for flooring/carpeting) at wholesale costs. Another creative solution involved Site #9, which was purchased at the list price under the condition that the previous owner made a donation to the organization of the negotiated sale price. This amounted to a $70,000 donation to the organization which helped to support renovations and other costs.

Another suggestion for sustainable programming involves finding good partnerships. Site #7 has developed a good working relationship with their local community housing provider which

provides them with a set number of units in exchange for the organization's support staff to manage and create more stable tenancies in the rest of the building. This partnership allows for the experts in each field to fill gaps within the current social housing programs in the city, which directly benefits tenants by creating a supported living environment. One recommendation for this type of collaboration is to ensure that a support worker has their name put on the lease as a contact person if there are issues with the tenant so that they can be addressed immediately, to help minimize the risk of eviction.

Overall, interviewees stressed the following points regarding funding:

- Find sustainable options such as support with paying off the overall building and mortgage costs.
- Do not underestimate the need to set aside maintenance costs, especially for older buildings.
- Factor in appropriate staffing costs to ensure that the model will keep the building safe and supported. The suggested ratio is 1.5 staff for every 10-15 tenants. Staffing is an investment into the overall success of the program and the smooth operation of the property.
- Catch the "fundraising wave" from community investors (e.g. anti-poverty/mental health) and tie into where the community is at. Figure out how your homes fit into the various initiatives that present themselves.

STAFF

Have well trained staff. Keep in mind that if you need 24 hour staffing, chances are you might be working with a population that may not be ready for second stage housing. Keep people moving towards something else—an improvement in their life. Find the right piece of property that is zoned properly and be able to say, "we are here, this is happening" and work from that standpoint instead of fighting to make it happen. Be the nicest property on the block. This makes the neighbours happy, and gives pride of ownership to the residents. Set the standard for what the residents should aim to have in their life, and show them that they deserve it.

Based on accounts from both the staff and residents, it is evident that the most critical element to the success of any second stage housing program is knowledgeable, supportive staff. Their regular presence creates a decisive separation between a safe, supported home and an unstable living environment. At each site visited, staff topped the list of what residents who participated in interviews liked best about living in the housing program. Likewise, all staff interviewed listed a staff presence as a critical piece to helping people successfully transition to long term community living.

When looking to hire staff, the majority of sites look for a minimum of a diploma in a related or relevant discipline, but preferably a degree in a human or social services field such as social work. General must-have skills include an ability to work independently, good decision making skills and communication skills. Beyond these basic skills, experience working with the clientele, First Aid, CPR, applied suicide intervention, crisis prevention/intervention, and mental health first aid qualifications are an asset. A good recommendation when hiring is to give consideration as to whether the tenants can relate to the staff, and not just the other way around.

Not all sites visited have 24 hour staff, 7 days per week. In fact, many are staffed Monday to Friday during daytime and some evening hours and rely on an on call staff person and security cameras during afterhours. However, staffing capacity usually had more to do with funding streams than with a specific decision to limit hours. Most staff members interviewed acknowledged that round the clock staffing throughout the week is ideal, particularly when tenants are managing substance abuse issues. The general feeling was that tenant crises and support needs are not limited to a regular work week, and in fact residents are more likely to feel vulnerable on weekends or during holidays. Despite this, many housing programs are managing with an on-call staff person on evenings and weekends, and in house staff during the weekdays.

When providing support to tenants, it is clear that successful programs are attempting to provide services that place the tenant at the centre of the decision making process. At one of the sites, staff members are certified in Reality Therapy, a cognitive based model that uses common language about making the right decisions for oneself, and being in control of one's choices and the responsibility associated with making them while acknowledging external influences. The scope of this project does not allow for an examination of the most successful staff certification styles to be applied in second stage housing programs. However, it is evident from speaking with staff that a consistent, fair approach to tenant needs which empowers them to make healthy choices and work

towards an independent lifestyle should be the basis for any support program. Organizations should evaluate the needs of their specific clientele and examine available options if they are interested in considering implementation of staff certification.

Additionally, it is important to be cognizant of the role of support staff and the position of trust they hold with the tenant—as such, ensure that there is a senior person in place who is responsible for enforcing some of the more serious matters such as rule breaking and eviction, in order to retain a trusting relationship with the support staff.

Organizations that are providing second stage housing to former CBRF residents that are not considering a staffing plan will need to screen in tenants that are considered very high functioning in order to avoid ongoing problems on the premises. For a model which has a significant portion of residents with support needs, a suggested a ratio is 1.5 staff persons for every ten to fifteen tenants.

In addition to hired staff, almost every second stage housing program, with the exception of very new programs which were still establishing themselves in the community, also benefit from the support of placement students from local colleges and universities. Typically the students come from social work or criminology programs, although some organizations also benefit from the support of pro-bono law students and occupational therapy students.

Placement or practicum students were often seen as critical to the program, and their support ranged from office admin and program support to specific research based projects that support the work of the overall organization, but which staff do not have the resources to do independently. Many organizations reported that they look to hire their students after the completion of their placement, which offered them a high profile within the colleges/universities.

The only risk associated with placement students is that they require additional supervision and training from staff. This requires investing resources for them to become employment-ready for the program, and in many instances this is short lived since once they are trained and have some experience they are often recruited for or seek out provincial or federal government employment opportunities.

RESIDENT SUPPORT NEEDS

Individualize the homes, where tenants know that the space is special—it is not a stretch to do it. Think about what you or your family would want to live in and then try and run with that design concept. Do something that shows the commitment of the organization to that tenant for their success and then the rest is up to them. Try to ensure as much sustainability for yourself as possible. The worst thing we can do for our clients is start and stop programs. People who live the lives of our clients are very used to things starting and stopping for them. And if you and I thought about it, if the things in our lives that were making us successful were starting and stopping all the time, we would not be successful. So have a really good sustainability plan that will allow you to keep going five to seven years into the future.

While the range of support needs for people with a history of involvement with the criminal justice system is vast and varies among sub-groups, there were several consistent needs listed at the sites visited. First and foremost is the need for safe, affordable housing. Others included:

- Substance abuse
- Mental and physical health and assistance with med compliance
- Basic life skills enhancement including how to function in their own home according to the agency's standards
- Education and employment
- Understanding and using public transit
- Access to pro-social experiences

Gender specific support needs identified for women:

- Assistance with children
- Trauma counselling
- Financial literacy

Overall, staff work to support these needs and attempt to facilitate any necessary connections either within the organizations' service profile or within the community.

Most of the sites visited housed a mixed population of people with a correctional background and people with some degree of history/risk of homelessness. All of the programs visited have primary experience working in community corrections, but not all had experience working with a chronically homeless population. While in many circumstances people from both subgroups have been in either situation at one point or another, it is important to note that those who are exiting correctional programs and those who are coming out of a shelter or off the streets are often at very different points in their lives. Of the organizations working with people who have been chronically homeless, there was acknowledgement of challenges that they were unsure of how to deal with at the start. Staff should be able to support the needs of people who are at either of these stages, and hiring people from different backgrounds may help to create a balanced understanding of the support needs for the overall housing program.

CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Don't be afraid to take a risk. There's always going to be people who tell you not to do it, and there's always going to be people who say "that's not going to work". Well you know what? It does work, and it has worked for years. It just has to be handled well and managed well.

Most interviewees identified fairly common issues that are associated with living in any multi-unit complex, such as noise complaints. These are typically resolved with mediation by a staff member if the matter cannot be resolved between the tenants first. Staff noted that these are important teachable moments for tenants to use basic life skills training, where in the past they may not have dealt appropriately with them. In addition to the everyday conflicts that can arise among tenants, second stage housing presents conflicts associated with the support needs of the overall population.

The more serious conflicts discussed were due to substance use on the property or being visibly under the influence in common areas, unwanted guests, not respecting the rules of the building, and poor hygiene. These were issues for staff as well as residents that were interviewed.

According to staff, it is essential to define a clear and appropriate policy around substance use and to enforce that policy consistently for every tenant. This is regardless of whether the housing program is an abstinence-only or harm reduction model. For most harm-reduction programs visited, tenants' substance use is required to be contained to their units, or off site without returning to the premises visibly under the influence. This helps to ensure that tenants are respectful of each others' needs. In instances where this rule is broken, and where eviction is not required, one interviewee stated that residents are asked to provide an apology to each of the tenants they may have disrupted.

Unwanted guests are another major conflict area, and there are different ways for dealing with them. Visitors to the building can create conflicts by staying too long, breaking rules, and can establish negative associations for other tenants in the building. Interviewees implemented different rules around unwanted guests, some of which include:

- Having tenants escort guests in and out of the building/having guests sign in and out of the building or present identification if they have contributed toward conflict in the past
- Offering tenants a set number of overnight stays for approved guests
- Teaching tenants how to identify whether their guest is a good fit in their life

For the most part, staff interviewed noted that residents are usually understanding about visitors who have over-extended their welcome in the building—and often are not willing to risk their accommodations for someone who is not willing to follow the rules. Staff also stressed that tenants should be consulted about their opinions around guests, and that policy should be shaped around their wishes while helping them to understand staff concerns as well. This was seen as an important part of the policy making process since many of the tenants face issues with loneliness and isolation.

Feedback on rule-breaking behaviours from both groups generally stressed the importance of being fair and consistent. In cases where the housing program had a mixed population of homeless/low income tenants and tenants coming from a correctional setting, fairness and consistency were seen to be helpful in maintaining a respectful atmosphere. However, in certain programs tenants coming from a correctional setting may have different restrictions placed on them (for example, curfew, or no unapproved guests) which require staff to be clear in explaining the reasons for a different set of rules.

One example of how to deal with general rules that are consistently broken was from Site #2, which was dealing with the issue of tenants keeping windows open during winter months while the heating systems were running—this revealed the issue of tenants smoking in their non-smoking units. The program director instituted a $15 fine for tenants caught with their windows open throughout the day, which forced tenants to comply with using the designated smoking areas during the winter months. Another site installed outdoor heaters in smoking areas to deter people from smoking indoors.

Residents not maintaining proper hygiene is another conflict area among tenants, made especially more significant in shared accommodations. There can be difficulties in managing a building that has tenants with varying levels of life skills, and this has been addressed in different ways. Residents are expected to take a non-judgmental approach towards each other, and staff will intervene when there is evidence of non-compliance. Additionally, staff are asked often to model behaviour, and will show tenants how to maintain a hygienic living space if they have not learned how to properly and safely clean their own home in the past.

Many programs provide all the necessary cleaning supplies to the tenants—some provide them free of charge and others provide a set of personal supplies for a resident once they move in and then the tenant is expected to maintain them afterwards. Interviewees noted that it is important to not take for granted that tenants understand how to maintain their own home, and providing in-house workshops on how to clean is often a good idea.

Despite these measures, conflicts around hygiene can not only create tension among residents, but can also be a health and safety issue as well. Nearly all sites visited reported instances of hoarding behaviour at some time or another. This was addressed by policy which requires some degree of scheduled maintenance checks on units, typically around every three months. Alternatively, one site requires tenants to authorize "wellness checks", which allows staff to enter units if they believe there is a concern about the tenant. This helps to identify life skills and other issues and allows staff to address them fairly quickly. It also creates an opportunity for staff to enter the unit without police involvement in the case of a suspected emergency, such as an overdose. For concerns about hoarding, looking for support through municipal health services may be helpful. Most municipalities have a city support worker who is trained to address hoarding—they may be able to help with tenants, or can be invited to do a workshop and training session for housing program staff.

CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE HOUSING PROGRAM DESIGN

Watch the contract negotiation. You can lose autonomy over the way you want to run your program. Keep in mind that the program is a continuum, and there's different ways you can develop a program. This is why it has to be something you and your board are comfortable with and have the resources for. Don't do anything where you'll just break even, because you'll go under, especially smaller organizations that can't absorb the loss. Start small—but the more apartments you have the more likely you'll break even. To function really well you need around 20 apartments, only 5-12 and you are on the margin. One calculation was that you need 48 apartments before you can hire one full time worker. This is why collaboration with a partner who owns the mortgage and upkeep is ideal. If the city pays for a worker, then the partner gets a stable tenancy that will allow your organization to achieve your mandate while creating positive community development programs.

Methods for determining the design of new buildings or selecting existing buildings for purchase varied greatly across the sites. For new buildings, funding streams sometimes had a role in dictating what the design should be like. Interviewees warned that unless the funding partners have a good understanding of the clientele, it is important to clearly lay out the parameters needed to achieve long term success of the tenants.

To identify the necessary parameters for a successful building design, recommendations included:

- Consult with leaders from the public and private sectors (e.g. mental health, corrections) who may have experience with those who would be potential tenants so they can help identify factors that would be most beneficial to the tenants.
- Pay attention to the location and allow for time to find the right place that will suit the needs of the tenants as well as the organization. Consider whether there is a need to be located close to the main administrative offices or whether it may be better value to merge main office space with a new building. Also consider the neighbourhood and the influence it may have on potential tenants.
- Attempt to give people options—not everyone wants a big space so consider mixing bachelor/studio units and one bedroom units
- Consider creating an option to designate at least one unit for a family, if appropriate
- Try to fit the greatest number of people as possible that still gives them a good amount of personal space and a positive living environment
- Have active consultation with board of directors or other governance group
- Become aware of other housing programs in the area and find out the best way to contribute to a continuum of services available in the community
- Meet with those who will be potential tenants and ask what they would want and need out of a second stage housing program

Interviewees were in overwhelming agreement that shared accommodations should be avoided as much as possible. While it is normal in many cases for people in the rental market to have roommates, this is not ideal for second stage housing. Due to the variety of support needs of second stage housing tenants, residents interviewed reported a high degree of dissatisfaction with shared accommodation, and staff interviewed reported a higher need for mediation and increased support requirements for tenants who shared a space. Staff also noted that people who share a unit are more vulnerable towards each other's setbacks, and if one person starts to fall off track with their plan the other often follows suit.

ZONING AND BUILDING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Keep office space on the ground floor, so resident traffic passes by to increase the level of contact they have with staff, to help address their support needs. Keep people in the loop with construction and opening plans, while keeping in mind that nothing happens on time. Get your local government on side because it can really work for you, and get the facts down such as local by-laws and building codes. If you don't know about this, hire someone who does to help get you started.

Most housing programs were zoned as residential, though Site #2 suggested there is an advantage to finding a property that is without a zoning variance which may help to avoid conflict from the neighbourhood if residential zoning may be negatively associated with the name of an organization.

Interviewees also noted the usefulness in being aware of the property lines for accessing city service lines such as water and sewage, and to check whether they affect neighbouring property lines. If there is work required to bring buildings to code that affect a nearby property, a good relationship with the immediate neighbours may help ease challenges which arise after the property is purchased. Additionally, it was recommended that organizations aim for consistency in the process of working with city officials to become operational (such as working with the same person as much as possible) which can expedite obtaining occupancy permits and starting up the program.

Some considerations regarding the exterior of the building for an existing property or planned construction that interviewees would have added to the location in hindsight included:

- The allocation of an area for a bike lock up—many residents use bicycles for transportation bringing them through the building regularly creates quick wear and tear on the walls.
- Consider the degree of pedestrian traffic in front of the building and whether the units face the street. At one site visitors took to shouting up to tenants from the sidewalk which caused some disruptions to other residents.
- Be aware of common spaces in relation to where neighbouring views are—this can minimize NIMBY issues in the long-run.
- Make realistic considerations of the amount of garbage for the building, and create a secured space for waste management that will not be infringed upon by the neighbourhood.
- Think about parking needs and investigate options such as overflow parking lots from neighbouring organizations in order to help maximize property space. Most sites did not require much parking space for tenant vehicles since many do not have them.
- If purchasing an older property, ensure that there is enough money set aside for renovations and maintenance issues.
- Consider hiring a project manager to help with the decision making and general work associated with getting construction completed, especially if you are unfamiliar with these processes. It can save a lot of time and hassle in getting the project completed.

Best practices and recommendations for interior design considerations included:

- Have self-contained, one bedroom apartments. Shared accommodation is not recommended for second stage housing due to the variety of support needs for the residents and should be avoided if possible.
- Ensure a way to have TVs and/or radios available in the units—this helps with people who have a history of institutionalization who find it too quiet. Consider having them donated.
- Rather than traditional key systems, a best practice across sites was keypad entry systems into the units which offers: individualized key code entry into units; eliminates changing of locks with new tenancies; tenants do not lose keys; and depending on the system can offer computerized monitoring of tenant arrival and departure from unit and/or building.
- Consider an intercom system for units vs. a buzzer system for guest entry if tenants are to escort their guests into the building. This avoids potential tampering with phone jacks to allow tenants to buzz people in directly from their unit, which reduces building security.
- Most sites have laundry facilities in a common area in order to reduce usage and maintenance costs, and allows for more space in the individual units.
- Ensure that room sizes are confirmed before ordering furniture, last minute changes to design might mean that furniture won't fit the original space.

This is an example of a keypad entry/exit system inside a unit for parolees with residency conditions. The keypad is connected to a computerized system which can be monitored by staff, and also has an emergency exit button in the event of a crisis which dispatches emergency response and unlocks the unit without a key code.

Other issues pertaining to building design highlight some of the challenges with making quick decisions for the long term use of the building, and the overall success of the tenants. A few of the sites visited built meeting/program space based on contracts which existed at the time of funding negotiation and construction, only to have program contracts shifted or cancelled within a couple of years. This left underutilized program space that could have been used for additional beds or more functional space. Being realistic about the long term use of common and administrative spaces and planning for their use can free up valuable square footage for the overall building.

The availability of common spaces within the building is an area of debate in second stage programs. Those who incorporated a common area such as a television room said it was helpful for addressing issues of loneliness, and allow for people to have a place outside of their apartment to socialize. Others suggested that their design plans took into consideration the need to make the housing program as realistic as possible for people who will eventually transition to independent living in the community. The absence of a common area was thought to encourage residents to find healthy ways of socializing outside of the building. Ultimately, the inclusion or exclusion of a common area is dependent on the population, and whether it contributes towards their long term reintegration needs.

N.I.M.B.Y. (NOT IN MY BACKYARD) ISSUES

You need to have your board of directors 100% behind [the plans]. They need to be the champions and they need to have a vision they will invest in. You need to be comfortable and ready for risk. Get ready for talking to the media and potential clients, as well as talking to angry groups. Create a strategy for these things ahead of time. Try to identify people who are in your corner and have them sell the idea to neighbours; don't try to sell the idea by yourself. Be prepared to teach clients how to be a good neighbour, and teach them that everything they do has an impact on outcomes for other tenants and impacts the organization. There needs to be good, clear contracting on acceptable behaviours, and be comfortable exiting people decisively so that you have clear boundaries and staff who will enforce the guidelines. Get connected to other housing providers and get yourself to the table as a group that wants to learn. Be quiet to start, and think about how you can assist them. Have the police, emergency services, city councillors, and Members of Parliament as partners and make capacity building a critical part of solutions for the community.

Organizations who are looking to create new housing opportunities for people with a history of homelessness or involvement with the criminal justice system often meet with resistance from the neighbourhood they choose to develop the program in. While each community is different, there were some common approaches to community engagement from the sites visited for this project.

All staff interviewed for this project were asked about their level of community engagement and challenges associated with NIMBY. The general approach taken by most organizations was to provide as much information as possible, and their commitment to being a good neighbour. Some examples of how to accomplish this included:

- Host a community information event prior to building construction or purchase to keep the community informed of what the organization's plans are.
- Before doing a widespread event in the community, attempt to have meetings and gain support from city officials and city council members who can help to advocate on your behalf. Other key people to have onside are: the mayor, Members of Parliament, police chief, and medical/psychiatric services (local hospital or health services).
- Have a note taker and comment sheet available to those who attend information events, and take the time to figure out how to accommodate and respond to each concern. This can help with addressing issues at city council also.
- Language is important, frame the housing program as supportive transitional apartments to help minimize the negative association with "halfway houses".
- Consider doing some media training for staff or put together a communications package that staff can use to field phone calls and concerned neighbours.
- Go out and meet the neighbours to explain the goals and objectives of the project, and how the organization plans to deal with community safety issues.
- Maintain the need to humanize potential residents.

- Help people to understand that you are addressing an existing issue in their community, not recruiting new problems to the area
- Maintain that housing is a right for everyone in the community and explain that not everyone has the same access to opportunity
- Try an informal approach such as hosting weekend BBQs in the summer to let neighbours get more comfortable with the organization and residents and to keep communication open
- Listen to community concerns and be as accommodating as possible, particularly if constructing a new building
- If possible, take feedback from existing properties that have become established in the neighbourhood. Positive testimonies from neighbours can have a big impact on future projects
- Do not underestimate the benefit to creating something new that will add value to the neighbourhood; strive to set the standard for the neighbourhood
- Take a rundown project and make it better and the community will learn to embrace it
- Be available and responsive to neighbours once the program is up and running—consider providing them with a cell number to the manager/director and show up when called in. You will establish a reputation based on what you do and how you respond to them
- Depending on the client group, consider holding contracts with other buildings on the street to have tenants help with landscaping or other small jobs

How an organization presents potential projects in the community can largely influence how it ends up, with the risk of losing the project entirely. Despite all of the efforts listed as suggestions, many of the sites we visited were met with resistance in their development stages. However, making the extra effort to go above and beyond what is needed to address neighbourhood concerns can keep governing bodies such as the city council on side.

Interviewees noted that opening the first building is always the hardest, and once an organization is able to establish a good track record of helping the community and providing responsible property management the barriers to program expansion are reduced. As mentioned by one interviewee, "it is really important work—and it's a lot of work to get it off the ground—but that should not deter people. You *can* do it and you *can* be successful at it. You are always going to have naysayers but keep the focus on the end goal because it is important work to do, and it should be done." (Interviewee, Site #8).

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Harm reduction may not work for parolees. Have community support professionals who can provide a continuum of services beyond the CBRF. Make sure the building is secure for both the staff and residents. Don't reinvent the wheel—talk to people who have done the same thing to help with the little decisions. Don't make assumptions about what people know, show people how to clean their apartments, compost, take out the garbage, etc. and make opportunities available through group sessions on these topics. Think about what kind of lease (one month, 6 month, or one year) based on the tenants. Have discussions with your tenancy board about the rules, and have a lawyer review the agreement.

The most common programs offered to tenants of second stage housing were life skills training, addictions services, and employment/education programs. According to the tenants interviewed, they most valued having an employment program to assist them with finding work in the long run. For staff interviewed the opportunity to offer employment training, in many ways, allowed for added layers of programming for skills and personal development which could be framed within the objective of finding employment. Because many tenants believe that all they need to be successful is to get a job, staff try to build in other necessary supports under the umbrella of helping them to find a job, such as time management/accountability, communication skills, and managing workplace conflicts without forcing the idea of additional programming onto the tenants.

Employment programs were offered in a few different ways. Some were rooted in classroom training sessions, while others were more hands on with social enterprise-type opportunities as part of the fund generating and skills building process. One site participates in a city voucher campaign, where tenants receive vouchers for small jobs they do for local businesses that can be redeemed at around twenty participating stores and restaurants in the downtown area. This program is beneficial to the tenants in supporting employment skills. It also helps to change the perceptions of those who work at the participating businesses to get to know people who were panhandling in the neighbourhood in the past.

Other programs and employment connections offered included:

- General Educational Development (GED) test preparatory course
- Correctional Service of Canada programs
- Restorative Justice programs
- Economic literacy
- Leadership training
- Shoplifting/fraud program
- How to be a good neighbour/how to live in a co-ed building and be respectful to others
- Living independently (basic budgeting/cooking/cleaning)

Staff interviewed pointed out the importance in developing relationships with potential employers, as well as with other community agencies that offer programs. Developing a relationship with local partners helps with getting tenants placement into the programs. Interviewees recommended

finding out what is available such as housing support programs for how to live in your own apartment, cooking classes, and onetime events in the community such as seniors' days. Based on established networks this can become a referral based program that helps to get people out into the community.

Additionally, consider inviting community programs on-site to help ease the transition for tenants. Many people become comfortable in the housing program and may be hesitant to try new places in the community. If the community is invited in and relationships can be established in-house, tenants may be less intimidated to seek out services later on.

It was widely noted that food is always a big draw for people. Some of the sites found very good responses from holding programs and workshops on healthy eating, or having a nutritionist come speak to residents about cooking for specific health issues such as diabetes. Other programs host community kitchens and had vegetable gardens which encouraged tenants to grow fresh foods and cook for each other or to help prepare foods for community drop in days. Having residents help provide healthy foods for other members of the community in need provided positive pro-social experiences.

Some second stage housing sites purposely do not provide programs to the residents. Instead, tenants have regular access to a community outreach staff person who is responsible for identifying the needs of the resident and designing a plan for them in the community. By using this approach, each person has a tailored plan based on their personal set of needs and it is the objective of the outreach staff to build a community strategy around that person. This approach was used with the goal of having residents achieving independence and resiliency, and to create pro-social anchors in the community so that residents do not rely solely on correctional supports and programming.

Whether or not it is more successful to have programs built into the housing services or networked out to the community was not made clear through this research. However, it is likely that depending on the population served and their level of support needs that one may be more successful than the other. For example, residents who have difficulties establishing trust or who have mental health needs may benefit from in-house programs where the surroundings are familiar and staff are trusted. In this circumstance, it would still remain important to establish partnerships with community based service providers to come in and deliver services so that there is an opportunity to create a relationship for tenants beyond the housing program.

In other cases where tenants have a greater sense of independence and may not find as many challenges with leaving the residence for support services, assisting residents with becoming connected to programs in the community may provide a greater likelihood that they will access services beyond the transitional housing program.

Physical and geographical issues may also determine plans for program space. If a purchasing an existing property or if using scattered site model, there are physical limitations that can prevent the ability to set aside an area for programs. Given this, it may become more important to consider the location of the housing program in relation to other available services, how easy it is for the tenants

to access these services (e.g. by walking distance or public transit), and the type of stakeholder relationships the organization will be able to develop.

One thing remains clear in either case: staff are a critical element to any type of program, and effective staff are required to deliver effective programs and services, as well as to facilitate connections to other programs and services in the community.

It is worth noting that each residence with available program space such as boardrooms, classrooms, or community kitchens offered their space, when available, to community or government groups free of charge. All staff noted the success with this approach in creating effective connections in the community and facilitating reciprocal relationships, while increasing access to services for their residents.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

You have to develop the capacity and bring something to the table in your community—without that you won't have support. Instead of competing go in and do it together and bring what you can to the table based on your expertise.

Whether community corrections organizations have good relationships with other local service providers or not, there is no denying that having meaningful and well established partnerships among various community agencies is an absolute asset to maximizing the ability to meet the needs of clients. All of the staff interviewed made note of important partnerships they have established which help to connect tenants to services in the community. Furthermore, most acknowledged that this is a critical element for people reintegrating from corrections, to assist with creating long term connections into the community which help to remove them from beneath the correctional services umbrella.

Recommendations on how to create partnerships, and who to create them with, included:

- Open dialogue with community groups that may have some kind of investment in what you are doing, as well as with those who may be hesitant to have you around. Talk to them about how you can benefit from each other's services.
- Host community awareness events on various topics for service providers and health networks, as well as justice and health professionals
- Assess whether some of your residents may be able to help out neighbouring stakeholders.
- Offer or try to receive overflow donations
- Share space that you are not using at no cost to other community groups, and let them know it is available to them as an option; alternatively, try to use other's program space to help get to know them better.
- Always say yes to others, this will help in establishing reciprocal relationships
- Maintain a constant presence in the community by attending events, and work constantly to develop a relationship with city officials.
- Consider becoming part of (or starting) a supportive housing network which brings together community based agencies that provide transitional housing and supports to their residents. This can offer a forum for discussing best practices and to support one another.
- Figure out how the city obtains information about supporting their own priorities and housing needs in the community, and become involved in that process (e.g. there may be a consulting group that the city uses to obtain information about local housing needs).
- Acknowledge and support the view that stakeholders are supporting a shared client, and be fair and transparent in taking on new opportunities. Discuss the best options for the community, not the individual organization.
- Do not limit attendance at community meetings only for when you need something or when funding becomes available
- Become partners with the police and housing branches in the city
- Get your foot in as many doors as possible, and deal with concerns immediately

Many of the recommendations listed require a proactive approach from the community corrections agency. Based on the survey findings from this project, it would appear that there may be some difficulty in facilitating relationships among stakeholders. While some community corrections groups have attempted to maintain a low profile in the past to avoid conflict and resistance from the neighbourhood, it is becoming increasingly clear that an integrated network of services remains the best option for ex-prisoners. Agencies should consider a sense of urgency in advancing collaborative models and should aim to set objectives which involve non-traditional partnerships and the business community as part of recognizing a shared client.

While each community is different, there are options for creating meaningful partnerships that will help to support the long term success of second stage housing residents. Becoming part of a service provider committee can be a successful operation if it can speak as one voice to city officials, and if it can take opportunities from the city back to the group for consideration. Doing this successfully relies quite heavily on having committed people with strong networking skills at the forefront, and for the group to have a good understanding of which issues are an organization's niche. The knowledge and experiences that come from such a network are important and beneficial to developing mutual opportunities.

A recurring idea is to extend available services and resources to other groups as a means of creating a give-and-take situation between service providers. As such, the concept of 'reciprocal relationships' emerged as major facet to effective stakeholder relations. To facilitate reciprocal relationships within the community, organizations should aim to be seen as doing something to solve a shared problem. By doing something to help the stakeholders and contributing to a continuum of services in the community, the client will benefit as a result.

CREATING LONG TERM SUCCESS FOR RESIDENTS AND SECOND STAGE HOUSING PROGRAMS

Make sure you have a solid operational plan and that you can get it built. Be prepared for the costs whether you're renovating or building from the ground up. Be prepared to sweat, it's going to take hard work for you to pull it off and you really need to be committed to making it happen. Your rewards will be internal. Operating dollars are always tough, the first project is tough and then it gets easier. Once you have a track record it gets easier. Start small, but small is not sustainable, so look to expand. Encourage people to talk about problems before they become real problems. Teach people what a good landlord looks like, and teach them how to be a good tenant.

When asked about creating long term success for the residents of second stage housing, interviewees emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of staff support. Being able to respond to people's needs immediately can help identify problematic behaviours early on, before they result in major issues which can negatively affect the success of the tenant. This also allows staff to support tenants through their challenges, and maintains the goal of trying to help people retain a positive living environment and stable tenancy for as long as possible.

In addition to establishing staff support, the second most recommended feature for creating long term success was community supports. By connecting residents to services within their community, they are able to build their independence and resiliency while also building resources that will leave them supported, or at least familiar with where to go, after they leave a transitional program.

Other recommendations for creating long term success included:

- Understand that some people will need support for the rest of their lives, and finding them the appropriate types of individualized care for the long term should be a goal
- Open up dialogue among residents and staff for ongoing feedback on available services
- Create a sense of normalcy with tenants to model interactions (such as meeting over coffee), while maintaining professional boundaries. This helps people to be comfortable with social networking opportunities outside of the staff
- Do not attempt to just do housing without support services in place, because without services the housing will not last
- Have a staff person that can work to support people in finding long term housing
- Have a strongly developed philosophy and solid operational plan attached to the work
- Making a commitment to the long term success of tenants may be unrealistic. Rather, commit yourself to giving residents every opportunity possible for them to be successful while they are at your program so that when they leave they are ready to use the skills given to them in order to move forward.

All of the staff interviewed were extremely confident that the services provided through their housing program are contributing to better public safety results for their community, and noted that commitment to the community should always be at the heart of second stage housing.

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECOND STAGE HOUSING

Second stage housing needs to be a working, engaging process to get the tenant where they need to be. Don't just wait out the time you have with them. They need to be able to set goals with staff, and the relationship needs to be working and therapeutic for them. The client has to have a buy in to the relationship. Build close to services and amenities.

Staff and residents were asked about their advice and recommendations to others who are looking to create or improve second stage housing for people who have a history with the justice system. Residents' feedback suggested the importance of having staff that are fair and non-judgemental, and who are willing to listen and help people find what they need in the community. They also preferred the location to be close to the downtown core or within a one hour travel period on public transit to access services and amenities. Anything over an hour of total travel time (i.e. waiting for the bus, and the trip time including transfers) would discourage them from seeking the service. Residents were also in agreement that shared accommodations were not ideal, and that they would prefer to have their own space that they were responsible for. There were mixed views on whether having a common space for residents to socialize was important, and likely this depends on how many other social supports a person had in place.

Overall, staff and residents interviewed were very forthcoming with advice and recommendations about second stage housing and the housing needs of people leaving a CBRF or institution. Feedback was offered on staff, location, style of housing, program style, and lessons learned.

Having staff on site is important for having the capacity to react to issues when they occur, and to be able to provide solutions. Tenants feel more supported if the actions taken by staff are immediate, and if they are consistent in the application of policy and solutions. It was made clear by staff and residents that poor personnel policies, poor or non-existent rules for residents, or a lack of professionalism from staff can contribute to giving second stage housing a bad name. Because of the level of responsibility and accountability to the community, there is a level professionalism that must accompany the overall operations of the program.

There were many comments about taking the time to find the 'right' location. There is a challenge in finding the right spot at the right price. One interviewee noted their goal of finding a space near apartments that the tenants could aspire towards living in after their time at the housing program was finished. The principle behind this was to create a level of comfort with the neighbourhood and nearby services which would be an easier transition for people if they could move somewhere within the same area.

The style of housing ultimately will depend on the amount of funding available to complete the project, the number of potential tenants, and the support needs of potential tenants. Beyond this, some general considerations are to figure out what is most conducive to the style of housing in the community.

While it may be more affordable (and funders may suggest) to create bachelor or studio suites for tenants, their urban design may not be well suited for a smaller city. Talk to organizations that may be referring tenants and find out what they think is best for them. If one bedroom suites are what service providers are in agreement for, then work to create this with the funders. One method of persuasion mentioned by an interviewee was going to the CEO of the funding partner and asking whether they would put their mother or brother in the units they were suggesting. When the CEO replied that he would want his family members to have more space, the interviewee asked him to explain why his family members deserved more space than some of the most vulnerable people in the community. The result was an agreement to produce one bedroom suites for the tenants.

In other instances, an organization will have to decide on an apartment building, or smaller scattered site units. Based on discussions with interviewees, the decision should be determined by the support needs of the tenants. Some will not do well with the isolation of a scattered site approach, and others will blossom from the supported independence. The organization providing scattered site units (Site #4), also provides affordable housing units in two apartment buildings, and reported having significantly less issues with the tenants in the duplexes and triplexes than those in the apartments. Ultimately, they believed that this came down to managing less support needs in a confined space, and because the tenants in scattered sites are not influenced by negative associations or behaviours which occur in an apartment building. The management staff at Site #4 highly recommended scattered sites if possible, with the condition that there was enough staff available to go out and support the residents across the community.

While scattered site might be ideal, it is usually more expensive to purchase and maintain multiple sites and takes more time to have the capacity to support the same number of people as an apartment building. Also, the reality is that most funding opportunities allow for a one time purchase or construction of a building, or will support putting people into existing units in social housing under the care of support staff. In any of these cases, the style of housing should seek to create an improvement to the neighbourhood.

Other recommendations for housing style and design considerations included:

- Obtaining the option to build in geothermal heating/cooling through a funding contract can help contribute to the sustainable costs of operations; however, some sites had difficulties managing the cooling component in the summers
- Create community gardens or vegetable gardens that can create small jobs for tenants and will contribute to the aesthetic of the property while instilling pride of ownership for the tenants
- Try to balance making the housing as 'normal' as possible, while retaining a feeling for community living
- If it is not possible to put phones/televisions in the units, consider having an outgoing phone line and television in a common space since many tenants are unable to afford these

Regarding general aesthetics and style in the buildings, a few things stood out at some of the sites that are working with a mixed population of corrections clients and homeless clients, especially those focusing on people with mental health needs. One of the sites is a multi-level apartment

building, and each floor is painted a different colour to help avoid residents feeling disoriented or lost in the building. At another site, one interviewee mentioned the importance of creating a space for people that made them feel like their home had a level of uniqueness. There were four different design schemes for the units, with different paint, light fixtures, and countertops. Since the residents can stay in their unit for up to two years, having a space that was different from the units next to it was thought to help generate the feeling in people that they are also unique.

Deciding on the type of housing program can also be a challenge. Second stage or supportive? Harm reduction or abstinence only? These are questions that can only be answered by organizations that know their client group and understand the type of needs they have.

The debate between second stage housing as a transitional program, versus supportive housing as a permanent program really comes down to numbers. A second stage housing program has the ability to affect more people due to the time limit on the stay, but its success is often determined by the availability of suitable 'third stage' or long term options for housing that are safe and affordable. Second stage often creates a necessary next step from a community corrections setting, before making the full transition to independent community living. It assists with transitioning an individual gradually out of the correctional system to support successful community re-entry.

Supportive housing, alternatively, establishes a long term home for people and allows them to transition in their own time. However, most supportive programs that participated in this research have found very limited turnover with their tenants, effectively reducing the number of people they can support. Supportive housing may also be necessary for people who will need some degree of support for the rest of their lives. An organization which provides supportive housing should look to larger apartment style buildings that can generate some type of revenue through rent, provided there can be enough staff in place to meet the support needs of the residents.

The argument for harm reduction models or abstinence only models depends on the vision of the overall program, and type of staffing model available to the program. For programs that are managing a harm reduction approach, it is important to establish clear guidelines around substance use. Of the harm reduction models visited, most required that using be contained to individual units, and that people never use in an open space or be visibly under the influence. Trafficking or dealing out of the building was a strict cause of eviction. Essentially, residents are told that if they can use and be a good neighbour, and not create issues in the building, then they can retain their housing within the program. Most staff interviewed from these models found that people do respond to the risk of losing the first safe, nice home they have ever had. Most have also seen a reduction in people's substance use. They attribute this to the fact that people are in a safe place and know where they will sleep at night, and do not have as many reasons to use substances as a means of coping.

Many of the staff interviewed also made recommendations on a variety of lessons they have learned since starting their program. These included:

- Wait until you have an occupancy permit in your hands before telling people when they can move in. There are usually delays, so waiting to tell people can help to avoid disappointment.
- While pets are great companionship for people and buildings should attempt to be 'pet friendly', consider offering people the option for pets after a period of stable and successful tenancy. Pet friendly buildings often have issues, including expensive maintenance costs (e.g. cat litter being flushed down toilets).
- Have tenants set up direct deposit services for their rental income supplement, this will help them to retain their housing.
- Take precautions against bedbugs; consider bed bug removal as a social enterprise opportunity.
- If building from the ground up, take the time and care to find the right contractors, project managers, and architects who will understand your vision and support your cause. Be wary that not everyone who comes in will be supportive of the work you are trying to do, and ensure that they do their job right.
- Be sure to understand the challenges associated with new technologies such as geothermal heating and cooling systems. Some properties have found difficulties with adjusting the temperature.
- Retain the right to call for a suspension if a parolee is heading off track.

It is clear that there are many factors to consider when looking to create or improve second stage housing opportunities—and it is likely that there are more than those which have been covered through this research. Not all the recommendations listed will suit all housing programs. They are meant to be taken as feedback from experienced service providers and used to guide ideas while shaping an operational plan that is tailored for specific sub-populations and communities. One thing remained very clear through this research: each organization visited is different, with unique residents who have varying support needs. Each of their programs was designed to meet the needs of those they serve and to work within the context of what is available to them in their community.

Homes for the 'Hard to House'
A Model for Effective Second Stage Housing

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