International webinar series on Housing First

Housing First and influencing policy

2021-February-25
CAMH Land Acknowledgement

CAMH is situated on lands that have been occupied by First Nations for millennia; lands rich in civilizations with knowledge of medicine, architecture, technology and extensive trade routes throughout the Americas. The site of CAMH appears in colonial records as the council grounds of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Toronto is now home to a vast diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis who enrich this city.

CAMH is committed to reconciliation. We will honour the land through programs and places that reflect and respect its heritage. We will embrace the healing traditions of the Ancestors, and weave them into our caring practices. We will create new relationships and partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis – share the land and protect it for future generations.

Housekeeping

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Use the magnifying glass to zoom in on slides.

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- Change the presenter layouts so you can see all panelist, or just the active speaker.

- This webinar will be recorded and posted on the CoI's webpage following the presentation. You will receive an email after this webinar with the link.

- We would appreciate having your feedback on today’s webinar. Your browser will switch to the survey after this webinar ends. Thanks in advance for the 2 minutes of your time to complete our online feedback survey!
AGENDA

1. Introduction: The Housing First Europe Hub, the OHFRN-CoI, and today’s presenters

2. Presentations on Housing First and influencing policy

3. Discussants and Q/A session
The Housing First Europe Hub

The Hub was established by the Y-Foundation (Finland) and FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People), along with more than 15 partners, creating a network of organisations, public authorities and foundations working to scale up HF programs in Europe.

For more information, visit https://housingfirsteurope.eu/
The OHFRN-CoI

**Purpose:** To assist communities across Ontario, Canada, to develop, evaluate, and improve Housing First (HF) programs based on the Pathways model tested, adapted, and shown to be effective in the At Home / Chez Soi Demonstration Project.

**Goals:**

- **Build** local capacity for HF programs
- **Promote** high quality implementation, fidelity, and adaptation of the Pathways HF
- **Advocate** and influence public policy related to HF

This CoI is supported by Evidence Exchange Network, at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

For more information, visit [https://www.eenet.ca/initiative/housing-first-community-interest#about](https://www.eenet.ca/initiative/housing-first-community-interest#about)
Today’s webinar

The goal of this webinar series is to:
• bring together the international HF community
• share evidence-based knowledge, experience and innovation
• build capacity for HF programs
• promote high quality implementation of the HF model that includes both fidelity to and adaptation of the model.

Today’s session will focus on HF and Influencing Policy. Presenters will provide examples from different countries on how to influence policies around elections at a local level.
Today’s presenters

Geoff Nelson is an Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University. Geoff’s research has focused on community mental health programs for people with serious mental illness, unstable housing, and homelessness. Geoff was a member of the national research team for the At Home/Chez Soi research on Housing First in Canada and co-led the qualitative and mixed methods research for this project. He also led a research project, funded by CIHR on the expansion of Housing First in 6 Canadian communities. His current research looks at sustainability and knowledge transfer of the Housing First approach for homeless people with mental illness in Canada. Geoff is the Co-Founder and co-chair of the Ontario Housing First Regional Network Community of Practice.
Eoin O'Sullivan is a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, and Professor in Social Policy in the School of Social Work and Social Policy. He is a member of the European Observatory on Homelessness since 1992, and editor of the European Journal of Homelessness since 2009. Recent books include Reimagining Homelessness for Policy and Practice (2020) and Ending Homelessness? The Contrasting Experience of Denmark, Finland and Ireland (2020).
Today’s discussants

**Professor Dr Volker Busch Geertsema** is the Coordinator of the European Observatory on Homelessness and works at GISS, Gesellschaft für Innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung, Bremen. In the European and international context GISS and Prof Busch Geertsema have been a lead partner in projects focusing on defining and measuring homelessness, prevention of homelessness and on strategies to minimise homelessness. In the German context, his work centers on homelessness research, evaluation and counselling, with a long history of successful work with German Länder and national government on the quantitative extent of homelessness, preventative policies and their effects, types and standards of temporary accommodation and efforts undertaken to reintegrate homeless people into normal permanent housing.
Deborah Padgett is a Professor at NYU Silver. She is internationally known for her mentorship and advocacy of qualitative and mixed methods in research. Dr. Padgett’s book Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Changing Systems and Transforming Lives (2016, Oxford University Press) (with co-authors Benjamin Henwood and Sam Tsemberis) documents the rise of a ‘paradigm’ shifting approach to addressing homelessness in the U.S. and abroad. Dr. Padgett has lectured widely on the topic in Ireland, Scotland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Canada, and India.
Today’s discussants

Freek Spinnewijn is the Director of FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. FEANTSA is the only European NGO focusing exclusively on the fight against homelessness and has app 120 member organisations in 30 European countries. FEANTSA's ultimate goal is an end to homelessness in Europe. Freek is also the Vice-President of EPHA - the European Public Health Alliance.
Stephen Gaetz is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at York University and the Director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Homeless Hub. Dr. Gaetz has published extensively on the subject of homelessness and his research on youth homelessness, prevention and models of intervention have contributed to significant change in how we respond to homelessness in Canada. In 2015, he was appointed to the Province of Ontario’s Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness, and in 2017 he played a leading role as a member of the Government of Canada’s Advisory Panel on Homelessness. He was appointed into the Order of Canada with the grade of member, one of Canada's highest civilian honours.
How Social Scientists Can Influence Homelessness Policy: Experiences from Europe, Canada, and the USA

Geoffrey Nelson, Wilfrid Laurier University
Tim Aubry, University of Ottawa
Beth Shinn, Vanderbilt University
Sam Tsemberis, Pathways Housing First Institute

Eoin O’Sullivan, Trinity College
Christian Laval, Lyon2 Université
Pascale Estecahandy, Délégation interministérielle à l’hébergement et l’accès au logement (DIHAL)
Two-part Set of Papers

• Aim – To understand how social scientists can influence homelessness policy to incorporate evidence into decision-making
• Lessons learned from Europe, Canada, and the United States, updating Beth Shinn’s (2007) paper
• Our belief is that homelessness policy should be aimed at ending and preventing homelessness, not managing it
The Policy Process

- Policy-making is an intensely political process, involving multiple stakeholders with different perspectives.
- Our contention is that social science research can and should be one source of input into the policy process.
- The homeless-serving sector does not have a long tradition of evidence-based practice or policy, and non-evidence based practices abound.
Social Scientists and Policy-makers

- Shinn (2007) likened social scientists working with policy-makers in the homeless sector to “waltzing with a monster”
- Social scientists and policy-makers live in two different worlds
- The parable of the social science researcher and the policy-maker
Kingdon’s Framework

- Problem Stream
- Policy Stream
- Politics Stream

Window of Opportunity

Policy Change

Policy Entrepreneurs

Social Scientists

Figure 1: A Framework for Public Policy Change
Roles for Social Scientists in Policy Change

• Researcher-evaluator - *evidence*
• Conceptualizer-innovator - *ideas*
• Partnership-maker - *connections*
• Policy advisor - *advice*
• Knowledge translator – *education and networking*
• Training and technical assistance consultant – *standards*
• Advocate - *activism*
The Problem Stream: Lessons Learned

• **Ideas Matter** – In their role as *conceptualizer-innovators*, social scientists have *reframed* homelessness as resulting from the intersection of structural and personal conditions, rather than as a moral failing or personal defect. This has been instrumental in shifting the paradigm from Treatment First to Housing First.
Traditional Approaches to People Experiencing Homelessness and Mental Illness

Staircase Approach, Residential Continuum, Treatment First Approach
Social scientific research in Norway ‘laid the foundations for re-defining homelessness as a housing problem. Previously, it had been seen as a social or medical issue....’ (Dyb, 2020)
The Problem Stream: Lessons Learned

• It is important to involve people who experience homelessness in policy, planning, services, and research.

• In their role as partnership-maker, social scientists have advanced the importance of including people who are experts by virtue of their lived experience.
The Policy Stream: Lessons Learned

• **Program evaluation matters** – In their role as *researcher-evaluator*, social scientists have conducted rigorous policy research demonstration projects

  - The original research on Pathways Housing First in New York City that included two randomized controlled trials (RCT)
    - France’s Chez Soi d’Abord four-city RCT
    - Canada’s At Home/Chez Soi five-city RCT
    - The US Family Options 12-city RCT
  - Research on the use of housing vouchers to prevent homelessness in the US.
The Policy Stream: Lessons Learned

- **Knowledge transfer matters** – In their role as *knowledge translator*, social scientists have taken up the challenge of bringing demonstration projects to scale

  - France’s Chez Soi d’Abord scaling from four cities to 20 cities, the important role of DIHAL
  - HUD-VASH – Scaling Housing First across the US for veterans
USA HUD-VASH program – 56 US cities have ended veterans’ homelessness; 60,000 veterans housed -

https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/we-can-end-homelessness-through-housing-first-interventions?fbclid=IwAR2L3Rcvid_SxDV-BvCoHas3tZpwZkG7rLS5pJH0VnmUYv6DX-x6yIAqXns
The Political Stream: Lessons Learned

• Individual leaders matter

“Dennis Culhane, a researcher with close ties to policy makers and an unusual adeptness at translating research findings to policy imperatives, and the charismatic champions Sam Tsemberis, the founder of Pathways to Housing, and policy maker Phil Mangano all served to cut through the noise and chaos of competing policy interests.’ (Stanhope and Dunn, 2011, p.280)
Policy Windows: Lessons Learned

• Timing matters
• Crises present an opportunity for change
• Persistence is important
Persistence is important!

Homelessness in Finland 1987-2027
So is resilience!

Despite the overwhelming research evidence on the efficacy of HF, some commentators continue to deny or ignore the research.
Conclusion

• Social scientists can play multiple roles in bringing evidence to bear on homelessness policy.
  
  • Problem stream – reframing homelessness
  • Policy stream - translating research into policy
  • Political stream - social scientists can be partnership-makers with policy and practice stakeholders who are motivated to base policy on evidence
  • Policy windows - timing and persistence matter
  • While policy change is a messy business, social scientists can play multiple roles and use the many tools that they possess to help policy become more evidence-based in the quest to end and prevent homelessness.
Questions for Geoff and Eoin
Discussants

• Volker Busch-Geertsema, European Observatory on Homelessness
• Deborah Padgett, New York University
• Freek Spinnewijn, FEANTSA
• Stephen Gaetz, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
Questions for Discussants
Upcoming events

Stay tuned for our next webinars in this series:

• **The 10-20%** of clients who are unsuccessful in ending their homelessness through participation in a HF program. **Registration will be available soon.**

• **Housing First and Women.** This webinar will examine research and work on the pathways to Housing First for women, families/mothers experiencing homelessness, as well as domestic violence and HF. **Register for this webinar** taking place on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 9:30am – 11:00am EST.

**Fourth International Housing First Conference** – Save the date! **October 3-5, 2021**, 10:30am – 12:45pm. The call for abstracts will be launched in the Spring.
Thank You!

Thanks to all presenters and participants for joining today’s webinar!

Please also take a few minutes to answer a feedback survey on today’s webinar and give us suggestions on future webinar topics.

The webinar recording will be posted the Col’s webpage shortly.