



Networking and Housing First Knowledge Mobilization

Ontario Housing First Forum: Linking Research and Practice
January 25, 2018

Southwest 5



History

- Initiated at 2014 CAEH National Conference
- At a pre-conference session on regional housing first networks, Susan McGee shared information on Alberta's 7 Cities Network
- Following this session and later on in the conference, five southwestern Ontario communities decided to pilot their own local network over 2015 to learn from and support one another through local housing stability system transformation

Who Involved?

- Windsor, Hamilton, Waterloo, London, York
- Group established based on:
 - Size of community (mid-sized city) - presence of similar system components
 - Proximity to meet face-to-face
 - Demonstrated investment and interest in innovative approaches, system redesign, networking and collective impact
- Membership - manager/director from service manager and any staff they wish to include
- Guests may be invited to participate.

Governance

- Terms of Reference and membership list
- Each community hosts one face-to-face meeting each year – responsible for drafting agenda, refreshments and notes
- Piloted over 2015
- Review of Terms of Reference and membership each year – decided to continue for 2016, 2017 and 2018

Activities

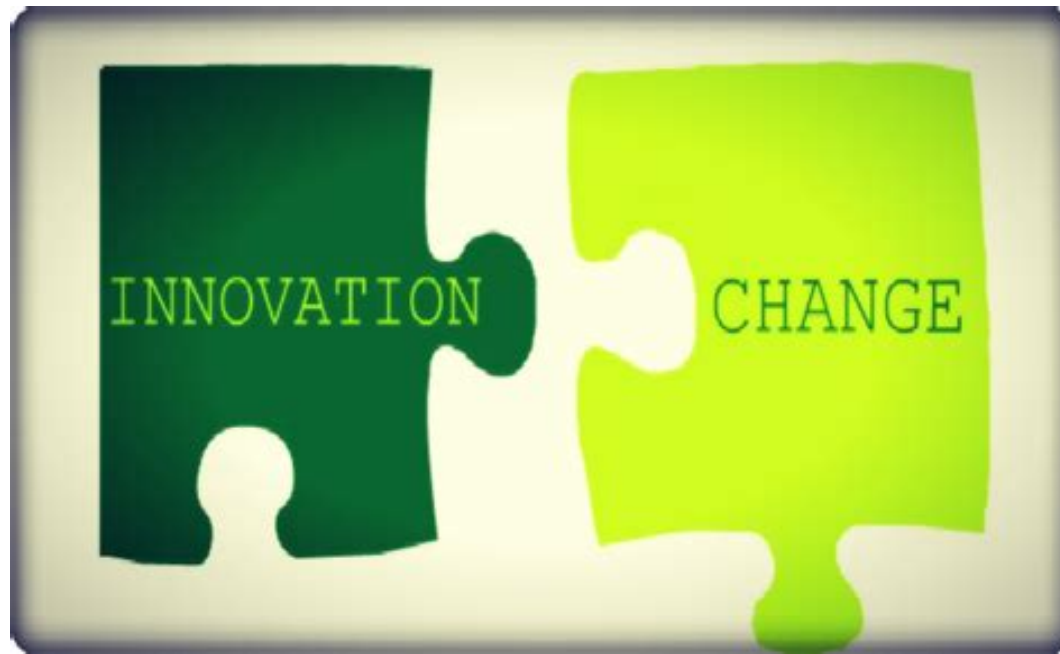
- Inventory and Membership List – so know what each other does and who to contact
- Bring in learning sessions e.g.,
 - “How To Be An Awesome Shelter”
 - Establishing Services Within a System Context
- Share plans, programs, redesign and materials
- Discuss/work together on HIFIS 4 implementation
- Discuss policy and aligning individual messages

Leveraging Knowledge



- Values
- Policy & Program Changes
- Opportunities
- “Wicked Problems”
- Continuous Improvement

Leadership and Change Management



Windsor-Essex Housing Connections

A model for community collaboration



Immediate access to
permanent housing
with no housing
readiness requirements



Consumer choice and
self-determination



Individualized,
recovery-oriented, and
client-driven supports



Harm reduction



Social and community
integration

Family Services Windsor-Essex



Who We Are

Established in 1950, FSWE is a non-profit, charitable, accredited, multi-service agency.

Lead Agency

Selected as the lead community agency to implement a Housing First program and approach to ending chronic homelessness in Windsor-Essex.

Why Family Services

- Proven track record in collaborating with other community agencies
- Clinical competency and variety of services, located in a community hub

Who is WEHC?

Windsor Essex Housing Connections (WEHC) is a multiagency initiative working to end chronic homelessness in Windsor-Essex.



Family Services Windsor-
Essex



Housing Information
Services



Access County Community
Support Services



Can-Am Indian Friendship
Centre

Why Work in Partnership

Ending Chronic Homelessness Requires a Multi-Agency Approach

- Staff agree that the fight to end chronic homelessness is one of the most challenging types of work they have done.
- No one agency has all the supports and services necessary to address the complexity of issues people we support are experiencing

New Ways to Support People

- Our traditional approach to service delivery required a reboot.

Funders Expect It

- Governments and funders want to see agencies working together

Challenges

- Values of partnering agencies are not always the same
- Agencies do work in different ways
- Agencies are under resourced administratively and this under resourcing can lead to competition between agencies
- Agencies are responsible to volunteer Boards of Directors who often don't understand the value of partnering and the concept of collaboration

Benefits of Collaboration

- Better outcomes for people we support
- Agencies can learn from each other
- Agencies hold each other accountable
- Opportunity to share training resources
- Opportunity to impact real change in the system when more system players are working the same way

What we have learned

- Leadership is critical
- Communication is hard
- Sometimes we have to forgo our previous ways of doing business and adopt new ones
- We need to keep working at being better, doing better and measuring how we are getting there





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