

Seminar 9: Youth Homelessness Prevention (Floor -2, Room 10)

Chair: **Caterina Cortese, IT**

Allyson Marsolais, CA: Making the Shift – Using Social Innovation to Build the Case for Youth Homelessness Prevention



Allyson is the Executive Vice President with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (previously the Canadian Homelessness Research Network) and VP and Co-Founder of Hub Solutions. Allyson has a Master's degree in Critical Disability Studies from York University and almost 20 years experience working in the social justice field. Currently, Allyson is excited about further developing Hub Solutions, and is working towards a professional designation as a Project Management Professional (PMP).

Launched in 2017 as a partnership between the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada, Making the Shift is a youth homelessness social innovation lab designed to build an evidence base for the prevention of youth homelessness. The work of MtS supports programming and policy decisions that will better coordinate systems, break down silos and reorient investments away from a crisis response to foreground the importance of prevention. MtS is a major funder of research on youth homelessness prevention in Canada. Moreover, MtS operates a range of demonstration projects that support communities to implement, evaluate and refine preventive programs and interventions. In this presentation we give an overview of our approach to social innovation, key projects, and preliminary outcomes of our research to date. We also highlight our knowledge mobilization strategy to identify how we are working to support commitment, uptake and scaling of preventive interventions.

Steve Gaetz, CA: Housing First for Youth – What Have We Learned from Our Demonstration Projects in Canada?



Dr. Stephen Gaetz is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at York University, in Toronto Canada. He is the President of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Homeless Hub at York University as well as co-Director of Making the Shift – Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab and the Toronto Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention. Dr. Gaetz works in collaboration with partners to conduct research and mobilize this knowledge so as to have a greater impact on solutions to homelessness, and in particular the prevention of homelessness. In 2017 Dr. Gaetz was awarded the Member of the Order of Canada.

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) is an adaptation of Housing First designed to meet the needs of developing adolescents and young adults. As part of the Making the Shift project we have implemented four HF4Y demonstration projects, each with a specific focus. In this presentation we discuss preliminary results of Randomized Controlled Trials of projects in Toronto and Ottawa. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, participants were tracked for 24 months, at three month intervals. The outcomes areas focused on include: 1) Housing stabilization, 2) Attachment to employment and education; 3) Quality of Life; 4) Lifeskills and 5) Resilience. We will also explore what we have learned from our Indigenous-Led HF4Y project called Endaayaang. We will include with a discussion of the growth of HF4Y as a key intervention in Europe and Canada.

Melanie Redman, CA: Enhancing Collaboration between Canada and Europe: The Toronto Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention



Melanie Redman is the co-founder, President & CEO of A Way Home Canada, a national coalition reimagining solutions to youth homelessness through transformations in policy, planning and practice. A Way Home Canada has inspired communities and countries around the world to adopt the A Way Home brand as a way to participate in a growing international movement for change. Melanie also leads the National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness in Canada, which is a pan-Canadian community of practice for youth homelessness service providers. Melanie is also the co-founder and Partnership and Implementation Director for the Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab, an international "Network of Centres of Excellence."

In 2021 the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe established the Toronto Centre of Excellence on Youth Homelessness Prevention at York University (Toronto Centre of Excellence). Hosted by York University and co-led by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada, the launch of the Toronto Centre of Excellence (TCE) presents an important opportunity to work internationally to contribute to the transformation of how we respond to youth homelessness through a greater focus on prevention. In this presentation, we discuss the key activities of the TCE and explore the opportunities for deep collaboration between partners in Canada and Europe in the areas of research and evaluation, training and technical assistance, mobilizing knowledge to create impact and building an international movement for change.