

FOSTERING MINO-BIMMAADIZIWN: HOUSING, HOME AND HEALTH: CURRENT RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

OCT 30, 2023

Kevin Fitzmaurice





OUTLINE OF TALK

- A Safe and Affordable Place to Call Home Indigenous homelessness
- Urban Indigenous research and housing and homelessness
- Urban Native Housing Program_K
- Making the Shift

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES IN INDIGENOUS HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS: A SAFE AND AFFORDABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME

- Significant (70 to 80percent) overrepresentation of Indigenous people in homelessness populations
 - With diverse experiences, including cultural homelessness
- Often complex, intersecting needs relating to intergenerational trauma and the 'long assault' of settler colonialism experienced by Indigenous people
 - IRS, child welfare, justice system, as structured/systemic anti-Indigenous racism, poverty, and violence
- Supportive responses in relation to whole person: Body, Mind, and Spirit
- Urban Indigenous homelessness connected to oppressive living conditions in Indigenous communities outside of cities.



SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES IN INDIGENOUS HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS: A SAFE AND AFFORDABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME

- CMHC funding of Indigenous non-profits and the possibility of urban reserves for housing First Nation members as expression of nation to nation, treaty relations
- The need for non-Indigenous allies in this effort
- Importance of a diversity of knowledge perspectives, including lived experience to break down silos/echo chambers
- Reconciliation is hard work...movement to ongoing relationship building in the direction of living well and enjoying the world together
- Recognizing diversity within Indigenous communities and the need for this to be reflected in the questions asked and the data collected
 - Holding space for first voice, community stories as data



INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH LITERATURE

- Social Determinants of Health
- The ongoing assault of settler colonialism and a social indicator of Indigenous health
- Indigenous Health disparities and inequities despite socioeconomic improvements for Indigenous people
 - Broad Range of Health Measures: Maternal, fetal and infant health; child health, disease, mental health and wellness, violence, abuse, injury, and disability; environmental health; and food security and nutrition (National Collaborating Centre of Aboriginal Health)
- Need for more targeted data

URBAN INDIGENOUS TRENDS GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS (UATF 2007, UAPS 2010, TARP 2012, UAKN 2023)

Majority of Aboriginal People living in cities

- 56 to 60%
- Growth rates from 184%(Toronto) to 667%(Ottawa) 1981-2011. Sudbury (562%)

Gains in education, employment, and income

- Emerging minority of economically successful members

Urban Indigenous communities

- Young, culturally diverse, highly mobile, and home to increasing number of 'newcomers'

URBAN INDIGENOUS TRENDS

GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

(UATF 2007, UAPS 2010, TARP 2012, UAKN 2023)

- The City is Home
 - Some links to communities of origin
- Home ownership is an increasing reality for urban Indigenous people
 - 22% UATF (Ontario)
 - 28% UATF (Sudbury)
 - 19% of TARP (Toronto)
- Increasing experience of transitioning out of poverty and urban Native housing services and into home ownership
 - Social support services are working



URBAN INDIGENOUS TRENDS

GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

(UATF 2007, UAPS 2010, TARP 2012, UAKN 2023)

- Organizational development and governance
 - 'Invisible infrastructure' social services network
 - Urban Indigenous Councils
 - National Urban Indigenous Council
- Section 35 / Urban Indigenous rights

URBAN INDIGENOUS TRENDS

GENERAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

(UATF 2007, UAPS 2010, TARP 2012, UAKN 2023)

- Persistence overrepresentation in poverty, homelessness, child welfare, criminal justice system
- Adequate and affordable housing is a major challenge for urban Aboriginal people because of the high incidents of poverty, unemployment, single-parent families and racism within the housing sector.
- Unstable or poor housing is connected to many other factors influencing the quality of life
- Housing that integrates a diversity of support services is required

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION (NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2009)

- **Prevent further growth in housing need:**
- 3,000 dwellings annually (combination of new construction, acquisition and rental assistance);
- Preserve and improve the existing social housing stock: 1,000 dwellings improved annually;
- 1,000 new transitional and supportive housing spaces with ongoing support services;
- Increase the urban Indigenous home-ownership rate

CANADIAN HOUSING AND RENEWAL ASSOCIATION

URBAN, RURAL, NORTHERN INDIGENOUS HOUSING 2019

Urban Native Housing Program CMHC 1975

Focused on core housing needs of growing urban Indigenous community across the country

Subsidized RGI (30% of income)

Included social supports

Mortgages are completed and agreements are Terminated

CANADIAN HOUSING AND RENEWAL ASSOCIATION

URBAN, RURAL, NORTHERN INDIGENOUS HOUSING 2019

- Formerly subsidized rents will rise hundreds of dollars per month to cover costs thereby reducing the number of RGI units;
- The stock of social housing will further shrink as housing providers sell off units to control costs and to generate operating funds;
- Indigenous families will be dislocated and, in some cases, will become homeless; and
- One analysis suggests that up to half of all housing providers may not be viable after their operating agreements expire.

- No ongoing funds to renovate the ageing stock and continue the subsidies,
- Families are having to move out of their homes and the units sold to revitalize the remaining stock and maintain rent subsidies on some units while raising the rent on others.
- Great concern was expressed at the inevitable net loss of RGI units, family disruption, loss of a supportive community, and the erosion/decline of tenant wellbeing.
- Tenants moving out are facing severe affordability problems with rents increases of up to \$1,000 per month in market housing units

CANADIAN HOUSING AND RENEWAL ASSOCIATION ABORIGINAL HOUSING CAUCUS REPORT 2015

EXPIRY OF OPERATING AGREEMENTS: STUDY OF AN EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUE IN ONTARIO (PHM 2016)

- 100% of Urban Native Housing Providers RGI units
- ‘Phenomenal’ need for deeply affordable housing in Indigenous community.
- Significant waiting lists across the province
- End of operating agreements will have a ‘devastating impact’
 - Significant number of small providers.
 - Move to market rents
 - Will need to sell off units to survive, eventually all may be sold
 - Increase in Indigenous homelessness, child welfare and criminal justice system involvement.

EXPIRY OF OPERATING AGREEMENTS: STUDY OF AN EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUE IN ONTARIO (PHM 2016)

- Indigenous people 5% of population and only 1% of social housing. 'huge imbalance' in need of a catch-up period.
- Indigenous people over-represented in homeless population
- 19,000 properties agreements ending nationally:
 - This many families in Canada could become homeless in next 10 years
- 2200 in Ontario, 44 providers, only 3 have more than 150 units as viability level for sustainability
 - (Ontario Non-Profit Housing Assoc.)

EXPIRY OF OPERATING AGREEMENTS: STUDY OF AN EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUE IN ONTARIO (PHM 2016)

- The 114 Aboriginal housing providers nationally who vary widely in size and staffing are working hard to broaden housing options, innovate and create new revenue streams, and form new partnerships.
- Furthermore, the estimated capital cost of replacing 19,000 Aboriginal units would be \$3.8 billion.

CASE STUDIES

NATIVE PEOPLE OF SUDBURY DEVELOPMENT CORP

- 1975, 106 Units 96 Sudbury and 11 Espanola under Urban Native Housing Program
 - Safe Affordable and quality housing
 - Purchased in 6 phases across city
- Counteract racism, culturally appropriate for Indigenous people
- Aboriginal and treaty rights in the city
- Significant unmet need: three year waiting list
- Indigenous people significantly over-represented in homelessness population
 - 9% of Sudbury population and 42% of homelessness (Sudbury, 2017)

CASE STUDIES NATIVE PEOPLE OF SUDBURY DEVELOPMENT CORP

- Two units at 1050 Beatrice St. agreements expired 2013. The subsidies have ended.
- Now charging low-end market rates, increased by \$300 and \$600 per unit
- Previous tenants were displaced
- All remaining mortgages matured in 2020
- Temporary city funding available to maintain RGI subsidy for upcoming agreements
- Have been in a legal dispute with the city to not be absorbed under the 2011 OHSA and to maintain our distinctive Indigenous operating practices

CASE STUDIES

NATIVE PEOPLE OF SUDBURY DEVELOPMENT CORP

- CMHC funds transfer to province and then to municipalities of Canada - Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) to maintain subsidies for RGI, social supports, prior operational practice
- Legal disputes have continued with city
- Colonialism through devolution of relationship and funding
 - Ontario Housing Services Act (2011)
 - Risk of loss of RGI Indigenous housing in the middle of a housing crisis

MAKING WHAT IS MAKING THE SHIFT? THE SHIFT

- National Study: Contributes to the transformation of how we respond to youth homelessness through research and knowledge mobilization specific to youth homelessness prevention and housing stabilization
- Prevent and end youth homelessness through co-creation, co-ownership, and collaboration with researchers, policymakers, service providers, and people with lived experience of youth homelessness.



- A longitudinal qualitative study of 120 youth over 3 years
- Communities:
 - Sudbury/Manitoulin
 - Timmins
 - Cochrane
- Age range: 13-30 years
- Challenges of COVID-19

MAKING WHAT IS MAKING
THE SHIFT?
THE SHIFT



WHAT IS MAKING THE SHIFT?

Sudbury	The Samaritan Centre, Elgin St. Mission, Corner Clinic, N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, L'Association des Jeunes de la Rue, Sudbury Action Centre for Youth	Blue Door Café Aboriginal Peoples Alliance Northern Ontario (APANO), Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA),
Timmins	Living Space Hub	Timmins & Area Women in Crisis
Cochrane	Cochrane District Social Planning Council Cochrane Ininew Friendship Centre	Ga Beh Shoo In Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board



RANGE OF EXPERIENCES WITH HOMELESSNESS

- **Absolute homelessness:** Having no secure place to live, staying outdoors, or in a shelter.
- **Hidden homelessness:** Couch surfing temporarily or staying in an unsuitable place.
- **At-risk of homelessness:** Elevated ongoing risk due to very low income, abuse, or health issue.
- People move across these experiences with similar physical and mental health challenges (REACH)



MAKING THE SHIFT: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN NE ONTARIO

Difficult transitional age range of being too young to access services, but too old for a foster home.

Leaving foster care as a major contributor to youth homelessness with many sharing that they became homeless the same day that they exited foster care.

High prevalence of learning disability and physical disabilities; which are getting worse from the hardships of living with homelessness

Have expertise and knowledge of what is personally needed to exit homelessness, but that their perspectives are not being respected and listened to by the agencies.

Using prison system as winter housing



- Actions: Daily living is focused on survival actions, meeting basic needs.
- Substance use: 80% of participants identify as using substances.
- COVID 19: Detrimental effects on ability to meet needs.
- Daily experiences: A daily grind, cycles of despair
- Feelings: Embarrassment, shame, anxiousness, hopelessness, and feeling stuck.
- Financial factors: Financial supports are insufficient.
- Mental Health Challenges: 65% of participants identify as having mental health challenges

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MAKING THE SHIFT: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN NE ONTARIO



MAKING THE SHIFT: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN NE ONTARIO

- Needs: Affordable housing, access to hygiene facilities, and access to service information.
- Physical health impacts: Overall health decline due to daily living with homelessness.
- Diverse reasons for homelessness: Leaving institutional care, family breakdown, substance use, conflicts, abuse, evictions, rent, etc..
- Social factors: Loss of friends and family. A sense of belonging among street youth.
- Spirituality: Not accessible.
- The need for an Indigenous residential / transitional, shelter_k



MAKING THE SHIFT: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN NE ONTARIO

- Youth who are experiencing homelessness in our community are doing so through no fault of their own. Many are leaving broken homes at a young age, have a disability, or they are aging out of institutional care and do not have the necessary supports (such as housing, food, transportation, and care) that all youth need to to attend and succeed at school, work, and to live a good life.
- We have collectively allowed our governments to turn their backs on youth in need in our community. There are presently no services for youth that are experiencing homelessness in Sudbury, Timmins, or Cochrane which can help provide the basic life supports to help lift them out of homelessness. The services that are available attempt to meet very basic needs of food, water, and shelter and function to maintain their homelessness.



MAKING THE SHIFT: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN NE ONTARIO

- Youth who are experiencing homelessness in Sudbury, Timmins, or Cochrane are working hard to find housing and exit homelessness, but they are caught in a daily struggle to meet their basic needs. Over time, they are becoming increasingly worn down, sick, and many are feeling overwhelming shame, despair, and hopelessness. Many youth experiencing homelessness in our communities are dying.
- As adults in our community, we are neglecting our youth when they need us the most; we need to get involved and do so much more!



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