

7 Cities Forum on Housing & Homelessness

Session Format Types:

- Training-single presenter with time for Q&A
- Panel Discussion: up to 3 presenters with time for Q&A
- Workshopping: Structured discussion that includes group work or “audience participation.”

Thursday, June 15:

Plenary 9:30-10:15 am

“Homelessness on the Rise, Increased Encampments, and Prioritizing Housing”

Speaker: Iain De Jong with Org Code Consulting

Session Synopsis:

Have we failed? It seems to many outsiders that Housing First doesn't work. It is seen as anti-treatment, airy fairy enabling that has resulted in an explosion of homelessness. Alternate approaches are being proposed, driven by fear and criminalization of homelessness over the evidence-based and evidence-informed practice. The keynote explores what we are up against more than 10 years after the birth of the 10-year plan, in a post-pandemic reality where what we do and how we do it is labelled as “broken”, and offers a pathway of where we need to focus next if we are to collectively succeed amidst a rise in homelessness, an increase in encampments, and a changing rental housing market.

Learning Outcomes:

- Core principles of Housing First and the application of each;
- The intention and purpose of shelters, outreach and drop-in services;
- How to change the narrative and make the case for continuing to prevent, reduce and end homelessness

Concurrent Sessions 10:30- 12 pm

Session 1 Wildrose Room:

Upstream Interventions: Effective Prevention and Diversion as a Service

- Format: Training
- Speaker: Iain De Jong w Org Code Consulting
- Moderator: Andrea Ness, Homeward Trust (Edmonton)

Synopsis: While much of the work in the past 15 years has focused on outflow (helping people exit homelessness), we need to collectively renew our efforts to reduce inflow (help people safely and appropriately avoid engagement with the homelessness response system). Doing so is better for the household, helps preserve rental accommodation that is often more affordable than trying to enter the

rental market, and decreases demands on both immediate response services like shelter and street outreach, as well as housing and support services. This session outlines the differences between prevention and diversion and how best to apply the approaches in a safe and appropriate manner with households at risk or beginning to experience housing instability.

Learning Objectives: 1) What the research demonstrates about effective prevention; 2) Core elements of prevention and diversion; 3) Steps in practicing diversion well with households; 4) Understanding and maximizing resilience

Session 2 Wildrose 3:

Data and Privacy 101

- Format: Training
- Speaker: Matt Parker, HelpSeeker Technologies
- Moderator: Jaime Rodgers, Medicine Hat Housing Society
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes: The first half of this workshop will discuss the grey area surrounding privacy in the social sector, what regulations you may run into, how you can navigate these regulations and what are the best practices for privacy and security in the social sector. The second half will separate into smaller discussions on how prepared your organizations are on ten different data and privacy competencies, followed by a group discussion on action items.

Session 3 Courtyard A:

Supportive Housing Models and the Housing Continuum

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Candace Noble, Bissell Centre (Edmonton) Jeff Coulombe, AHS AMH, Steve Richardson, The Alex (Calgary), Renee Iverson, George Spady Society (Edmonton)
- Moderator: Kerri Sandford, Medicine Hat Housing Society
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes: Supportive Housing, Models, what it is and isn't, and how it fits in the Housing Continuum
 - Attendees should gain an understanding for:
 - How programs may offer unique supports to populations with unique needs
 - How different organizations resource services over and above “standard” case management and tenancy supports for program participants
 - How individuals with higher-intensity needs may be connected to services from an SH setting

Session 4 Courtyard B

Lived Experience Engagement

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Liam Thompson, Homeward Trust (Edmonton), Tammy Rogers, CMHA Lived Experience (Red Deer)
- Moderator: Ryan Veldkamp, City of Red Deer
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes: The role of lived experience and the impact of their voices in informing practice plays an increasingly important role in planning and program decisions. The presentation will provide an overview to attendees on best practices of Lived Expertise engagement. Will outline the Participant Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Group structure, accountability framework and projects that continue to shape our work.

Session 5 Manitoba Room:

(Full day) Learning Circle and Cultural Activities- supported by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Description: This interactive space is open for all attendees on a drop-in basis for opportunities to learn, participate, and rest. Activities will be relevant to practitioners to deepen understanding around meaningful daily activities with participants from the cultural perspective.

Lunch Keynote 12-1:30 pm

“Systems and Performance Management”

Speaker: Dr. Alina Turner, HelpSeeker Technologies

Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

In her keynote address, Alina will share her insights and vision, underlining the pivotal role of technology, data, and systems performance and planning in transforming our approach to social issues. Her contribution to HelpSeeker exemplifies her belief in the transformative power of the right technology, data, and strategy to address the challenges of homelessness and social disparity.

Concurrent Sessions 1:30- 2:45 pm

Session 6 Wildrose Room:

Excellence in Case Management Part 1

- Format: Training
- Speaker: Iain De Jong w Org Code Consulting
- Moderator: Jaime Rodgers, Medicine Hat Housing Society

Synopsis: Part One explains the required service orientation of effective housing case management; outlines the pathway to housing stability through adjustment, coaching and monitoring; structuring effective home visits; and key tasks to complete the first month the household is housed.

Learning Outcomes: 1) applying the Housing First service orientation; 2) understanding the steps and milestones in housing stability; 3) improving move-in activities and first tasks towards housing stability.

NOTE: Attendees should plan to attend both part 1 and part 2

Session 7 Wildrose 3

Build Your Program Impact Strategy

- Format: Workshop
- Speaker: Dr. Alina Turner, HelpSeeker Technologies
- Moderator: Kerri Sandford, Medicine Hat Housing Society
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

Description:

If you are involved in a program or initiative addressing homelessness in Alberta and are seeking ways to optimize your impact, join us for a deep dive into the art and science of building an effective Program Impact Strategy. This workshop is designed to equip program professionals like you with the tools and insights needed to define clear goals, measure success, drive systems change, and clearly articulate your work to stakeholders.

During this interactive session, we will cover:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Learn how to identify and establish meaningful KPIs that reflect the true impact of your work. We'll discuss how to use these metrics for ongoing program monitoring and improvement.

Systems Change: Explore how your program can contribute to broader systems change in the context of homelessness. We will delve into the connections between individual programs and larger systems, highlighting strategies for systemic impact.

Articulation and Communication: Develop your skills in articulating the work and impact of your program to various stakeholders. Whether you're communicating with funders, policymakers, or the general public, we'll offer techniques for telling your story effectively and compellingly.

Hands-On Exercises: Throughout the session, you'll have the opportunity to apply what you're learning to your own program. We'll provide worksheets, templates, and other resources to guide you in developing or refining your Program Impact Strategy.

By the end of this workshop, you will walk away with a clearer understanding of your program's impact, a strategy for enhancing that impact, and the ability to effectively communicate your work to those who need to understand it. This session is an invaluable opportunity for program professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness in Alberta.

Session 8 Courtyard A:

Supporting Recovery through the Indigenous Perspective

- Format: Training
- Speaker: Marlene Orr -Native Counselling Services of Alberta
- Moderator: Jeff Walker, Homeward Trust (Edmonton)
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

Session 9 Courtyard B

Peer Support Program Models

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: RoseMary Fayant, George Spady Society (Edmonton)
- Moderator: Liam Thompson, Homeward Trust (Edmonton)
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes: Sharing of ideas around the value of Peer Support, and how to support Peers in their work. Discussion around what a Peer Support Community of Practice.

Session 10 Manitoba Room:

(Full day) Learning Circle and Cultural Activities- supported by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Description: This interactive space is open for all attendees on a drop-in basis for opportunities to learn, participate, and rest. Activities will be relevant to practitioners to deepen understanding around meaningful daily activities with participants from the cultural perspective.

Concurrent Sessions 3 - 4:30 pm

Session 11 Wildrose Room:

Excellence in Case Management

- Format: Training
- Speaker: Iain De Jong w Org Code Consulting
- Moderator: Jaime Rodgers, Medicine Hat Housing Society

In Part Two the focus is on productive goal setting; the teaching and coaching functions of the case manager; documentation approaches; care conferencing; and exit planning for when a participant comes to the end of a time-limited program. *NOTE: Attendees should plan to attend both part 1 and part 2*

Learning Outcomes: 1) distinguishing goals from dreams; 2) selecting the right approach to goal setting with the program participant; 3) accountability through documentation; 4) how to structure and document a care conference; 5) helping program participants prepare for independent living without case management supports.

Session 12 Wildrose 3:

Theory of Change

- Format: Workshop
- Speaker: Dr. Alina Turner, HelpSeeker Technologies
- Moderator: Megan Boe, Homeward Trust (Edmonton)
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

In the complex world of social programs, initiatives, and policies, a robust, data-driven Theory of Change (ToC) can be an invaluable tool. We're inviting professionals like you, who are driving change in the field of homelessness, to join us for an interactive workshop on crafting and refining your Theory of Change.

During this hands-on session, you'll learn:

Theory of Change Basics: We'll start with a comprehensive overview of what a Theory of Change is, why it's crucial, and how it can guide your work.

Systems Mapping: Understand how to map the connection from your program, initiative, or policy to micro, meso, and macro systems. You'll learn how to visualize the ripple effects of your efforts and the systemic changes they can foster.

Data-Driven Decisions: Discover how to leverage data to inform your Theory of Change and maximize your impact. We'll discuss how to identify key data, interpret it, and use it to shape your strategies.

Hands-On Activities: Throughout the workshop, you'll apply these concepts directly to your work. Whether you're starting from scratch or have a Theory of Change that needs refining, the instructor will be there to facilitate as an expert and helper. You're encouraged to bring your materials for a second pair of eyes.

By the end of the session, you'll not only gain a deeper understanding of the Theory of Change and its importance, but you'll also walk away with a visual representation of your ToC that you can proudly display in your office. This workshop aims to equip you with a data-backed ToC that you can use as a guiding tool for your efforts.

Bring your passion, your projects, and your readiness to learn. This workshop is designed for you to get stuff done while boosting your capacity to drive meaningful change in the realm of homelessness. Let's map out the journey from your current efforts to the systemic impact you aspire to achieve!

Session 13 Courtyard A:

Housing-Focused Shelter: Shelter Hubs

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Sandra Clarkson from Calgary Drop in and Tim Pasma from Hope Mission
- Moderator: Kerri Sandford, Medicine Hat Housing Society
- Synopsis/Learning Objectives: The role of housing-focused shelters is critically important in ending homelessness in any community. Attendees will learn about the work of Shelter transformation and Shelter hub pilots in Alberta, gaining insights and strategies for implementation in their communities.

Session 14 Courtyard B:

Youth Homelessness, Community Planning and Programs

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Jessica Day, YESS (Edmonton), Michael Peters, YMCA of Northern Alberta (Edmonton team)- Youth Diversion Program
- Moderator: Jodi Kelloway, City of Red Deer (TBC)
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes: Overview of how communities are supporting youth in our province
- This session will describe the specialized approaches required to address youth homelessness in an urban setting. Panellists will discuss the methods and approaches to providing a network of supports for vulnerable youths and how collaboration in the sector is essential to prevent youth from entering chronic homelessness.

Session 15 Manitoba Room:

(Full day) Learning Circle and Cultural Activities- supported by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Description: This interactive space is open for all attendees on a drop-in basis for opportunities to learn, participate, and rest. Activities will be relevant to practitioners to deepen understanding around meaningful daily activities with participants from the cultural perspective.

Friday, June 16:

Plenary: 9-9:45 am “Mental Health and Self Care”

- Speaker: TBC – Kathleen Gorman
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

Concurrent Sessions: 9:45-10:45 am

Session 16 Wildrose Room:

Developing Self Compassion

- Format: Workshop
- Speaker: Christine Ellery and Sarah Pearson, Canadian Mental Health Association
- Moderator: Jodi Kelloway, City of Red Deer
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

Life can take a toll on our stress levels, our moods, our sense of control, our sense of the future, and our confidence. The best antidote to these impacts is self-compassion. This 1-hour interactive course will help you rediscover self-compassion and provide some tools to build this skill. Objectives for this course include: defining self-compassion, identifying the benefits of self-compassion and developing a practice of self-compassion.

Session 17 Wildrose 3

Collaboration for Community Safety

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Placeholder- Inspector Bill Krull (Edmonton Police members), Jaime Rodgers, Medicine Hat Housing Society, Hon Leung, Chinatown Transformation Collaborative (Edmonton)
- Moderator: Ryan Veldkamp, City of Red Deer
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:
- The interconnectedness between homeless-serving agencies, law enforcement, and community members are explored in this panel discussion. Participants should gain an understanding for how police engage with the homeless-serving sector in two different cities, Edmonton and Medicine Hat, and different initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of homelessness in our communities. Hear from a community stakeholder from Edmonton’s Chinatown on working in a collaborative space with the sector, law enforcement, and community members.

Session 18 Courtyard A:

Social Enterprise and Partnerships: FIND, Employment, and Training

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Bev Latta and Janine Tremblay- FIND (Edmonton), Tanner Chambers – Bissell Centre (Edmonton)
- Moderator: Kirsti McNicol, Homeward Trust (Edmonton)
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:

- Social enterprises play critical roles in both uplifting community members in a time of need, and also, in providing pathways from homelessness into civil society. In this panel discussion, we will explore how innovative programming provides accessible, sustainable, and person-centered connections to essential services.

Session 20 Manitoba Room:

(Full day) Learning Circle and Cultural Activities- supported by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Description: This interactive space is open for all attendees on a drop-in basis for opportunities to learn, participate, and rest. Activities will be relevant to practitioners to deepen understanding around meaningful daily activities with participants from the cultural perspective.

Concurrent Sessions: 11-12 pm

Session 21 Wildrose Room:

Encampments Outreach –Standards and Practice

- Format: Training
- Speaker: Org Code Consulting
- Moderator: Ryan Veldkamp, City of Red Deer

Synopsis: Outreach is often thought of as developing rapport and addressing immediate needs. However, in a housing-oriented system of care, ensuring that outreach is also focused on helping people get included in Coordinated Access, taking care of administrative tasks like securing documentation, and helping people focus on housing solutions is critically important. If there isn't significant emphasis on housing solutions, unsheltered homelessness will continue to rise and people who are unsheltered will face increased risks to sustaining life in an unsheltered situation.

Learning Outcomes: 1) The purpose and intention of housing-focused street outreach; 2) understanding typologies of unsheltered homelessness and how that informs the approach to street outreach; 3) establishing priorities for service within the unsheltered population; 4) balancing sustained relationships with engaging with newly unsheltered people.

Session 22 Wildrose 3

Access to Healthcare Services in the Homeless-Serving Sector

- Format: Workshop
- Speaker: BSCS (Marliss Taylor), Radius (Tricia Smith), CUPS Calgary (Elaine Wilson)
- Moderator: Jackie Liu, Homeward Trust
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes:
Overview of the intersection between housing and health, with examples of how partnerships are supporting the collective goal of wellness for people in their housing process, and defining how healthcare is accessible for individuals experiencing homelessness

Through this panel discussion, participants should gain an understanding of how community members may access healthcare services, gain a deeper appreciation for what "healthcare" services include, and discuss the role and importance of primary healthcare services

Session 23 Courtyard A:

Supportive Housing – Programs and Operations in Congregate Settings

- Format: Panel Discussion
- Speaker: Nicole Webber, George Spady Society (Edmonton), Laurence Braun-Woodbury, Bissell (Edmonton), Katie Kitschke, Mustard Seed (Alberta)
- Moderator: Jodi Kelloway, City of Red Deer
- Synopsis/Learning Outcomes: Operational focus, with Supportive Housing Providers leading the discussion.
 - An understanding of coordinated and intentional referral, intake and exit procedures
 - Bridging community reintegration and engagement through building an understanding of the role, purpose and benefits of SH in communities
 - Highlights of comprehensive support services that effectively meet the needs of participants through a combination of embedded, in reached and community-based interventions.

Closing Panel 12-1 pm “Going Forward: Challenges to Overcome and Lessons Learned” -7 Cities Leadership