

Match Summary

Name of Match: **Homelessness and Mental Health**

Location of Match: **Vancouver, BC**

1. Brief summary of the outcomes of your match

This very successful Match and delivered in Vancouver and provided participants with the opportunity to spend time in the community observing Housing First programs and homelessness services first hand. The Match took place in Vancouver's Downtown East Side, an area noted for a high incidence of poverty, drug use, sex trade, crime, and violence, as well as a large number of social service agencies primarily focused on homelessness, housing, and outreach.

On the first day, participants spent the morning with the RainCity Housing First ACT team, and were able to watch them as they conducted their morning meeting. They then had an opportunity to ask questions with the team. RainCity's Executive Director Greg Richmond and Laura Caron, Director of Clinical Services, visited with the participants to answer questions and discuss the implementation and administration of a Housing First program. Three Housing First clients came to the meeting to provide an opportunity to hear more about the Housing First approach from a firsthand perspective. After lunch, the Match group reconvened to their meeting space to reflect on the morning and have a more fulsome discussion on the Housing First model with Dr. Tsemberis.

On the second day, participants spent the morning touring Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES) and visited a number of service providers and agencies to learn about the various approaches to delivering services to people living in homelessness. Two staff from the City of Vancouver provided a walking tour of the DTES and three agency tours were provided. These included In-Site Supervised Injection Site, Portland Hotel Society, and Union Mission. The afternoon was spent with further discussion on Housing First as a response to homelessness and mental health, and participants received a presentation on the Vancouver At Home / Chez Soi experience from Catharine Hume who was Vancouver Site Coordinator for At Home / Chez Soi.

2. Resources used in your match

In preparation for our Match, participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with Housing First and the At Home / Chez Soi research program led by the Mental Health Commission. The following resources were shared in advance of our Match:

To familiarize themselves with At Home / Chez Soi project, participants were encouraged to visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca. They were also provided with the link to watch the National Film Board of Canada's film at <http://athome.nfb.ca/#/athome> which beautifully captures the At Home / Chez Soi research project and Housing First.

The founder Housing First and CEO of Pathways to Housing National, Dr. Sam Tsemberis, joined us for the 2 days of the Match. For more information on Dr. Tsemberis and his work at Pathways National, participants were provided with the Pathways web-site at www.pathwaystohousing.org

Given that our Match began with a visit to the RainCity Housing First ACT team in Vancouver, I also provided participants with a link to videos found on the RainCity Housing web-site at <http://www.raincityhousing.org/hf-p-into-p/>. These 5 videos were developed by RainCity and

reflect on the guiding principles of Housing First.

Participants were also provided with the websites for 2 of the site visits in advance of the Match:

- Insite Supervised Injection Site <http://supervisedinjection.vch.ca/>
- Portland Hotel Society <http://www.phs.ca/>

At the Match, participants were provided a package containing the At Home/ Chez Soi final report along with some other infographics and one-pagers on Housing First and the Recovery Guidelines developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

3. Brief description of how your match has accelerated change towards mental health, well-being and inclusion

The Mental Health Commission of Canada led At Home / Chez Soi, a \$110 Million research project to test the efficacy of Housing First as an approach at ending homelessness for individuals who have been chronically homeless and experience severe mental illness. The results of the research showed that Housing First is an incredibly effective approach to end homelessness for this population, and the results have received international recognition and Housing First is being implemented in communities and countries across the world. This Match provided participants the opportunity to see Housing First first-hand, as well as within the context of the overall homeless services within Vancouver.

4. Brief description of how your match has built leadership for the future

This Match provided participants with an in-depth appreciation for the operations of a Housing First program, as well as its overall contribution in the ongoing effort to end homelessness for those who are chronically homeless with complex needs. Participants received the information required to bring this approach back to their countries and assess the viability of implementing Housing First in their communities. Match participants have indicated desire to continue to meet via Skype in order to maintain an ongoing discussion on Housing First and addressing homelessness and mental health.

The Match participants were also invited to attend a Networking event with participants from 2 other Matches: Multi-Sectoral Partnerships Responding to Community Crisis and Youth & Mental Health. This provided the opportunity for broader networking as well as discussions of mental health on a broader scale beyond housing and homelessness.