

2016 ONPHA Conference and Trade Show

401

Moving past stigma:

Creating supportive environments for tenants with mental health issues

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ONPhA



Who are we?

Today we will discuss:

Supportive Housing In Peel (SHIP)

1. Understanding mental illness
2. Bias / stigma
3. Tenant rights
4. How to respond
5. Real life scenarios
6. Community resources
7. Q & A

Test Time!



Who is SHIP?



- A champion of the fundamental right of housing for nearly 30 years
- Provides housing and community based supports to vulnerable individuals
- We advocate for Healthy Housing™ by forming lasting relationships with landlords and developers

MISSION:

To optimize quality of life through community-based housing and mental health services



Who is SHIP?

650+ tenants

700+ apartments

6 SHIP owned apartments

50+ landlords



50+ new applications per month

1000+ individuals on the wait list

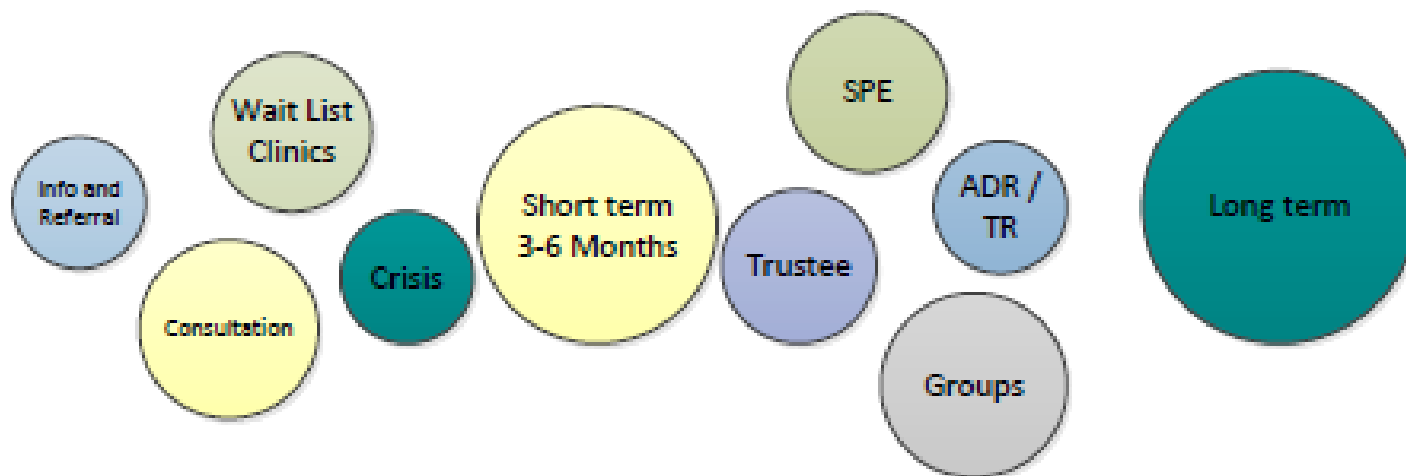
10+ individuals housed per month

**Wait
List**



Who is SHIP?

SUPPORT CONTINUUM



HOUSING CONTINUUM



Your Challenge

**Having different approaches to
meet the different support needs
of your tenants**



The Goal

Goal: Preserve the tenancy

How this is done:

1. Understand mental illness
2. Check biases and stigma thinking
3. Know a tenant's rights
4. Know how to respond
5. Seek assistance when necessary



1. Understand Mental Illness

- Mental health issues are common
- Many people are not well-informed about mental health problems
- Professional help is not always on hand
- People often do not know how to respond



1. Understand Mental Illness

What is mental illness?

Just as our lives and circumstances continually change, so do our moods and thoughts, and our sense of well-being.

It's natural to feel off-balance sometimes sad, worried, scared or suspicious. But these kinds of feelings may become a problem if they get in the way of our daily lives over a long period.

When there are changes in a person's thinking, mood and behaviour that cause a lot of distress and make it difficult to do daily tasks, that person may have a mental illness.



1. Understand Mental Illness

Prevalence

- At least **1 in 3** Canadians will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life 
- At least **1 in 5** Canadians will experience a mental health problem in a year 
- In Canada **20%** of all sick leaves are related to mental health



1. Understand Mental Illness

Mental disorders take many forms

- mood disorders (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder)
- anxiety disorders (e.g., panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias)
- schizophrenia – hallucinations and delusions; paranoia
- personality disorders (e.g., antisocial personality disorder)
- eating disorders (e.g., anorexia nervosa, bulimia)



1. Understand Mental Illness

Signs and symptoms vary depending on the type of disorder, but any of the following may be cause for concern:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• major changes in eating or sleeping habits• having strong feelings of anger• having strange beliefs not based in reality (delusions)• hearing or seeing things that aren't there (hallucinations)• a growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• thinking about harming or killing oneself• not admitting to obvious problems• having many physical ailments that have no clear cause• substance abuse• confused or suspicious thinking• neglect in hygiene and self care |
|---|---|



1. Understand Mental Illness

Treatment

Among Canadians living with a mental illness or addiction in any given year, **only one-third** will seek help through:

- Psychotherapy
- Medication
- Supportive counselling
- Wellness exercises

Source: Statistics Canada (2003). Canadian community health survey: Mental health and well-being.



1. Understand Mental Illness

Negative effects of mental illness

- **70 - 90%** of people with serious mental illness are unemployed
- the **most common** cause of death in people with schizophrenia is suicide
- major depression can put a woman at **greater risk** of developing breast cancer
- **75%** of homeless individuals have a mental illness
- the likelihood that a person with a mental illness will be a victim of violent crime is **2.5** times that of the general population



1. Understand Mental Illness

Negative effects of mental illness

- People with mental illnesses may have **difficulty** acknowledging their own mental illness
- In some cases their disabilities may interfere with their ability to take care of themselves and their living spaces



1. Understand Mental Illness

An exercise in empathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7ZSDeec41U>



1. Understand Mental Illness

Myths about mental illness

- Mental illnesses aren't real illnesses
- Mental illnesses will never affect me
- Mental illnesses are just an excuse for poor behaviour
- People with mental illnesses are violent and dangerous
- People don't recover from mental illnesses
- People who experience mental illnesses are weak and can't handle stress



2. Biases and Stigma

There is stigma associated with mental health problems

- Stigma excludes people with mental illness from our communities and create barriers to well-being
- Can lead people with mental health conditions not to seek help
- Prejudicial attitudes in social stigma lead to the internalization of discriminatory perceptions in perceived stigma
- Public stigmas may harm social opportunities (finding suitable housing or procuring and keeping good jobs)



2. Biases and Stigma

What you can do

- Learn the facts
- Start with our own assumptions and behaviours
- Think about where information comes from



3. Tenant Rights

Human rights and duty to accommodate

- The *Code* of disability is broadly interpreted
- It protects people who are perceived to have a disability and people with disabilities such as **mental illness**, physical disabilities and a range of other conditions that expose people to unequal treatment in housing
- The principles of respect for dignity, individualized accommodation and integration and full participation must be extended to people with mental illness in their housing



3. Tenant Rights

- Acknowledge that a power imbalance exists between landlords and tenants
- Prevailing stigma and misinformation may lead to discrimination and harassment against people with mental illnesses

Example: Some landlords may harass tenants or fail to address harassment between tenants, ignore valid complaints and permit substandard living conditions for people with mental illness due to negative attitudes and stereotypes.



4. How to Respond

Behaviours you may see

- Knocking on other tenant's doors
- Muttering or shouting to themselves in public spaces
- Hygiene issues
- Behave strangely in elevators with other tenants present
- Shout intermittently for no apparent reason in common areas
- Throwing their own property out of their unit
- Re-organizing their unit very loudly



4. How to Respond

Behaviours you may see

- Making repeated telephone calls to management raising complaints that are unfounded
- Filling up the voicemail of the superintendent with rants - often religious or confusing in nature
- Complaining of being wronged in some way
- Fixating on a tenant and interfering with that person in the building



4. How to Respond

What you can do

- Ask “how can I assist?”
- Communicate with tenant - listen
- Stay calm
- Identify issues
- Work to develop a solution
- Maintain privacy



4. How to Respond

What you can do

- Reduce fear
- Encourage the person to get appropriate and professional help
- Encourage self-help strategies
- Build supportive environments
- Write down information for tenant



4. How to Respond

What you can do

- Establish emergency plan
- Mitigate any potential risks
- Encourage family support
- Encourage formal support – doctor / psychiatrist
- Call crisis services when necessary
- Serve notice?

*Remember the interplay between human rights
and the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB)*



5. Scenarios

Tenant A

Amanda has been a tenant for one year without any tenancy issues. As of late, she has been acting erratically, throwing her belongings off of her balcony, chasing after people in the hall and wearing her pajamas in the lobby and parking area. She has a 7-year-old son. The unit was recently inspected and there were no issues with the maintenance of her unit.

What do you do
????



5. Scenarios

Tenant B

John is a recent tenant. You see some activity coming in and out of his unit on a weekly basis. Neighbours have complained about a smell coming from his unit. You serve 24-hour notice for an inspection and once inside you see a very dirty unit, the fridge is unplugged, there is little furniture and it looks like there are some hoarding issues.

What do you do
????



6. Community Resources

There are resources out there that can help you and your tenant!

RESOURCES

(Included in package)

SHIP

Emergency Housing

Mental Health

Information

Crisis Services

Addiction

Social Assistance

Food Banks



Test Time!



Thank you!

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Questions?

Our Contact Information

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