



# 2017 ONPHA Conference and Trade Show

Shaping  
OUR  
Future

603

**Leveraging rent  
supplements to provide  
housing stability**

**PRESENTED BY:**

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# Learning goals

- Understand three approaches to using rent supplements
- Learn some of the factors that help (and hinder) effective rent supplement programs
  - Creative partnership development
  - Leveraging partnerships
  - Working with (for profit) landlords
- Develop some ideas for rent supplements in your own community



# Regeneration Community Services

# Regeneration Community Services

- Charitable non-profit agency
  - ✓ supportive housing
  - ✓ case management
  - ✓ peer support
  - ✓ employment
- 1990's -shift from agency ownership to rent supplements
- 8 units of rent supplement paired with \$84,000 for case management support



# Rent supplement with support

- many agencies have created programs in scattered market apartments
- Regen has a well developed program model for:
  - ✓ 24/7 high support housing
  - ✓ Step Up model that provides 12/7 support in scattered units in a large apartment building
- Regen able to provide supportive housing using the rent supplement funding with top up funding from the Toronto Central LHIN



# Health Link Supportive Housing Project

- Able to provide high support and step up support to 40 individuals using the rent supplement and support funding without the added LHIN support.
- RFP was to provide supportive housing to individuals with complex mental health needs.
- Regen in partnership with COTA and Reconnect proposed to meet the needs of 40 individuals with complex needs through
  - ✓ 15 units of high support housing
  - ✓ 25 units of independent apartment living



# Health Link Supportive Housing Project

- Regen had
  - ✓ a landlord who had readied a 15 unit site suited for 24/7 support.
  - ✓ Ongoing commitment from 3 other landlords to provide first refusal on vacant apartments.
- We already had
  - ✓ staff supporting other clients in these buildings
  - ✓ a manager who was able to add the program to her portfolio

**The Funding:** \$266,000 in rent supplement. \$420,000 support funding.



# Staffing:

- \$420,000 to staff the 15 unit high support 24/7 with one extra staff to overlap day and evening.
- Housing Support to 25 independent living clients to help them establish in their units and facilitate their involvement in the local community.
- Managerial support from 2 separate managers already managing programs near the 2 locations.
- Work to influence the case management support for the clients.





# Housing

- All clients on ODSP -shelter allowance of \$479 to contribute to the rent.
  - ✓ Regen head-leased the units
  - ✓ most clients were pay direct on the shelter allowance
- The supplement was enough to rent the 15 unit building from the landlord and cover utility costs.
- The scattered units rented for just under the supplement plus the shelter allowance.

**TIP: Negotiating an amount that covers the common space in the building is essential**



# Important Issues

- Partnering with Case Management supports allowed us to hire sufficient housing and peer workers to provide excellent housing and community support to the individuals
- Housing Support Workers support the individuals in establishing themselves in their housing and in their local community.
- Regen's strong relationship with the owners of the buildings made sure the capacity was available when needed.
- Having community resources in the scattered units important.



# Fife House

# Addiction Supportive Housing – Brief Background

- ◉ Prehistory: 3 projects approved by TCLHIN for funding
- ◉ New call for proposals in June 2009
- ◉ 6 Projects selected by TCLHIN for funding subject to Ministry of Health and Long Term Care approval
- ◉ Staff from Partner organizations and TCLHIN create Supportive Housing for People with Problematic Substance Use Providers Working Group
- ◉ Approval from Ministry arrives in November, Charters negotiated in December, Signed in January



# Funded Projects

- ◉ Fife House and LOFT/McEwan Housing(40 units)
- ◉ TCAT: St. Stephen's Community House, Mainstay Housing, Regeneration Community Services and St. Michael's Hospital
- ◉ Jean Tweed and Mainstay Housing
- ◉ Breakaway and Regeneration Community Services
- ◉ Good Shepherd and TGH
- ◉ Fred Victor Centre and Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team



# Objectives

- ◉ Support MOHLTC provincial priorities (through a continued focus on reducing Emergency Room (ER) Wait Times and on reducing Alternate Level of Care (ALC) days)
- ◉ Reduce the frequency of re-admissions to addiction programs
- ◉ Reduce contact with the criminal justice system
- ◉ Increase successful tenancy
- ◉ Reduce repeated use of emergency and acute care systems



# What does the program offer?

- ◉ Case Management and Housing Support at an 8:1 ratio across each team
- ◉ Housing with Rent Supplements attached
- ◉ Scattered units and some in units scattered within buildings
- ◉ Fife House negotiating locations with landlords ranging from downtown to inner suburbs - 18 with TCHC, 15 with private sector and 1 with a non profit (a market unit), 6 units TBD



# Eligibility Criteria

- ◉ HIV+
- ◉ Severe and Active Substance Use Challenge
- ◉ Homeless or Marginally Housed
- ◉ Qualify for Housing Subsidy under MoHLTC rules
- ◉ Meet Program Specific Population Group
- ◉ Meet one of the High Intensity Service Use criteria:
  - Frequent WMS use
  - Frequent Emergency Department Use
  - Intensive use of Acute Care
  - Frequent incarceration/arrest
  - Other health care system use criteria to ensure inclusion of women





# Performance Indicators

- ◉ 33 clients housed (July 31, 2017)
- ◉ 83% reduction in unscheduled emergency department visits after participation in ASH
- ◉ 87% reduction in number of days in hospital
- ◉ 100% retained in HIV care
- ◉ 87% reduction in accessing withdrawal management system use after participation in ASH



# Leveraging Partnership Resources

- ◉ Both have expertise in mental health, addiction and HIV services
- ◉ Access to coordinated care planning for complex individuals
- ◉ Strong partnerships with hospital clinics (Positive Care Clinic, Psych Clinic)
- ◉ Program resources ie meal programming, volunteer opportunities, peer run programming and activities
- ◉ Ability to transition to other housing options within the partnership
- ◉ Rent supplement program is part of an overall coordinated access initiative involving 10 agencies



# Building Owner as a Partner

- ◉ Establishing a good working relationship
  - ◉ Involves much investment of time working with the landlord and on site property manager or super.
  - ◉ Scheduled meetings with the proposed client prior to move in
  - ◉ Establish lines of communication prior to any potential problems popping up
  - ◉ Being pro-active with building managers
  - ◉ Establish what areas are the property/building responsibilities and what are with the agency taking the head lease
- ◉ Over half the units are with Toronto Community Housing (market units)
  - ◉ Bit more understanding of the client community
  - ◉ Access to a wider range of units and locations



# Rent Supplement Challenges

- ◉ Subsidy amount
  - ◉ Combined with ODSP Shelter Allowance not enough in current market
  - ◉ Restricts geographic location of units
  - ◉ Restricts size of target units (Bach, 1 bdrm)
  - ◉ Tight vacancy markets
  - ◉ Hydro and other utility costs
- ◉ Market Rents
  - ◉ Funding is static; budget projections are important
  - ◉ Factoring in the unknown - damages, pests etc
- ◉ Private sector
  - ◉ Landlord expectations
  - ◉ Head lease arrangement - know what you are responsible for
  - ◉ Tenant behaviours and who gets evicted
  - ◉ Homeless or Marginally Housed



# Niagara Regional Housing

# Affordable Housing in Niagara

NRH owned units 2751

Rent Supplement 697

Housing Allowance 333

Non Profit Portfolio 4214



# Rent Supplement Program

- Formal agreement with private sector landlord
- Centralized wait list
- Regular Landlord and Tenant relationship
- Rent geared to income (30%)



# Housing Allowance Program

- Time limited program
- Not Rent-Geared-to-Income
- Agreement with private Landlord
- In situ agreements





# NRH Portable Rent Benefit

- IAH and SIF funding
- Address affordability while on waitlist
- Able to target specific household types
- Agreement with applicant



# SDV-Portable Rent Benefit Pilot

- Assistance for 50 households
- First and last months rent
- Utility deposit
- “Pre approved mortgage” approach
- Maximum rent levels by bedroom
- In situ



# Challenges of Rent Benefit programs

- Limited rental supply – competition
- Low vacancy rates
- Not increasing asset/supply
- Take up has been slow - communications



# Going Forward

- Stops along a continuum - What's the right number?
- Difficulty to do long range planning - Not permanent funding
- Promotion of program
- Rent payment verification



# Questions?

