



## Session #408: More than Tenancy: Fostering Tenants' Sense of Belonging

Gord Singer: Peer Support Specialist, Tenant Member at Mainstay  
Andrea Gutowski: Supportive Housing Worker  
Volletta Peters: Director Tenant and Member Services



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### AGENDA

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Ice Breaker
- ❖ Overview of Mainstay Housing
- ❖ Essence of our Approach
  - Successful Tenancy
  - Community and Belonging
- ❖ Member Belonging and Community Initiative
- ❖ Questions
- ❖ Wrap Up




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## About Mainstay

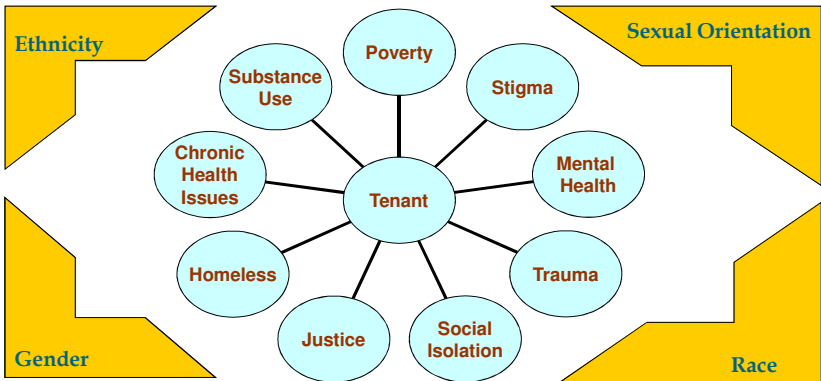
- Since 1982, developer of “housing plus supports” approach to meet the needs of consumers of mental health and/or addiction system who are homeless
- Citizenship and Rights-based, ‘Homes First’
- Developed 41 properties for ourselves – 867 units: 88 Rent Supplement Scattered Sites: 1,100 tenant members – singles, couples and families
- Built Form: 16 apartment buildings, 18 houses (shared), 2 boarding homes, 5 condos; from bedroom to bachelor to 4 bedroom unit choices
- 54 staff in 3 departments
  - Tenant Member Services – (21 SHWs, 2 Peer Support Staff, 3 Managers, Director)
  - Building Services (9 Caretakers, 3 MW, Maintenance Manager, 2 Supervisors, Director)
  - Finance and Admin (Executive Assistant, 2 bookkeepers, 2 Admin Asst, Reception, 2 Managers)
  - 23 Support Service Agreement agencies (Mental Health and Social Service clinical/outreach/other support services)


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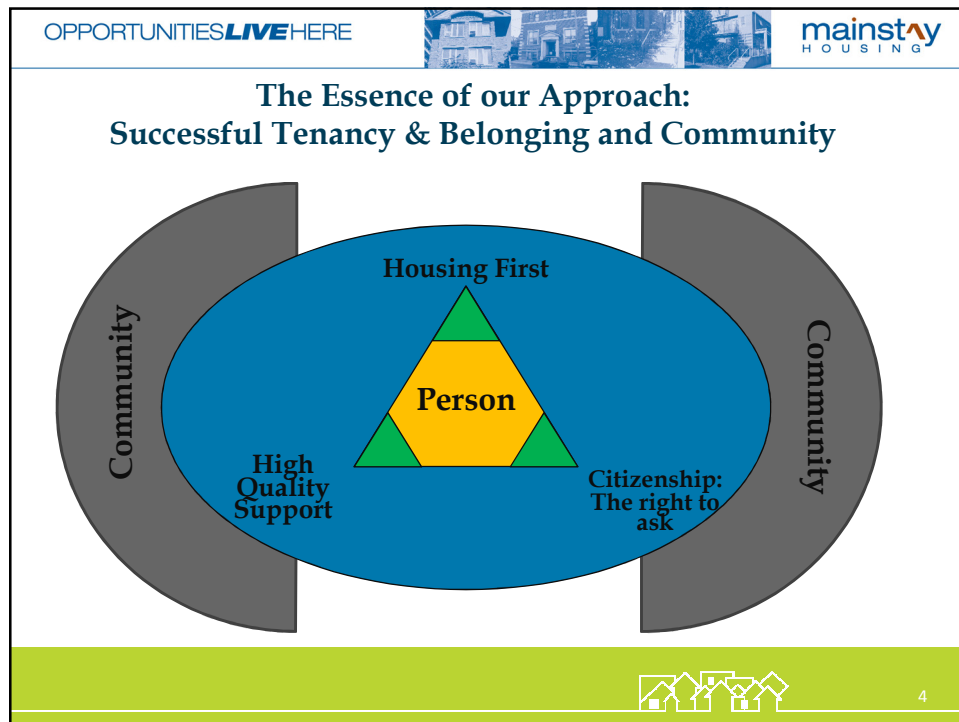


## Chronically Homeless People Bring Extraordinary Complexity

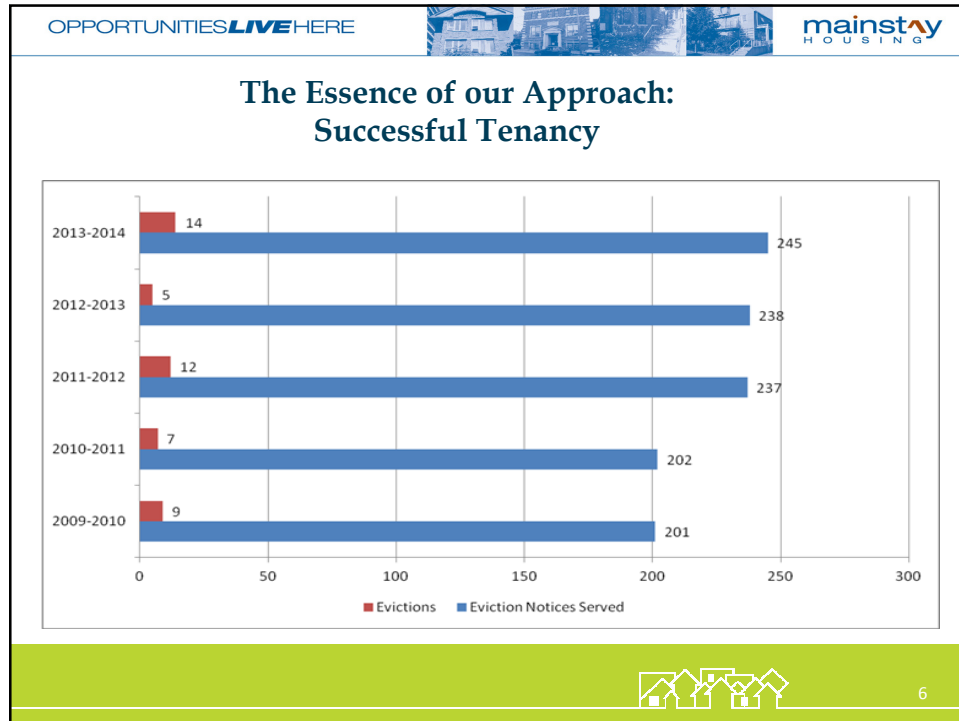


The interplay of challenges, internalized stigma, experiences of discrimination, affects the new tenant's ability and confidence to succeed as a tenant.



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- The Essence of our Approach:  
Successful Tenancy**
- Housing First Approach
    - Low Threshold for Access
    - Choice
    - Focus on Rights and Responsibilities
    - Create home
  - Quality Support
    - Engage with the Tenant
    - Engage with the Circle of Support
  - Comprehensive Successful Tenancy Action Plan
    - Individualized
    - In Writing
    - Results Measurable
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### The Essence of our Approach: Belonging and Community

### Gord's Story

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## The Essence of our Approach: Belonging and Community

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**OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOICE AND COMMUNITY**

- Board of Directors: accountable for the Vision to our stakeholders – public, people yet to be served, tenant members, staff, funders.
- Work with neighbours to identify, start and lead programs (gardening, good food box, yoga, coffee group, etc)

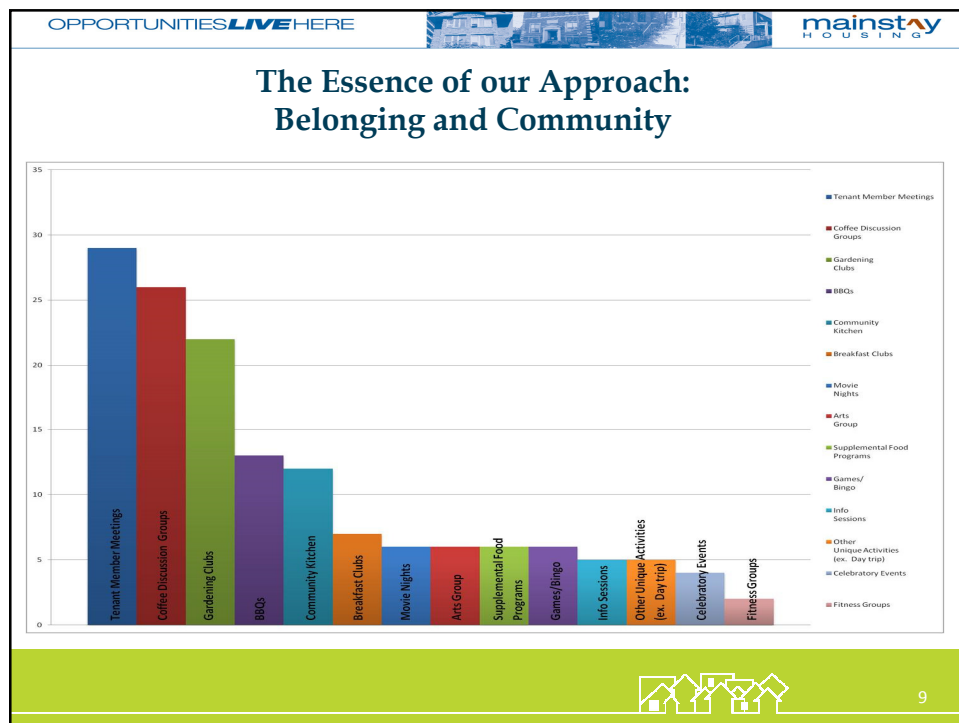
**GROUNDING IN A RECOVERY ORIENTED, HOUSING FIRST APPROACH, WE FOSTER COMMUNITY AND BELONGING THROUGH:**

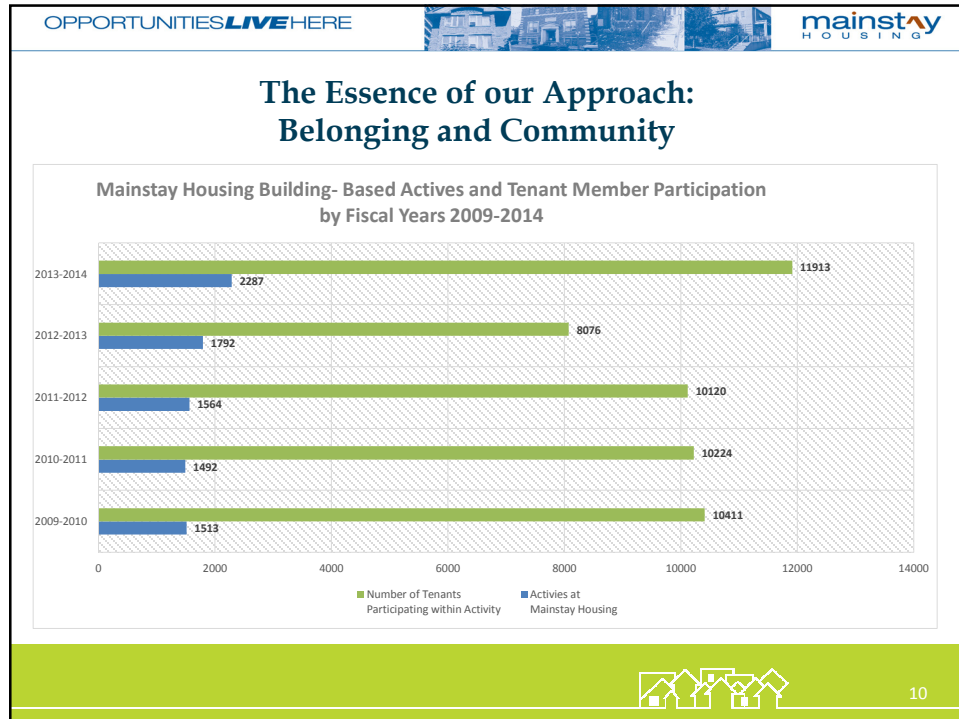
- Opportunities for flexible, individualized supports-ensure individuals are able to create and keep their homes through education & focus on rights and responsibilities while providing support to improve their quality of life in other areas.
- Opportunities to create meaningful networks – work with individuals to break down social isolation and identify ways to connect to others inside and outside of Mainstay as they choose.
- Opportunities to explore potential -Mainstay's 'Opportunity Fund' supports tenant members to further goals towards education and employment.
- Opportunities for Voice –monthly, building based, community meetings to identify and act on ways to improve quality of life for one's self and neighbours. There are many other opportunities to sit on steering committees to shape programs & services across Mainstay. Tenants are members of the Corporation and make up 1/3 of the Board of Directors.

- Meet with staff about recovery goals (first times)
- Attend building-based community meeting
- Take advantage of Mainstay-initiated groups & programs (AGM, WRAP program, Seasonal Events, Focus groups, Opportunity Fund)
- Sit on Steering & Advisory Committees to plan and shape programs across all Mainstay communities (WRAP, Conflict Mediation, etc)




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- ### The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative
- Initiative grew out of Mainstay's Strategic Plan (2012-2017):  
**Enhance the relevance, quality and impact of our services.**
  - This project has a Steering Committee made up of:
    - 4 Tenant Members
    - 1 Community Development Specialist
    - 2 Staff
    - 2 Students
  - It will help us better understand Tenant Members' experiences of belonging and community and reach out to Tenant Members to support them.
  - We will communicate with Tenant Members and measure their experiences of belonging and community within and outside of Mainstay.
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## The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative

### Phase 1 :What we have done to date


- Hired a Community Development Specialist.
- Launched project (Nov. 2013) that included a call for Tenant Members who were interested in participating in the Steering Committee.
- Selected four Tenant Members based on geography, experience, commitment to the initiative.
- Created a steering committee.
- Developed a work plan.
- Established Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee.



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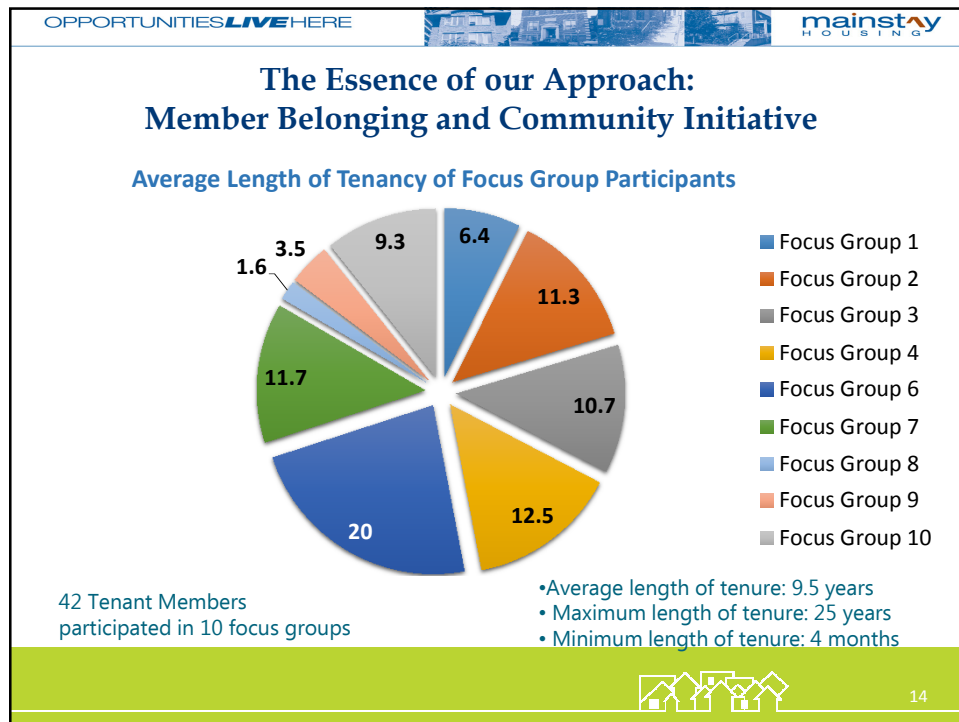
## The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative

### Phase 2: What we have done to date

- Designed and tested focus group questions
- Determined building criteria for 10 focus groups
  - Geography (East, West, Central & North)
  - Levels of participation in building-based community development activities
  - Building type (large apartment building with 135 units to shared house with 5 rooms)
- Conducted 10 focus groups
- Reviewed literature on belonging and Community (International, National, Local)
- Interim Report



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### The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative

### What we learned and heard

**Main Themes:**

- Active Participation
- Sense of identity
- Tenant Leadership
- Skills Building
- Relationship with Supportive Housing Worker
- Safety
- Disability and Belonging
- Stigma and Exclusion

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## The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative


### What we learned and heard


*“To me a community means having the right to participate in activities and having a sense of identity”.*

Tenant Member

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## The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative

### What we learned and heard

*“Belonging can be about emotional attachment, feeling at home, and feeling safe, and can be an act of identification done by communities, or simply by oneself. It can be naturalized or unstable, and in a form of constant flux”.*

Literature Review

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## The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative

### What we learned and heard

*“Previously this house was viewed as a crazy house, however, we built up relationships with the community. Some of the neighbours have even come over to the house to help us with computer issues”.*

*Tenant Member*


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## The Essence of our Approach: Member Belonging and Community Initiative

### What we learned and heard


*“ When people who have been street-involved for a long period of time moved into stable housing, they also began to feel that becoming housed meant removing themselves from the negative implications of homelessness. Social housing tenants reported mixed feelings. They were happy to be housed, but some felt as if their previous life was shameful and abnormal”.*

*Literature Review*


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The Essence of our Approach:  
Member Belonging and Community Initiative

What we learned and heard

*" This area is very unsafe and I am afraid for my kids".*

Tenant Member


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The Essence of our Approach:  
Member Belonging and Community Initiative


What we learned and heard

*"Sharing a physical location also helps form a voice which can be used for collective representation, action and participatory democracy".*

Literature Review


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**The Essence of our Approach:**  
**Member Belonging and Community Initiative**

**Phase Three:**

Informed by focus group learning and findings from the literature review, design and implement replicable survey with tenant members that will provide data for baseline quality improvement initiatives consistent with our Theory of Change (successful tenancy and belonging and community).

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**The Essence of our Approach:**  
**Successful Tenancy & Belonging and Community**

QUESTIONS

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### Contact

Mainstay Housing  
550 Queen Street East, Suite 150  
Toronto, ON M5A 1V2  
[info@mainstayhousing.ca](mailto:info@mainstayhousing.ca)



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