



## Housing is More Than Just a Roof – it’s a Stable Foundation

*Providing Enriched Housing Support and Trustee Services to Single Individuals experiencing on-going issues of housing instability and homelessness*

A Project of Metro Non-profit Housing Association and Direction 180

### Assessing Halifax Housing Help Services and Client Outcomes

Between January and March 2009, 50 clients who had been receiving help from HHH for at least 3 months, agreed to participate in a survey which asked about their life situation before and after they received services. This information was combined with an inventory of services accessed, collected and compiled by HHH staff at every point contact was made with that client.

- 68% were men, 32% were women
- The age range of the sample was from 20 years old, to 76 years old, with an average age of 46
- 71% of the sample did not have a home or permanent shelter and 29% were renting or owned an apartment or house when they came to HHH

### Housing Situation before HHH

The people coming to HHH for assistance and services had a diverse range of housing experiences and backgrounds. **Only 16% of these clients could be described as having stable housing**, as this was the proportion who reported being in same home for at least 2 years. The housing situation for the majority of HHH clients was unstable and precarious, with **30% reported having moved two or more times in the past 2 years** and an additional **30% reporting moving four times or more in the last 2 years**.



52% of the sample of HHH clients had used a temporary shelter in the past two years, and 44% indicated that they had been without any shelter at all in that time period. 14% of the sample said that they had been evicted in the past two years, and 10% had used a residential program.

### Services Accessed



**Out-of-the-Box Services**

|                       |  |                    |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|
| Apartment Maintenance |  | Housing Search     |
| Service Coordination  |  | Landlord Mediation |
| On-Going Support      |  | Trusteeship        |
| Financial Assistance  |  | Moving Assistance  |

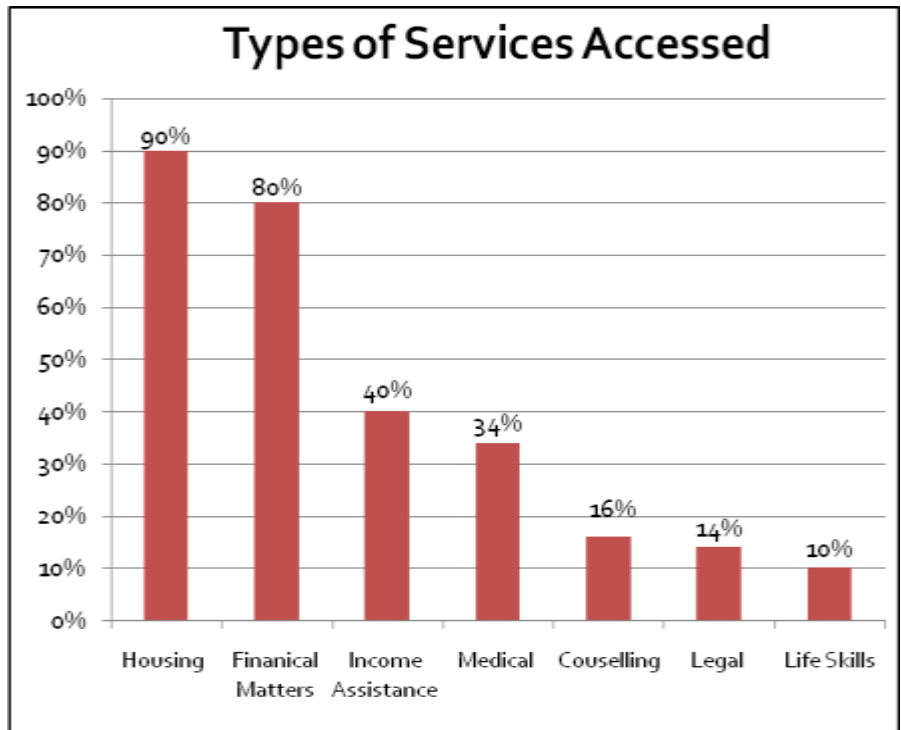
**On average, respondents accessed any combination of 3 services over a three month period**

**Housing support** was accessed the most frequently by **90% of the sample** an average of **7 times per client**

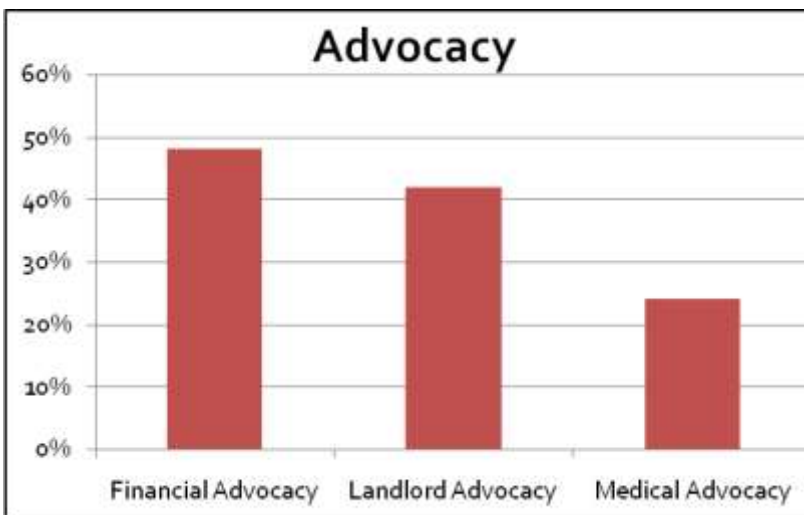
80% required assistance with general **financial matters** an average of 4 times per client

Services accessed by 40% of respondents were related to **Income Assistance**, and 34% sought the **Medical services** offered. Respondents accessed these services on average 1-2 times

HHH was also able to provide general **counselling** services to 16% of the sample; assistance with **legal matters** for 14% of the sample; and **life skills counselling** to 10% of sample



**62% of clients utilized HHH for assistance navigating services, mediating difficult situations or to communicate on their behalf**



In HHH reporting the term 'Advocacy' can refer to navigation of services, mediation, or communication on behalf of client .

48% of the sample accessed Financial Advocacy Services, which included mediation between the client and the Income Assistance Program (30%), NS Power (14%), and one of the telephone service providers in HRM (8%)

42% had HHH intervene with their landlords

24% required advocacy due to their special needs with mental and physical health issues

**58% of the sample had accessed the Trusteeship Program**

**HHH began with 13 trustee clients and now has 61**

**3 Trustee Clients utilize HHH to manage their employment income**

**What is Trusteeship?**

The HHH trustee program helps to remove this key barrier to housing stability. Trustee clients work with the Housing Support/Trustee Worker to create a plan for their rent and bills to be paid and in some cases to assist with managing their personal finances.

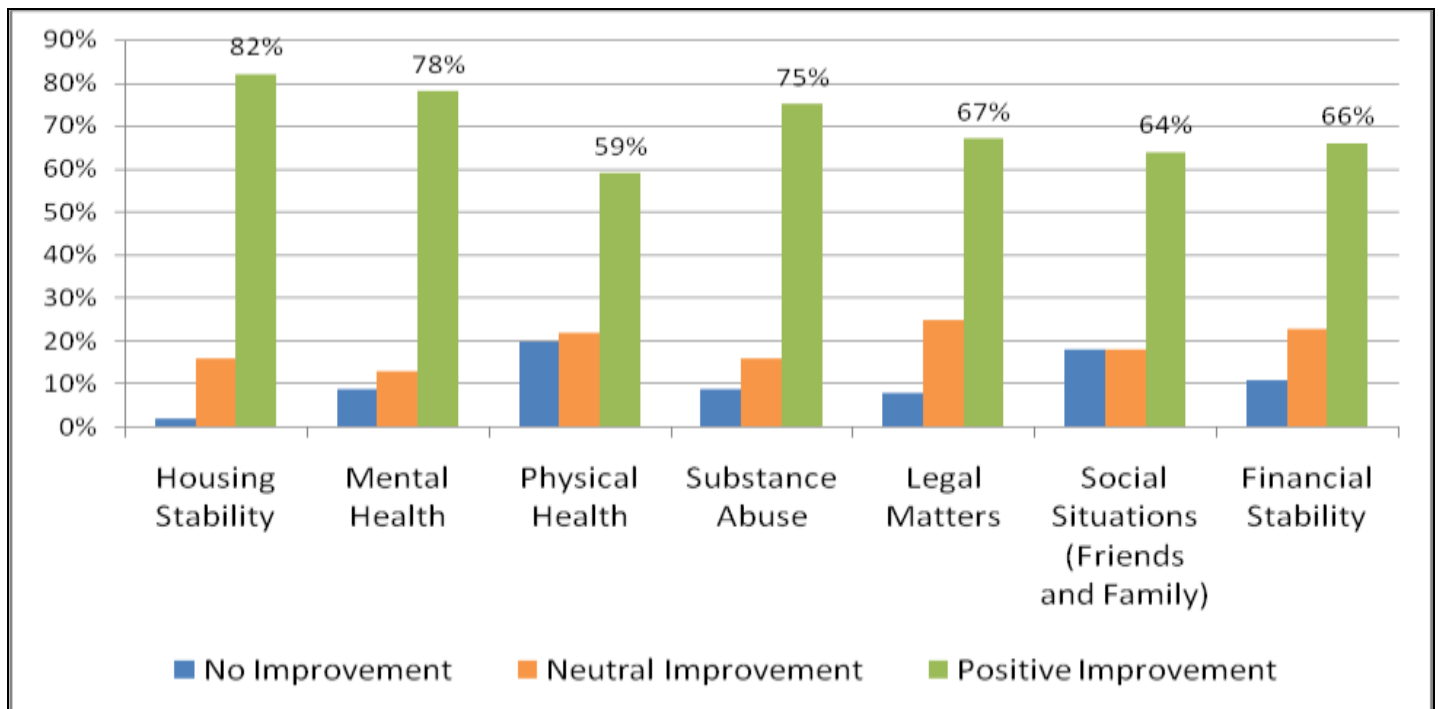
**How does it help?**

This allows individuals to focus more of their energy on maintaining other aspects of their tenancy as well as meeting complex health, mental health, addiction recovery obligations which are integral to increasing long-term housing stability.

## Client Outcomes

Clients were asked to self-rate improvements to their stability since they started accessing services through HHH along the dimensions of housing, health, economic, and social outcomes.

Most clients (82%) felt that their housing stability had improved because of the interventions and services delivered by HHH. Further, 78% indicated that issues around their mental health had improved, and 75% of those who had substance abuse issues, indicated that the work through HHH was having a positive influence. In fact, in all areas the majority of clients indicated that the assistance they were getting from HHH with these issues was having positive effects on their lives.



### What Does Improvement Look Like?

The following quotes were taken directly from self-reported client follow-up surveys

**“They got me out of slum areas and into improved housing conditions”**

**“My health is better because I have a permanent place to live”**

**“Being homeless is depressing, housing has helped”**

**“I had heart surgery. It’s hard on the streets to care for yourself. Housing has improved my health a lot because I can care for my condition now”**

**“With their help I am more at ease and able to relax. I am not in as much stress to trigger drinking”**

**“They did whatever they could to help. I stopped using crack when I found stable housing”**

***“When you go in they lead you down the right road when you’re lost”***

**"I had tried for years to get help for [my son] but no one helped bring all the pieces together until I found HHH"**

*-Mother of Case Study Subject*

**Point of contact**

\*Mother approached HHH for support in getting housing for her son \* 46yrs old \* consistently lived at a men's shelter for the past two years \* over 20yr history of chronic alcoholism, including use of Mouthwash \* Frequently detained in police cells for public intoxication \*Only medical assistance at hospital emergency services for many years \* Organic brain damage due to head injury suffered during alcohol related incident has left him unable to live independently.

**Key Housing Barrier**

No appropriate supportive housing options that could accommodate him at his level of transiency and alcohol use.

**Strategy**

Emotional/Social Support: With key support from HHH staff, mother was able to support her son at her apartment, where he was able to break away from street culture and reduce his alcohol consumption dramatically and eventually eliminate it all together. Mother connected regularly with HHH staff for emotional and social support around the complexity of their relationship.

Coordination: HHH, as central coordinator, developed key relationships with agencies and individuals central to clients' support system:

- Health: Developed integral link with North End Community Health Centre nurse practitioner to begin consistent primary healthcare and to make referrals to first Adult Protection and then to Community Supports for Adults.
- Income Assistance: HHH communicated with Income Assistance Case Worker to attain shelter allowance for mother while boarding her son in her home and reduce financial strain on her fixed income.
- Community Support for Adults: Acted as on-going liaison with placement worker over a 5 month period

**Outcome**

Seven months after initial contact with HHH a Licensed Boarding Home placement was secured for this client.

**Success Factors**

- Having a central contact agency (HHH) to act as main contact amongst all players to ensure follow-through and on-going communication
- Close working relationships with community partner agencies assisted with positive collaboration and effective coordination of services
- Availability of on-going emotional and social support and counselling for client and his mother made it possible for him to remove himself from entrenchment in street culture and access to substances triggering his addiction.
- As Government placement workers are burdened with high caseloads and are therefore less accessible, HHH staff contact and accessibility allowed for increased communication for client and his mother and assurance that placement was moving forward.

**HHH was able to act as missing link amongst all players and factors**

- Stabilizing health
- Accessing income source
- Referral and Placement Process
- Addiction Recovery

***"They understand my needs, they know what you need. They look you in the eye and really listen"***