

# Tenancy Risk Reduction Service for Seniors

A Local Poverty Reduction Fund  
Research Project



# Living in Squalor (Hoarding)



# What does hoarding look like?

- Acquisition of possessions along with failure to discard (even if worthless, useless)
- Items fill home, interfere with day-to-day activities and relationships
- Danger to life (fire and safety hazard)
- Increases every decade of life
- Associated with mental illness and dementia
- Childhood adversity, loss (of spouse), deprivation, low income
- Low success rate of interventions due to singular focus



# TRSS Overview

- The Tenancy Risk Reduction Service (TRSS) was initiated to support low/moderate income seniors at risk of
  - Tenancy loss due to inability to maintain home in safe living state
  - Environment designated as “unsafe to provide care”, limiting access to homecare services enabling them to remain safely at home
  - Illness and accidents due to disrepair and client frailty
- Planned and implemented in partnership with York Support Services Network and VHA Home Care.
- The initial Proof of Concept, funded by through the York Region Community Investment Fund, operated for one year

# Initial Proof of Concept

- The program model involved the completion of a comprehensive assessment and individualized plan of support, leveraging the skills and capacity of each of the partner agencies.
- Target population seniors and adults with age related conditions at risk of losing their tenancy/homes due to hoarding, squalor, etc.
- Provided a menu of services including program coordination, case management, occupational therapy, advocacy, extreme cleaning, home support worker hoarding intervention, minor repairs.

# Proof of Concept Outcomes

- Launched on April 28, 2014 and supported a total of 27 clients during the funding year.
- Clients, ranging in age from 45-89, accessed all services offered, with the majority of clients utilizing the case management (17), occupational therapy(10) and home support worker home remediation (19).
- Program outcomes very positive based on validated outcome measure rating scales that assessed impact on quality of life, clutter rating, etc.



# Moving to Research Pilot

- In August of 2015, Ontario released RFP for the Local Poverty Reduction Fund, an initiative of the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (Treasury Board Secretariat).
- CHATS responded in partnership again with York Support Services Network and VHA Home Care and was successful in receiving just over \$200,000 in funding for the 2-year initiative.
- In addition, CHATS will be working with York University (Institute of Health Research Program Evaluation Unit) as all initiatives are required to have a formal research component.



# TRSS Pilot Model

- Provides for longer term specialized case management
- Advocacy to support landlord and tenancy issues
- Homemaking to work physically with clients to remove clutter
- Home adaptation and maintenance to remediate/repair
- Therapeutic intervention through OT
- Info/referral
- Transition planning and connection to community supports



# TRSS Poverty Reduction Fund Objectives

- “Theory of change” proposes that increasing community capacity and knowledge will increase ability to recognize those at risk and capacity to provide appropriate services to:
  - Improve mental and physical health,
  - Reduce clutter
  - Keep vulnerable seniors in their homes longer (out of hospital and long term care)
  - Lead to reduction in poverty and homelessness
- Tests two key questions:
  - Does building community capacity to identify and support vulnerable seniors keep seniors in their homes longer?
  - What aspects of a multi-pronged approach are most effective in improving the health and well-being of seniors identified as having problematic hoarding behaviours?
- Not a “project” – designed to be replicable and scalable

# Questions



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