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"IT FEELS LIKE HOME": THE IMPACTS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ON MALE YOUTH – PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH AND SERVICE PROVIDERS AT FIVE BEDS TO HOME

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"IT FEELS LIKE HOME": THE IMPACTS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ON MALE

YOUTH – PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH AND SERVICE PROVIDERS AT FIVE BEDS

TO HOME

By

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Abstract

This study identifies the impacts of supportive housing on the lives of male youth. The researcher studied the Five Beds to Home (Five Beds) supportive housing facility for male youth, located in Cambridge, Ontario. The study focused on two areas: one, the current engagement of tenants and second, the long term impacts on past tenants. Impacts include areas such as progress on or achievement of goals/overcoming challenges, employment and education status, happiness and health, and housing stability. The general research questions were as follows: 1) What are the impacts of supportive housing on the lives of male youth?, 2) What have been the long term impacts on the youth?, 3) Are the current tenants engaged in Five Beds? Why? Why not?, and 4) What makes a good supportive housing facility for male youth? The objectives of the study were to identify both the strengths and challenges of the program, and to provide the youth with an opportunity to share their experiences in the hopes of improving services not just at Five Beds but services to homeless male youth and youth in general. The researcher completed qualitative, in-depth interviews with four former tenants of Five Beds, five current tenants and five staff. The researcher approached the topic using a critical social science and interpretivism/constructivism framework, utilizing empowerment and critical social theory. Elements of Participatory Action Research (PAR) were also used. Several themes emerged from the findings, related to factors external and internal to Five Beds. A prominent theme was that the Five Beds staff approach is overall, very effective. The approach blends support and caring, with the maintenance of boundaries and structure.

An interesting and unique sub theme which was noted is that Five Beds feels "like home" for many tenants. In addition, Five Beds has succeeded in engaging many youth. The factors which combine to lead to tenant engagement at Five Beds were found to be: a positive bond or relationship with staff, progressing towards or achieving personal goals or overcoming challenges, experiencing improvements in health and happiness, feeling positively about moving downstairs, feeling involved in what happens at Five Beds, experiencing Five Beds as being "like home" and maintaining stable housing. In addition, most of the youth who have lived at Five Beds have stabilized; and/or achieved or taken significant steps to reach goals or overcome challenges. The former tenants are also maintaining stable housing. In addition, engagement and empowerment of youth in their residential setting was found to be crucial to better outcomes. The findings also indicate that while Five Beds has been successful with many youth, the model is not the most innovative because it contains elements of a custodial model. The findings support previous research which identifies that scattered site, integrated apartments in the community is the best model of supportive housing. Such a model gives tenants a greater degree of ownership and control in their living environment. Five Beds does not facilitate a significant amount of ownership or control for tenants. However, the findings also show that the Five Beds model is effective for male youth experiencing or at risk of persistent homelessness, which is the specific demographic that Five Beds serves. This finding suggests that male youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness may benefit from a living environment which incorporates some elements of a custodial model. Another finding strongly suggests that Five Beds would operate more effectively were it a stand-alone facility (currently the facility is in the basement of a male youth shelter). The information gleaned from the study may help service providers improve their services and better engage male youth and youth in general. The findings are presented here, including research and practice implications as well as recommendations to improve Five Beds.

Acknowledgements

This study is dedicated to the 9 tenant and former tenant participants of Five Beds to Home, inspiring individuals who gave this research its heart. I thank you for opening up your lives and sharing your stories through your vital participation.

Special thanks to Argus Residence for Young People Executive Director Eva Vlasov for our candid and warm conversations which provided sources of inspiration and insight. Thank you as well to the Social Planning staff at the Region of Waterloo and the staff at Argus for answering the continual questions I had throughout the writing of this thesis!

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Finally, special thanks and love to the following significant people in my life: Maija, RJ, & Desmond Eclarin, Luke Burnside and my parents David and Michelle Ogden, for their caring and support throughout my research, and for assuring me continuously, that yes, I can do it! And with you all beside me, I did.

My hope is that this work can be of some help in advocating for more affordable, supportive housing for young people, as well as for people of all demographics. Further, I believe that the stories shared by the current and former tenants not only reveal the strengths of the Five Beds to Home model, their stories are also testament to the resourcefulness, courage and determination of these young people and other young people who experience homelessness. Through sharing their stories they are champions in the fight to dispel the myths associated with youth who experience homelessness.

-Sarah Michelle Ogden

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

[Current tenant] "Before coming here, I thought this would be the worst thing that ever happened to me. It was really the best. The staff treat me like I am human, not just like something that has no place to stay. They've [Five Beds] done more for me in the two years I've been here on and off then all of my family combined has done for me in my entire life."

[Staff member] "Whatever we can do towards ultimately working ourselves out of a job, we will do."

The words of a current tenant[1] of the Five Beds to Home supportive housing facility provide glimpses into the difference supportive housing can make for youth. The stage of adolescence, as one approaches adulthood, can be a difficult time for youth. Most youth have support from their caregivers (such as parents or guardians) during this time. However, youth experiencing homelessness do not have the steadying presence of housing and conventional parental supports (Region of Waterloo (ROW), 2010a). Nevertheless, they are expected to develop life skills, values, and identities. They are also expected to build positive self esteem. Due to the absence of supports, they may experience more challenges in growth and moving to adulthood and self-reliance (ROW, 2010a). This study looked at the impacts of supportive housing on male youth, specifically the youth of the Five Beds to Home supportive housing facility. Many of these youth have experienced persistent homelessness.

Youth living on the street are more likely to engage in dangerous behaviours such as unsafe sex, criminal conduct, and drug and alcohol abuse (ROW, 2010a; Altena, Brilleslijper-

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[1] Throughout this thesis, the youth of Five Beds will also be referred to as "tenants" as they are tenants of Five Beds under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). The staff at Five Beds call the youth who reside at Five Beds tenants as well.

Kater & Wolf, 2010). They are also more likely to have endured trauma and victimization. In

addition, youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience mental health and

behavioural disorders than their housed peers (Colegrove, 2010, p. iv). From a "public health

perspective, such dramatic disparities in health outcomes warrant strategic interventions"

(Colegrove, 2010, p. iv). One of these possible interventions is supportive housing.

In a 2012 policy statement document, the government of British Columbia (BC)'s

Ministries of Housing and Social Development (MHSD) and Community and Rural

Development (MCRD) offered a thorough definition of supportive housing:

> *"'Supportive housing'" means: housing that integrates long-term housing units for (i) persons who were previously homeless; (ii) person who are at risk of homelessness; (iii) persons affected by mental illness; or (iv) persons who have or are recovering from drug or alcohol addictions, with on-site support services that are available to the tenants of the housing project, but does not include supportive housing intended primarily for seniors"[2] (MHSD & MCRD, 2010, pp. 1-2).*

Supportive housing is safe, secure and affordable housing with supports on site and/or access

provided to offsite supports. Although there are variations to this definition, it provides a good

picture of what constitutes supportive housing. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (2003)

describes some elements of supportive housing programs for young people, and also comments

on the transitory nature of most supportive housing programs for youth:

> *"While they cannot evict residents based on age or length of stay, youth-specific supportive housing programs are designed to be transitory. Most programs express a desired age range of tenants (e.g., 16 to 24 years). Through communicating this age range, it is implied that the supportive housing is not intended to be permanent. Supportive housing programs for youth also focus heavily on setting goals related to increasing independence, including in the area of housing. Youth are supported in*

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[2]" In the definition of "supportive housing", "long-term" means tenants are not restricted by policy to occupancies of less than 90 days; "on-site support services" are physically offered in the buildings offices or common areas, and include but are not limited to: a. health and mental health services; b. health and community support referrals; c. addiction services; d. employment and education services; e. job and life skills training; f. assistance with meal preparation and housekeeping; or g. counseling and outreach services. "housing unit" means tenantial sleeping accommodation where the tenant: a. controls access to the room or rooms the tenant or tenant's family sleeps in; b. has access to private or shared bathroom facilities; and c. has access to private or shared cooking facilities" (MHSD & MCRD, 2010, pp. 1-2).

gaining skills to live more independently and, unlike many adult supportive housing programs – there is a focus on finding alternative permanent housing. Finally, the communal nature of supportive housing for youth promotes a time limited stay. As youth age, many will naturally want to move on, feeling a disconnect between themselves and younger youth. For youth who cannot live independently (e.g., due to complex needs), they are supported in accessing ongoing permanent adult services. Thus, while youth in supportive housing programs are not evicted or forced to move out, they will usually transition into more independent housing or support programs targeted to adults" (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2003 in ROW, 2010a, pp. 33-34).

In Ontario, there are approximately 10,000 supportive housing units. The waiting lists for these units "range from one to six years depending on the area" (CMHA Ontario, 2008 in CAMH, 2012, p. 3). The waiting lists continue to increase, "while the creation of new supportive housing lags" (CAMH, 2012, p. 3).

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH, 2012) reports that there is "a strong fiscal case for supportive housing" (p. 3). CAMH (2012) explains that:

"The cost of supportive housing programs across Canada varies significantly depending on the type and intensity of supports offered. A review of these costs shows a range from $15 per day for a low-support housing program (Jacobs et al., 2008) to $115 per day in a high-support program (Conference Board of Canada, 2010). Studies also show considerable range in costs of inpatient psychiatric beds depending on the type of care and province, but these costs are universally much higher: the MHCC estimates the cost of a psychiatric hospital bed at between $330 and $681 per day. In addition, the average cost of an ambulance ride is about $700 and emergency room visits cost between $200 and $800. Individuals in supportive housing experience reductions in hospital admissions and emergency room visits" (p. 3).

The Region reports that "it costs ten times less to provide a person with housing and support than if they were to remain in a persistently homeless situation" (ROW, 2011c).

Multiple advocacy groups recommend the "use of supportive housing as a tactical means for both improving the lives of young people as well as for helping these young people maintain housing" (National Network for Youth, 2007; Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2004; Healthcare for the Homeless, 2004 in Colegrove, 2010, p. 57). Many studies have shown that having housing is central to ending homelessness and improving the health of individuals

experiencing homelessness (Colegrove, 2010). Research also shows that there is a link between supportive housing and better health for homeless youth (Campbell et al., 2008; Hopkins, & Parker, 2005). For people of all ages and backgrounds, including youth, "affordable housing combined with supportive services has proven to be the link to stability and an enhanced quality of life" (Hannigan & Wagner, 2003, p. iii). When comparing youth in supportive housing with youth without stable housing, tenants of supportive housing were found to have higher levels of "education and housing stability" (Hopkins et al, 2005, p. 9). Furthermore, youth residing in supportive transitional housing are less likely to use substances, and have criminal justice contact than youth residing in other living arrangements (Jones, 2011, p. 17). Research also strongly suggests that approaches and programs that are most effective with youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness are "youth-specific," that is, for youth only, and are designed to meet the changes and needs of youth's distinctive developmental stage (ROW, 2010a, p. ii). A study by Choca et al, (2004) stated that "transitional and permanent housing for youth" which is supported by programming emphasizing "educational attainment, employment preparation and work experience, and personal growth and development" can have positive outcomes for youth (p. 491). Thus, supportive housing has the proven potential to improve the lives of youth.

In the Region of Waterloo, Ontario (the Region), where Five Beds is located, "the average age of youth accessing youth-specific emergency shelter services is estimated to be around 16 and 17" (ROW, 2007, p. iv). Further, more male youth access emergency shelters than females (ROW, 2007, p. iv). This trend is also present in other communities (ROW, 2007, p. iv). The option to return home may not be immediate or even possible for many youth (ROW, 2007, p. v). As well, youth specific services are lacking in the Region (ROW, 2007, p. v). This information gives insight in to just how much safe, affordable, supportive and supported housing

is needed for youth. As a response to the recognized need for such facilities, Five Beds was developed.

On April 12th, 2011 the Region's Community Services Committee reported the following regarding Five Beds:

> *"Five Beds has consistently been at full capacity and has successfully stabilized young men with complex needs who had previously been cycling in-and-out of the emergency shelter program. The Five Beds program has aided in filling a gap by providing one longer-term housing option for male youth with complex needs in this community"* (ROW, 2011b, p. 2).

How successful has Five Beds been? According to the ROW, it has been very successful. However, at the time of undertaking my study, no formal studies or evaluations have been completed on Five Beds. In general, research on youth experiencing homelessness remains limited, especially in terms of intervention evaluations (Altena et al, 2010). One of the aims of this study is to help fill that gap and also help determine how successful Five Beds has been.

Overall, although the need is present and the positive outcomes of services, including cost savings, have been demonstrated through research, homeless services for youth, specifically supportive housing, are lacking. The findings from a Los Angeles (L.A) study suggest that the presence of funding is the main factor which leads to the development of programs for homeless youth, as opposed to the need for services (Esparza, 2009). Although the finding reflects the climate in L.A, it is also applicable to the Canadian and Ontario context, where a lack of funding prevents the development of programs, regardless of the need for service. Therefore, it is important that studies be conducted on facilities such as Five Beds in the hopes of highlighting the potential strengths and weakness of supportive housing for youth. In this study, I also hope to highlight the perspectives of the youth and staff of Five Beds. I also hope to contribute to ideas

of what constitutes best practices in supportive housing design for male youth and youth in general.

Social Location & Role of the Researcher

I am a middle-class, 29 year old, able-bodied, hetero-sexual female, from a small, rural area in south-eastern Ontario. I am a third generation Canadian. My family ancestry is primarily Scottish, with a mix of Irish, Spanish and French. I grew up the oldest of four children. My parents raised us in the country, and I was fortunate to have wide open spaces where I could run and learn. I had a privileged upbringing, in that I had safe, stable, and secure accommodations, consistent parental support and guidance, and was supported in pursuing interests and extra-curricular activities. However, my parents, while always having good health and literacy, did not come from privilege, and instilled in me a sense of appreciation for the life I had, which they taught me is not readily available to most. My mother grew up making most of her own clothing as her parents could not always afford to buy her clothes. She worked a few jobs in order to become the first member of her family to go to university. She paid for her post-secondary education entirely on her own, with money saved from her jobs. My father followed in the footsteps of his own father who was a railway engineer. My father worked his way up from sweeping floors at the Canadian National Railway (CNR) to eventually becoming an engineer. My father is also an avid environmentalist and skilled outdoorsman, managing a woodlot and protecting and promoting the growth of vulnerable species of trees and other wildlife. My parents have both taught me the importance of respect and compassion for others and for the Earth, giving your best effort, family and integrity. My family has faced challenges over the years, however my family life overall, has given me stability and support.

After obtaining my undergraduate degree, I was uncertain of the exact career path I wanted to take. I did know that I was interested in social work, having completed and enjoyed summer placements at Ontario Works (OW) as an undergraduate student. I then worked for the Children's Aid Society (CAS) in my hometown for over four years. It was during my employment at the CAS that I came to fully grasp with first hand clarity that many children were not as fortunate as I. Many families I worked with were able to overcome their challenges with their own resources, as well as with support provided by the CAS and other agencies, and move forward together, maintaining their family unit. However, I also worked with children and youth who were residing in unsafe living conditions and/or who were abused and needed to be removed from their families.

My own stable and supportive upbringing compelled me to want to create better home environments for the children and youth I worked with. I worked with some youth who eventually resided in foster or group care. I have witnessed positive outcomes for children in foster and group care; however, I have also observed and been struck by the negative outcomes. My passion for supportive housing was a result of wondering what a better alternative to foster and group care would be, or how to improve it, which in part fueled my desire to complete a thesis on the impacts of supportive housing on male youth.

Another experience that led to my interest in supportive housing was a research assistantship I completed as part of a York University study looking at the impacts of affordable housing on Ontario families with children. This study is entitled "Housing Affordability and the Well-Being of Children: Towards a Longitudinal Research Strategy" (Anucha, Leung, & Lovell, 2011). Many families shared with me during in-depth interviews that affordable housing has

positively impacted their lives, given them stability and allowed them to feel a sense of "home" that they had not felt before.

Another source of my interest in supportive housing is my mother, who is an affordable housing supervisor at an Ontario municipality. She has coordinated the recent construction of new affordable housing buildings, including accessible units. She is a passionate and tireless advocate for affordable and safe housing for all. She has created innovative initiatives that have helped build community for social housing tenants. She has led by example and I am very proud of the work she has done and will continue to do in community building and in bringing more affordable and safe housing to those who need it.

In addition, my first MSW practicum was with an Ontario social housing provider and I learned a great deal about social housing. I learned that there is an unequal relationship between the social housing provider and the tenants. The social housing provider holds a great degree of power over tenants. For example, tenants often wait years to be accepted into social housing, given the scarcity of funding available to build or acquire new units. There are eligibility requirements, and applicants cannot earn more than a certain amount or they are not accepted into social housing. In addition, once accepted into social housing, tenants must submit to ongoing monitoring, including income reporting. These factors combine to give the social housing provider considerable power over tenants. The experience can be de-humanizing in some ways for tenants. Some tenants I spoke with stated that they felt "intruded" and "spied" on by the provider.

However, some social housing providers are working to reduce the sense of intrusion and monitoring felt by tenants and are focusing on building a sense of community (M. Ogden, personal communication, March 10th, 2012). For example, I return again to my mother's work:

she created a free summer camp for children who live in social housing in Hastings County, Ontario which includes the same programming as summer camps which charge a fee. The initiative has been very successful and the ideas and perspectives of parents and children are included in the design of camps. In addition, the development of Community/Tenant Relations departments around Ontario and beyond speaks to the efforts of social housing providers to encourage tenants' involvement in their communities. The development of Community Relations departments also shows an effort on the part of the provider to improve the troubled relationship between social housing providers and tenants (M. Ogden, personal communication, Jan 5th, 2012). However, despite these efforts and improvements in the relationship with tenants, I feel it needs to be noted that social housing providers often intrude in the lives of tenants, to a degree that can be degrading.

My role as the researcher in this study will be to provide information about the impacts of supportive housing on male youth. I am approaching the study from an interpretivism/ constructivism and critical social science paradigm, using critical social and empowerment theory. Through facilitating an opportunity for the youth to share their experiences at Five Beds and contribute to research, I have hoped to help them empower themselves. I am also mindful that I can only understand the topic of my research from the place of my own experience (Kovach, 2012). I also recognize and am guided by the fact that the research participants involved in my study are experts on their own lives.

Context of the Study

As outlined in the introduction, there is a general need for more supportive housing. The benefits of supportive housing, which include better health, stability and an enhanced quality of

life, have been demonstrated by previous research (Choca et al, 2004; Hannigan et al, 2003, p. iii; Campbell et al., 2008, p. 1091; Hopkins et al, 2005, p.9). Supportive housing was chosen as the topic for this study given the need for, as well as, the positive outcomes associated with supportive housing. A focus on supportive housing for male youth was chosen as there has been little research on supportive housing's impacts on this demographic.

Argus Residence for Young People

Founded in 1985, Argus Residence for Young People is the charitable organization which operates Five Beds. Argus is located in Cambridge, Ontario. Argus has two shelters, one each for male (Argus Residence for Young Men) and female youth (Argus Residence for Young Women) between the ages of 16-24 who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Argus amalgamates the essential services of food, shelter and 24-hour support with a voluntary life-skill acquisition program. One of the main goals of the program is to mobilize youth towards healthy and viable community integration. Youth may also choose to access Argus for food and shelter exclusively. The intake package acknowledges the voluntary nature of the program, stating that "I further understand that my involvement in the programming at Argus Residence for Young People is a voluntary commitment" (E. Vlasov, personal communication, Feb 22nd, 2013). If a youth is transgendered, they are invited to reside at whichever shelter they feel most comfortable. The buildings are not wheel-chair accessible currently. Wake-up and curfews are established to ensure residents are getting a full 8 hours of sleep each night (E. Vlasov, personal communication, Feb 22nd, 2013). Most residents of the shelter are awoken around 7:30 AM; however this is not a mandatory wake-up time. Staff will accommodate residents who need different wake-up times due to requiring more sleep, working over night shifts, medical concerns

or other factors (E. Vlasov, personal communication, Feb 22nd, 2013). Although there is no definitive time limit on how long youth can stay at Argus, a long stay is considered to be six months.

There are group nights at Argus every Tuesday and Thursday evening. Attendance at these groups is voluntary for shelter residents. On Tuesdays, staff or volunteers facilitate groups that cover life skills topics such as effective job searching, anger and stress management, healthy relationships, cooking and more. House group meetings usually take place on Thursdays during which tenants and staff share their concerns and positive experiences from the previous week. Staff and residents can also identify concerns with particular residents or with an issue occurring in the house and the group can discuss those concerns as a collective, putting forward prospective solutions. Residents are supported in engaging in productive activities, which are defined by Argus as (but not limited to) going to school, looking for work or an apartment, volunteering, and pursuing improvements and/or counseling in physical and/or mental health. The shelter residents have regular one-to-one meetings with staff.

Argus falls under the umbrella of the Region's STEP Home – Support to End Persistent Homelessness initiative. Youth who stay in the Argus shelters are considered residents of the shelter and fall under the service category of the Region's "Emergency Shelter Solutions" (SPPA, 2013, p. 15). The shelter is required to follow the shelter guidelines as part of their service provision agreement with the Region (C. Renna, personal communication, Jan 4th, 2012). The Region has proposed moving the funding approach for Argus in 2013/14 from a per diem model to an annual grant based on projected actual claims for 2012 (SPPA, 2013, p. 15).

Argus shelter residents are also able to benefit from partnerships that Argus has with local agencies in the Region. For example all residents of Argus have a free pass to the YMCA

and they can enjoy the facilities as often as they like. As well, Argus has a partnership with a local medical team and the residents of the shelters can access the medical support for their physical and mental health needs. In addition, there is a partnership between Argus and a local counseling service. All Argus residents can access this support.

Five Beds to Home

The Five Beds to Home supportive housing facility is located in the basement of Argus' shelter for male youth. Five Beds opened in June 2010 and is a "five bed congregate living home with 24/7 on-site support for male youth ages 16-24 experiencing or at-risk of persistent homelessness" (ROW, 2011a). The stated goal of the program is to "build upon the capacity of individuals creating opportunities for hope, healing, empowerment and better autonomy" (Vlasov, 2012). Five Beds purports to create an environment that is "caring, client centered, respectful and responsive" (Vlasov, 2012). The program is intended for self-identified male youth experiencing, or at risk of, one or several of the following: a mental health diagnosis requiring support; a physical and or cognitive disability which has been documented by a medical doctor, hospital or referral source; mental health or cognitive symptoms that are diagnosable and have been documented by a medical doctor, hospital or referral source; a substance use issue requiring supports; and persistent homelessness (Vlasov, 2012). As of September 2012, Five Beds has conducted 21 intakes with 19 individuals.

The youth who reside in Five Beds are considered tenants and fall under the Residential Tenancies Act and under the service category in the Region of "Housing with Related Supports" (SPPA, 2013, p. 15). This is why the youth living in Five Beds are referred to by staff as "tenants" and not "participants" or "residents." Staff shared with me that they also make a point

of referring to the youth as tenants to encourage the youth to feel a sense of independence, ownership and pride in recognizing that Five Beds is *their* home. Regarding funding for Five Beds, the Region has proposed moving the funding approach for Five Beds in 2013/14 from a per diem model to an annual grant based on projected actual claims for 2012 (SPPA, 2013, p. 15).

The features of the housing at Five Beds include: up to one year of tenancy, individual bedrooms with key access, a security protected building, a common room with TV and DVD player, and two bathrooms (Vlasov, 2012). Tenants are also provided with clean and modern décor, bedding, desk, closet, personal needs items, phone, internet and computer access and laundry facilities (Vlasov, 2012). Tenants are also given a budget to decorate their rooms according to their personal tastes and are provided three meals and two snacks per day (Vlasov, 2012). The supportive features of Five Beds include: 1 staff for every 5 tenants, client cluster support meetings to gather together and expand personal and professional supports, on-site access to therapeutic counseling and customized programming and case plans (Vlasov, 2012). Furthermore, a productive activity schedule is developed based on client needs and goals, transportation is provided to appointments, recreational pursuits and accompaniment to independent living searches (Vlasov, 2012). Five Beds tenants also have access to a Flex Fund which covers special items for them (if cost is not prohibitive). Five Beds tenants are also able to apply for a position with the Social Enterprise Effecting Social Action in Waterloo Region (SEESAW) (see Appendix A for definition of SEESAW). Tenants of Five Beds, like residents of the shelters, are also able to benefit from the partnerships that Argus has with agencies in the Region.

The Region's STEP Home program provides support and progress-tracking for tenants who move out of Five Beds and onto independent living. If they move back to their family home, STEP Home does not track them. However, Five Beds staff often keep in touch with former tenants who move back home.

A Note on Implications of the Different Laws for Argus & Five Beds

As mentioned, Argus is included as one of the Region's "Emergency Shelter Solutions" (SPPA, 2013, p. 15). Thus, the shelter is required to follow the shelter guidelines as part of their service provision agreement with the Region (C. Renna, personal communication, Jan 4th, 2012). In contrast, Five Beds is a program included in the service category in the Region of "Housing with Related Supports" (SPPA, 2013, p. 15). The youth who reside in Five Beds fall under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). One implication of these different laws is the different status of youth residing upstairs and downstairs. Youth residing upstairs are "residents" and youth residing downstairs are "tenants" and sign year leases. In addition, Five Beds tenants can be evicted for the same reasons (such as posing a danger to other tenants) as other individuals living in other types of housing. Residents of the shelter in contrast, are "discharged" (removed) and can be "banned" from Argus if they are deemed to pose a substantial risk to staff and/or other residents. Very few youth have been banned from Argus.

Organization of Thesis

In order to help situate this study and identify the literature which informed the research questions, a review of the relevant literature is provided first. Secondly, I will describe my methodology, including the ethical concerns, as well as the strengths and limitations of my study.

Next, I will share the results from the research, which include several themes. Finally, I will offer

a discussion and conclusion, including recommendations and implications for practice and future

research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This literature review will discuss the research that has informed the research questions and main purpose of this study, which was to identify the impacts of supportive housing on the lives of male youth. First, I will explore the literature that identifies different models of housing. It is important to note that Five Beds is specifically for youth who have experienced or are at risk of persistent homelessness. Not all of the models discussed in this review are aimed at this demographic. However, Five Beds is similar in some ways to the models reviewed here. The models discussed do share some similarities with Five Beds in terms of characteristics of residents, and features of the housing and support.

Secondly, I will examine examples of supportive housing facilities and related programs for youth. In addition, I will analyze engagement and empowerment as it relates to youth in their living environment. I will also examine previous research on similar facilities/programs. Finally, I will discuss gaps in the research.

Review of Housing Models

Foyer Model

Foyer, a holistic approach to supporting youth, is a youth housing model that was developed in Europe in the 1990s. Foyers are usually viewed "as a unique community within a community. They typically provide access to employment, education, healthcare, life skill development programs, recreation and other supports within one building" (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2003; Eva's Initiatives, 2006 in ROW, 2010a, p. 32). Foyers blend

elements of the critical disability paradigm, a model developed from the disability movement

which has impacted housing options for youth, and is described in the following section.

Disability Paradigms

Some of the concepts around supportive housing, independence, and individualized

funding and planning for youth have some of their roots in the disability movement. Therefore,

it is important to include a discussion of disability paradigms. There are three disability

paradigms which are reflected in housing options created for people experiencing disabilities and

other challenges. These three disability paradigms are: the medical and rehabilitation paradigm

(institutional), the traditional community services paradigm (institutionalized in the community),

and the critical disability paradigm (consumer control) (Dunn, 2012, p. 290). Five Beds contains

elements of both the traditional community services and disability paradigms.

In the critical disability paradigm, it is recognized that the person requiring service has

rights as a citizen. The critical disability paradigm also recognizes the importance of social

inclusion, social identity, independent living and quality of life. Participants take on the role of

consumers and decision-makers in the services that they require (Dunn, 2012, p. 290). The

critical disability paradigm is reflected in housing options for youth which stress the voice of

youth and give them autonomy and ownership over their housing.

In the 1960s, supported independent living arrangements developed (Dunn, 2012, p. 290).

In 1976, the Ontario government formed the Community Mental Health Branch of the Ministry

of Health and Long-term Care, and started providing funding to develop supportive housing as a

substitute for custodial housing (Ridgway & Zipple, 1990 in Nelson, Hall, & Forchuk, 2009, p.

5). Supportive housing programs were originally structured in some communities "along a

residential continuum, ranging from high-support group settings to lower-support apartments"

(Ridgway & Zipple, 1990 in Nelson et al, 2009, p. 5).

Individual Funding

Individual funding (IF) models fall under the critical disability paradigm described

previously. The development of IF occurred in two areas during the 1970s (Dowson and

Salisbury, 2001, p. 36; Bach, 2000, p.1 in Laragy, 2002, p. 264):

> *"In British Columbia, Canada, the Woodlands Parents Group assisted their children
> with intellectual disabilities as they moved from an institution to individually designed
> and funded programs. Around the same time in California in the US, a group of people
> with physical disabilities formed Personal Assistant Services and demanded control over
> the funding previously given by the government to support agencies. They were able to
> employ their own assistants and felt they gained real control over their own lives"
> (Dowson and Salisbury, 2001, p. 36 in Laragy, 2002, p. 264).*

In the 1990s, People First, an advocacy organization for people with developmental disabilities,

"called for an end to institutional care, group homes, and sheltered workshops" (Dunn, 2012, p.

290). The movement has directly impacted housing options available for youth and more

supportive and supported housing options, involving more tenant control and ownership, have

developed as a result.

IF is "a term describing a process in which an individual identifies his or her needs and

presents an outline of the needs including how the needs can be met in the community (a plan)

to a funding body (typically government-related)" (Lynch & Findlay, 2007, p. i). Community

Living British Columbia (CLBC), although not focusing solely on youth and housing, is an

example of an agency that offers IF. In its guide for consumers CLBC (2009), defines IF as

follows:

> *"Individualized Funding (IF) lets you or your family use money given to you by CLBC to
> create new, different kinds of services that will support you in your community. IF
> provides new ways to pay for the supports you need. It also helps you get and manage the*

supports and services that will meet your disability-related needs. IF gives you more say over the decisions that affect your life. You can choose who you work with and when and how you get your supports. You can get IF in two different ways: 1) direct funding: Funds to buy supports and services for you are paid directly to you or the person helping you; 2) host agency funding: Funds to buy supports and services designed for you are paid by CLBC to a Host Agency that you or your Agent choose" (p. 3).

The IF offered by CLBC is for individuals 19 and older. CLBC states that an Individual Support Plan:

"describes your goals and the types of support you need to live in the community. It also describes your disability-related needs. You can write your own plan or ask your family, friends, or people in your support network to help you write it. If you want to ask for Individualized Funding in your plan, you must also work with a CLBC facilitator as you write your plan. Your plan will include: the things you do in community to achieve your goals that are not funded by CLBC; the things that you do with your family and friends; details about the type of support you want CLBC to fund; how much support you want CLBC to fund" (CLBC, 2009, p. 4).

Lynch et al (2007) found that "individual funding allows individuals to take an active role in determining how they can reach their short-term and long-term goals" (p. ii). In addition, a study by Sanderson, Duffy, Poll & Hatton (2006) found that self-directed services give people more control over their own individual supports. Sanderson et al (2006) found that more control leads to the following outcomes: people are more self-determined; people have a better sense of direction in their lives; people's support has improved; people's money situation has improved; people are improving their home situation; and people's community lives are improving (p. 3). In terms of youth, while not focusing specifically on housing, one study demonstrated "how a collaborative approach to funding individual budgets for disabled [students leaving] school with complex needs has led to more positive, individualised outcomes for the young people and their families" (Cowen, Murray, & Duffy, 2011, p. 30). The study showed that a collaborative approach to funding individual budgets:

> *"allows young people and their families to be in control of support planning and organising their lives beyond school with a mix of funding from health, social care and education according to individual needs. The focus is on the young person as a citizen with a contribution to make – not as a service user" (Cowen et al, 2011, p. 30).*

Specific outcomes include:

> *"Young people with severe impairments are finding work, getting more involved in community life and having better lives" (Cowen et al, 2011, p. 33).*

Supported vs. Supportive Housing

It is important to differentiate between *supported housing* and *supportive housing.* Most models of supported housing fall under the critical disability paradigm. Supportive housing can be a blend of both the critical disability paradigm and the traditional community services paradigm. The concept of "supported housing" in the field of mental health was developed by "Paul Carling and his colleagues (which had already taken root in the fields of developmental and physical disabilities under the rubric of 'independent living')" (Carling, 1995; Hogan & Carling, 1992; Ridgway & Zipple, 1990 in Nelson et al, 2009, p. 6).

Kirsh, Gewurtz and Bakewell (2011) explain that

> *"supported housing differs from supportive housing in that the latter term is a more generic one that includes a broad range of residential facilities that typically provide a continuum of time-limited supports and have a rehabilitative or skill development focus" (Hamilton District Health Council, 2001; Parkinson et al., 1999 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 16)."*

Supported housing is founded on the "underlying values of empowerment and community integration" (Parkinson, Nelson, and Horgan, 1999 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 16). As well, similar to some models of supportive housing (such as Five Beds) treatment is not a requirement of residency in supported housing facilities. Unlike supportive housing, which does not involve as much tenant control, supported housing gives tenants considerable choice over their housing (Kirsh et al, 2011).

There are other challenges with supportive housing, in addition to lack of tenant control. Nelson et al (2009) lists the problems that were identified in the 1980s regarding supportive housing and the residential continuum approach:

> "(a) consumers/survivors do not have choice over where or with whom they live; (b) they are often concentrated in one setting, thus inhibiting rather than promoting broader community integration; and (c) they may be forced to move into a less-supportive residential setting when they show improvement, thus disrupting relationships that they have developed with living companions and staff (Hogan & Carling, 1992; Ridgway & Zipple, 1990). Such forced relocation can have the effect of disassembling social networks, which other research has shown to be centrally important to fostering the adaptation of psychiatric consumers/survivors to life in the community (Hall & Nelson, 1996; Nelson, Hall, Squire, & Walsh, 1992)."

Five Beds does not give tenants much choice over where they live or who they live with; as mentioned, they are concentrated to the basement of the Argus shelter. Five Beds tenants are not forced to relocate however, and only move when they are ready to do so. As mentioned, after tenants move out, the supportive relationships are not disrupted as Five Beds staff will continue to work with tenants if they want this support.

A defining feature of supported housing that differentiates it from supportive housing is that the role of the landlord and the support provider are "separated or 'de-linked'" (Hamilton District Health Council, 2001; Hogan & Carling, 1992; Parkinson et al., 1999 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 16). In addition, supported housing usually occurs in "generic housing units dispersed in the community, offers flexible and individualized support, and has no time restrictions" (Hogan & Carling, 1992; Livingston & Srebnik, 1991 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 16). The three key features of supported housing are provided by Nelson et al (2009):

> "1) mental health consumers/survivors should have choice and control over where and with whom they live. In this regard, the supported housing approach works from a disability rights rather than a medical model perspective; 2) supported housing emphasizes community integration. Rather than creating separate facilities for people with mental health problems, the supported housing approach advocates integration into

housing that is available to anyone in a community; and 3) to have realistic choices about housing, consumers/survivors need financial and social support to enable them to operate in a normal housing market context. The goal of supported housing is to help individuals 'choose, get, and keep' the type of housing that they want. Thus, it is this third principle which, in many communities, poses a significant practical barrier to achieving the implementation of supported housing" (Nelson et al, 2009, p. 6).

It is important to consider housing for those experiencing mental health concerns because, as noted, youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience mental health concerns than their housed peers (Colegrove, 2010). For people with psychiatric disabilities, housing options have been custodial, supportive, and supported (Parkinson, Nelson, & Horgan, 1999 in Kirkpatrick & Byrne, 2011). Nelson et al (2009) write that in the 1990s, "some mental health housing organizations in Ontario began to shift their orientation from supportive housing to that of the supported housing philosophy" (Lord, Ochocka, Czarny, & MacGillivary, 1998; Pyke & Lowe, 1996 in Nelson et al, 2009, p. 6). There has been a shift to supported housing, which stresses "normal housing in the community and individualized, flexible supports," (Sylvestre, Nelson, Sabloff, & Peddle, 2007 in Kirkpartrick, 2011, p. 32) and has been supported by research. This shift from custodial to supported housing is "recognized as a best practice" (Kirkpatrick et al, 2011, p. 32). Nelson et al (2009) explains how supportive and supported housing have blended in Ontario as follows:

"Today supportive and supported approaches have been blended in many of the province's community mental health housing agencies. While housing programs continue to have congregate or group living settings, most do not employ a 'levels' system or have time limits on residency. Some programs do not have staff specifically attached to the setting; rather, staff members work with individuals, whatever their place of residence. Also, many housing agencies have developed individual apartments, some of which are scattered and some of which are concentrated in one apartment block, and provide portable staff support to residents of these apartments. Consumer choice and portable support services are the common elements of these different types of housing. Moreover, this mix of types of housing is supported by research that has found positive impacts for both supportive and supported housing on the well-being of consumers/survivors" (Health Canada, 1997; Parkinson et al., 1999 in Nelson et al, 2009, p. 6).

Despite being recognized as a best practice, challenges have been identified with supported housing (Kirkpatrick et al, 2011, p. 32). For example, a study of individuals residing in "supported housing identified four themes: loneliness, making do with socially and structurally inferior housing, a desire for more understanding, and a concern with integration into a community" (Walker & Seasons, 2002 in Kirkpatrick et al, 2011, p. 32). However, research also shows that residents prefer treatment with low restrictiveness and independent living arrangements "despite the risk of loneliness and isolation" (Fakhoury, Murray, Shepherd, & Priebe, 2002 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p.18). Kirsh et al (2011) highlights that supported housing appears to lead to better outcomes for persons with mental health concerns, including improved housing stability. Of the two models – supportive vs. supported housing – supported housing, which offers the tenant more choice and ownership over their housing, is the model preferred by consumers. Scattered-site living in the community as opposed to concentrated, single site housing has also been shown to be the preferred location as this allows tenants more choice in where they live (Kirkpatrick et al, 2011). As Kirkpatrick et al (2011) states, it is known that choice in housing is positively related to housing satisfaction, residential stability, and psychological well-being (Srebnik, Livingston, Gordon, & King, 1995 in Kirkpatrick et al, 2011).

Examples of Models

This literature review will examine predominantly Canadian examples of the previously discussed models and programs. These facilities were chosen because they are primarily directed at youth. Examples of a culturally-inclusive model and an Australian Individualized Funding (IF) program will also be described. Additionally, a relevant study by Colegrove (2010) of US

supportive housing facilities will be explored as the findings are significant to this study. It is

important to examine other facilities and programs to investigate what they offer in comparison

to Five Beds, which can lead towards developing a better understanding of what works and does

not work for youth, and help to develop a framework for best practice in supportive housing

design for youth.

Individualized funding program – Futures for Young Adults, Victoria, Australia

Futures for Young Adults is an IF program based in Victoria, Australia. Although not

housing-based, the model provides an example of IF for youth. This program is school-based and

is described in table 1. The outcomes of the program include young people being "empowered to

follow their dreams" (Laragy, 2002, p. 276).

Table 1. Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) (Schofield 1998, p. 7 in Laragy, 2002, p. 266).

FFYA assists young people with all types of disabilities in Victoria as they move from school to adult service options. Services were provided to approximately 3, 250 students between the years 1997 and 2000.

The processes identified for the FFYA program relating to self-determination were: individual transition planning in which the young adults and their families are full participants. This process is to include a formal review of each young person's initial choice, and a review of their needs over time; recurrent and ongoing client-centred funding which is portable and travels with the young adult as they move between service providers; service sector development with the involvement of existing service providers and the introduction of new service providers and new models of service delivery (DHS, FFYA Stage 1 Implementation, 1998, p. 6, internal document).

Supportive housing – Foyer Model – Peel Youth Village, Mississauga, Ontario

The Peel Youth Village in Mississauga is an example of a program based on the foyer

approach to support (ROW, 2010a, p. 32). Peel Youth Village "is a transitional housing program

for 48 youth aged 16 to 30. Peel Youth Village provides a wide range of supports in-house to youth" (ROW, 2010a, p. 32). The program includes the following:

> *"a commercial kitchen for training purposes; a gymnasium for recreation; an onsite public health nurse; a Region of Peel employment resource centre; meeting rooms and public lounges; support for finding and maintaining permanent housing; and general support from case managers and youth workers (Region of Peel, 2009 in ROW, 2010a, p. 32)."*

Funding for the development of Peel Youth Village came from a combination of sources including Peel Region, HRSDC (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada), and NHI (National Homelessness Initiative) (ROW, 2010a, p. 32).

Supportive housing – single-site model - The Nanaimo Youth Services Association Youth Residence, Nanaimo, British Columbia (BC)

The Nanaimo Youth Services Association (NYSA) operates a supportive housing facility for youth. This facility is the NYSA's Youth Residence. The intent of NYSA's Youth Residence is outlined as follows:

> *"… [to] provide safe, supportive, and affordable housing for youth between 17 to 19 years of age; exceptions can be made based on further evaluation of circumstance. The residence is a drug, alcohol, and violence free environment" (NYSA, 2012b).*

The residence has 13 studio units available for single youth, 6 two bedroom units available for single parenting youth and 1 wheelchair accessible unit for a single youth. There are also the following features:

> *"…A laundry room, community room, computer room, and storage area available for tenants only. A play area is provided for children living in the complex. There is also an outdoor basketball court, a garden space, and parking available" (NYSA, 2012b).*

To be eligible to reside in the Youth Residence, a person must have a household income that falls below an amount set annually by BC housing and their rent must constitute over 30% of their income (NYSA, 2012b). In addition, applicants are considered for their current need for housing

based on criteria which "includes the applicant's income, safety concerns related to current living situation and personal requirements" (NYSA, 2012b). This process ensures that people with the greatest need are housed first. Applicants must also complete an interview (NYSA, 2012b).

The majority of the tenants at NYSA's Youth Residence are currently, or have been under the care of BC's Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The website for the facility states the following:

> *"Youth tenants are provided support to: complete High school, become gainfully employed and/or increase their competence and reach independence. MCFD, NYSA and other community resources address the present and future needs of these youth as emerging young adult citizens from an Integrated Case Management (ICM) approach. Action is predicated upon existing CIC Standards and Service Planning expectations relative to a differential response to youth in need of assistance. ICM promotes complementary and joined services that identify and build on existing strengths and resiliency, rather than services that address only risks and deficits" (NYSA, 2012b).*

There has been some limited research on NYSA's Youth Residence. The website indicates NYSA subscribes to an evidence-based model of practice and that ongoing participant feedback on programs is important. The website states that the NYSA has:

> *"traditionally utilized survey data collection techniques that ask standardized questions of respondents to ensure validity and reliability of answers over time. Accumulated answers continuously inform our program logic model" (NYSA, 2012a).*

Culturally- specific supportive housing – single-site model – Salish Lelum, Nanaimo, BC

Salish Lelum in Nanaimo, BC is a culturally-specific, affordable supportive housing facility for Indigenous youth and elders. It is an initiative of the Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Society (McGarrigle, 2011). It has 18 low-income apartments – eight for elders and 10 for Indigenous youth – and a communal kitchen and family room (McGarrigle, 2011). The $3.08-million facility was funded by the province of BC, with the City of Nanaimo waiving

development cost charges of $115 906 (McGarrigle, 2011). The rationale behind placing elders and youth together is that it allows the youth access to the mentorship and cultural knowledge that the elders have to offer (McGarrigle, 2011). "This is actually, as far as I know, the first elder-youth facility," Grace Elliott-Nielsen, Tillicum Lelum Executive Director, reports. She adds that "It helps the youth move into a more positive future. It keeps [the elders] young, they really are motivated to work with the youth" (McGarrigle, 2011). The facility will include youth who are in school or just starting their first job, but still need support while they work towards becoming fully independent (McGarrigle, 2011). The youth are welcome to stay as long as they need the support (McGarrigle, 2011). The youth live in studio apartments: each apartment has its own private bathroom, kitchen, and sleeping area

Theresa Gogolin, 60, an elder who moved into the residence, states of the youth, "It's kind of nice having them around and if you ever need help, they're there," she said, adding that "To me, it's just like being with my grandchildren" (McGarrigle, 2011). One youth, who lives at the facility, Kim Wilson, 19, shares that, "It's a really good idea to get us together because elders give us a chance to learn their stories, telling us stories from our past" (Bellaart, 2011). Timothy Cousineau, also 19, stated that it is "cool" living alongside elders. "Elders have wisdom," Cousineau said. "I love learning about (aboriginal) cultures" (Bellaart, 2011). Although no research has been conducted on the facility to date, the comments from the elder and youths suggests that the facility tries to create a sense of home and family, as the elders view the youth as their "grandchildren" and the youth in turn, enjoy learning from the elders. The facility also takes a culturally-specific approach, and is aimed at Indigenous youth and elders.

Supportive housing – scattered site model – Phoenix Supervised Apartment Program, Halifax, Nova Scotia (NS)

Phoenix, located in Halifax, NS, is another example of a supportive housing program for youth. The services are offered to youth, ages 12-24. One of the programs they offer is the Phoenix Supervised Apartment Program, which includes three independent homes in the community providing a long-term, supportive living situation for youth learning skills needed for independent living (Phoenix, 2011). The Supervised Apartment Program is described as follows:

> *"The Supervised Apartment Program (SAP) is a long-term residential program consisting of three separate homes. SAP provides nine clients with an independent, yet supervised, living environment. Established in 1992, this program was developed to provide safe, supportive housing for young people who recognize the need to develop independent living skills. In each of the three apartments, live-in staff oversee the day-to-day activities of residents while developing personal relationships with the youth. Staff are also available to help with budgeting, household activities and to provide support. This community setting offers a great opportunity for youth to learn and practice the skills needed for greater independence. The average age of residents of the SAP is 19. The average length of stay is 10 months"* (Phoenix, 2007b).

Phoenix has been recognized for its innovative leadership in the area of supportive housing for youth (Phoenix, 2011). Phoenix also follows up with the youth who have been through their programs and shares their stories on their website. What follows are quotes from two of these youth (Phoenix, 2007a):

> *"I could never have done it without the help, support, and guidance of the wonderful staff at Phoenix."*

> *"One of my friends mentioned to me to go check out 'Phoenix Centre for Youth,' and I'm telling you nothing in my whole life helped me as much as they did. I had a place to live. I got back into school for the first time since I was thirteen and I got my grade ten."*

Although only offering a glimpse into the impacts on the youth who go through their programs, these quotes suggest that the Phoenix SAP has made positive and lasting impacts on the youth they have served.

Additional Canadian examples of scattered site supportive housing

In January 2007, the Halton Transitional Housing Study for Homeless Youth Steering

Committee released a report entitled "More than a Roof: Best Practices for Transitional Housing

Models for Homeless Youth in Halton" (Transitions for Youth, 2007). The report included

examinations of Canadian supportive housing options for youth, including their strengths and

challenges. Table 2 includes the information from the report on some of these supportive housing

facilities.

Table 2. Supportive Housing for Youth (Transitions for Youth, 2007, pp. 13-24)

Facility/Program	Elements and Evaluation of Program
LOFT Community Services (Toronto, ON)	LOFT (Leap of Faith, Together) Community Services provides several types of services to youth. LOFT has semi-independent houses which consist of 5 residents each; housing persons aged 16-24. The houses are all single gender homes. The rent is geared to income and each resident has their own locked room with mini fridge. There is no on-site staff, but residents have access to housing support workers that provide the initial intake assessment and meet with the residents individually, as well as through house meetings on a weekly basis. The houses follow a senior resident model, where a senior resident provides the main contact with staff and is responsible for extra duties in exchange for free rent. The youth take ownership of their place and are involved in house rules and decisions as to who is accepted into the home for residency. The residents sign a contract when they enter that includes goals in stabilizing their lives (schooling, job readiness, etc.) One of the reasons for the success of this program has been the partnership with the youth. The experience has demonstrated how the necessary supports allow youth to recognize and achieve their potential. Also it is important that the support workers are flexible in dealing with the issues as they arise within the house context. Some of the challenges to this program are that it cannot accommodate seriously challenged youth, given the minimal supervision structure of the homes.
Choices for Youth (St. John's, Newfoundland)	In 2000, Choices began to revamp its housing program from a "live-in" to an outreach model (Supportive Housing Program) due to changes in provincial legislation governing youth. Choices has a supportive housing program for youth (male and female) between the ages of 16 and 21. They do not own the housing directly but, in partnership with landlords, place up to 45 youth at a time in the community in independent living situations, receiving support from Community Youth Workers. The program serves approximately 65 to 75 youth a year. As defined by program funders and provincial legislation, youth do not continue to receive support beyond age 21. The program is block funded by the provincial system, whereby income

	supports are provided to the young people to pay for rent, groceries, and bus passes. An advantage in this model is that youth have a greater say in the type of housing they live in. This is more of an outreach model, with a central office that provides the connection to the support workers. Another advantage is that the supports are not tied to the housing. As opposed to programs where exiting the program means exiting the housing provided, because Choices accesses the private rental market, youth have the option of maintaining housing beyond involvement with Choices. A drawback to this model is working with youth who struggle with independent skills. The program has found that shared arrangements do not work as well as board and lodging, bed sitters or staying with a distant relative.
SHY – Supportive Housing for Youth (Cambridge, ON)	Supportive Housing for Youth Project (SHY) was developed with the primary objective being to "create a [stable], supportive housing environment for youth whereby they [can] learn to be responsible tenants within the context of actually being a tenant" (SPC CND, 2006). The program is no longer in existence. The main goal of this project was to provide a 'bridge' for youth in the housing continuum to other forms of housing and transition from a structured housing environment to other more permanent housing options. This helps youth gain personal independence, and successful reintegration back into the community. The project had four apartments in two Kiwanis non-profit housing complexes in Cambridge. The SHY apartments were integrated, with typical standard tenancy arrangements and up to eight youth (aged 16-24) at any given time (four males and four females are matched with a same-sex roommate). Rents were geared to income and a supportive housing worker was employed full-time and was available to provide 24-hour on-call services to all youth in the program. Examples of supports provided for youth included: crisis intervention; life skills coaching/problem solving; obtaining furniture; food and household items; studying for G1 driver's licences; accompaniment to appointments; assistance with entering school/work/training programs; liaison with Ontario Works; transportation to job interviews; referrals to/case conferencing with roommates and other support systems/institutions; assistance with the tribunal process; one-on-one emotional support. In an evaluation of the program, it was described in predominantly positive and hopeful terms. SHY's supportive component was identified as being critical to the success of the youth in the program. The model had also been received well, in that it was different because it was not a group home situation. The 24-hour accessible housing support worker was identified as a key component to this model in providing the youth with needed supports and connections to services.

The models listed in table 2 include some innovative practices. LOFT, for example, have no staff on site and:

> *"follow a senior resident model, where a senior resident provides the main contact with staff and is responsible for extra duties in exchange for free rent. The youth take ownership of their place and are involved in house rules and decisions as to who is accepted into the home for residency" (Transitions for Youth, 2007, pp. 13-24).*

LOFT articulates respect for youth and recognition of their abilities by giving them ownership and leadership in their living environments. Choices for Youth also includes an innovative feature. The supports at Choices are not tied to the housing and:

> *"as opposed to programs where exiting the program means exiting the housing provided, because Choices accesses the private rental market, youth have the option of maintaining housing beyond involvement with Choices" (Transitions for Youth, 2007, pp. 13-24).*

This is an excellent option and prevents youth from having to leave a home where they may have already established comfort and familiarity. SHY also included a useful feature, which is the 24-hour accessible housing support worker, who "was identified as a key component to this model in providing the youth with needed supports and connections to services" (Transitions for Youth, 2007, pp. 13-24). The worker was on-call, which allowed youth the option of calling or not. The element of choice to access the support was a positive feature of SHY especially since ownership and choice in their residential setting are very important for youth (Ferguson, Kim, & McCoy, 2011).

It is important to note that some of the programs described in this literature review have not had an independent evaluation completed on their services. However, information is available on SHY. As mentioned, SHY is no longer in existence. Although the program was successful for some youth, some of the issues identified with SHY included: youth refusing to meet with the accessible housing support worker, and evictions stemming from a variety of factors (including property damage, noise complaints, non-payment of rent and others). As well,

one stakeholder identified that a high majority of SHY tenants were evicted from the program. The SHY program demonstrates that although some approaches seem effective in theory, in practice they may not lead to positive outcomes for all youth.

US supportive housing for youth

Colegrove (2010) completed a study on supportive housing for homeless young adults in the US. Utilizing a socio-ecological perspective, the study offers "a complete analysis for understanding supportive housing for homeless young people" (Colegrove, 2010, p. iv). Despite the fact that Colegrove's (2010) study was conducted in the US, its findings are nevertheless relevant to the Canadian context. Colegrove reviewed several US supportive housing programs for youth as part of her research, and found that the best programs were the Teen Living Program (Clustered and Scattered Site Apartments) in Chicago, IL, Larkin Street Youth Services (Ellis street apartments) in San Francisco, CA, First Place for Youth Supportive Housing in Oakland, CA, Life Works Supportive Housing Program in Austin, TX and Green Chimneys Triangle Tribe Apartments in New York, NY.

Colegrove noted that these programs contained six key components. First, the programs have tracked data and reported housing and health outcomes. Secondly, youth received help with education and employment goals. Thirdly, although not all of the programs included this feature, most do offer scattered site models of housing. Fourthly, the housing program is connected into a continuum of care, although the connection to a continuum of care would be ideal but is not required. Fifthly, youth clients meet regularly with case managers, and finally, the models ideally use a harm reduction approach, although not all the programs listed by Colegrove do (Colegrove, 2010, p. 213).

Colegrove's findings are significant for developing a framework for best practices in supportive housing for youth. Frameworks for best practices in supportive housing for youth need to highlight the importance of tracking youth after they move from supportive housing, and ensuring that youth receive guidance with regards to education and employment while in supportive housing. As well, Colegrove reinforces that the scattered site model of housing is best practice. In addition, Colegrove highlights the importance of connecting housing to a continuum of care. In addition, it is important for youth to meet regularly with their case managers and for programs to use a harm reduction approach. These elements should be included in supportive housing facilities for youth.

Youth Engagement & Youth Engagement Theory

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) describes youth engagement as "a process that happens over time, is based on relationships, and works best when tailored to the young people and their local context with whom you will work" (OPHA, 2011a). They further describe youth engagement as follows:

> *"Youth engagement is a community empowerment approach. Youth engagement is about young people being actively involved in addressing issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe are important (Pereira, 2007 in OPHA, 2011b). Youth engagement means amplifying young people's voices and leadership, creating safe spaces where they can discuss issues that affect their lives, and taking action" (OPHA, 2011b).*

A framework for Community Youth Development (CYD) is described by HeartWood, a charitable agency in Nova Scotia whose mission is "youth engagement for positive community change. We work with youth to develop their skills and confidence as community leaders. We also train and coach adults to meaningfully engage youth" (HeartWood, 2013). HeartWood defines youth engagement as "the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity that has a focus outside the individual" (HeartWood, 2004, p.4).

HeartWood also offers ideas on the criteria and qualities for youth engagement. When it comes

to the core of youth engagement, HeartWood's research found the following:

> *"When asked why they engaged as full and active participants, the young people interviewed articulated the following motivators, which have become the core values of the CYD Framework: opportunities to follow their passions, connections with both peers and adults, a sense that their work contributed to making a difference, the ability to take concrete actions, and having fun. When employed as the focus of a youth engagement strategy these values will draw young people into a community or organization, guide their work and relationships, and sustain their commitment"* (HeartWood, 2004, p. 4).

HeartWood states that there are five tools for growth in CYD, which lead youth to become

engaged. The first is youth-adult partnerships, where youth feel supported. The second tool is

peer support, which helps youth feel accepted. The third tool is adventuresome learning in which

youth believe that learning can be fun. The fourth tool is empowering culture, a culture in which

youth feel like their voice counts. The fifth tool is meaningful contribution in which youth feel

that they are needed (HeartWood, 2004, p. 6). HeartWood reports that outcomes they have

observed from taking the CYD approach and youth being engaged, have included youth "living

true to values, developing self-worth, being a visionary, seeking opportunities for learning,

taking initiative, making healthy choices, and acting for the good of others" (HeartWood, 2004,

p. 8).

In addition, Cunningham, Duffee, Huang, Naccarato and Steinke (2009) developed a

scale for assessing youth engagement in residential services. The scale looked at "attitude about

treatment, bond with providers, and participation in treatment activities" and how important

these factors are in contributing to the engagement of youth (Cunningham et al, 2009, p. 63).

Fostering youth engagement with supportive services is important because when youth are

engaged in the services they access, this promotes change in their lives (Colby & Dziegielewski,

2001; Hornby & Atkins, 2000; Irvine, 1979; Lerner, 2001; Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000;

Parloff, 1961; Rogers, 1957; Skidmore & Thackeray, 1982; Turner, 1975 in Huang, Duffee,

Steinke, & Larkin, 2011, p. 1515).

Youth engagement is also fostered when youth feel a sense of ownership over their lives.

When it comes to decision-making in agency and community settings, one study found that

youth value their "voice and ownership in agency and community programming, emotional

safety, power and reciprocal support" (Ferguson et al, 2011, p. 1). As well, although not looking

specifically at youth, a study of cooperative housing found that "more power over their lives

appears to result in tenants having increased self-esteem and self worth" (Dunn, 1980, p. 42).

Colegrove (2010) found that youth experiencing homelessness want control over their lives and

living spaces (p. 215).

Overall, as indicated in the previously cited studies and research, youth engagement in

their living environment has been shown to have positive outcomes. Part of this study will

examine the level of tenant engagement at Five Beds, explore the factors that facilitate youth

involvement and engagement, and identify the possible outcomes of the tenants' engagement.

Youth Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as a process of social action that takes place at many

levels; for example, at the level of the individual, family, organization and community

(Hilfinger, Jennings, McLoughlin, & Parra-Medina, 2006). Empowerment has been proposed as

a scale or ladder with atomistic individual empowerment (which focuses on changing the

individual) and political empowerment (which focuses on changing the community) as "the two

endpoints" (Rocha, 1997, in Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 33). Psychological empowerment, at the

level of the individual, "focuses on individual-level capacity-building, integrating perceptions of

personal control, a proactive approach to life, and a critical understanding of the sociopolitical

environment" (Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000 in Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 33).

The main goal of Five Beds is to "build upon the capacity of individuals creating

opportunities for hope, healing, empowerment and better autonomy" (Vlasov, 2012). Therefore,

it is helpful to turn to the Critical Youth Empowerment (CYE) theory, a conceptual framework

proposed by Hilfinger et al. (2006), which is based on the integration of youth empowerment

processes and outcomes at the individual and collective levels. Hilfinger et al (2006) examine the

components of youth empowerment through examining four models of youth empowerment.

They combine these models to develop the CYE. Two models, the Adolescent Empowerment

Cycle (AEC) and the Youth Development and Empowerment (YD&E) model highlight that:

> *"Youth empowerment involves a participatory cycle that engages youth in a safe*
> *environment and meaningful activities where they can learn skills, confront challenges,*
> *demonstrate success, and receive support and positive reinforcement for their efforts,*
> *[which] can lead to empowerment on an individual level" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, pp. 39-*
> *40).*

Some of the youth residing at Five Beds may have experienced times of difficulty related to their

identity and forming an identity, and therefore the AEC model can prove to be useful (Chinman

& Linney, 1998 in Hilfinger et al, 2006). The AEC purports that for adolescents going through

times of identity crisis and formation, being involved in meaningful activity may contribute to

role stability, "offsetting a general lack of purpose or direction many adolescents experience"

(Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 34). The AEC centers on three dimensions: adolescent participation in

meaningful activities (1): such as community service that provides opportunities for skill

development (2) and positive reinforcement and recognition from adults (3) throughout the

process (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 34).

Hilfinger et al (2006) also examined the Transactional Partnering (TP) model which "captures the attribute of shared power among adults and youth members to a greater degree than the other models" that were studied in their research (p. 40). This model also presents a method for "developing youth-led community-change activities that provide all youth participants with leadership opportunities" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 40). The Empowerment Education (EE) model represents particular components of youth empowerment that differentiates it from the other models, as it emphasizes "critical reflection and structural level change" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 40).

The authors argue that the key components of critical youth empowerment (CYE) are:

"(1) a welcoming, safe environment, (2) meaningful participation and engagement, (3) equitable power-sharing between youth and adults, (4) engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and sociopolitical processes, (5) participation in sociopolitical processes to affect change, and (6) integrated individual- and community-level empowerment" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 32).

Hilfinger et al (2006) state that a major practice implication of their work is that education and training of adults is needed with the "aim of increasing conscious power-sharing, guiding youth and adults through critical reflection activities, and supporting the broad goal of critical social youth empowerment" (p. 52).

Hilfinger et al (2006) discuss the potential impacts to youth and communities that can arise from the full integration of the six dimensions of the CYE theory within youth programs:

"Individual-level developmental outcomes for youth include increased self-efficacy and self awareness as well as positive identity development, positive social bonding, awareness of organizational operations and interpersonal relations, and a sense of purpose (Cargo et al., 2003; Chinman & Linney, 1998; Kim et al., 1998; Wallerstein et al., 2005). Inter-personal outcomes include opportunities for adults and youth to spend time together, recognize each other's strengths and assets, and value partnership and collaboration, thereby bridging existing divides and further integrating young people into larger social worlds (Chinman & Linney, 1998; Kim et al., 1998). Community engagement provides benefits of social integration and expansion of life chances and

social networks and also enhances participatory competence, such as the capacity to cooperation, compromise, and appreciate diverse perspectives" (Cargo et al., 2003) (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 51).

Pearrow (2008) speaks to the benefits of empowerment as follows:

"A growing body of research demonstrates the positive, life-improving impact of empowerment on individuals from marginalized and disenfranchised communities (e.g., Bemak, 2005; Bemak, Chi-Ying, & Siroskey- Sabdo, 2005; Wallerstein, 2006). The range of benefits and outcomes for individuals and communities that become empowered include enhanced self-awareness and social achievement (Altman et al., 1998); improved mental health and academic performance (Bemak et al., 2005; Lerner & Thompson, 2002); reduced rates of delinquency, substance abuse, and school dropout (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998); reduced health disparities (Wallerstein); and reduced violence (Hazler & Carney, 2002). Empowerment is recognized as both an outcome, in and of itself, as well as an intermediate step to long-term outcomes" (Wallerstein) (Pearrow, 2008. P. 510).

Pearrow (2008) used the previously outlined six dimensions of Hilfinger et al's (2006) CYE, to examine "the Teen Empowerment (TE) program, as implemented with high-risk youths in urban communities" (Pearrow, 2008, p. 509-510). Pearrow (2008) states that "youths from marginalized and disenfranchised communities can be empowered to advocate for social justice through civic engagement and sociopolitical action" (p. 509). Pearrow (2008) "provides a model for how to critically examine youth empowerment programs using this [the CYE] framework" (p. 510). The conceptual framework of the TE program is as follows:

"1) There is a connection between feeling powerless and increased risk of engaging in dysfunctional behaviors; 2) analysis + decision making + action + success = power; 3) youths have the ability to make real and meaningful changes in their schools and communities; 4) to make real changes, youths need access to adequate resources to implement their ideas; 5) the most effective forms of youth leadership are facilitative rather than command in nature; and 6) there is a connection between the skillful use of interactive group work methods and the ability of the group to reach consensus and to maximize the amount of productive work they are able to accomplish (Pearrow, 2008, p. 513)."

In summarizing the findings from this study, Pearrow (2008) states that TE is based on critical social theory and demonstrates characteristics of the six dimensions identified by Hilfinger et al (2006) for CYE programs. The article provides an example of "applying these dimensions to youth empowerment programs. TE unites youths as they engage in the work of social change" (Pearrow, 2008, p. 521).

These studies and research show that empowering youth can have many beneficial impacts, for both themselves and their communities. Part of the findings from this study may show if Five Beds, like the TE Program, facilitates the CYE or any of the different models of youth empowerment.

Results from Previous Research

Currently a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study is being completed for Five Beds (E. Vlasov, personal communication, Apr 10, 2012). Information currently available on the SROI is as follows:

> *From 2011-2012, two STEP Home programs (at 4 sites) (Argus Residence for Young People, Cambridge Shelter, Charles Street Men's hostel, and YWCA-Mary's Place) participated in a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of their programs in order to enhance their ability to understand and communicate the social value they have created through their work. The report will be available on the Region of Waterloo's website once it is finalized at the end of March 2013 (N. Francoeur, personal communication, Mar 15, 2013).*

My research differs from the SROI in that I am not looking at the social value created by Five Beds. I am also focussing solely on Five Beds, whereas the SROI is examining other programs as well.

Research on youth homelessness in the Region exists but there is not an overabundance of studies completed on facilities and programs comparable to Five Beds. Previous research relating to the topic of this study has looked at outcomes for former foster care youth in

transitional housing (Penzerro, 2003), the impacts of supportive housing on tenants (Hannigan et al, 2003), best practice in supportive housing (Epstein, Straka, & Tempel, 2003) and supported housing (Kirsh et al, 2011), the impacts of independent living programs on youth (Georgiades, 2005a), and improvements youth feel can be made to homeless youth services (De Rosa et al, 1999).

It is important to consider the population of former foster care youth, as there is an "overrepresentation of former out-of-home care youth among the long-term homeless population" (Penzerro, 2003, p. 229). Those former foster care youth who "drift from one placement to another while in care become separated from all family. Drifting contributes to a general disaffiliation from the institution of family" (Penzerro, 2003, p. 230). Growing up "drifting through placements" may lead to "identification with the lifestyle of drifting" (Penzerro, 2003, p. 230). Therefore, such youth who find themselves "drifting" from one residential setting to the next, may find it hard to develop a sense of family or even a desire to develop a sense of "home." Some of the youth who have resided in Five Beds are former foster care youth. Studies show that between "10% and 30% of former foster care youth experience at least one night of homelessness (staying on the streets or in a shelter) after leaving care" (Cook, 1994; Courtney et al., 2001 in Rashid, 2004, p. 240). For male youth with little resources that were formerly in foster care, transitional living and employment training programs may be effective interventions (Rashid, 2004).

Supportive housing can have many impacts on tenants. For people of all ages and backgrounds, including youth, "affordable housing combined with supportive services has proven to be the link to stability and an enhanced quality of life" (Hannigan et al, 2003, p. iii). In addition, both transitional and permanent housing for youth, supported by programs which focus

on educational achievement, preparation for employment and work experience, and "personal growth and development" are determined to be "the only formula for success" (Choca et al, 2004, p. 491). When comparing youth in supportive housing with youth without stable housing tenants of supportive housing were found to have higher levels of "education and housing stability" (Hopkins et al, 2005, p. 9). Furthermore, youth residing in supportive transitional housing are less likely to use substances and have criminal justice contact than youth residing in other living arrangements (Jones, 2011, p. 17). A study by Nelson et al (2009) found that study participants who reside in supportive housing and in their own apartments or houses "have the highest levels of education, and those living in supportive housing are most likely to be employed full-time or part-time" compared to participants who lived in other types of housing (p. 10). Research also shows that there is a link between supportive housing and better health outcomes for homeless youth (Campbell et al., 2008, p. 1091; Hopkins et al, 2005, p.9).

As well, youth participants in a study examining the impacts of supportive housing on those with mental illness reported that after residing in supportive housing, they had developed strengths, increased feelings of independence and well-being and a "better vision for the future" (Nelson, Clarke, Febbraro, & Hatzipantelis, 2005, p. 100). Being in supportive housing also helped youth to "stay out of jail, and to cease or control their substance addictions" (Nelson et al, 2005, p. 100). Relationships also improved and the youth's resources increased, including their sense of safety (Nelson et al, 2005, p. 101). The researchers involved in the study examining a supportive housing initiative concluded that:

> *"We believe that while the supportive housing initiative is not perfect, it is a step in a positive direction that has increased participants' quality of life in terms of their physical and mental health, their sense of independence and their participation in the community. The quality of life outcomes were positive for the participants in this study, but there were still some shortcomings in the quality of some of the housing" (Nelson et al, 2005, p. 103).*

Regarding best practice in design of supportive housing for youth, research shows that effective models of supportive housing for homeless and at risk youth must include the following: safe and affordable housing, a relationship with at least one responsible trustworthy adult, consistent emotional support, an opportunity to learn and practice independent living skills, career counseling and guidance, continuing education, job-readiness training and occupational skills development, medical and dental care, and access to mental health services (Epstein et al, 2003). Five Beds has many, if not all, of these supports available for the youth who reside there.

It is also important to look at best practice in supported housing design, as Five Beds does contain elements of supported housing. Supported housing is also viewed as a model which gives the client or consumer of service more choice and ownership over their housing. Hannigan et al (2003) found that scattered-site supported housing provides more "autonomy and anonymity to tenants" than single-site housing (Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 17). In addition, all approaches to housing for those experiencing mental health concerns "should include consumer empowerment, access to valued resources, and community integration (Nelson & Peddle, 2005 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 17). Furthermore, "social support, location, privacy, and choice" should be included as these features seem to favourably influence outcomes (Parkinson et al., 1999; Rog, 2004 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 17). The "use of generic housing dispersed widely in the community, provision of flexible individualized supports that vary in intensity, assistance in locating and maintaining housing, and no restrictions on the length of time consumers can remain in the housing" are also important features for guiding best practice in housing (Sylvestre et al., 2004 in Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 17).

Independent living (IL) programs can offer supports similar to those available in supportive housing facilities. For example, an IL program in Florida offers classes which focus on developing basic life skills including employment, money management, community resources, communication, and decision-making/problem solving (Georgiades, 2005a, p. 419). An evaluation of the program suggests that "IL program participation is associated with better educational, employment, income, housing, early parenting-prevention, transportation, anger control, criminal-prevention, and self-evaluation outcomes" (Georgiades, 2005a, p. 417). In addition, in a study conducted on an IL program, youth were asked for their recommendations on improving IL services. Among other recommendations, they recommended that counselors develop closer relationships with youths (Georgiades, 2005b, p. 503). Another study came to a similar conclusion, recommending "the establishment of a strong and supportive connection between one worker and the youth that goes beyond a focus on the acquisition of independent living skills" (Hines, Lemon, & Merdinger, 2005, p. 268). When homeless youth are considering accessing housing or services, "A caring staff, a nonjudgmental atmosphere, and flexible policies were perceived as important" (Baer et al, 2008, p. 436). This highlights the importance for youth of feeling supported by and connected with their counselors and/or workers.

Another study conducted in Los Angeles asked youth what improvements should be made to homeless services. Youth recommended "more targeted services, more long-term services, revised age restrictions, and more and/or better job training and transitional services to get them off the streets" (De Rosa et al, 1999, p. 449). In addition, Colegrove (2010) found that youth experiencing homelessness want help overcoming emotional barriers (p. 215). Youth also identify that staff need to have age-appropriate skills, and be non-judgmental and supportive. Additionally, youth say they need outlets to combat loneliness once they find housing, such as

having pets, friends and sources of entertainment (p. 215). Youth also indicate that they do not want roommates, and prefer a scattered site model and off-site support services (p. 215).

Gaps in the Research

Despite extensive research that provides evidence for the effectiveness of using a supportive housing approach for homeless families and single adults with disabilities, "fewer studies have been reviewed concerning young people" (Colegrove, 2010, pp. 57-58). Colegrove (2010) points out that, methodologically, completing research on youth experiencing homelessness is difficult due to challenges relating to sampling, data-collecting, and measurement (p. 5). Colegrove (2010) elaborates further as follows:

> *"Obtaining population samples that are representative is challenging due to the heterogeneity of homeless young people in terms of family histories, pathways leading to homelessness and physical and mental health issues (Toro et al., 2007; Robertson and Toro, 1999 in Colegrove, 2010, p. 5). Another issue with sampling is that though random sample designs are considered more generalizable (Slack et al., 2001; Miles and Huberman, 1994 in Colegrove, 2010, p. 5), less rigorous convenience samples may be more realistic to obtain when studying homeless youth and are more commonly found in the literature (Vising, 2007 in Colegrove, 2010, p. 5). Challenges with data collection may stem from the potentially inhibiting high-risk living situations that lead to overall difficulty in locating or having access to the young people. [Additionally], caution needs to be exercised before generalizing the research findings of one study to homeless youth populations in other regions" (Colegrove, 2010, p. 5-6).*

The issues that Colegrove identifies are relevant to the research on Five Beds and should be considered in all research completed regarding youth experiencing homelessness.

Some studies completed have identified that there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of services for and the service preferences of homeless youth. One study found that: "Research related to homeless youth service preference remains limited and further work is needed so that a better grasp on service needs and utilization patterns of homeless youth are achieved" (Shillington, Bousman & Clapp, 2001, p. 41). For example, as of 2011, there was only one study completed examining how urban homeless youth use services (DeRosa et al., 1999 in

Shillington et al., 2011, p. 29). This study found that "youth drop-in centers are more utilized, easier to access, and receive higher levels of satisfaction than other services, such as shelters, medical care, church services, and/or employment services" (Shillington et al., 2011, p. 29). Despite the overall preference of youth experiencing homelessness for drop-in centres, there is scant information on the characteristics and particular preferences of the youth relating to drop-in centres (Shillington et al, 2011, p. 29).

A review of the literature reveals that there are few publications that provide information regarding best practices for addressing housing and homelessness issues, especially for the subpopulation group of youth (Transitions for Youth, 2007, p. 5). Nevertheless, the work that has been done does provide important information. For example, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) report *Innovative Housing For Homeless Youth* (Serge, 2002 in Transitions for Youth, 2007, p. 7), "homeless youth identify four types of help as important: compassion (individualized and unconditional attention); limits and consequences to their actions; practical assistance (housing, food, money); and professional intervention" (Transitions for Youth, 2007, p. 7)

In addition, "there has not been clear evidence regarding interventions that are effective in addressing the specific needs of homeless youth" (Altena et al, 2010, p. 637). Altena et al (2010) recommends that more methodologically sound research is needed to determine what type of interventions would be most beneficial for different groups of homeless youth (p. 637). For example, research is needed to determine what types of interventions would work best for male youth, female youth, or youth experiencing disabilities as well as homelessness and other subgroups of youth. Promisingly though, studies carried out "to understand the complex (health)

issues of homeless youth" have resulted in an "increase in the development and improvement of social services, social policies, and interventions to assist this group" (Altena et al, 2010, p. 638).

　　　As the reviewed literature illustrates, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of services for and the service preferences of homeless youth, particularly in regards to supportive housing. An important purpose of studying Five Beds is to help fill an overall gap in research on services for homeless youth. The limitations of the research reviewed include a lack of research on the effectiveness of services for and the service preferences of homeless youth, a lack of research on best practice addressing housing and homelessness issues for youth, and a lack of methodologically sound research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As mentioned previously in the social location section, I chose the topic of supportive

housing and its impacts on male youth after working in the fields of child welfare and housing,

and noting gaps in services to youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The purpose of this

study was to identify the impacts of supportive housing (Five Beds) on the lives of male youth.

Another purpose of this study was to respond to the needs identified by the community for

research in this area. The Region's Social Planning Department recommended that I pursue Five

Beds as the topic of research as at the time it had not yet been studied. I looked at the needs of

the community which indicated that more supportive housing options are needed for male youth

in the Region, as more male youth access emergency shelters than females (ROW, 2007, p. iv).

This trend is also present in other communities (ROW, 2007, p. iv). As is the case in Ontario and

beyond, waiting lists for supportive and affordable housing are long (M. Ogden, personal

communication, February 5th, 2012; CAMH Ontario, 2008 in CAMH 2012, p. 3).

The research questions are: what are the impacts of supportive housing on the lives of

male youth?, what have been the long term impacts on the youth?, are the current tenants

engaged in Five Beds? Why? Why not?, and what makes a good supportive housing facility for

male youth? The study focused on two areas: one, the engagement of the current youth who

reside at Five Beds and second, the long term impacts on past tenants. The engagement of and

impacts on youth were measured using the following seven categories: progress on or

achievement of personal goals/progress on or overcoming any personal challenges (drug/alcohol

abuse, mental health issues, behavioural issues, any other issues identified etc); employment

status; educational status; housing status; general contentment/happiness with life; and general health. I developed these categories after reviewing the literature related to supportive housing and its impact on youth and after meeting with three tenants of Five Beds.

Although there has been some research conducted that looks at the impacts of supportive housing on tenants, that research is scant and studies specifically looking at male youth are especially lacking. Thus, one objective of this study was to help fill that gap. A benefit of this research is that the community will learn more about Five Beds. As well, the study provided some of the former and current tenants an opportunity to share their experiences. In addition, depending on the results of the study it could potentially be cited by those who are proponents of supportive housing and could be used as another tool to advocate for the creation of more supportive housing. In this way, the research could potentially help bring about social action as it would aid in bringing about more supportive housing for marginalized and vulnerable populations at a time when this is sorely needed. Another objective of this study was to identify both the strengths and challenges of the Five Beds facility. The information gathered could be used by other service providers to improve homeless services to youth.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The epistemology that was utilized in this study was interpretivism/constructivism. Interpretivism/constructivism seeks to understand subjective meanings and the social context of individual experiences (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Given that I am seeking out the individual experiences of male youth experiencing homelessness, and aiming to understand the meaning and social context of those experiences, interpretivism/constructivism is an appropriate epistemological perspective.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Critical social theory

Critical social theory promotes "critical thinking and focuses on emancipatory processes that give rise to community actions and the promotion of social justice with a call to activism" (Brown, 2006; Campbell, 1991; Leonardo, 2004 in Pearrow, 2008, p. 511). This theory focuses on institutional and conceptual transformations "centered on the function of criticism and its ability to advance research on the nature of oppression and emancipation" (Leonardo, p. 11 in Pearrow, 2008, p. 511). Furthermore, critical social theory takes aim at oppression in order to "differentiate between misfortune, which is random and quite natural, and inequality that is structurally immanent" (Leonardo, p. 14 in Pearrow, 2008, p. 511). As Pearrow (2008) outlines, "critical analysis is an imperative component of young people working together in efforts to create social change that addresses situations of injustice" (p. 511).

Critical theorists "set out to interpret findings through the filter of their empowerment and advocacy lens" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011, p. 51). In addition, critical theorists seek to "understand human experience as a means of changing the world. The common purpose of researchers who approach investigation through critical theory is therefore to come to know about human experience to promote social change" (DePoy, Hartman, & Haslett, 1999, p. 561). This research will involve learning about the individual experiences of the youth, and through sharing their experiences, they will be possibly contributing to social change in the form of improvements to services for male youth experiencing homelessness, and perhaps to youth in general.

Critical social science paradigm is defined by its "focus on oppression and its commitment to use research procedures to empower oppressed groups" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011,

p. 51). Therefore, critical social science is an appropriate approach because the research involves working with a group that is traditionally marginalized and not given a voice (male youth experiencing homelessness). The research aims to advocate with and for the youth. I hoped to help facilitate the youth empowering themselves by sharing their stories and contributing to improving services for themselves and other youth. Story "works as a decolonizing action that gives voice to the misinterpreted and marginalized" (Kovach, 2006, p. 98). Through sharing their stories, the male youth who may have been misinterpreted and marginalized throughout their lives now have a chance to tell their stories in their own way and ensure their voices are heard.

Empowerment theory

Empowerment theory has been defined as "a process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals, families, and communities can take action to improve their life situations" (Gutierrez, 1994, p. 202 in Pearrow, 2008, p. 510). Further, "empowerment suggests a belief in the power of people to be both masters of their own fate and involved in the life of their several communities" (Rappaport, 1987, p. 142 in Pearrow, 2008, p. 510). Therefore, empowerment is "an action taken by an individual to facilitate his or her own ability to act in the face of oppression" (Brown, 2006 in Pearrow, 2008, p. 510). In the broadest sense, "empowerment refers to individuals, families, organizations, and communities gaining control and mastery, within the social, economic, and political contexts of their lives, in order to improve equity and quality of life" (Rappaport, 1984; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 2000 in Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 32).

Empowerment theory is an appropriate theoretical lens with which to approach this research because, to quote Pigg (2002) it has three important dimensions: "self-empowerment through individual action, mutual empowerment that is interpersonal and social empowerment in

the outcomes of social action" (p. 108). The youth participated in designing the interview guides, and shared their experiences and what has impacted them about being at Five Beds in the interviews. They will see the outcome of their sharing reflected in the final study, and hopefully, in improvements in the services they and others receive.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research methods attempt to "tap deeper meanings of particular human experiences and are intended to generate qualitative data: theoretically richer observations that are not easily reduced to numbers" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011, p. 437). Qualitative research provides a "superior method for studying the experience of being homeless" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011, p. 437). As mentioned, qualitative methods focus on individual human experiences and the meanings of those experiences. The experience of being homeless cannot be generalized or quantified. There is a great diversity of experiences for those who have been in a homeless situation. Qualitative research "offers unique insight into youths' experiences of services and interventions received" and "offers rich information regarding the perceptions and experiences of the youth themselves, which is less easily garnered from survey reports" (Slesnick, Dashora, Letcher, Erdem, & Serovich, 2009). Consequently, I decided to use a qualitative design in my research because I am aware of the richness of the information that can be gathered and the demonstrated benefits of using this approach with youth.

In keeping with the epistemology of critical social science and the theoretical framework of critical social and empowerment theories which guided this research, the study incorporated elements of Participatory Action Research (PAR), including social action research. Action research is founded on the principle that those who experience a phenomenon are the most

qualified to investigate it (Depoy et al, 1999, p. 561). Action research also has four values

(Stringer, 1996 in Depoy et al, 1999, p. 562): democracy – the research is participatory; equity –

all are equally significant in the research process; liberation – the design of the research is aimed

at decreasing oppression; and life enhancement – the research is a systematic inquiry approach to

encourage the expression of full human potential. This study met some but not all of these

values. The youth participated in the design of this study through creating, with me, the interview

guides.

PAR (Participatory Action Research)

Participatory action research (PAR) aims to understand the world through attempting

collaboratively and reflectively to change it (Reason and Bradbury, 2008, p. 1). PAR approaches

attempt to tackle issues of power, politics and empowerment (Bradbury and Reason, 2001 in

Fenge, 2010, p. 878) and therefore "offers an inclusive method of working with marginalized

and excluded voices" (Fenge, 2010, p. 878). PAR has been utilized "effectively with diverse

groups of marginalized people to support social justice and to promote the voices of these groups

within both service development and academic debate" (Cahill, 2007; Etowa et al., 2007 in

Fenge, 2010, p. 879). Within a participatory methodology, the participants define the focus of the

research or the knowledge gained (Beresford, 2000 in Fenge, 2010, p. 884).

PAR includes an "acknowledgment that there are multiple truths or 'extended

epistemologies'" (Bradbury and Reason, 2003 in Fenge, 2010, p. 880), and that underrepresented

groups should be encouraged to participate in inquiry and research processes" (Fenge, 2010, p.

880). In addition, PAR recognizes:

> *"the expertise of non-academics, enabling them to share their own experiences and*
> *'insider' knowledge, and, as a result, impacts upon the conduct of the research process*

itself. In PAR, validity is defined by the context of the researchers and participants and therefore the most important criterion is the generation of usable knowledge. Ownership of knowledge is identified as one of nine categories of anti-oppressive social work research, and this concerns the need to give participants a true sense of control over the research process (Strier, 2007 in Fenge, 2010, p. 880)... It also allows professionals to engage in research with a new lens and to become co-learners in the cycle of research" (Fenge, 2010, p. 891).

Whitmore and McGee (2001) propose a helpful approach for investigating "issues of power and control within the participatory group process and identify principles for working with disempowered groups that focus on empowerment and participation":

"non-intrusive collaboration—including ownership of the project by the group; mutual trust and genuine respect; solidarity—all humanity is connected by a common journey and shared destiny; mutuality and equality—everyone's interests are important; a focus on process—informal interaction that goes beyond a detached working relationship, and respects others' cultures; language as an expression of culture and power (Whitmore & McGee, 2001, p. 396–397).

PAR includes social action research. As mentioned, action research has four values (Stringer, 1996 in Depoy et al, 1999, p. 562): democracy; equity; liberation; and life enhancement. In this research, due to time and resource restraints, I was not able to involve the participants in every stage of the research process, but three of the current tenants did participate in the design of the interview guides. As well, participants were vetted to ensure they agreed with the use of their quotes. Quotes that participants did not want used were removed. Participants were also invited to add further information after their interviews if they thought of something they wanted to add. All participants were provided with my email and phone number and invited to contact me at any time with any questions or concerns. Despite the constraints of the project, I attempted to include the participants as much as possible. Further, as mentioned the design of the research is aimed at improving services to male youth experiencing homelessness, and thus is designed to reduce oppression that male youth may experience because of inadequate or

inappropriate services. Finally, the research is aimed at improving the lives of the male youth who participated in the study, as well as youth in general, by identifying areas of improvement at Five Beds, which may be applicable to other services.

Overall, I was not able to use all elements of PAR and social action research. I did not involve the research participants in the development of the research and data analysis, and I have not created change. Nevertheless, the study could add to the body of knowledge regarding the impacts of supportive housing, and in that way lead to the development of more supportive and/or supported housing.

SAMPLING

Morse (1994) states that "saturation is the key to excellent qualitative work" (p. 147). However, "there are no published guidelines or tests of adequacy for estimating the sample size required to reach saturation" (Morse, 1994, p. 147). Some findings in the literature recommend that in all qualitative research, (Bertaux, 1981) fifteen is the smallest acceptable sample (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). I attempted to reach a sample size of 15 (5 current tenants, 5 past tenants, and 5 staff), however I was not able to locate a fifth past tenant. Therefore, my total sample size was 14. Although 15 would have been a preferred sample size, there is evidence that smaller sample sizes can still reach saturation. Researchers in one study found that:

> *"based on the data set, saturation occurred within the first twelve interviews, although basic elements for metathemes were present as early as six interviews. Variability within the data followed similar patterns" (Guest et al., 2006, p. 59).*

The researchers concluded that "For most research enterprises, in which the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals, twelve interviews should suffice" (Guest et al, 2006, p. 79). My study meets these criteria, as the majority of my participants are youth who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness,

and while of course there are unique factors impacting each individual, there is also a degree of homogeneity in their experiences.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Purposive sampling was used, as the study focused on Five Beds. I consulted with the Executive Director (ED) of Argus and Five Beds staff regarding participant recruitment. In order to ensure the confidentiality and help facilitate their comfort with the research process, it was decided that Five Beds staff would assist in recruiting current and past tenants. This was viewed as the best decision as Five Beds tenants have a positive and supportive relationship with the Argus ED and Five Beds staff and therefore would likely be more comfortable discussing their potential involvement in the research with them. A script was created for staff to use when approaching tenants to see if they were interested (see Appendix F). This was created as a precaution to reduce the risk of coercion.

I also created an advertisement for the project which was distributed to Five Beds staff to share with potential participants (see Appendix G). Interested participants either contacted me directly to confirm their involvement or confirmed it with staff who then contacted me. Five Beds staff have all signed confidentiality agreements as part of their employment so at no time were there concerns that participants' confidentiality regarding their involvement in the research would be compromised. I then contacted the participants and arranged interviews at times and on days convenient for them. The majority of the interviews were held at Five Beds, in private rooms, and other interviews were held in the community at locations of the participants choosing, such as parks or private residences.

The participants in this study were current and past tenants of Five Beds, as well as staff of Five Beds and Argus. The reasoning for choosing past and current tenants of Five Beds was to attempt to ascertain the impacts of Five Beds on the lives of tenants. As tenants are experts on

their own lives and experiences, it makes the most sense to interview them directly. I interviewed the staff to determine what their views were regarding the impacts on tenants. This allowed me to ascertain if there were corroborations between tenants' and staff's reports. If themes and similarities emerged in the findings from interviews with tenants and staff, it gave credibility and validity to the findings. Staff are also an appropriate choice because they have been trained on working with youth experiencing homelessness, have years of experience and can be viewed as having expertise on the subject of male youth experiencing homelessness and the impacts supportive housing can have on their lives.

The sample size was small (5 current tenants, 4 former tenants and 5 staff) due to time and resource restraints, as well as the relatively short period of time that Five Beds has been in operation. Only 12 tenants in total (as of October 2012) have resided in Five Beds since it opened in 2010. Five tenants were residing in Five Beds (there are only five beds in the facility) at the time of my interviews so I was able to interview 100% of current tenants. I interviewed 75% of the total tenants who have ever resided at Five Beds, as of October 2012. Therefore, data gathered from the former and current tenants can be viewed as potentially representative of the overall experience of Five Beds tenants since the facility opened.

As well, the study is a thesis being completed in partial requirement for the degree of the Master of Social Work (MSW), which is a two year program. Therefore, I did not have time to track down every past tenant of Five Beds. The challenges inherent in accessing youth experiencing homelessness were also a factor in the small sample size. These include continued transiency. Some youth have continued to move from place to place since moving from Five Beds and are therefore difficult to locate. Resource restraints included funding, as the project was entirely self-funded.

The characteristics chosen for the current and past tenant participants reflected the eligibility criteria for Five Beds. These characteristics included being a current or former tenant of Five Beds, being male, between the ages of 16-24[3] and experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The former and current tenant participants identified as male. I did not record the ages of the youth interviewed as this may have been an identifying factor for the youth. These participants are or were in the past, persistently homeless or at risk of this. Most come from difficult family and early life experiences, including experiences of abuse, poverty and neglect. Most of the participants experience mental, physical or other challenges, including diagnosed and/or undiagnosed conditions or illnesses. Some also live or have lived with addictions issues. Further, some have experienced concurrent conditions or disorders (for example, a mental illness and also an addiction). Some of these participants have struggled with employment and education. The former and current tenants were interviewed in September and October of 2012.

I also interviewed five staff members. The staff members are both male and female and once again, their ages were not recorded to ensure their confidentiality. All the staff have experience working with youth, including youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, as well as related training and education. The staff were interviewed in September and October 2012.

I was not aware of the specific ethnic and cultural backgrounds of all the participants. The participants included individuals who are visible minorities, individuals who are Caucasian and individuals who are Indigenous. However detailed information related to ethnicity or cultural identity was viewed as identifying information, and therefore was not included in the study. All participants were able to communicate fluently in English.

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[3] Some former tenants were over the age of 24.

Data Collection Procedures

When I was initially exploring a topic of research for this MSW thesis, I met with officials from the Region's Social Planning department in fall 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to identify affordable, supportive housing programs and facilities in the Region which may benefit from research and which have not yet been the subject of research. Social Planning staff proposed a few recommendations, one of which was Five Beds. I explored Five Beds and the other ideas further and decided after some preliminary research, to pursue Five Beds. The decision was made due to the fact that this relatively new program is one of the most innovative and lauded in the Region, and had not yet been the subject of any studies. I also met with the Executive Director (ED) of Argus, who also manages Five Beds, in late 2011 to discuss the option of pursuing the research. The ED approved of the research.

A thorough literature review was also completed on issues related to the topic of supportive housing and its impacts on youth and helped to inform the research questions and design. I then prepared material for and submitted the material to the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB) and after some modifications, received approval from the REB in the summer of 2012 to proceed with the research. I then conducted the qualitative interviews in September and October 2012 with Five Beds current and past tenants, and staff. I used the interview guide approach. The interview guide approach allows for topics of relevance to the research to be covered, and specific questions to be asked, but it also allows for flexibility in question wording depending on the interviewee. The strength of the approach of the general interview guide is the capability of the researcher

> *"...to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee"* (McNamara, 2009 in Turner, 2010, p. 755).

The interview guides can be found in the Appendices.

Prior to interviewing the current and past tenants, I conducted one-on-one, private meetings with three of the current tenants to facilitate their participation in the design of the interview guides. These youth went over my preliminary ideas for questions, suggested re-wording, identified irrelevant questions which were removed and also formulated their own questions which were included in the guides. Out of these meetings, the interview guides were developed and finalized. These initial meetings lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to 1 and a half hours. The purpose of involving tenants in creating the interview guides was to better ensure that the questions being asked were getting at matters that are important in the lives of tenants and that impact them. Without the input and ideas of the tenants, the interview guides may have lacked such crucial questions and relevancy.

As mentioned, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured, qualitative interviews with all participants once the interview guides were finalized and approved by the REB. In addition, the study collected retrospective data, as some participants were asked about their past experiences at Five Beds. The interviews took anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours. All participants were given an honorarium of $20 for their participation. See Appendix E for honorarium receipt. In addition, I gave my contact information to all of the participants and advised them to contact me to inform of any changes to their contact information, so they would be able to participate and be given the results of the study if they moved.

Data Analysis

Participants were given homogeneous titles, for example "Staff member" or "Current tenant." This was to ensure the confidentiality of participants. Using gendered fake names (Bob, for example) may have compromised the confidentiality of participants. The information that

participants shared was highly personal and specific. Using titles such as "Staff member"

provided extra protection to participants. All data was stored in a secure, locked location and on

a secure computer. Interviews were audio recorded and the digital recording device is kept

locked in a secure location. It is important to note that I was the only person with access to the

data, computer, audio-recorded and transcribed interviews, the digital recording device, and the

locations where these items were stored. All interviews were transcribed so that the recordings

can be erased. Any identifying information or information that could potentially compromise the

confidentiality of the participants was not included in the final study. The transcriptions of the

interviews were analyzed and compared for themes. These themes are explored in the Results

section of the thesis.

ETHICS

I completed the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving

Humans Course on Research Ethics* and the research was also approved by the Wilfrid Laurier

University REB. Colegrove (2010) points out that, methodologically, completing research on

youth experiencing homelessness is difficult due to challenges relating to sampling, data-

collecting, and measurement. I relied on Five Beds staff to help recruit current and past tenant

participants; although convenient, it may have resulted in a less rigorous sample. However, in

defense of the method, it was also an approach which took into consideration the comfort level

of potential current and past tenant participants. They were likely to be more comfortable with a

supportive staff member sharing information on the project, than a complete stranger (myself,

the researcher). The staff introduced me to the participants, and with a trusted adult helping to

facilitate the introduction between myself and the participants, it was likely that the participants

were more open to speaking with me.

However, despite its benefits, the inclusion of staff in helping to connect participants with me does raise other ethical concerns. A script was created for staff to use when approaching tenants to see if they were interested (see Appendix F). Nevertheless, tenants may have felt coerced even at no fault of the staff; even if the staff did everything in their power to reduce the risk of coercion, it still does not mean that tenants may not have felt some degree of pressure to participate in the research. It can be hoped that the reiteration throughout the research that participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty, helped to reduce or eliminate any feelings of coercion.

Most of the current and former tenants of Five Beds interviewed for this study do experience mental health concerns and some also experience a cognitive concern, but the participants were able to indicate if they did not understand a question. I was then able to rephrase the question to render it understandable. The mental health and cognitive concerns of the participants were not so severe as to encumber their participation in the research. However, although all current tenants participated in the research, I only interviewed 4 former tenants (12 youth in total have resided at Five Beds). Did the research unintentionally and unknowingly exclude those past tenants who may have more severe mental health and/or cognitive concerns and who may have had valid and important information to contribute? It is difficult to know, as I did not have information on all former tenants of Five Beds. What is known is that I did not have access to resources that would have helped facilitate the inclusion of those who may have found the interview process challenging. Funding and resource constraints provided an obstacle. Future research on Five Beds as well as on other services for youth experiencing homelessness should ensure accessibility to persons who may have a range of physical, mental and cognitive needs.

LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

Limitations

As mentioned, I was limited by time and resource restraints. Ideally, I could have interviewed every tenant who has ever lived at Five Beds, and interviewed them in waves. For example, I would have liked to have interviewed tenants once they first moved in, then after every three months of their tenancy, and then a few months after they moved out of Five Beds to track their progress and the changes in their lives. However, the difficultly in tracking down participants, and the time lines I was under as an MSW student created barriers to interviewing every participant, and interviewing in waves. Financial barriers also existed as the study was self-funded.

The use of retrospective questions may have created a concern around recall limitations and some former tenants openly admitted to having trouble remembering certain details of their lives while at Five Beds. Therefore, the complete accuracy of all the information gathered through the interviews is not assured. Additional ethical issues could exist as participants were entirely made up of staff and current and former tenants of Five Beds. There were concerns before the research began that participants may report overly favourable results, which is a concern in self-reporting, where individuals will report more socially desirable information (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). I attempted to address the concern around self-reporting by assuring participants continuously that all information is valid and helpful, and that part of the purpose of the study is to highlight areas for improvement at Five Beds. During the interviews, most participants were open and provided negative as well as positive feedback. Therefore, the concern relating to reporting more socially desirable information was alleviated.

Another limitation of the research is that although former tenants identify particular long-term impacts that Five Beds has had on their lives, these impacts could also be influenced by other factors and may have been brought about by factors other than the experience of living at Five Beds. I attempted to assuage this concern by being clear that the intent of the questions was to discover the impacts Five Beds had on the tenants. As well, a related concern is that it is difficult to tell for certain at this point in time what the long-term impacts of Five Beds are on tenants, due to the relatively short time that Five Beds has been open. Therefore, in the future, longitudinal studies would be recommended to more accurately report on the long-term impacts of Five Beds on tenants.

Furthermore, the research may have been inaccessible to those past tenants who may have more severe mental health and/or cognitive concerns but nevertheless have valid and important information to contribute. For example, past participants who have literacy and cognitive challenges may not have understood the advertisement for the project, even with staff explaining the study.

In addition, participants were not asked to identify their cultural or ethnic background as this may have been an identifying factor in the research due to the small sample size. In the interviews, the majority of participants did not share information regarding any cultural practices or religious beliefs, and any information that was shared relating to these areas was removed from the final study as I viewed it as potentially identifying information. However, it is important to note that cultural and/or religious factors certainly impact individuals and they may play a role in the impacts supportive housing can have on male youth. In the literature review, I examined a supportive housing facility for Indigenous youth and elders (called Salish Lelum) located in BC. The cultural knowledge and practices of Indigenous people are central to the

operations of this facility. The cultural focus of Salish Lelum may bring about certain impacts that programs without a cultural focus do not.

Strengths

Due to the small sample size, I was able to have longer, more in-depth interviews with each participant. The result was rich, detailed information that captured the lives and experiences of the youth. The small sample size also allowed for me to attempt to build better rapport with the participants with the aim of increasing their comfort levels. Given the personal nature of much of the information shared, it can be suggested that the participants felt quite comfortable and safe with me.

Furthermore, the interview guides are strong because of the youth. The guides reflect issues that are important to current tenants at Five Beds. They target areas that otherwise may have been left out had I designed the guides solely on my own. The guides can be further refined by other youth and researchers, and tailored accordingly for use in studies of other programs. The guides could also be adopted and adapted by Five Beds to use as part of regular monitoring and evaluation of the program. For example, Five Beds could use the current tenant interview guide to evaluate the experiences of tenants three to six months into their time at Five Beds, and they could use the former tenant interview guide to follow up with former tenants three to six months after they move out. The staff interview guide could also be used on a yearly basis to evaluate staffs' views on the status of the program. It may be beneficial to compare and contrast the results from such evaluations over the years to see if there are differences. Such information could also complement and enrich statistical data already gathered by Five Beds.

In addition, the study provided an opportunity for empowering of youth experiencing homelessness. Through their participation in the design of the interview guides, the youth were identified as experts on their own lives and experiences. Through being interviewed regarding the impacts of Five Beds on them, this message was reiterated. Five Beds will be provided with the results of the study and may make changes and improvements to the program based on the study findings. The final study may lead to improvements in services at Five Beds and in other services to youth experiencing homelessness. The youth may see social change and improvements resulting from their participation in research. Therefore, a strength of the study is that it created an opportunity for youth to feel empowered, to help them realize their strengths and to see that they can bring about positive change.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

THEMES

The youth will also be referred to as "tenants" as they are tenants of Five Beds under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). Current and past tenants were asked about the impacts of Five Beds on their lives, and staff members were also asked about the impacts on tenants that they have observed. After reviewing the literature related to supportive housing and its impact on youth, relevant questions were developed with the youth regarding specific areas that were impactful for them. These questions asked about impacts Five Beds has had regarding: achievement of or progress on personal goals; overcoming or progress on overcoming any personal challenges (substance abuse, mental health issues, behavioural issues, any other issues identified, etc); employment status; educational status; housing status; general contentment/happiness with life; and general health. Some of these areas emerged as themes and sub-themes during analysis of the data. Themes were categorized as internal or external to Five Beds. Internal themes represent themes which relate to issues within the Five Beds program. External themes are themes involving factors that occur outside the program. The themes are outlined in table 3. There were two broad internal themes identified, along with sub-themes.

The first internal theme was in regards to the staffs' impact on tenants, and the three staff sub-themes included: effective approach of staff, staff contribution to sense of stigma felt by youth, and staff keeping in touch with youth after they move out. The second internal theme was related to the benefits and drawbacks of the program structure of Five Beds, and the subthemes related to program structure were: sense of "home," the need for an autonomous facility, relief

felt by tenants, and Five Beds as a turning point of positive transformation. There were five external themes identified as follows: what brought tenants to Five Beds, stability prior to leaving Five Beds, improved housing, employment and education, improved happiness and health, and positive long-term impacts on former tenants.

Table 3. Themes of Five Beds Research

Themes	Type of Theme (External or Internal)
A) What brought tenants to Five Beds Tenants experience a range of factors that lead to Five Beds, including but not limited to: abuse, poverty, family breakdown, housing precariousness or no housing, use of or exposure to violence, drug abuse, and more.	External
B) Staff's impacts on tenants i) Effective approach of staff – staff are supportive and caring, but also work to motivate and "push" youth. ii) Contributing to sense of stigma felt by youth -some tenants appear to have internalized the stigma around homeless youth, possibly in part because they occasionally do not perceive staff are listening to them. iii) Keeping in touch after moving out - most tenants maintain contact with staff to some degree, and staff also keep in touch with tenants.	Internal
C) Benefits and drawbacks of the program's structure i) Sense of "home" – there is a sense of "family" at Five Beds. Tenants refer to each other as "brothers," staff are "big brothers, big sisters," "mom", etc. ii) The need for an autonomous facility - both staff and tenants reported challenges due to the presence of the shelter upstairs; this takes away from the "sense of home." iii) Relief - tenants felt a sense of relief in moving downstairs; being able to have more time to organize their lives. iv) Five Beds as a turning point of positive transformation - after moving into Five Beds, most tenants moved forward in their lives in a positive way.	Internal
D) Improved housing, employment and education Most tenants made improvements in one or more of these areas - housing, employment and education status - while at Five Beds.	External

|	
E) Improved happiness and health Most tenants improved in both of these areas after moving in to Five Beds.	External
F) Stability prior to leaving Five Beds Tenants have reached stability, and have something set up for them when they leave.	External
G) Positive long term impacts on former tenants "Long term" is difficult to gauge due to the short time Five Beds has been open. However, so far, most former tenants are maintaining housing, work, education, etc.	External

Relationships between the themes are outlined in figure 1.The effective approach of staff can be viewed as helping lead to the sense of relief felt when moving downstairs, as tenants know they will have supportive staff who will be there for them. The sense of relief and the effective staff approach can be viewed as leading to tenants viewing Five Beds "like home." The feeling that Five Beds is "like home," can lead to Five Beds being a point of positive transformation, which in turn, can lead to improvements in happiness and health, and improvements in education and employment. These improvements can then lead to tenants moving out of Five Beds to independent living. The continued contact with Five Beds staff, and the support therein, can help lead to tenants maintaining their improvements and result in positive long term impacts. It also should be noted that the themes are my general observations and do not reflect the exact process for each tenant.

A) *EXTERNAL THEME – WHAT BROUGHT TENANTS TO FIVE BEDS*

While each individual has their own unique story, all staff, current tenants and former tenants reported similar circumstances which resulted in young men coming to Five Beds. Precarious housing or none at all, family breakdown including abuse, conflict and neglect,

threats or violations to personal safety, and mental health concerns were some of the recurring

issues leading individuals to Argus and then Five Beds. Drug use was also a concern in a few

Figure 1. Relationships of Themes
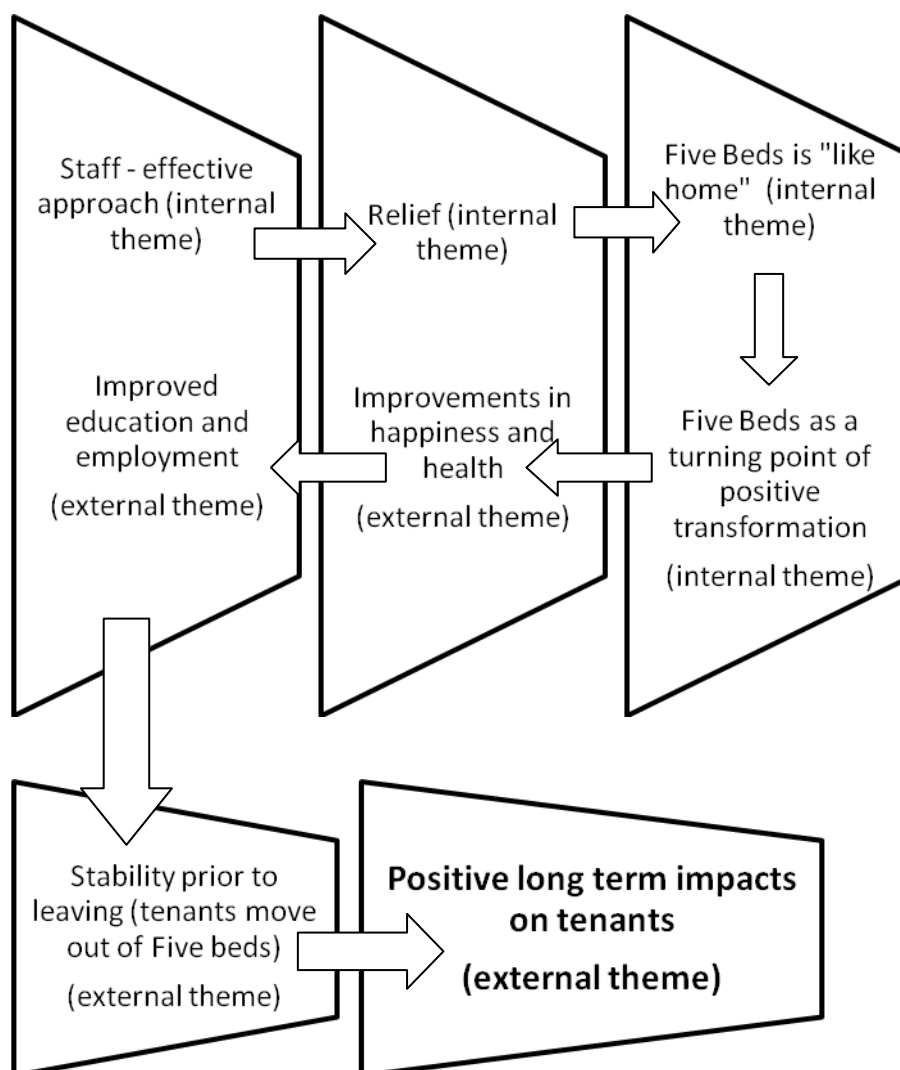
cases. Some of the youth interviewed were also formerly in the care of Family and Children's

Services (F&CS). All five current tenants discussed experiencing some type of mental health

concern, including depression. Furthermore, they initially came to be at Five Beds through the

upstairs shelter, and all of them report not having anywhere else to go before coming to Argus.

One current tenant had been residing somewhere which was no longer safe. He shared that he and a friend moved to another shelter (not Argus) "but the shelter was not good for me as it was mostly for older people. A friend recommended this place (Argus) and said it was good for students." A former tenant shared what brought him to Five Beds:

> *[Former tenant] "Five months into my shelter stay, I was still not doing well with my parent, so I wasn't ready to move back home. There is a six month limit. So when the option to move downstairs came up, I was glad. Downstairs you can stay an extra year. I ended up finishing school so downstairs helped a lot that way."*

One current tenant ended up at Five Beds because of mental health concerns and continuously residing in what he called "not good places." This current tenant added that he has been "couch hopping" since he was a teenager. He provided some background as to why he has been transient from a young age. He shared that he witnessed regular domestic violence and abuse in his parents' relationship. Finally, he said he had reached his breaking point, and had to leave his family home. From that point on, he went from place to place. He captured his depressed state during those days by describing himself as "a teenager who just had a bad attitude because this is what my life has come down to: living on my friends couches."

Another current tenant's childhood and time growing up were spent in foster care. He did have some positive experiences in foster care. However, the involvement of a biological parent in his life caused some difficulties for him. He moved in with his biological parent eventually but the arrangement did not work out. This current tenant then moved in with a friend, but this too did not work out. He reports that his friend's mother told him about Argus, so he came there. He learned about Five Beds from the then-current tenants of Five Beds while he was in the Argus shelter upstairs.

A former tenant shares that the time prior to his moving into Argus was marked by close personal loss and a desire to change his life:

> [Former tenant] "I recently had gone through a personal loss and I was living a lifestyle I didn't want to live anymore. In this lifestyle, I was selling drugs, and I was in and out of jail. I just did not want it anymore. I thought 'It's finally time to grow up; I need to get on with my life.' I was severely depressed - and I would not admit that to anyone. I was spending money like crazy like I should not have been. I knew it was time for me to go from being a child to a man. I decided I wanted to change my ways, cut out all my old friends, and in the meantime I was evicted. I had no place to live. I found my own place eventually, but there was drug use there, so I left and went to Argus and not long after that I was referred to the downstairs program."

One current tenant's parents asked him to leave because he could no longer follow their rules. He was not ready for living on his own, so he came to Argus. Another current tenant experienced poverty and other difficult circumstances growing up. He faces mental health concerns as well. He struggled with persistent homelessness, before finally finding an apartment. However, this period of stability was short lived, as his housing became unsafe, and he ended up homeless again. In his own words, "I was pretty much kicked down, I had to shelter hop again. I had no where left to stay. I went to Argus, and things have been a lot better since." This current tenant did not know about Five Beds until he moved into the male Argus shelter upstairs. He described the process for tenants to be selected for Five Beds:

> [Current tenant] "It is a selective process, there are certain requirements, we get a bit of a say in who comes down here. The staff will talk to us about who they want to come down. We can say whether we think the person is a good fit or not. It's all up to the executive director in the end. I have been happy with her decisions."

Staff members' perspectives on what causes young men to seek out Five Beds reflected the tenant and former tenant stories. Staff report that at any given time, 3 of the 5 tenants usually face mental health concerns, and at least one usually faces multiple challenges. There may be periods of housing stability, mixed with periods of housing instability for tenants prior to moving into Five Beds. Most tenants cannot return home for a variety of reasons.

There are different ways tenants could be referred to Argus; they can be referred by the guidance counselor at school, through probation, or through social services, F&CS, or counseling services. Some youth also hear about Argus through their friends or people whom they have stayed with. Thus, there is a mix of many different referral sources. Staff indicate that they have staff meetings wherein they discuss which of the Argus shelter clients would be appropriate for the Five Beds program. If there is a consensus, that individual will be approached and asked if he wants to go downstairs.

B) INTERNAL THEMES – STAFFS' IMPACTS ON TENANTS

i) Effective approach - Supportive and caring, while maintaining boundaries

Both former and current tenants gave consistently favourable reports regarding Five Bed staff's approach. The staffs' self-descriptions of their approach also spoke to overall success. I noted that the overall approach of Five Beds staff is one that blends a great deal of consistent caring and support with boundaries, and a sense of structure. Even if this exact description was not used, the interviews revealed that this approach was viewed as most effective by the majority of participants interviewed.

One staff member offers his perspective on the Five Beds approach:

[Staff member] "I grew up in a community where the belief was 'it takes a village to raise a child' and many people were involved in my upbringing. But more and more our society is so inward focused. We lose so much, we lose so many teachable moments, we lose the opportunity to grow together, to journey with one another. I believe with Five Beds to Home, it comes head long into this inward focused society that has been built. Five Beds fights against this inward society. Being at Five Beds is one of the greatest privileges that I get to be a part of. It is a blessing for me to be at Five Beds, and journey with the guys and spend as much time as I do with them."

Another staff member stresses that the relationship between staff and tenants is vital: "It is important to be progressive, and bring services based on best practice to your clients. But what

is key is the relationship you maintain with your clients and what they observe of you." This staff

member's perspective mirrors how the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) describes

youth engagement, as "a process that happens over time, is based on relationships, and works

best when tailored to the young people and their local context with whom you will work"

(OPHA, 2011a). This staff member also explains that when a youth first comes to Five Beds the

first step is to gather as much information as possible about him to better understand his unique

needs and assets. This staff member describes the Five Beds client-centered approach in greater

detail as follows:

> *[Staff member] "Whatever we can do towards ultimately working ourselves out of a job, we will do. We look beyond the individual and look at how the people in their life have an impact. What comes to mind, if someone is not accessing the service, maybe there is something wrong with the service. As opposed to trying to squeeze somebody in to doing things that other people have done. To engage the youth, we share our observations, we ask them what they need and sometimes there is also a component of marketing. Sometimes you have to help a young person see what is in their best interest by marketing it in such a way that they start to appreciate that it may be in their best interest. Five Beds is not like a car wash, where someone checks in and everything is solved when they check out. There is no way that change can happen overnight. We continue to work with them once they leave Five Beds. The door is never shut. Another really good indicator is this: it doesn't matter what any of us are doing, if a client comes to the door, everything is dropped and we respond to the client and whatever it is that person wants to share, whether it's a problem, or to share some good news. I think that's a very good example of client-centeredness because it is very much an ingrained practice."*

The perspectives of the former and current tenants also offer examples of the

effectiveness of the Five Beds staff approach. A current tenant shared what helped him to be

motivated and how staff have helped:

> *[Current tenant] "I can sit down with certain staff and be like, 'I have an interview with this place, what do I do?' So that I am not going in there and being like 'I have no idea what to expect.' They help you prepare."*

This current tenant admits that sometimes there is conflict in his relationship with staff, but he

acknowledges this as normal, stating that:

> *[Current tenant] "Some of the staff piss me off but that's natural, because you can't like everybody all the time. They are all really great. I don't even see the staff as workers anymore, they are family. I am pretty sure even if they did not get paid, most of them would still be here."*

Another current tenant shared his views on the staff, and his involvement in Five Beds as

follows:

> *[Current tenant] "I think the staff are supportive, they can answer any questions you have the best they can. If they can't, they will figure out answers. They keep you motivated, they are always very positive and have a smile on their face. It's hard not to be happy too, it rubs off on you. They are really good people and positive role models. I have had no problems with any of the staff during the time I've been in the shelter upstairs and no issues since I moved downstairs. They are doing their job really well."*

This current tenant also added that he "would jokingly call a staff 'mom'."

Another current tenant described the relationship he has with staff and what he dislikes

about a specific staff member's approach

> *[Current tenant] "For the most part, the staff are awesome. I have shelter, I have food, I have a nice place. I may complain about the rules, or not agree with them, but if you give me a decent reason for the rule, I will understand, I will be like 'that kind of makes sense.' Most of the rules are common sense. I don't really have any problems with staff. Maybe one or two of them are too over-bearing on stuff. One of the staff usually makes rules to suit them; they will make rules around what they like. If they don't like something, they won't allow it (including music, shows, etc). It doesn't bother me really."*

This current tenant recognizes that the rules a particular staff member makes reflect their own

personal beliefs and are not objective rules. However, he said it was not a major concern and

describes the other rules of Five Beds as understandable, as long as there is a good reason for

them. This current tenant's comments regarding the staff speak to the need for staff to ensure

partiality and objectivity when creating and enforcing rules.

A former tenant noted that "I am good friends with a former staff - he is being a big help.

I was cooped up in this house all day after I moved out and they are helping me in being more

productive with my activities." This former tenant added that "They helped me find my own

apartment, and they helped me access emergency care when I needed it." Five Beds met a variety

of needs for this tenant and continued to do so after he moved out. Another former tenant

describes how the Five Beds approach helped him as follows:

> *[Former tenant] "Five Beds helped because they give you motivation, pushed you to do this, and do the paper work and other things you needed to do. They also give you the sense of independence, that you could do it on your own too. The staff were looking out for my best interest. The staff are guiding you as opposed to saying 'you have to do this, you have to do that.' They still did have to set rules and place some authority. The most important thing that being at Five Beds did for me was give me my independence back. It took me from a bad place in my life to a good place. Motivating me, asking me what my goals are, where do I want to be, that really helped me. It was a great experience living there."*

This former tenant's comments speak to the effectiveness of the staff approach (caring and

motivating), which made a big difference in his life.

Another current tenant captures the theme of the other comments, indicating that the best

approach is one that mixes caring and support with boundaries and structure. He also comments

on what helps make him feel involved, noting that he wishes there were more opportunities for

physical activity at Five Beds:

> *[Current tenant] "I love certain staff members, and can't stand others. I get along with one staff like we are two peas in a pod. It's been like that since day one. I love this particular staff member; they bring a sense of structure. When they are here, stuff gets done. There is no way around it. On the weekends, I get along with all the staff. I enjoy and get along well with staff who can maintain order and enforce structure. One staff member wants to do the same things we do, but it's kind of unprofessional. Another staff is really amazing. Another former staff was also amazing, they treated us right. My first time here, another staff ran the downstairs and they always had us doing something different every night. They got us a football and a soccer ball. We'd play with those for a couple hours and then come home. They got us active which was awesome. A lot of us enjoyed that time and we'd take a group of the upstairs boys with us on these outings. It was good to get out and get active. I love doing physical activity including sports. That staff no longer works for Argus. Now a lot of staff are not able to do that with us now. One staffer currently just plays video games and does not do athletic activities with us. Other staff aren't really able to be physical and active."*

This current tenant noted that it is important for him to be physically active. Although

there are currently no staff who can help him meet this need, he said that some of the staff at

Five Beds had helped him pursue physical activity in the past. It should be mentioned that this

current tenant does have access to a free YMCA pass as part of his tenancy at Five Beds. Additionally, the turnover rate of staff that this current tenant has experienced has been fairly high, and as a result he has not had staff that can provide consistently for his needs (such as his need for physical activity).

Five Beds management reports that the program currently has a fairly stable staff team. However, high turnover rates are something that has been an issue. A former tenant mentioned that a staff member he had became quite close to resigned and he lost touch with them. For this former tenant, this was the equivalent of losing a parental figure, as he shared that he thought of them as a parent. The nature of the staff work at Five Beds is very demanding, emotionally as well as physically, and the pay, which is quite low for most staff, does not recognize the amount of effort the job demands and may not encourage staff retention. Pay is an admittedly challenging area to address as increases in funding which could lead to higher staff wages are difficult to achieve especially during a time of government cut backs.

High staff turnover potentially has a direct negative outcome on the youth, as having inconsistent care givers can contribute to or create a sense of instability, which is something that one current tenant noted in his interview. For him, this instability manifested in having to learn and negotiate what each staff member expected and the different rules that different staff members enforce, and alter his behaviour accordingly. In essence, he felt as if he was "on his toes" and in some ways, "walking on eggshells" with regards to staff. Although overwhelmingly, Five Beds includes a consistent and supportive staff approach, as was evidenced in some of the tenant interviews, it is still an area that requires improvement.

ii) *Contributing to sense of stigma*

Although this study found that on the whole, Five Beds staff create an atmosphere where the youth feel valued and recognized, a few interviews with current tenants revealed they have internalized to a certain degree the societal stigma around youth experiencing homelessness. Sometimes they do not feel listened to. Staff are by no means the main cause of youth not feeling listened to; youth experiencing homelessness face stigma, and discrimination from peers at school, the media and many other sources, quite possibly on a daily basis. However, I will examine what a few of the tenants reported in relation to their perceptions of how staff treat them.

A few of the current tenants expressed not wanting to be viewed as greedy and therefore wanted to avoid any criticism of Five Beds. For example when asked if he had any suggestions to improve Five Beds, one current tenant stated the following "I don't want to ask for anything. I don't want them to think I am greedy." When asked if he feels like staff listen, this current tenant replied by saying "I would not say 100% of the staff listen to me, but maybe 70% of the staff listen to me. It's not their fault if they aren't listening, we are homeless people. So I don't have a problem if they don't always listen." This statement reveals that this current tenant has devalued his opinion. He may believe to a certain degree that because he has experienced homelessness, he may not entirely deserve to have a voice.

Another current tenant in some ways echoes what the previously quoted current tenant reported, stating that "The staff overall, listen to you, but once in a while, they don't listen. Sometimes I feel that things I say aren't taken the way they should. It doesn't bother me that much." This is troubling, but likely not the intent of Five Beds' staff. Another current tenant said that "We know what we have both upstairs and downstairs at Argus is a gift. We could be sleeping outside. A lot of kids would love to be here, that aren't here. We are very thankful for

what we have." Other tenants have also expressed similar views. Although it is positive that tenants appreciate the support available at Five Beds, it is also important that they are not wary of expressing dissatisfaction with services. When tenants feel safe to recommend changes, areas for improvement can be identified at Five Beds.

It should also be noted that another current tenant said he feels that Five Beds needs more staff because the staff "want to have those important conversations with us, they just don't have time." He indicated that he knows Five Beds staff are caring and attentive but sometime they are too busy because there is so much to do and not enough staff. He said that is why sometimes they are not able to speak with or spend time with the tenants to the extent they would like. He recommended hiring additional Five Beds staff. Also, certain tenants of Five Beds may require more support than others. These factors mean that sometimes staff may be busy with other priorities, and they are not necessarily not listening or do not want to listen to Five Beds tenants.

iii) Keeping in touch after moving out

Another theme that emerged from a fair number of the interviews with staff and former tenants was that former tenants tend to keep in touch with Five Beds staff after they leave. One former tenant for example shared that "With the staff I still keep in contact by volunteering at Argus for a couple hours on the weekend. I want to keep in touch with the staff. I don't think of them as staff, they are almost a big brother or big sister." One staff explained that "They keep in touch because they want to share their news with us, or if they are experiencing a crisis." This staff also commented that "Some young people are eager to come back and contact us 2 or 3 years later to report back what they've accomplished – it's very much what they associate with

the environment here." The staff member added that "They know they will get positive feedback and feel like the staff are proud of them for their accomplishments."

Another staff member mentioned that he knew a "former tenant who wanted to let the staff know he had made it as they had helped him the most. This tenant wanted the staff to give him their acceptance and be proud of him." Another staff member reported that "Five Beds is the first place they call to celebrate a new job or a new baby. They want to share their success with us. The former tenants feel that the staff will be proud of them." Another staff member commented that "what we have seen lately is that people who have left the program, are contacting us in times of crisis. They view us as a safe place to call."

C) INTERNAL THEMES – BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF THE PROGRAM'S STRUCTURE

i) Sense of "home"

A theme that emerged in most of the participant interviews was that Five Beds feels like "home" and the tenants, by and large, trust each other. A current tenant shares how this feeling manifests for him:

> [Current tenant] "I have my laptop in my room. I trust everyone down here not to take it. I get along with everyone pretty good. Every so often we are at each other's throats, so we ignore each other for a few days – this is normal. Then a few days later we are getting along, and at the smoke pit people apologize. We talk about personal stuff there as it is more private. Five Beds feels more like home than any other place I've ever lived at. It just is. It's where I feel safest; it's where I feel happiest."

Another current tenant shared that the commonality of the experiences of Five Bed's tenants leads him to trust them. He said that "I definitely trust the other tenants, and I don't lock my door. I trust them because I know they are in the same position as me. I've talked with all of

them and I know how respectful they are and I know they would not do anything." He also added

that "Five Beds definitely feels like home." He explains why as follows:

> *[Current tenant] "It gives you the meal structure, I have my own room, my own bed, and my own items. If I want, I can lock my room. This gives it a sense of home. Also, everyone else here they are kind of like siblings in a sense. You spend a lot of time together daily and we all interact together. Eating meals together, and all of us doing chores together, also help create the sense of family."*

Another current tenant echoes the previous comments in terms of why he trusts the other

residents, describing the atmosphere downstairs as a "community." He states Five Beds is a

"community, we all get along, we all kind of trust each other, we don't lock our doors. Not sure

why we all trust each other but we just do. We know each other; we know who lives down here."

This current tenant is somewhat ambiguous about whether Five Beds feels like home, due to his

previous life experiences. He said "It does and it doesn't [feel like home]." He elaborates, saying

that "After being kicked out of my home, no place is really going to feel like home anymore,

until I have my own apartment again." However, he adds that "At the same time, there is kind of

a sense of home living downstairs. My room definitely feels like my space."

Another current tenant has comments similar to those of the previously quoted current

tenant, saying that "It feels like home in our rooms, we can decorate them as we want, and we

can have all our own stuff. It feels like my own room." He adds that "I get along with the other

Five Beds tenants as brothers; we get along really, really well." For this current tenant the close

relationships he has formed at Five Beds are significant. He spent most of his childhood in care

and was not often in one place for very long. He is an example of a youth who experienced

"drifting" from one home to another, which is described by Penzerro (2003). Youth who

experience such "drifting" can develop a "general disaffiliation from the institution of family"

and may "identify with the lifestyle of drifting" (Penzerro, 2003, p. 230). It is significant that this

current tenant was still able to develop a sense of home and family at Five Beds despite

experiences that were likely to lead him to feel a disassociation with any sense of family.

A former tenant described how Five Beds felt kind of like home, as follows:

[Former tenant] "Most of the time Five Beds felt like home. It felt like home because I at least knew I had somewhere to go to sleep at night. The people and the staff made it kind of feel like home too. They did not feel like family; that is too strong of a word to describe them. They tried to make it like family, but it won't ever be. I trusted the other guys down there and got along with them. I was not there a lot, I was always job searching and apartment searching, but nothing was stolen of mine. I could trust them with all my stuff in my room. If I get married someday I would probably share that with the staff. I think they would be shocked to hear the news and it would freak the hell out of them so I would want to see their reactions. I think they would be proud of me too."

Another former tenant stated that when it comes to what home feels like to him, he

"doesn't really know" because he "constantly moved throughout" his life. He added that "I

would still say it was like a home at Five Beds. I like it a lot. Compared to my Mom's anyways."

When asked if he trusted the other residents, this former tenant replied as follows:

[Former tenant] "Did I trust people? Yes and no. I guess because people were constantly moving in and out and different people had their different styles of doing things. Some of them I didn't like too much, some of them I did. Some of them I was good friends with. I also kept in touch with one resident on and off but he keeps moving and he doesn't have internet and is going from place to place so it's hard to keep in touch with him."

Another former tenant explained why Five Beds felt like home to him as follows

[Former tenant] "I quite enjoyed it downstairs, more quiet time, it feels more like an actual home. When you are downstairs it feels more like an actual home because you have more things you can do in your room. Being allowed to decorate your room, bringing in your own TV, watching movies and stuff like that, and it's a lot cleaner. I liked the fact that it was separate from the upstairs, we had our own living space, and there were less people. It felt more like a family than like a whole bunch of guys living together."

A staff member describes the bond he has observed between the Five Beds tenants:

[Staff member] "The tenants of the program trust each other and leave their doors open. In Five Beds, they are tenants. The relationships between members in the program, with

the support and trust, are so strong. The tenants believe in each other and have confidence in each other."

All but one staff described perceiving that Five Beds feels like home to tenants.

The external and internal layout and design of Five Beds is another possible reason why it may feel like home to the tenants. From the outside, the facility looks like a well-kept and modern family home. The entire building – the Argus shelter upstairs and Five Beds downstairs – are clean, tidy, and include "homey" décor and design. The stereotypes that one may hold of what a "shelter" looks like are completely dispelled when one walks in the doors of Argus and Five Beds. During my tour of the facility, I noted that there are decorative wall-hanging quotes on the walls, some of which are inspirational and others which reference family and home. There are also colourful paintings, bright colours, comfortable furnishings, wide-screen TVs (one in the upstairs shelter common area and one in the Five Beds common area), DVD players (again, one in each common area), a communal computer, communal dining areas, and other features that may add to the sense of home. These factors are in place to enhance feelings of safety and communicate human respect (E. Vlasov, personal communication, Feb 22nd, 2013). In the interviews, the youth did reference being able to decorate their own room as important in creating a sense of home and their "own space."

However, a couple tenants noted they "didn't really know" if it was like home and they also cited that people constantly move in and out (of the upstairs shelter). Something that emerged from the interviews is that the presence of the upstairs shelter takes away from the sense of home felt by Five Beds tenants, because of the general inconsistency and instability of the shelter residents. As well, some tenants noted that not having to make their own meals was a positive and made Five Beds "better than home", as they did not have to do this labour. Others said they wish they had to make and/or were taught how to make their own meals as this would

teach them a life skill. Once tenants leave Five Beds and are possibly living independently, they will need to know how to make their own meals. Most likely their meals will not be prepared for them. Thus, it seems important that Five Beds implement a better program for teaching Five Beds tenants how to cook and make their own meals as this is a vital life skill for independent living and is something the program seems to currently lack to a certain degree.

ii) The need for an autonomous facility

Several participants suggested that Five Beds would operate more effectively were it not located in the basement of the male Argus shelter. One current tenant for example, noted that:

> *[Current tenant] "It feels kind of like a hotel with the relationships, because all the time different people come. Different residents in and out, one day they come, one day they don't; that is why it reminds me of a hotel or a vacation. You see a lot of different people."*

Similar to this current tenant's comments, another current tenant noted that "upstairs feels kind of like a hospital." A former tenant recalled that "it [Five Beds] definitely did feel more homey then being in the upstairs shelter. It was nice not to have to deal with the upstairs people as they were less mature then the downstairs people." It could be assumed that residents of the shelter may be in more of a state of crisis or uncertainty or at a different life stage than the downstairs tenants, and this could result in behaviour that may be perceived as "immature" by the tenants downstairs.

A staff member noted that there is jealously from the upstairs residents towards the downstairs tenants because of "the other privileges they [Five Beds tenants] have." Another staff member stated that "The whole building should be a shelter; it should all be one program." This staff member cited the differences in the programs, and how downstairs tenants have more

freedom and fewer responsibilities, which results in some of them "doing nothing." Overall, the findings suggest that Five Beds would function best were it an autonomous facility and not located in the basement of the Argus shelter.

iii) Relief

A reoccurring theme in most of the participant interviews was tenants' sense of relief when knowing they could move into Five Beds, due to having more time to rest and get one's life in order. A former tenant explains:

> *[Former tenant] "Living downstairs you have a year. So you have more time to figure out what you want to do. It affected me in a good way. It gave me more time to figure out what I wanted to do. Until I got a job, I spent the time I was down here job hunting and apartment hunting like crazy. A couple months after moving downstairs I found a job."*

Another former tenant cited a sense of relief, explaining that when he moved downstairs, he felt "A little bit more relief for being allowed to stay longer." He continued, saying "It was actually a really big step for me; it helped me by allowing me to finish my school and everything. It allows me longer time to look for permanent housing." Likewise, another former tenant described how moving downstairs made him feel as follows:

> *[Former tenant] "It was almost a sense of relief. Downstairs it feels more like a family. Downstairs they have that homey feeling with their common room, and it seems like the guys mesh together much better. It gives you that sense of that independence and sense of responsibility of almost having your own place and where you have to sign your tenant agreement and keep your room a certain way. It is that half step to being out on your own and still living there."*

Another former tenant also referenced a sense of relief, stating that he "was relieved to move downstairs. There is a lot more freedom. I felt better emotionally; there were a lot more programs and help." A current tenant also used the word "relief" when describing his feelings about

moving downstairs: "It was a bit of a relief. I knew I was going to be in a more permanent position and be able to do what I want to do in my life."

It is interesting to note that "relief" was also an emotion reported by residents of supported housing interviewed for a study by Kirsh et al (2011). While the study did not focus on supportive housing, the sense of relief reported by residents was similar to that discussed by Five Beds tenants in this study. Kirsh et al (2011) found that supported housing can be a foundation for recovery, as "residents described the relief they experienced in having a place of their own. Many felt that their stress levels were reduced because they had private space to unwind and reflect at the end of the day" (Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 21). For example, one resident interviewed for the study echoed the comments of Five Beds tenants when he stated:

> "When I go back now to my own unit, I'm able to assess and process what took place that day, and what should be happening next. So that gives me my own space to do that. I think that would be the key component of having my own space" (Kirsh et al, 2011, p. 21).

iv) Five Beds as a turning point of positive transformation

A reoccurring theme of the participant interviews was that Five Beds served as a turning point of positive transformation in the lives of current and past tenants. Living at Five Beds is viewed as the period of time in their lives that helped change tenants' for the better, as illustrated in the words of a current tenant:

> [Current tenant] "Before coming here, I thought this would be the worst thing that ever happened to me. It was really the best. I've never been social, especially around guys, because I've never had trust for them. I don't think I ever had a real friend until grade 10. But I came here, and it's just like no matter which set of guys is here, I don't think there has been a single person who has lived here while I've lived here that I haven't been friends with. My friends from years back, would be shocked that I am making friends so easily now. Being here has helped me be more easy-going, more social. I used to be really socially awkward because I have a bit of a stutter and I speak too fast. So I shut down, but I've gotten help with that now and that's helped a lot. I've known one

tenant here for a year and a half and he's like my best friend. Being here has helped me communicate better – I can actually talk to people, I don't hide away. They've done more for me in the two years I've been here than all of my family combined has done for me in my entire life."

The progress of this current tenant captures a tenet of Hilfinger et al's (2006) Critical Youth Empowerment (CYE) theory which describes that the outcomes for CYE include inter-personal outcomes which "include opportunities for adults and youth to spend time together, recognize each other's strengths and assets, and value partnership and collaboration, thereby bridging existing divides and further integrating young people into larger social worlds" (Chinman & Linney, 1998; Kim et al., 1998 in Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 51). Being at Five Beds facilitated the previously quoted current tenant expanding and integrating into "larger social worlds." Another current tenant remarked that Five Beds is "a great program, it's a very positive thing in my life. I was super happy to get down here." A former tenant echoed these thoughts, stating that:

> *[Former tenant] "Overall, being at Five Beds has impacted me greatly. It has made me a better person, it has made me the person who I was years ago – motivated, out on my own, independent, and a productive member of society. I definitely credit them and Argus greatly with helping me."*

Staff comments also indicate that they have witnessed tenants turning a corner in their lives for the better, such as dealing with long-term traumas through entering into counseling, or finishing high school while at Five Beds, and continuing with positive changes from that point.

It is important to note that for one current tenant, Five Beds was not entirely a point of positive transformation. Indeed, this youth reported that he stopped going to school because of going into Five Beds. This particular youth, who was an Honours student before dropping out of school, reported that he needed school attendance to be mandatory in order for him to go and because it was not mandatory at Five Beds, he ceased attending. He shared that he benefits from more structure, and Five Beds has less structure then the upstairs Argus shelter program.

D) *EXTERNAL THEMES – IMPROVED HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION*

Most of the former tenants interviewed have secured and maintained education and/or employment and stable housing. Similarly, most of the current tenants interviewed have also reached or are working towards goals relating to education and/or employment. Statistics were complied by Five Beds staff and made available to me regarding how many tenants and former tenants have reached or continued towards goals pertaining to housing, education, and employment. Staff report that out of the 12 youth that have been through Five Beds since it opened in 2010, 8 have stabilized and/or improved. A staff member explained the progress of the various youth:

> *[Staff member] "We have witnessed individuals moving from no employment to employment. We have witnessed youth moving from no schooling to schooling. We have also seen them move from no therapeutic intervention to therapeutic intervention through family counseling or another program. It depends on the individual. One young man was prepared for parenthood through Five Beds. Another young man could not get employment, and he started in the shelter upstairs. He now has a regular job. Another youth is in school all the time, and is stabilized. Another youth I am not sure if there has been improvement. Another youth, I don't think enough time has gone by. He is now in school which is great. Another former youth has stabilized but not overcome their challenges. Another former tenant has stabilized and is trying to overcome generational poverty. Two other former tenants also stabilized."*

Another staff member stated that "Honestly, the ones that have the least contributing issues are the ones that do the best. Ones that have experienced family breakdown but want to do well in school do very well here [at Five Beds]."

Former Tenants' Housing Status

All four of the former tenants interviewed have found stable housing since leaving Five Beds. The tenants were asked if Five Beds has helped them with their long term housing goals. When asked this question, one former tenant said:

> *[Former tenant] "Before I came to Argus, I was staying at parents, and staying at friends, going back and forth. I came to Argus instead of going to a friend's house because I had nowhere else to go at the time. I moved out of Five Beds because I got a job and ended up finding an apartment. My living arrangements since moving out of Five Beds have been quiet and awesome. I am living in a two bedroom apartment since I moved out of Five Beds, and my housemate is a cat. I've continued to work full time. Five Beds has given me more stability, and gave me a roof over my head so I could focus on getting a place of my own and more time to get that place. I didn't have to freak out about doing it all right there and then. I didn't feel rushed."*

When asked if Five Beds has helped with his long term housing goals, another former tenant stated the following:

> *[Former tenant] "Being at Five Beds has helped with my long term housing goals. They have taught me that I have to get back in there with signing the year contract, you can't go from place to place, it's not good for your health, and you need a stable living environment. They have taught me daily living skills – making your bed, washing your dishes, rinsing them, taking out the garbage, just things of that nature. They've helped prepare me for living on my own."*

Former Tenants' Employment & Education Status

Three out of four of the former tenants interviewed reported finding employment and/or continuing with or finishing their education while at Five Beds and maintaining employment and/or education after they left. For example, one former tenant said that living downstairs, "helped me by giving me a bit more time to look for jobs and an apartment." This former tenant ended up finding both a job and an apartment while at Five Beds, and this allowed him to move out. Another former tenant described his education and employment when he came to Five Beds and changes that occurred while he was there:

> *[Former tenant] "When I first went to Five Beds, I had my grade 12, and was unemployed, but while being down there I found employment. I then found another job after that that led me to leaving Five Beds."*

Another former tenant stated that although he got a job on his own, he still felt Five Beds helped him:

> *[Former tenant] "When I first started at Five Beds, I was not working. I then got a job. They tried helping me get a job but I ended up getting this one on my own. I was still in school when I lived at Five Beds. I maintained my schooling while in Five Beds. I recently finished school. Five Beds helped with job training and job searching. When I moved here, certain people were not as motivated as me, so they [staff] would help them. I was always pretty motivated so I didn't need as much help as a lot of others. I feel more prepared in some ways for work because of Five Beds, helping, you know, how to job search. They sent us down to the career centre and they helped us with our resume."*

Current Tenants' Employment & Education Status

The current tenants interviewed have either obtained employment, and continued or finished school while at Five Beds. One current tenant reported that his language skills have improved since being at Five Beds, and he has continued his schooling. Another current tenant shared that Five Beds has helped with his education and employment goals. He states the following:

> *[Current tenant] "My resume is no longer a bunch of crap. It was horrible. It looks a lot better. They've made it easier to make sure I get out and am going and finding jobs and not just walking everywhere, they give me bus tickets for interviews which is actually a lot bigger help then most people realize because they kind of take it for granted. They helped me to get my GED done. If I needed help with anything, they would help me. They have also been helping me a lot with information on college. Going to college is in my future."*

Another current tenant shared how Five Beds has helped with his education status, and remarks on how the program helps with employment:

> *[Current tenant] "They helped me get my ID and I also participated in SEESAW [employment program]. They helped me back on my feet, with new clothes and more. They provide a computer so I can look for jobs, and they have helped rewrite my resume. They will help out with bus tickets. I am not looking for employment currently but they*

have helped my peers a great deal with their resume, bus tickets, and more. Five Beds has helped me get my high school diploma, helped me do course upgrading, and will help me choose a college. They helped me get my community hours by doing stuff around the house."

Although most of the tenants and former tenants of Five Beds reported continuing or reaching their educational and/or employment pursuits, one current tenant reported that since moving downstairs he actually stopped going to school because staff could no longer enforce his attendance (which they can in the upstairs shelter). He reported that he needed to feel it was mandatory in order to go to school (see the internal themes – structure of program section for more).

E) EXTERNAL THEMES – IMPROVEMENTS IN HAPPINESS & HEALTH

All but one of the former and current tenants reported that their levels of happiness and health improved (one current tenant said his health and happiness stayed the same). A Five Beds staff member described some of the improvements pertaining to health that they have witnessed. They also describe how improvement is not always the result of a linear process, and that stabilization is significant for many youth experiencing homelessness:

> *[Staff member] "Solely based on our observations (of myself and my colleagues) and based on feedback from youth that have accessed the program, it's been indicated to us that there has been an improvement in individuals' sense of safety, increase in sense of community belonging, an increased opportunity to rest, and an increased opportunity to focus on health, both physical and mental health. One current tenant, for example, has pursued his physical health, going to the Y regularly using the free pass he is able to access through being at Five Beds. One former tenant was involved in gang-related activities and left that gang-related activity while with us. He was ready for that change. If we see youth returning to our shelters again and again, we look for signs of improvement in whether their shelter stays are shorter, and if they have tried to overcome their challenges. A person experiencing addiction, that links to their experience of persistent homelessness. Has that person used less? Have their shelter stays been shorter? Have they returned to a stable environment after staying at the shelter? So has that person improved somewhat? Yes, as they have developed some stabilization. In this line of work, A+B does not always equal C. It is difficult because our job is outcome based; we are focused on outcomes and making people better."*

Current Tenants' Happiness & Health

A current tenant shared that "My level of happiness is the same although sometimes I miss my family but I try to realize that is just life. Being here has helped me to maintain my physical health, as I am still going to the Y and staying active." The Y pass he has accessed through Five Beds has allowed this current tenant to maintain his physical health. Another current tenant feels that Five Beds spared him from ending his own life. He shares how being at Five Beds has impacted his mental health, and he credits the approach of the staff as described below:

> *[Current tenant] "Before I came here, I was ready to kill myself and now I have a good time every day. They have helped a fair bit with my happiness for sure. I went from everything hitting me like a ton of bricks, to now if something bad happens, I am like 'whatever, life is still good.' The staff treat me like I am human, not just like something that has no place to stay."*

Another current tenant talks about his experiences growing up and how that contrasts with his experiences at Five Beds. His health and happiness has improved since coming to Five Beds, as he explains:

> *[Current tenant] "Being here has impacted my happiness in a good way, I feel better about myself, and my accomplishments. I am in a really good, positive space, people are nice, I am enjoying the city, and I kind of thrive here. I grew up with a bad scene – a poor family, and we didn't have much. I hung out in the streets downtown, in grimy areas, and I saw a lot of things you wouldn't really want to see. I saw people picking through trash cans, all kinds of drugs, and random fights. Rough people. I grew up in some pretty rough neighbourhoods. If you even looked at them the wrong way, they would try to punch you. I feel a lot happier now, more capable now, a lot more empowered now to be able to do what I want to do. And actually do it. People always used to make fun of me, and say things to me like 'you will never be nothing, you will be a loser.' I started thinking that way. 'Stay on OW, who cares,' I thought. So being here has helped me through the positivity from the staff, a new place, different people, and different environments from what I have been used to, what I grew up with. Being at Five Beds has been good for my health. My mental health is getting better; I used to be depressed. I have two different mental health conditions. I have improved my eating habits – I eat so much better now. I used to only eat once a day."*

Another current tenant talked about how being at Argus and Five Beds has helped to rebuild his family relationships, as well as his personal health and happiness. Another current tenant describes how being at Five Beds has boosted his self-esteem:

> *[Current tenant] "I feel a lot better about myself. Living down here, it does not feel like I am homeless. Downstairs here it feels like I am living with a bunch of friends. It's like a huge self-esteem booster. It has boosted my self esteem as I am not in and out down here. Down here it's like we like each other, we have fun, it's different."*

Former Tenants' Happiness & Health

A former tenant described how moving downstairs affected his mental health and happiness as follows

> *[Former tenant] "I was a lot calmer here, I was able to express my feelings. Once I moved in to Five Beds my mental health was better – It was easier to cope because of friendly staff; with the one staff I could sit down with her after dinner and we would just talk while she did her work and it was interesting and she would tell me stories and help me out with certain things. She was like a second Mom. The staff treated me with a lot of respect. I had a lot more freedom which helped."*

Another former tenant shared how Five Beds impacted his health and happiness:

> *[Former tenant] "As time went on, I felt happier. I felt more at peace. I noticed that my depression started to lift while I was there because I had that feeling of a family again; it was something I was missing. I needed that at that time in my life. I took advantage of the Y passes that we got at Argus and went to the gym whenever I got the chance. I definitely improved my physical health. My determination to keep going, get a job, go to school, set personal goals, lose weight, etc; those were positive changes in my outlook."*

Another former tenant also shared how being at Five Beds has impacted his health and happiness as follows:

> *[Former tenant] "There was a lot of change in my happiness. Upstairs there was a lot more people and it is crowded, when you get downstairs you notice the freedom. There is more space, more time to think for yourself. I felt happier after moving downstairs. In my mental health, I started having anxiety attacks about a year into my stay downstairs, and*

> *while I was upstairs I didn't have them. I wasn't sure why I was getting the attacks, as I didn't have those upstairs. I did make friends with many people downstairs; they were cool people and if you wanted to hang out they were always close by."*

It is interesting to note that this former tenant started having panic attacks about a year after moving to Five Beds. Part of this may have been because the usual length of stay at Five Beds is one year; therefore, this former tenant may have sub-consciously been experiencing stress due to knowing he may soon have had to move out of Five Beds, and this stress manifested itself in his panic attacks.

The comments of the Five Beds tenants regarding their increased happiness are similar to those made by residents of a supported housing facility who were interviewed for a study by Kirsh et al (2011). Although residents in the study reside in their own apartment and not in a congregate setting like that of Five Beds, the feelings invoked by the living environment are similar to those expressed by the Five Beds tenants. For example, one resident interviewed for that study stated the following regarding having his own apartment:

> *"It's allowed me to stop worrying about those things that were holding me back. When I was in the rooming houses, I wasn't able to even think about the things that I'm doing now … because I was so suppressed with all this negative energy and these negative things going on around me. I just felt hopeless and trapped. But due to my housing situation being changed, and I have a beautiful home and I'm happy there, now I'm learning to be happy with me…. I have a good life, things are going good, I'm going to go out today and I'm going to be a nice person, and I'm going to have a good day. And … I'm going to help somebody if I can, and I'm going to make somebody smile, stuff like that … I can focus on more positive things now"(Kirsh et al, 2011, pp. 21-22).*

F) EXTERNAL THEME - WHAT LED TENANTS TO LEAVE FIVE BEDS

For most of the former tenants interviewed, their tenancies at Five Beds came to an end because they had found work and/or an apartment, or were able to move in with family or friends. In each case, the tenants had reached a time of stability and preparedness for leaving

Five Beds. No one reported just leaving Five Beds abruptly without a plan in place. Every former

tenant interviewed spoke of having a concrete plan and being ready to move out, with assistance

from Five Beds staff. For example, one former tenant found a job and an apartment and moved

out. Another former tenant says when the time came for him to leave Five Beds, "I left because I

had enough money to move out and everything was going pretty good." Another former tenant

shares that he was able to stay in Five Beds although he was slightly over the age limit. He

explains the circumstances: "I was a bit too old to be at Five Beds but the staff let me stay a bit

longer; it was extended for me so I could get situated. They made sure I had something set up

before I left."

H) *EXTERNAL THEMES – POSITIVE LONG TERM IMPACTS ON FORMER TENANTS*

Part of the purpose of this study was to determine what the long term impacts of residing

at Five Beds have been on former tenants. It is acknowledged that knowing true "long term"

results is somewhat difficult at this stage as Five Beds has only been in operation since 2010.

However, it is still possible to come to some conclusions about how Five Beds is possibly

impacting tenants in the long term. Most of the former tenants have gone on to independent

living and employment. A staff member noted that "There have been a lot of the youth who have

lived downstairs that have moved on to independent living or back in with their parents and we

heard that they are doing well." This staff also noted that former tenants of Five Beds who

experience mental health concerns tend to keep in touch with Five Beds after they move out for

support. This staff member explains this as follows

> *[Staff member] "A lot of the former tenants with mental health concerns keep in touch
> with us more so than other tenants as there are not a lot of supports out there for youth
> with mental health concerns. We found out a lot when we were trying to find resources
> for clients with mental health issues in Five Beds. There is a not a lot of assisted living,
> home visits for youth with mental health concerns out there. There is a gap there."*

For former tenants with mental health concerns, being at Five Beds was even more important because of the support they continued to receive even after moving out.

Another staff member noted that "a lot of the guys when they move out, they have come a long way from where they've been. The youth have found jobs, etc." Indeed, three out of four of the former tenants interviewed for this study spoke of making progress or achieving a goal. These goals were mostly employment and education related. As well, three out of four of the former tenants interviewed made progress on or overcame a challenge. All of the former tenants interviewed shared that being at Five Beds gave them immediate housing stability and also helped better prepare them for long-term housing stability. One former tenant indicated his health and happiness stayed the same after moving into Five Beds, but all other former tenants indicted positive changes in health and happiness.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION - THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section will discuss the research questions which were explored through the research.

Research Question #1: What are the impacts of Supportive Housing (Five Beds) on the lives of male youth? (current tenants)

Table 4. The Impacts of Supportive Housing (Five Beds) on the Lives of Male Youth

Impact	# of current tenants interviewed who report experiencing impact
Progress/achievement on personal goals, overcoming challenges	4/5 (80%)
Stable housing	5/5 (100%)
Improvements in happiness and/or health	4/5 (80%)

As noted, 4 out of 5 current tenants interviewed for this research made progress on or achieved goals, and/or overcame challenges and reported improvements in levels of happiness and/or health. As well, 5 out of 5 tenants reported having stable housing, due to residing in Five Beds.

Research Question #2: What have been the long term impacts on the youth? (former tenants)

Table 5. The Long Term Impacts on the Youth

Impact	# of former tenants interviewed who report experiencing impact
Progress/achievement on personal goals, overcoming challenges	3/4 (75%)
Stable housing	4/4 (100%)
Improvement in happiness and/or health	3/4 (75%)

As indicated, 3 out of 4 former tenants interviewed reported progress on or achievement of goals and/or overcoming of challenges and improvement in their levels of happiness and/or health while at Five Beds. As well, 4 out of 4 former tenants reported residing in stable housing at the time of their interview.

Discussion of Research Questions #1 & #2

The results from this study support findings from previous research, which shows that there is a link between supportive housing and better health for homeless youth (Campbell et al., 2008; Hopkins et al, 2005). In addition, Pearrow (2008) found that

> *"The range of benefits and outcomes for individuals and communities that become empowered include enhanced self-awareness and social achievement (Altman et al., 1998); improved mental health and academic performance (Bemak et al., 2005; Lerner & Thompson, 2002); reduced rates of delinquency, substance abuse, and school dropout" (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998) (Pearrow, 2008, p. 510).*

The findings from this study seem to substantiate Pearrow's findings, at least in part. Most tenants reported feeling "listened to," feeling as if they were a part of a "community" and having "more confidence" in their abilities to do what they want to do. Some tenants outright stated that being at Five Beds has improved their mental and physical health significantly. Tenants' reported feeling calmer and less angry, eating better, doing better academically, and/or gaining employment. It can be argued that a sense of engagement in their living environment, as well as feelings of empowerment created therein, helped the Five Beds current and past tenants improve their happiness and health, pursue goals and overcome challenges and generally feel better about themselves, which mirrors to some degree, the findings of Pearrow's (2008) research. Overall, for people of all ages and backgrounds, including youth, affordable, supportive housing leads to stability and an enhanced quality of life (Choca, 2004, p. 491; Hannigan et al, 2003, p. iii; Campbell et al., 2008, p. 1091; Hopkins et al, 2005, p.9).

Research Question #3: Are the current tenants engaged in Five Beds? Why? Why not?

The interviews reveal that most tenants seem to be involved and engaged in Five Beds. For the purposes of this study, I have defined what constitute indicators of engagement, although the list is certainly not exhaustive. For each tenant there may be unique indicators. Indicators of engagement include the following areas: a positive bond or relationship with staff, progressing towards or achieving personal goals or overcoming challenges, experiencing improvements in health and happiness, feeling positively about moving downstairs, feeling involved in what happens at Five Beds, experiencing Five Beds as being "like home" and maintaining stable housing. Looking at all tenants overall, Five Beds staff report that of the 12 tenants who have been through the program as of October 2012 (including those interviewed for this study), 8 have made progress or achieved goals and/or overcame challenges (66%). These goals and/or

challenges related to employment, education, mental health concerns, substance abuse,

relationships and other areas. Stabilization was also viewed as progress by staff. I am in

agreement with the Five Beds staff that stabilization can be viewed as a sign of progress. In my

work in the social work field, I have observed individuals who began the process of improving

through first stabilizing (S. Ogden, personal communication, May 5th, 2012).

I have created a diagram, figure 2, which shows what different factors lead to

involvement and engagement of tenants at Five Beds. The research findings indicate that there

are relationships between the elements listed in figure 2. My research suggests that generally,

maintaining stable housing is the first aspect that tenants experience, which leads to feeling

positively about moving downstairs. This in turn, leads to a positive bond with staff, and this

leads to tenants' feeling involved in what happens at Five Beds. This can lead to tenants' feeling

like Five Beds is like home, which is a precursor to progress on or achievement of personal goals

and overcoming of challenges, which can bring about improvements in health and happiness. All

of the positive factors associated with maintaining stable housing are arguably what helps

cement tenant involvement and engagement.

Again, these factors do not necessarily occur exactly in the order listed. That is why the

diagram is represented in a circular format, surrounding and being tied to tenant involvement and

engagement. In addition, different tenants may experience different factors that are not captured

here. Figure 2 represents what I have conceptualized from the research findings. These factors

which lead to engagement reflect what is found in other theories and models, such as the CYE

developed by Hilfinger et al (2006). Similar to one of the elements of Hilfinger et al's (2006)

CYE, participation at Five Beds (involvement in groups, etc) helps lead to engagement. Hilfinger

et al (2006) also purport that youth empowerment involves a:

"…participatory cycle that engages youth in a safe environment and meaningful activities where they can learn skills, confront challenges, demonstrate success, and receive support and positive reinforcement for their efforts, [which] can lead to empowerment on an individual level"(Hilfinger et al, 2006, pp. 39-40).

Figure 2. What Contributes to Tenant Involvement & Engagement at Five Beds
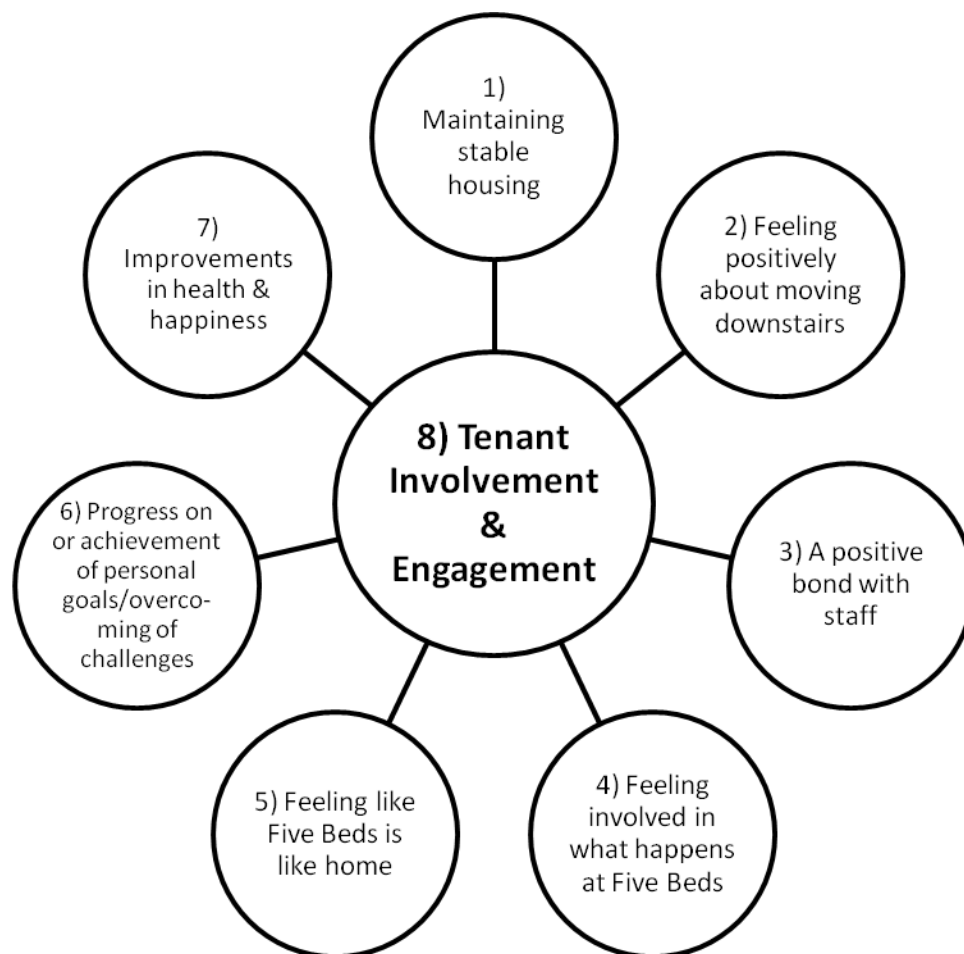
The factors that lead to engagement at Five Beds reflect some of these elements, including an environment where youth can confront challenges and demonstrate success (progress on or achievement of goals/overcoming of challenges).

It is also helpful to return to HeartWood's (2004) findings around what motivates youth to become engaged as full and active participants (p. 4). Figure 3 captures what HeartWood has found leads to youth engagement.

Figure 3. HeartWood: What Leads to Youth Being Full and Active Participants

```
┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│  Opportunities  │        │ Connections with│
│  to follow their│   ──▶  │  both peers and │
│     passions    │        │      adults     │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│ A sense that    │        │                 │
│ their work      │   ──▶  │ The ability to  │
│ contributed to  │        │ take concrete   │
│ making a        │        │ actions         │
│ difference      │        │                 │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │        │    ENGAGED      │
│   Having fun    │   ──▶  │    YOUTH        │
│                 │        │                 │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘
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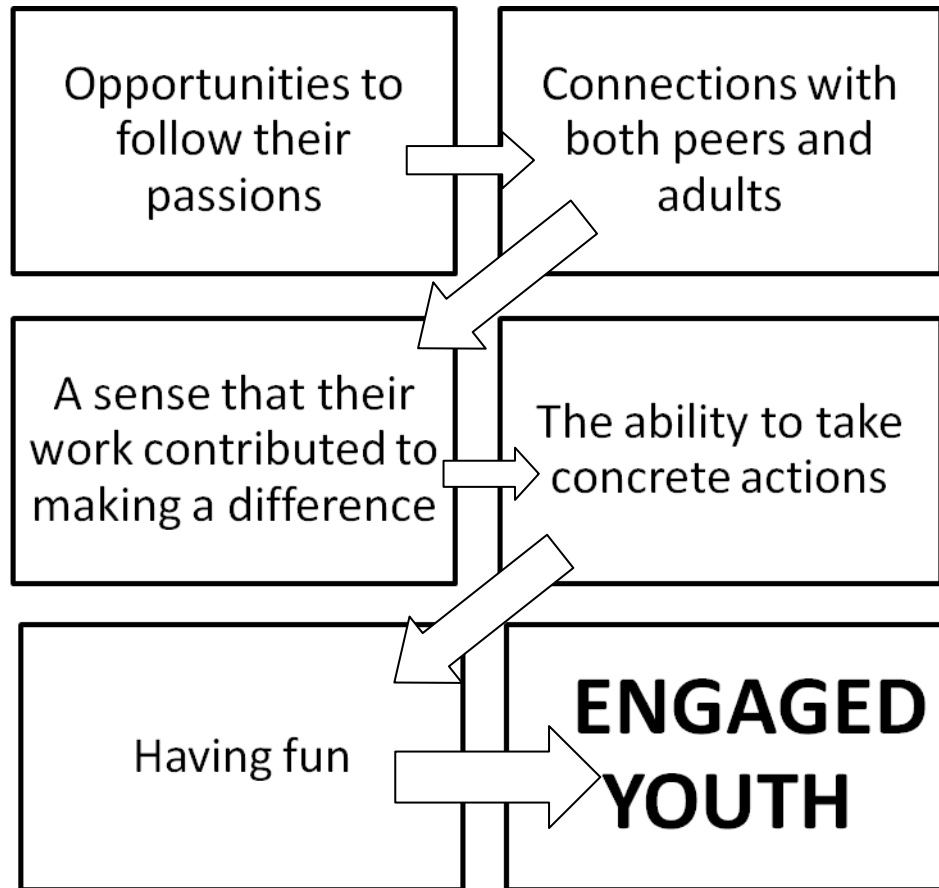
(HeartWood, 2004, p. 4).

Although HeartWood's model is by no means the only way to facilitate youth engagement, it is

one method that has demonstrated positive outcomes (HeartWood, 2004). Does Five Beds meet

these five conditions? My research indicates that Five Beds does facilitate a connection to peers

and adults, as well as an environment where fun can be had. Five Beds also may help to create a

space where youth can follow their passions, because, as mentioned, youth are supported and

encouraged to pursue education and employment. As well, Five Beds has a Flex Fund with

which to purchase items for Five Beds tenants, if cost is not prohibitive, such as a bicycle.

However, if youth's "passions" do not lie in education and employment or in things that can be

accessed through the Flex Fund, then Five Beds may not be able to fully facilitate youth pursuing their passions.

What follows are some quotes from current and former tenants which provide examples of some of the factors which lead to tenant involvement and engagement at Five Beds:

> *[Former tenant] "The groups helped me to get more stable, the workers helped me with house searching, they would give me a list of places that are up for rent, tell me what I would need, and stuff like that. One group I remember the most was when a special guest came in and was teaching us about saving our money and stuff like that and she said if we filled up a two liter bottle with just dimes then we'd save like $200 inside that bottle. She taught us how to spend our money wisely and stuff like that. That particular group helped me save my money. I give myself a set spending limit, and follow an envelope system, where you write down on the envelope how much you'd spend on groceries and put that much in the envelope. Another thing I have found helpful is that at the beginning of every month we'd sit down with one of the workers and we'd write down a goal list of what we want to accomplish for that coming month. We'd have short term and long term goals, relating to jobs and school and stuff like that and they would make a goal and help us with it. We'd have three goals or something every month. This was helpful for me, because I'd never really done goals. It was a new concept for me."*

> *[Current tenant] "I feel involved in what happens here. When I finished school, this summer we went to Canada's Wonderland. It was fun. It was the first time I was on a roller coaster. If I want to do some volunteering, and I ask for a Y pass, they say yes and give me the pass. They guide us; they give us paperwork and stuff. If I ask to go to the library, they give me a library pass."*

> *[Current tenant] "I definitely feel involved in what happens here; the house has a family-type feel, through eating dinner together. There is a community feeling, and it motivates you to be involved. You can't just go in your room, you feel like you have to be involved. Also, as long as you are respectful in your approach with the staff they will listen to you. The staff give you their full attention, they look right in your eyes and they give you feedback and help you out. I have attended the groups too, and I like what I get out of them. There was one on learning about job searching which was good. The house meetings are good because everyone gets together and we get everyone's input. It's good to hear what everyone has to say."*

> *[Current tenant] "I like to be a part of dinner. I was raised to believe dinner was a social time. I do enjoy socializing at dinner. I go every week to groups too if I am here. I will go for fun. A lot of my favourite groups relate to drugs. The group I remember was on substances and what they can do. The groups are very informative. I have learned that weed is addictive. Also alcohol is too. People become reliant on drugs to solve problems.*

I have family members who were addicts and I fear so much to become like them so I stay away from them."

[Former tenant] "I definitely felt involved there. The groups are optional for Five Beds residents. I took part in it as much as I wanted. I still felt a part of the home. We had our own time downstairs; if we wanted to be alone we could go downstairs. I wanted to go to the groups – sometimes the content was interesting. It's also good to know what's going on in the house you are living in so the groups offered an update on what was going on in the house. If someone was doing something they should not do it is good to know about that. We talked about everything from drugs, to interviewing for jobs, to cooking; we covered everything in the groups. I was a lot more mature then some of the guys there. It was not so much learning for me, as much as it was a refresher. I still learned some things though."

Research Question #4: What makes a good supportive housing facility for male youth?

Guidelines for supportive housing have not been developed specifically for male youth. I will examine the indicators of what makes a good supportive housing facility for male youth, in relation to Five Beds. An issue that was not mentioned often by the youth of Five Beds but seemed implicit in their statements was that a sense of safety is important for a good supportive housing facility for male youth. One current tenant outright said that he feels "safest" at Five Beds and that is part of why, for him, it "feels like home." Other tenants spoke of being exposed to violence and danger before coming to Five Beds and how that contrasts greatly with the supportive environment of Five Beds. Therefore, it can be suggested that a sense of safety for youth tenants is probably crucial in a good supportive housing facility for male youth. Safety was also something that was important in the other supportive housing facilities referenced in the literature review. Epstein et al (2003) found that tenants' feeling safe is an important factor in best practice design of supportive housing (pp. 10-11).

Two current tenants mentioned specifically that Five Beds is a "community." Other tenants did not explicitly use this word but described Five Beds as a "group of guys" who are

like "brothers" or "siblings," who spend time together, "eat together," "watch movies together" and do a variety of things *together*. Many tenants spoke of the sense of camaraderie, of closeness and of warmth amongst tenants of the downstairs. Most tenants linked this directly to trusting each other and to leaving their bedroom doors unlocked without fear. It also contributed to Five Beds feeling "like home." A sense of community is important to incorporate in best supportive housing design for male youth (and possibly for youth in general) as community creates an atmosphere where youth feel safer and at "home." This study indicates that a sense of community, home and trust of other tenants is important for male youth.

The supportive housing programs analyzed in the literature review, such as the Nanaimo Youth Services Association (NYSA) Youth Residence, offer support relating to tenant's education and employment goals. NYSA's Youth Residence states that "Youth tenants are provided support to: complete high school, become gainfully employed and/or increase their competence and reach independence" (NYSA, 2012b). Similar to the NYSA Youth Residence, Five Beds offers support to tenants regarding their education and employment goals. Phoenix, another supportive housing program for youth also offers support for education and employment pursuits. One former Phoenix tenant stated the following regarding Phoenix: "I'm telling you nothing in my whole life helped me as much as they did. I had a place to live. I got back into school for the first time since I was thirteen and I got my grade ten" (Phoenix, 2007a). Similar to some of the youth of Five Beds, the Phoenix youth valued going back to school and the support he received in doing so from the Phoenix staff. Offering such support is an element of best practice in supportive housing design for youth (Epstein et al, 2003). Five Beds tenants also value having access to community supports and services, such as the library, YMCA and counseling.

From the information gathered in this study, it can be concluded that most tenants of Five Beds feel a strong bond with the staff and participate in the treatment activities and the supportive services offered through Five Beds. Bond with staff seems very important to tenants. One-hundred percent of both current and former tenants interviewed reported a positive relationship with staff. Some tenants commented that they did not always get along perfectly with staff, but that they viewed occasional disagreements as "normal" or "ok." A current Five Beds tenant stated that he values the staff because they guide him towards better choices in terms of education. Another current tenant reports on the positivity of the staff and how it is contagious – making him feel positive as well. He too mentions that the staff keep him motivated. The tenants seem to identify and bond with staff who are able to form a bond while enforcing rules and motivating the tenants to pursue their goals. The tenants may feel that way because this type of relationship best replicates what they may want and expect from the traditional parental relationship – closeness and warmth, as well as boundaries and guidance.

Overall, for Five Beds current and past tenants, safety, a sense of community, support in pursuing education and employment, access to community supports and services and capable and supportive staff, emerged as important components which are encompassed by Five Beds (see figure 4). Regarding best practice in design of supportive housing for youth that have been suggested previously, research shows that effective models of supportive housing for homeless and at risk youth must include at least 9 elements (Epstein et al, 2003). These elements are listed in table 6, as well as corresponding commentary as to whether Five Beds provides these elements.

Table 6. Elements of Effective Supportive Housing

Elements of effective models of supportive housing	Does Five Beds provide this? How?

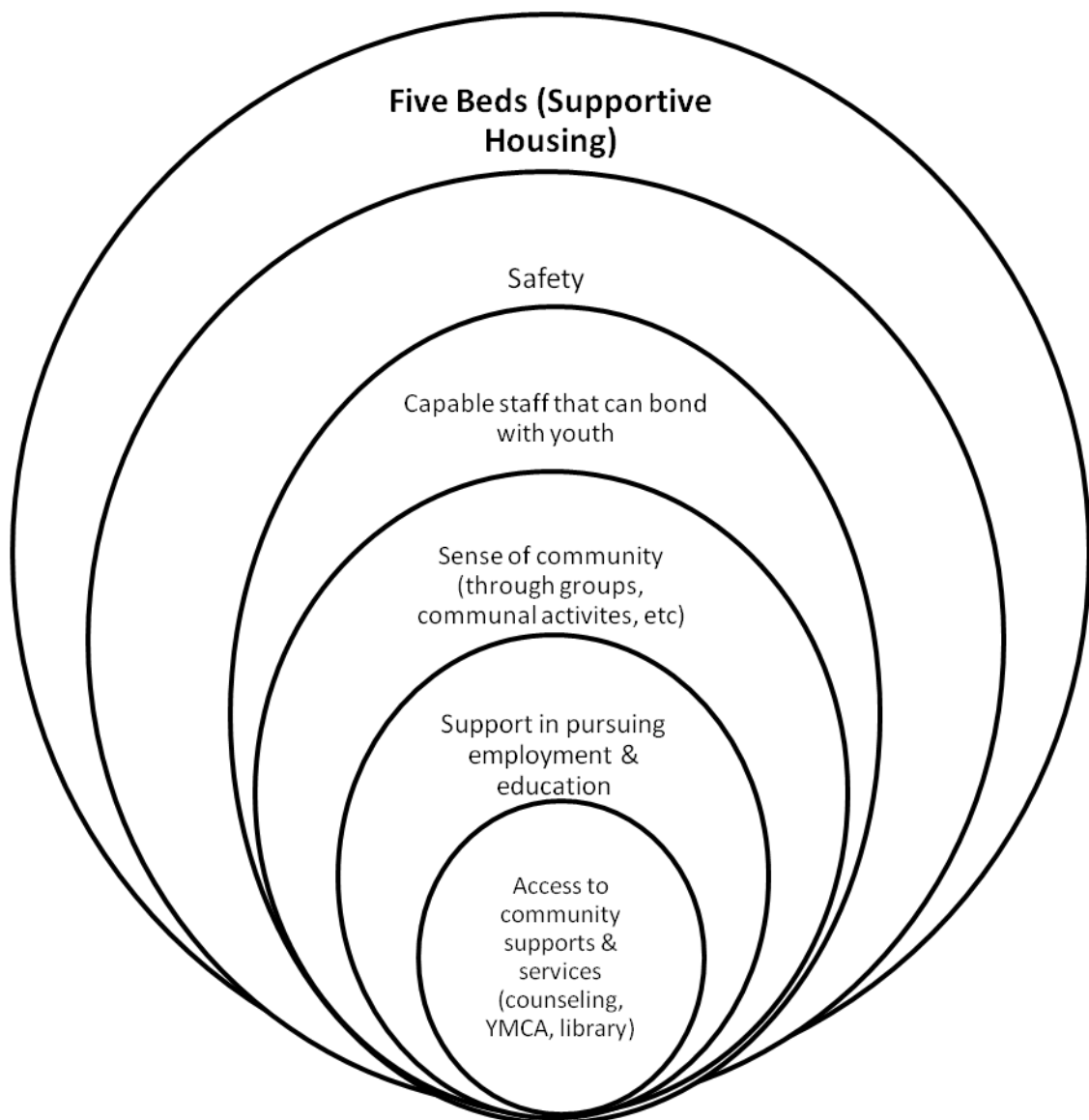|	
Safe and affordable housing	Yes - rents are not expensive, and OW normally pays shelter costs for most tenants.
A relationship with at least one responsible trustworthy adult (ideally a mentor)	Yes – regular meetings for every tenant, 1-5 staff-to-tenant ratio. Tenants report staff who pay attention, listen and are like family.
Consistent emotional support	Yes - Five Beds staff will "drop everything" to attend to the needs of a tenant.
An opportunity to learn and practice independent living skills (i.e., grooming, money management, shopping, cooking, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, parenting skills, employment skills)	Yes - Five Beds facilitates most of these, but interviews indicate more attention should be paid to cooking skills. Shopping skills were also not mentioned by tenants so this may be an area for development.
Career counseling and guidance	Yes - Five Beds facilitates referrals to a local career centre where these services are available. Five Beds staff also provide lists of jobs to tenants depending on their interests and help them job search.
Continuing education	Yes – If tenants are interested in continuing education, Five Beds ensures tenants are enrolled in school, including adult and alternative education.
Job-readiness training and occupational skills development	Yes - Group topics include preparation for the work place. Occupational skills could be an area for development as this was not mentioned in the interviews.
Medical and dental care	Yes - Five Beds tenants have access through a partnership with a local medical centre.
Access to mental health services (therapy, psychiatric treatment, substance abuse treatment)	Yes - Five Beds tenants have access through a local counseling service. As well, some Five Beds staff are trained as counselors.

Five Beds meets all of the 9 elements listed by Epstein et al (2003) to be an effective model of

supportive housing. After the research I completed on Five Beds, I would add a sense of home

and community to Epstein et al's list as being vital for supportive housing for youth. The youth I

interviewed articulated that this was important to them and helped to foster their engagement in Five Beds.

Morans (1977) outlined some different needs which should be met by one's housing. One need mentioned by Morans that Five Beds does not meet is the need to experience nature. Facilitating experiences of nature is an area of development at Five Beds. Partnerships could be

Figure 4. What Supportive Housing at Five Beds Encompasses (according to youth)

Five Beds (Supportive Housing)

Safety

Capable staff that can bond with youth

Sense of community (through groups, communal activites, etc)

Support in pursuing employment & education

Access to community supports & services (counseling, YMCA, library)

formed with local conservation areas to allow for field trips and camping excursions for Five

Beds tenants (with staff accompanying for support and safety). Local conservation authorities

may be willing to offer discounts on camping trips and use of their sites or donate camping and

site usage given that Five Beds is operated by Argus, a charitable organization.

Colegrove (2010) noted that the best supportive housing programs in the US contain six

key components. Based on information collected in the interviews as well as information gained

from other sources, I will outline whether Five Beds contains these six components in table 7.

Table 7. Six Components for Supportive Housing Programs

Six components for effective supportive housing	Does Five Beds contain these components? How?
Programs have tracked data and reported housing and health outcomes	Partly. Five Beds formally will follow and track former tenants through STEP Home if they move onto independent living after Five Beds and do not return to family. Informally, staff keep in touch with many former tenants regardless of where they move to after Five Beds.
Youth received help with education and employment goals	Yes. As evidenced in the interviews, tenants receive help in pursuing their education and/or employment, depending on their goals.
(Possibly) scattered site model of housing	No. Five Beds represents a single-site model. Tenants are not integrated in the community in scattered individual apartments or units.
(Possibly) housing program be connected into a continuum of care	Yes. Five Beds staff continue to work with tenants after they move out and support them in maintaining stable housing.
Youth clients meet regularly with case managers	Yes. Tenants have regular meetings with staff.

(Possibly) use a harm reduction approach	Yes. Five Beds tenants are not permitted to use drugs/alcohol on site. However, if they arrive home under the influence of substances, they are allowed in. If staff think they are a serious risk, ambulance and/or police may be called.

Five Beds does track tenants who move on to independent living, as part of the STEP Home program. Also, tenants and Five Beds staff usually keep in touch regardless of where Five Beds tenants move. The formal tracking however is not continued if tenants move back into their parents'/caregivers' home. In addition, Five Beds does use a harm reduction approach. The Region states that

> *"Harm reduction refers to any program, policy, intervention or approach that seeks to reduce the health and social consequences associated with drug use. It focuses on consequences rather than the use itself, and does not require abstinence (not drinking or using drugs)" (ROW, 2012b).*

Although Five Beds does not permit drugs or alcohol on site, as mentioned, tenants are permitted entry while under the influence and are supported in accessing rehabilitation and other treatment for substance abuse. Five Beds is not a scattered site model, and this represents a significant short-coming of the model, as tenants are not integrated into the community in individual living settings. Community integration using the scattered site model has been demonstrated to be best practice (Colegrove, 2010, p. 213).

In addition, Five Beds reflects some of the elements of Hilfinger et al's (2006) Critical Youth Empowerment (CYE) theory. Figure 5 illustrates which elements of CYE that Five Beds meets, partially meets, and which is does not meet, according to information gathered in the interviews. Five Beds does not meet two of the elements: participation in sociopolitical processes to affect change; and integrated individual and community-level empowerment. There needs to

be more opportunities for integrated individual and community level empowerment for Five

Beds tenants. I discuss this further in the recommendations section.

Overall, the Five Beds approach has been successful, but does not incorporate all aspects

of best practices. Five Beds includes elements of a group home or custodial model. For example,

tenants are given specific times to eat (exceptions are made for work schedules, etc) and there

are 24/7 on site staff. In addition, Five Beds is a single-site model. Tenants are concentrated in

the basement of the Argus shelter. True integration would involve youth residing in apartments

or units in the community. However, with regards to the physical layout, Five Beds in many

ways is working as well as it can with what it currently has available. The physical layout of Five

Beds does not allow for each tenant to have their own apartment.

Figure 5. CYE (Hilfinger et al, 2006) Theory When Applied to Five Beds
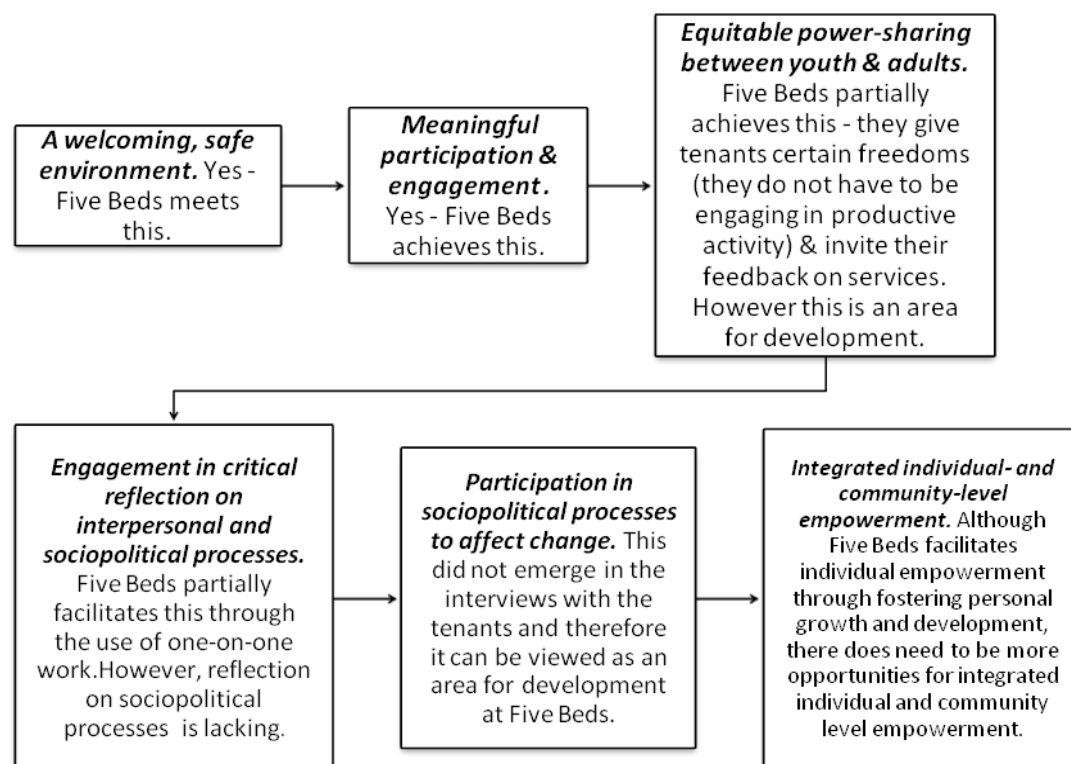
Contributions to Best Practice in Supportive Housing for Youth

My study had similar findings to Colegrove's (2010) research. Colegrove (2010) found that youth identify that supportive housing staff need to have age-appropriate skills, and be non-judgmental and supportive. Similarly, Five Beds youth identified that having capable staff that can bond with them is important. In Colegrove's (2010) study, youth also said they needed outlets to combat loneliness once they find housing, such as having friends. Similarly, the Five Beds youth identified that having good relationships (such as friendships) with their fellow tenants and Five Beds staff is important. As well, HeartWood's (2004) research into what leads to youth engagement, found that connections with peers and adults help youth engage. In the same way, Five Beds tenants value the sense of community that relationships with their peers and staff create, which helps them engage. Therefore, my study substantiated the findings of HeartWood's (2004) work. In addition, similar to two of the elements of Hilfinger et al's (2006) CYE, safety and a bond with caring and capable staff is important to Five Beds tenants.

Colegrove (2010) also found that youth prefer off-site support services. The youth of Five Beds reported valuing their off-site support services, such as counselling, the YMCA and the library. A study by Choca et al., (2004) found that successful "transitional and permanent housing for youth" is supported by programming which emphasizes "educational attainment, employment preparation and work experience, and personal growth and development" (Choca, 2004, p. 491). Similarly, the Five Beds model focuses on helping youth with education and employment, including personal growth and development. Most Five Beds tenants continued their education or found employment while at Five Beds, and most youth credited their success, at least in part, to the support from Five Beds staff.

As well, it is vital to remember that Five Beds is aimed at a particular demographic –
male youth experiencing or at risk of persistent homelessness – and seeks to serve a specific
function: mobilizing these youth towards healthy and viable community integration. The Five
Beds model does contain elements of a custodial model; however appears to be very effective for
many youth who reside and have resided there. Five Beds has contributed to improvements in
tenants' happiness and health, education and employment status, and is showing beneficial
outcomes for long-term housing stability. These findings suggest that at least some youth
experiencing or at risk of persistent homelessness, may be best served by a model like Five Beds.
The Five Beds model includes elements of a custodial model, including 24/7 onsite staff, as
opposed to a model which facilitates greater independence (i.e.: off-site or part-time on-site
staff). However, it is also important to note that the presence of the shelter in the same building
as Five Beds was reported on negatively by many participants and seen as detrimental to Five
Beds. Therefore, a facility like Five Beds may be even more effective for youth at risk of or
experiencing persistent homelessness were it an autonomous, stand-alone facility (not in the
same building as a shelter or other program). As well, in many cases youth experiencing or at
risk of persistent homelessness have been disempowered; they do not really have a sense of
power. In my research on Five Beds, I found that empowerment and engagement of youth in
their residential settings is critically important in creating better outcomes.

This study also expanded knowledge around the importance of having a sense of "home"
and "family" in supportive housing for youth. Previous research on supportive housing for youth
has highlighted that it is important for youth be able to make their living environment "their
own" (Durham, 2003, p. 18). However, the benefits to creating a sense of "home" and "family"
for youth residing in supportive housing has not been extensively explored. Some Five Beds

youth referred to staff as "mom," "big brothers," "big sisters," and "family" and to fellow tenants as "brothers," and "siblings." The specific use of such terms by tenants in supportive housing is not something that appeared in the literature I reviewed. Only one facility I reviewed, Salish Lelum, a supportive housing facility for Indigenous youth and elders in Nanaimo, BC, appears to (possibly) foster an atmosphere of home and family. One elder resident noted that she views the youth in the same way that she views her "grandchildren."

Many of the Five Beds youth interviewed discussed the importance of Five Beds feeling "like home" and how this facilitated greater comfort and enjoyment of their living environment. The sense that Five Beds is "like home" seems to lead to improvements in tenants' happiness and health, and contribute to progress on or achievement of personal goals and/or overcoming of challenges. These improvements seem to lead to greater tenant engagement with their living environment. Therefore, it is important that future research on supportive and supported housing for youth examine whether programs are working to foster a sense of "home" and "family" and if so, what the outcomes may be. Researchers could compare their results to my own findings on Five Beds.

Finally, this study focused on the impacts of supportive housing on male youth, an area which has been the focus of very little prior research. Although the results can possibly be applied more generally to all youth, as well as mixed-gender supportive housing facilities, the findings shed light on best practices in supportive housing design for male youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Practice Implications

This study has shown that the impacts of supportive housing on male youth include progress on or overcoming of personal challenges, improvements in employment and education status, levels of happiness and health and stable housing. The results from my study strongly indicate that the best approach to foster engagement with youth experiencing homelessness is one that mixes a great deal of support and warmth with enforcing reasonable rules and structure. Theory and research suggest that engagement leads to positive client outcomes (Cunningham et al, 2009). Furthermore, the findings from my study certainly seem to indicate that engagement leads to positive client outcomes at Five Beds, as most of the youth interviewed who are following through on going to school, reporting an improvement in their health, social life and other areas, are also reporting a good relationship and engagement with their living environment and the staff. Tenants also commented on the stability offered at Five Beds and the extra time that it gives people to organize their lives. All the participants (current and former tenants, and staff) agreed that a facility like Five Beds needs to exist for women. One youth cited a personal example he knows of a girl who would benefit from the support of the facility.

It needs to be noted that the results also indicated that the Five Beds approach does not work for all youth. As well, the approach of a minority of staff members could be improved. Some of these improvements relate to ethics. Staff need to ensure they are not unintentionally allowing their own values or beliefs to interfere with the work they do. It is important for staff to be self-reflexive and critical of their own practice and be committed to recognizing, acknowledging and working to correct shortcomings in their approach.

Being able to strike a balance between accountability and independence of Five Beds tenants is one of the conundrums that the program is facing. Five Beds staff are able to provide support and encouragement. However, they are not able to mandate that tenants pursue a

productive activity, such as school, work or counselling. Most of the youth are self-motivated and are able to pursue their goals. However, for some youth the Five Beds approach is not as effective. One youth shared with me that he needs to know that school attendance is mandatory or he will not go. Five Beds is not able to make school attendance mandatory for the youth.

All participants interviewed were asked for their ideas on how to improve Five Beds. Their responses are included as follows, and are divided into categories. I comment and expand on their perspectives. I also offer some of my own recommendations which were formulated from the study results.

1) Need for more customization of service

"It felt like home – there was a lot of freedom. You did not really have to do anything, it was nice down there" - For this former tenant, this was a positive thing because the pressures of job and apartment hunting exacerbated his anxieties and mental health concerns. However, his comment does reveal that downstairs tenants did not "have" to do anything. While that was ok for this former tenant, as it allowed him to relax and focus on his mental health issues, for others, such as one current tenant it was not effective. This current tenant describes the benefits to more structure for him as follows:

> *[Current tenant] "Upstairs is probably the better program for most kids though, such as myself. When I moved down here I started slacking. I went from going to school every day all day to going when it was convenient or I would sign out and come home. It was just more convenient to come home then to go to school. Instead of graduating when I should have, I nearly have all my credits, but am still short of my high school diploma. I do really well in school too. Upstairs had more structure, every day we were woken up at 7:30 AM and we had to be off to school. I had a routine which was good, and simple to follow. I need structure and routine to do well and go to school and downstairs does not have as much structure and routine as upstairs."*

This current tenant captures the problems that can arise if youth are not mandated to go to

school. For this current tenant, he needed to know he had to go to school in order to do so. A

staff at Five Beds also noted the issue:

> *[Staff member] "Some of the youth have really succeeded. There are other youth who go down there, and were in school and then decide they don't want to be in school anymore. There is not much we can do anymore, and because it's a tenant landlord act now instead of shelter guidelines, we can no longer enforce going to school like upstairs, especially if they are over the age of 18. We can try to motivate them but we can't threaten to evict them like we can upstairs. If they are under 18, OW will usually step in and tell them to go to school or they will lose their funding, however even then, OW gives them chance after chance and they eventually turn 18. The influence of other youth downstairs can also influence the other youth. If a youth is like 'hey we're downstairs and we do whatever we want' then another youth may be like 'this is great, I don't have to go to school or attend these appointments or do a chore or area of responsibility or clean my room.' They should still have choices but sometimes if they are given choices they chose nothing. For some of the youth, it has really helped them and we have been able to go above and beyond. For the rest, it has created so many choices that it enables them to do nothing."*

The comments of this staff member, as well as the current tenant indicate that greater

customization of services is needed. It should also be noted that threatening eviction is a

concerning method to motivate a youth. Threat of eviction should not be used when staff are

attempting to motivate youth.

A staff member shared that when the facility opened the first ever Five Beds tenants were

asked if they wanted a program – and they said no; they just wanted to "be:"

> *[Staff member] "A week before the first group moved into Five Beds we had a huge pizza lunch and asked them what they want – they did not want a program. They sent the message that they just want to 'be' so that is why the downstairs is less structured. Downstairs is about taking more time to establish goals. The pace is slower. During the first year of the program, it received criticism from people with lots of experience with the shelter system where they see change quickly. I had to remind people that we are looking towards longer term results and impacts."*

This staff member sheds light on why Five Beds is currently not as structured as the upstairs

shelter. Each group of youth who reside in Five Beds has been and will be different from each

other, so the model of little structure which worked for the first group, may not work as well for subsequent groups. In the case of the current tenants interviewed for this study, it appears at least some of them would benefit from more structure.

One current tenant feels that the Five Beds tenants should be made to get out of bed in the morning and pursue a productive activity. However, he also says that they should be treated like tenants, with more freedom to bring friends and family over, and be able to stay up all night if they want, as long as they are being quiet. The question is, could Five Beds enforce more structure around productive activities but loosen the rules around curfew, visitors and in other areas, as some tenants interviewed ask for? It may not be easy, but might be possible if Five Beds staff and management develop a working group with both current and past tenants and map out exactly what the changes would look like.

The idea of customized leases for each tenant, which reflects their unique needs (some may need productive activity included as a condition of their lease, while others will not) may be a potential solution to the myriad of unique personal circumstances and needs of Five Beds tenants.

2) A separate facility

As noted in the themes section, some staff and tenants feel Five Beds would function more smoothly were it an autonomous facility. One staff member noted that there is jealousy from the upstairs residents towards the Five Beds tenants as they are permitted more freedoms and more recreational activities then the upstairs. Another staff member agreed, and said while they do believe there should be more places like Five Beds, they also added the following:

> *[Staff member] "I believe this type of a program is better suited for adults. If it is to be offered to youth then it should be in a separate facility then youth residing under shelter guidelines as it creates a visible divide and change in house dynamics."*

Tenants also echoed this concern. One current tenant noted that it was "not fair" that downstairs tenants were able to do more than the upstairs residents. Another current tenant commented that Five Beds feels like a "hotel" in some ways. Many different people come and go upstairs, which may contribute to the "hotel" feeling that the youth describes. The "hotel" feeling would likely be eliminated if the Five Beds facility were in its own building, separate from the shelter. As well, youth in the shelter and youth in Five Beds are likely at different stages of their lives, with the residents of the shelter potentially being in more crisis situations. For the Five Beds tenants who are settling in and reaching a more stable period of their lives, being exposed to the crises and comparative instability of the shelter tenants may not be beneficial and may hinder the Five Beds tenants from moving forward in their own lives more smoothly.

Although Five Beds has been successful for many youth, it is not an innovative model in some respects. Future facilities should consider integrating youth into the community, including individual apartments, scattered throughout the community, and allow tenants great control over and leadership for their day-to-day living and living environments. It will be important to include on-site staff support; however perhaps staff could maintain part-time as opposed to full-time hours. Future facilities should be modeled after scattered site and supported models of housing. Five Beds could also look to the following programs for guidance in future program design and implementation: LOFT Community Services, Toronto, ON, and Choices for Youth in St. John's, NFL (described in the literature review section).

3) **Official volunteer program for Five Beds (and possibly all Argus) youth**

There does not seem to be a great deal of emphasis placed on youth volunteerism at Five Beds. Volunteering can be an important part of fostering youth engagement. Engagement has been defined as "the process of being actively involved and participating in a community, commonly through volunteerism (Stoneman, 2002; Canadian Federation for Sexual Health, 2005 in McArthur, 2011, p. 4). Given that not all youth are able to work or go to school, volunteering may be a viable and fulfilling alternative productive activity for them. Five Beds and Argus could form a partnership with the association or organization responsible for volunteers in the Region and develop a volunteer program specifically for Five Beds and Argus youth (or just Five Beds youth if this was deemed as more appropriate). Youth could be connected to volunteer opportunities that match with their interests, skills and/or knowledge, which would create opportunities for a fulfilling experience for youth who are not involved for various reasons in educational or employment pursuits.

4) **More innovative group topics & introduction of the Former Tenant Mentorship Program/Peer Support Workers**

Although there were many positive comments made regarding groups, and group nights seemed to contribute to a sense of community at Five Beds and Argus, one current tenant reported not getting anything from group nights, and another current tenant said they are as "boring as hell." Several tenants expressed wanting more life skills groups which focus on cooking. A former tenant remarked that: "A lot of people don't want to do group, they don't know what it's about, and they find it boring. An incentive to attend group could be you get a candy bar or not have to do your chore, etc." These honest comments should mobilize Argus staff to search out new and more innovative ideas for group nights, or at least more creative ways of engaging youth in topics. Perhaps arranging for tenants to co-design and co-facilitate groups, or even allow tenants to completely take over group nights, at least for one or two weeks out of

the month, is one idea. The tenants could be given some guidance from staff if needed. Giving

youth more ownership over group nights may result in an increased sense of empowerment, and

would also reflect what was found in the literature – that youth in residential settings greatly

value having voice and ownership in community programming (Ferguson et al, 2011, p. 1).

In addition, the development of a life coach, mentorship and/or peer support worker

program between former and current tenants is recommended. A former tenant, who came up

with the idea, explains it as follows:

> *[Former tenant] "I would like to see opportunities for former residents to be life coaches to current residents. I would be interested in a position such as this. I would want to help the current residents to think of their lives in the future and plan out what their future will look like."*

This former tenant's idea is quite innovative. The mentorship program would represent a shift

from Five Beds tenants being "helped" to being the "helper." Arguably, it would be quite

powerful for a current tenant of Five Beds to discuss and plan their future with a former tenant of

Five Beds. Former tenants may feel a sense of empowerment at being in a position to help and

empower other youth. In keeping with the idea that the client is the expert on their own lives, it

would seem very fitting that former tenants are helping to guide current tenants as they plan for

independent living.

5) **Improvements in staff approach/role**

Overall, the staff of Five Beds are adept at developing bonds with the tenants of Five

Beds. Nevertheless, there are areas for development and change. One current tenant had mostly

positive remarks about feeling involved at Five Beds, however he did remark that the staff

sometimes do not listen to him, which he reported was "ok" in his view because he is

"homeless." Some of the current and former tenants reported not always feeling listened to so it

is crucial that Five Beds staff work toward improvement.

A staff member also touched on some areas for change and development with the following comments:

> [Staff member] *"The Five Beds program has had high turnover. Some staff don't help with homework on the weekends. A youth has told me this. Also allow the youth to fill out feedback forms on the staff they work with. The upstairs program is much more monitored and structured with staff. Some staff are great, and some could be better. I feel the weekend could be more supportive to those youth who want to put some weekend time aside for job searching and homework."*

An idea to address the issue of homework for school-oriented youth would be to put a Five Beds staff on homework duty for the weekend. Helping with home work would be the focus, although not the sole function, of that particular staff's shift. There would also be another staff on duty who could engage in games with the youth, so that the various needs of the youth are met. To a large degree Five Beds staff already meet the various needs of the youth most of the time. Therefore, perhaps just more awareness around homework on the weekends, and a homework check in with the youth who may need help with it would be advisable.

Another staff member had ideas to improve the staffing of Five Beds, described as follows:

> [Staff member] *"Some staff may have issues with building rapport – perhaps a course on rapport building ethics would be good. It is important to try not to bring your own values and beliefs and force them on participants. I think a refresher in social work ethics for staff would be good."*

This staff member's comments reflect what a current tenant noted regarding a staff member who he feels, makes rules to reflect their personal beliefs and preferences. However, this concern was not a reoccurring theme in the research and is not wide spread amongst Five Beds staff. The findings from my study indicate that the overwhelming majority of Five Beds staff do not bring in their personal views and preferences, and do not allow their personal beliefs and preferences to negatively influence the work they do with the youth.

The issue could be addressed relatively easily with a staff meeting reminding everyone that staff are expected to adhere to the Canadian Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. A refresher on the Code of Ethics or a course on ethical rapport building are also viable options. If all staff engage in such a learning experience together, it also avoids singling anyone out. It is acknowledged as well that funding may be an issue in supporting staff to pursue ongoing learning and education, however, where feasible, it is recommended. As well, seeking the perspectives of tenants on the issue is important. An informational hand out could be distributed to Five Beds tenants asking them, if they want, to speak with whichever staff they feel most comfortable with, regarding any concerns they may have with the staff approach.

6) Adaptation of CYE Theory as a guiding principle

The Critical Youth Empowerment (CYE) theory is a conceptual framework proposed by Hilfinger et al (2006) and is based on the integration of youth empowerment processes and outcomes at the individual and collective levels (p. 33). These occur within

> *"welcoming, youth-centered environments, through meaningful engagement and knowledge, skill, and leadership development, critical reflection on societal forces and power relations, and active community participation, leading to change in sociopolitical processes, structures, norms, or images" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 33).*

The information I gathered indicates that Five Beds facilitates all elements of the CYE theory, excepting "critical reflection on societal forces and power relations, and active community participation, leading to change in sociopolitical processes, structures, norms, or images" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 33). Several viable strategies could be employed by Five Beds to address these areas. All of these ideas would need to be carried out in a manner which ensures the emotional and physical safety of the youth, and the comfort of youth and staff. Involvement in these activities, while encouraged and fostered, would be voluntary.

First, where possible, Five Beds tenants could accompany Five Beds staff or qualified volunteers to meetings (including city council meetings), events, and forums pertaining to housing and homelessness issues. Advertisements for upcoming meetings and events could be posted on the house fridge or distributed to Five Beds tenants, and discussed at house meetings and group nights. Secondly, Five Beds staff could encourage tenants to participate in community organizing around such issues as raising OW and ODSP rates, advocating for more affordable housing, and protesting cuts to programs and services that impact them. Staff could offer to support and accompany the youth in these efforts. Another idea is to invite local politicians of all parties into Argus to speak to Five Beds tenants and Argus shelter residents about their stance on housing and homelessness issues, which would not only be a chance for the residents and tenants to become more politically involved, it would also be an opportunity to inform and educate local political leaders on youth homelessness. Local activists and advocacy groups concerned with housing and homelessness issues and raising OW and ODSP rates could also be invited to speak to tenants. These are just a few ideas to help create opportunities for Five Beds tenants to engage in "critical reflection on societal forces and power relations, and active community participation, leading to change in sociopolitical processes, structures, norms, or images" (Hilfinger et al, 2006, p. 33).

7) Development of more facilities

As mentioned, one challenge for Five Beds lies in its physical design. Some tenants as well as staff noted challenges that were caused by Five Beds being in the basement of the shelter (including jealousy from upstairs tenants, and instability occasionally caused by the inconsistent upstairs residents). All those interviewed felt there should be more facilities like Five Beds. The waiting list for supportive housing also necessitates the development of more facilities. Future

facilities should be stand-alone, autonomous and not attached to a shelter or other housing

program. All those interviewed also agreed that there needs to be facilities developed like Five

Beds for women. One staff member for example, stated the following:

> *[Staff member] "Yes I think there should be more programs like Five Beds and also a program for women. If we had the program at the women's shelter the things we could accomplish would be quite remarkable. To have that extra support and a longer term working with the girls we could provide more intensive support and help achieve more lasting change. Some girls cycle in and out of the Argus shelter so if we had a Five Beds for girls, we could prevent that recidivism. In terms of the number of cases that require more support, a Five Beds for girls is very needed."*

CONCLUSION

Priorities for Future Research

One study found that "Research related to homeless youth service preference remains

limited, and further work is needed so that a better grasp on service needs and utilization patterns

of homeless youth are achieved" (Shillington et al., 2001, p. 41). In addition, "there has not been

clear evidence regarding interventions that are effective in addressing the specific needs of

homeless youth" (Altena et al, 2010, p. 637). Surprisingly, "only one review reported

systematically on interventions for homeless people, including homeless youth." (Altena et al,

2010, p. 637). Therefore, it is clear that more research needs to be completed regarding the

service needs, usage and preferences of youth experiencing homelessness. In addition,

intervention evaluations are needed of existing services.

It is promising to note that studies that have been undertaken "to understand the complex

(health) issues of homeless youth" have resulted in an "increase in the development and

improvement of social services, social policies, and interventions to assist this group" (Altena et

al, 2010, p. 638). In addition, for youth, it can be an engaging and empowering experience to be

involved in research. Pertaining specifically to Five Beds, future research should follow a PAR

model of involving youth at every stage. Further, as mentioned, longitudinal studies would be

best for determining more concretely whether the Five Beds model is best practice. Future

studies should include more former tenant participants (all if possible) and all current

participants, and interviews should take place in waves. Researchers should interview tenants

when they first move in, then every three months during their tenancy, and then for a period of

time every few months after they move out of Five Beds to track their progress and the changes

in their lives.

In addition, I would highly recommend that researchers planning to study the impacts of

supportive and/or supported housing on youth experiencing homelessness utilize all PAR or

Community-based PAR methods fully. As Healy (2001) states, using PAR "is particularly

pertinent when working with marginalized groups, as such approaches can create more holistic

understandings and better routes towards change and development of practice" (Healy, 2001 in

Fenge, 2010, p. 880). In addition:

> *"When youth and researchers are each valued for their unique contributions and decision-making is shared, research has the added benefit of empowering youth as agents of change. Research that is conducted by youth is more likely to be accepted by other youth, increasing the chance that the results will create change in youth behavior (Powers and Tiffany 2006). In addition, research is enriched by the contextual knowledge that only youth as 'experts in their own lives' can provide, enhancing the likelihood that results will be meaningful and valid" (Langsted 1994) (Jacquez, Lisa, & Wagner, 2013, p. 183).*

When partnering with youth in research, researchers have reported realistic challenges relating to

time and effort, but mostly, they "describe the benefits of these experiences as outweighing the

costs, in terms of both research quality and youth empowerment" (Jacquez et al, 2013, p. 186).

Youth voices must be involved in every stage of research, which includes involving

youth in deciding which issues the study will focus on, the research methodology and design,

data collection and interviewing, writing of the actual report/paper, and finally, presentations and workshops relating to the findings. It is also important to recognize the contribution youth make to the work, and to recognize that they can make a difference.

Researcher's Learning and Process

A seemingly obvious, but powerful overarching theme reoccurred through every stage of my research. Having a stable and safe place to live is a huge determining factor in being physically and mentally healthy, being able to reach goals and overcome challenges, and pursue or continue education and employment. As a former tenant who was interviewed for my study stated: "you can't go from place to place; it's not good for your health. You need a stable living environment." As has been shown in my research and other studies, housing is a determinant of health. Housing has the proven potential to improve the health of those who are experiencing homelessness (Colegrove, 2010). The results from the interviews indicate that, overall, Five Beds to Home has succeeded in recognizing and meeting youths' interrelated set of needs.

In addition, throughout the research, I learned of the resourcefulness, capabilities and determination of youth experiencing homelessness. Prior to conducting the research I believed that the youth of Five Beds, like all youth, had many strengths and assets. They demonstrated to me that I really had little idea about their lives until I sat down with them and heard what they had to say. They indeed have many strengths and assets, but being able to hear their stories identified to me what exactly their strengths and assets are. They are strong, creative, resourceful, capable and determined youth. They are also curious, a little scared at times, looking for support and care, and acceptance. In several ways, they are like many youth. I felt honoured and humbled that they would share their powerful stories and experiences with me, and open up their hearts. I want the youth to know that I have been moved by them. I have been changed by

the process of this research and I have learned so much from the youth. I will never forget the experience of meeting and speaking with the youth. I want them to keep trying and keep going forward, and I know that each of them can reach their goals. I truly believe they are leaders in the struggle to reduce the stigma and remove the myths around youth experiencing homelessness.

Nelson et al (2005) studied a supportive housing initiative and commented that overall, it was "not perfect" (p. 103). Similarly, Five Beds is "not perfect." It is not the most innovative model of housing for youth. However, Five Beds is going in the right direction and has led to many positive outcomes for youth. As well, it is important to remember that Five Beds is aimed at a specific demographic – male youth experiencing or at risk of persistent homelessness – and aims to serve a specific purpose: mobilizing youth towards healthy and viable community integration. The Five Beds model, which does contain elements of a custodial model, is very effective for many youth who reside and have resided there. Five Beds has contributed to improvements in tenants' happiness and health, education and employment status, and is showing beneficial outcomes for long-term housing stability. These findings suggest that at least some youth experiencing or at risk of persistent homelessness, may benefit and be best served by a model which blends a degree of independence for tenants with elements of a custodial model, including onsite staff, as opposed to a model which facilitates greater independence (i.e.: scattered site model with off-site staff). The Five Beds model seems to provide preparation for complete independence for some tenants. As one former tenant explained, Five Beds is that "half step to being out on your own." However, it is also important to note that a facility like Five Beds may be even more effective for youth at risk of or experiencing persistent homelessness were it an autonomous, stand-alone facility (not located in a building with a shelter or other program). The study also found that Five Beds creates a sense of "family" and "home" for most

of the tenants; a finding which represents a relatively new concept in the literature which should

be included in best practice design for supportive housing for youth. This study strongly suggests

that a sense of home is very important in fostering engagement and positive outcomes for youth

residing in supportive housing. As well, my research indicates that youth's engagement and

empowerment in their residential setting is key in leading to better outcomes for youth

experiencing persistent homelessness.

In conclusion, I want to issue a call to action. Given the benefits of supportive housing

reported by the current and past tenants of Five Beds, I recommend that governments expand

housing options for youth and others experiencing homelessness. In a time of economic

uncertainty, such a move would also be economically responsible. As the Region has reported,

"it costs ten times less to provide a person with housing and support than if they were to remain

in a persistently homeless situation" (ROW, 2011c). It is deplorable that the waiting lists for

supportive housing in Ontario continue to increase, "while the creation of new supportive

housing lags" (CAMH, 2012, p. 3). It is time for governments, policy-makers and funders to take

action and develop more affordable, supportive and supported housing. It is time for the voices

of youth who live in supportive housing to be heard and listened to. I will end with a quote from

a current tenant of Five Beds to Home. His words illustrate that affordable and supportive

housing for youth holds the potential to positively impact and in some cases, save, the lives of

youth:

> *[Current tenant] "Literally if it was not for this place I would just be another statistic or another tombstone. I am glad I came here. In college I am pushing to take criminal psychology and my goal is to be able to work with youth who are breaking the law, find out why they are, and figure out how to get them to stop, and not just so they aren't breaking the law anymore. So they can actually have a kick ass life of their own."*

Appendices

Appendix A – Key Terms of the Research

Table 8. Key Terms of the Research

Affordable Housing   *"This housing has been created over the past few years under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program. It is developed, owned and operated by private landlords or non-profit housing providers. Rent in an affordable housing unit is at or below the average market rent and not rent geared to income. To be eligible for this housing a household's income must fall below levels set by the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program" (HRC, 2013).*
Community/Tenant Relations   Social housing providers in Ontario, and elsewhere have developed Community/Tenant Relations positions (Community Relations Workers (CRW)) and departments. CRWs are advocates for and with tenants and facilitate referrals for tenants to other supportive services. For example, CRWs work with tenants on issues such as: disputes between tenants, connecting with supports for hoarding issues, mental health concerns, life skills, and more. CRWs develop programs and support existing programming for tenants (for example, free summer camps for children and a variety of social activities for seniors and families). The role of the CRW is to assist tenants not only in maintaining their housing but also support tenants in a more holistic manner. CRWs often play the role of advocate for tenants with programs such as OW and ODSP (M. Ogden, personal communication, May 15th, 2012).
Continuum of Care (in relation to housing)   *"The Continuum of Care is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. Four necessary parts of a continuum are: Outreach, intake, and assessment in order to identify service and housing needs and provide a link to the appropriate level of both; emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative to sleeping on the streets, especially for homeless families with children; transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will be needed once permanently housed; permanent housing and permanent supportive housing to provide individuals and families with an affordable place to live with services if needed" (NCCEH, 2009).*

Co-Operative Housing

If one lives in a co-op, they can be actively involved in the decision making on how the co-op is run, by attending meetings or sometimes being a part of the board. There are some units with an assisted housing charge, which is generally 30% of one's monthly income. If one lives in a co-op without an assisted housing charge they are paying the equivalent to market rent (HRC, 2013).

F&CS

Family and Children's Services (F&CS) (also known as the Children's Aid Society) is a

> *"non-profit agency working in local communities with the aim of providing help and support to children and their families. Established under the authority of* The Child and Family Services Act*, the CAS is a non-profit corporation (OACAS, 2010b). Ontario's 47 Children's Aid Societies and Family and Children's Services are the only child welfare agencies mandated by the Ontario Government to protect children from harm. Children's Aid Societies work with service partners and the community in attempting to ensure the safety, well-being and stability of children and youth (OACAS, 2010a). Community partners such as hospitals, schools, community service agencies and police services work together with Ontario's Children's Aid Societies with the goal of preventing abuse and neglect, improving child safety, maintaining children's health and wellness and supporting and strengthening families to better care for children (OACAS, 2010a). The CAS is operated by a board of directors elected from the local community and by the membership at large (OACAS, 2010b). The board of directors reflects the opinions of the community it serves. Programs and services are developed in response to the needs of children and families in the local community" (OACAS, 2010b).*

In addition, it should be noted that CASs in Canada have had a varied history. Often the approaches of CASs are criticized for being too heavy-handed and in some cases, too lax (S. Ogden, personal communication, May 5[th], 2012). Currently, child welfare workers are trained to take a strength-based approach with clients with the goal of better supporting families to stay together (S. Ogden, personal communication, May 5[th], 2012). Removal of children from their families and placements in foster and adoptive care are supposed to only be a last resort intervention (S. Ogden, personal communication, May 5[th], 2012). However, CASs, especially in the past, have been criticized for lacking cultural awareness and understanding, and removing children too quickly, as was the case in Canada with many Indigenous families during what is known as the "Sixties Scoop." This refers to the apprehension of disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children "by the Canadian state between 1960 and the early 1980s" (Sinclair, 2009, p. 89). This is viewed by critics as a "post-residential school program enacted by Canadian governments to further an assimilationist agenda of replacing Indigenous peoples' cultures with Euro-Canadian culture and values" (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997; Sinclair, 2004 in Sinclair, 2009, p. 89). For more on the "Sixties Scoop," see Chapter Five of *Wicihtowin: Aboriginal Social Work in Canada* (Bruyere, Hart, & Sinclair, 2009).

Harm Reduction

"Harm reduction means encouraging people to adopt practices that will help them to reduce risk associated with a particular behaviour (for example injection drug use) without expecting the person to stop the behaviour. Harm reduction approaches have been proven effective in improving health through reduced transmission of HIV, STI, reduced rates of overdose, reduced rates of infection and decrease of the negative effects of drug use on individuals and communities. Harm reduction can be defined as a set of strategies and tactics that encourages people to reduce harm to themselves and their communities, through the sharing of relevant information, facts and practical material tools, that will allow them to make informed and educated decisions" (Nine Circles, 2013).

Homelessness

"Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing. Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other. That is, homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations.

The problem of homelessness and housing exclusion refers to the failure of society to ensure that adequate systems, funding and support are in place so that all people, even in crisis situations, have access to housing. The goal of ending homelessness is to ensure housing stability, which means people have a fixed address and housing that is appropriate (affordable, safe, adequately maintained, accessible and suitable in size), and includes required services as needed (supportive), in addition to income and supports. Numerous populations, such as youth, individuals from different ethno-cultural backgrounds, families, newcomers to Canada, people impacted by family violence, the elderly, etc., experience homelessness due to a unique constellation of circumstances and as such the appropriateness of community responses has to take into account such diversity. The over-representation of Aboriginal peoples (including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples), for instance, amongst Canadian homeless populations, necessitates the inclusion of their historical, experiential and cultural differences, as well as experiences with colonization and racism, in their consideration of homelessness.

Types of homelessness:

Unsheltered - This includes people who lack housing and are not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation, except during extreme weather conditions. In most cases, people are staying in places that are not designed for or fit for human habitation.

Emergency Sheltered - This refers to people who, because they cannot secure permanent housing, are accessing emergency shelter and system supports, generally provided at no cost or minimal cost to the user. Such accommodation represents a stop-gap institutional response to homelessness provided by government, non-profit, faith based organizations and /or volunteers.

Provisionally Accommodated - This describes situations in which people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, access accommodation that offers no prospect of permanence. Those who are provisionally accommodated may be accessing temporary housing provided by government or the non-profit sector, or may have independently made arrangements for short-term accommodation.

At Risk of Homelessness - Although not technically homeless, this includes individuals or families whose current housing situations are dangerously lacking security or stability, and so are considered to be at risk of homelessness. They are living in housing that is intended for permanent human habitation, and could potentially be permanent (as opposed to those who are provisionally accommodated). However, as a result of external hardship, poverty, personal crisis, discrimination, a lack of other available and affordable housing, insecurity of tenure and/or the inappropriateness of their current housing (which may be overcrowded or does not meet public health and safety standards) residents may be "at risk" of homelessness" (CHRN, 2012).

Degrees of Homelessness:
"One-time homelessness: Usually the result of an unexpected event where those affected tend to have more social and economic resources to draw on than people who experience homelessness for longer periods of time.
Episodic homelessness: Periods of housing stability interspersed with periods of housing instability and homelessness.
Persistent homelessness: People experiencing persistent homelessness are described using the following characteristics:
-The length of time that a person has experienced homelessness is often greater than one year;
-People for whom homelessness has become the new "normal;" where they have developed skills oriented to survival on the streets rather than to living in housing; and
-The extent of service use, which can include either extensive use of emergency services and/or a large number of disconnections from the service system (ROW, 2010a, pp. 5-6)."

Non-Profit Housing

This housing is "Typically owned and managed by a community organization sponsoring group" (HRC, 2013). In addition, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) reports that:

"There are almost 1500 non-profit housing providers in Ontario. They can be found in 220 communities, and range in size from 4 units to over 58,000 units. They own and

manage shared houses, townhouses, small apartment buildings and high-rises in cities, towns and rural areas. All are overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors, and managed by professional staff and all provide affordable rental housing. The majority of non-profit housing tenants pay rents geared to their incomes (known as RGI housing). A minority pay market rents. There are three types of non-profit housing in Ontario: private non-profits are owned and managed by independent, community-based groups, such as faith groups, service clubs, ethnic organizations and community agencies; municipal non-profits are owned and operated by over 100 different municipalities across Ontario; and local housing corporations are owned and managed by Service Managers - the local government body responsible for housing, social welfare and ambulance services" (ONPHA, 2013).

Not in my backyard (NIMBY)

Refers to an attitude/view based on fear, ignorance and prejudice that can crop up amongst neighbours/community members when an affordable housing, supportive housing or other type of similar facility is proposed to be built in their neighbourhood. When neighbours oppose the development of such facilities, it can lead to them not being built. Those with a NIMBY viewpoint may purport to oppose the building of an affordable housing building because of concerns such as parking lot zoning or other construction-related concerns; however, this is often a facade for their real concerns. In actual fact, they often believe in harmful stereotypes about those who live in affordable housing and do not want to share their neighbourhood with these individuals. For example, an affordable housing employee in Ontario reports that plans to build an affordable housing building were quashed due to NIMBY (Affordable housing employee, personal communication, February 11[th], 2012). For NIMBY resources, refer to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association's (ONPHA) NIMBY materials: http://www.onpha.on.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=NIMBY&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=12022

ODSP

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Income Support is one of Ontario's social assistance programs. Income Support provides financial help for people with disabilities who are in need. It can help pay for living expenses, such as food and housing (MCSS, 2008b)

OW

Ontario Works (OW) is social assistance provided by the provincial government. OW is described by the Ontario government as being for those who "are in temporary financial need" (MCSS, 2008a) OW provides money and help finding a job. To be eligible to receive help from OW, one must

- live in Ontario
- need money right away to help pay for food and housing costs, and

- be willing to take part in activities that will help them in finding a job (MCSS, 2008a).

One may also receive health benefits for themselves and their family, including drug and dental coverage. Additional benefits may also be available (MCSS, 2008a).

PNA

The Personal Needs Allowance (PNA). The authority to administer the PNA is provided under the *Ontario Works Act*. Eligible residents may receive a PNA and other mandatory and discretionary benefits through the *Ontario Works Act* (SPPPA, 2007, p. 8). As of Jan 2013 residents receive a lump sum of $132.00 per month (SPPPA, 2013, p. 5). The PNA is provided to assist emergency shelter residents with the cost of personal items (including toiletries, clothing, etc) (York Region, 2008, pp. 1-3).

Rent Geared-To-Income Housing (RGI)

This type of housing is also "referred to as subsidized housing. Tenants' rent is calculated by 30% of their gross monthly household income" (HRC, 2013).

Rent Supplement Housing

Described as follows:

> *"If one receives a rent supplement this means that they are living in a privately owned building with a subsidy. A portion of the rent is geared towards their income (30% of gross household income) and a subsidy from the city/municipality is paid to the landlord" (HRC, 2013).*

Scattered Site model

Relating to or being government funded low-income housing units scattered throughout middle-income residential areas. Provides participants (tenants) the opportunity to live in housing located in multiple locations in the community (Aspiranet, 2011).

SEESAW

The Social Enterprise Effecting Social Action in Waterloo Region (SEESAW) Program is a 3 month contract position which allows individuals to work on their resume and cover letter, get WHMIS trained and First Aid/CPR certified. They also run an on-line thrift store with 9 other individuals. The program is funded by the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. The program was created and is operated by Argus Residence for Young People (C. Butler, personal communication, Dec 5, 2012). Some of the participants in this program are current and former residents of the shelters at Argus and current and former tenants of Five Beds.

Shelters to Housing Stability

Part of STEP Home (see definition of STEP home in this glossary).

> *"People involved in this program are episodically homeless and have medium support needs, so the support provided is less intensive. As a result, it is expected that each worker would be able to support approximately ten people. This program has two sites in Kitchener (YWCA- Mary's Place and Charles Street Men's Hostel) and one in Cambridge (The Cambridge Shelter), and works with both women and men who are generally staying at the local shelters. The goal is to assist them in finding housing and to continue a supportive relationship with them to maintain that housing" (CCBR, 2012).*

Supportive Housing

Is defined as:

> *"Housing that integrates long-term housing units for (i) persons who were previously homeless; (ii) person who are at risk of homelessness; (iii) persons affected by mental illness; or (iv) persons who have or are recovering from drug or alcohol addictions, with on-site support services that are available to the tenants of the housing project, but does not include supportive housing intended primarily for seniors" (MHSD & MCRD, 2010, 1-2).*

Further, "If one lives in supportive housing, there are support services available to them that will assist them in living independently. Support services that may be available [for example] are for people with physical disabilities or support for youth" (HRC, 2013).

STEP Home Program

Support to End Persistent Homelessness (STEP). The Region describes the program as follows:

> *"The Region of Waterloo, in conjunction with community partners implements STEP Home. STEP Home is an interrelated set of 12 person-centered programs at 10 organizations across 19 sites. They are designed to provide options and supports to end persistent homelessness. The programs foster respect, hope, home, and community and are guided by the following principles: we support housing towards a home; we know relationships are key; we walk with people to build community; we do what it takes and we don't give up; and we think about what we do and how to do it better. Ultimately, STEP Home is working towards an overall vision that Waterloo Region is an inclusive community where everyone has adequate housing, income and support to make a home. STEP Home seeks to address barriers at both the individual and system level to increase access to housing, income and support for people experiencing persistent homelessness"*

(Social Services, 2012a).

Streets to Housing Stability

Part of STEP Home. Streets to Housing Stability was initially modeled on Toronto's Streets to Homes which began in 2005 (Social Services, 2012b). The program is:

> *"...designed to provide an intensive support relationship for approximately ten people who are experiencing persistent homelessness. Support is provided by one worker at The Working Centre who works with men, and another worker at YWCA- Mary's Place, who works with women. The goal is to assist people in becoming housing-ready and in finding housing, and then to continue supporting them in maintaining housing" (CCBR, 2012).*

The Region & Emergency Shelter

The Region of Waterloo (the Region), located in south-western Ontario, Canada, is made up of three cities, Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, plus four predominantly rural townships; North Dumfries Township, Wellesley Township, Woolwich Township and Township of Wilmot (ROW, 2010c). In relation to emergency shelter, the Region describes their role as follows:

> *"The Ontario Works Act defines the provision of Shelter services as a discretionary service. The Region has recognized that it is a vital service and one for which it will direct funding. A portion of the funding for Shelters is provided under the Act through a per diem. This per diem is cost-shared 80/20 between the Province and the Region, up to a set provincial maximum per Eligible Resident per day. The Region may provide additional funding to Shelters (e.g. funding for extreme weather alerts as outlined in the Waterloo Region Social Services and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Extreme Cold Weather Protocol Appendix C)" (SPPPA, 2007, p. 8).*

Appendix B: Advertisement for Study

What is it like living downstairs?

You are invited to participate in a research study looking at the ways living downstairs (at Five Beds to Home) has impacted the residents who live there.

I am a Master of Social Work student at Wilfrid Laurier University and I am very interested in supportive housing for youth. I have decided to write my thesis on this topic. The goals of my study are to discover both the strengths and challenges of Five Beds, and to provide the residents who live there now and in the past, a chance to share their experiences in the hopes of making not just Five Beds better but improving services to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness in general. I want to have one-on-one interviews with the youth and other participants in late July and August 2012. I will be giving youth and other participants my contact information so that they can contact me if they move before the study is completed so

that I am still able to share the results of the study and answer any questions they may have as the study progresses.

You should be aware that:

☐ Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate in this research without any repercussions whatsoever. If you do agree to participate, you will still be able to withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation.

☐ Your participation or non-participation in this study will have no impact on your housing, living arrangements or employment at Five Beds, nor any services/programs you access through the facility.

☐ Combined group data and transcript passages from this study will be included in future publications or presentations.

☐ Your quotes and things you say may be used in presentations or publications. Your identifying information will not be attached. You will be given a list of your quotes that the researcher wants to use in the final study and if there is anything you do not want included, the researcher will take it out. No identifying information will be included in the study.

☐ Your information will be stored in a locked cabinet in the principal researcher's office until the end of the study. Your information, without your name attached, will be used for analysis and publication purposes and will be destroyed when all products such as articles and workshops are complete, or within five years of the collection of the material.

☐ There is no use of deception in this study.

☐ Confidentiality is strictly maintained by the researchers, except as required by law (i.e., reporting current suspected abuse of a minor, court order).

☐ The benefit of participating in this study is that it may lead to improvements in Five Beds as well as provide information on how to improve services to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It may also help to see funding increased for Five Beds and other similar facilities.

☐ Some of the things you will be talking about in interviews with me may be upsetting to you. Counseling will be made available via phone if you need to speak to someone. You can also withdraw from the study at any time, or chose to have part of your interview on one day, and the rest of the interview on another day.

☐ Each participant will receive a $20 honorarium from the researcher for the in-depth interview they complete. This is to express the appreciation of the researcher for your participation and to recognize the vital contribution you are making to the study through your participation.

☐   This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB). The REB tracking number is 3282.

If you want to participate or have questions, please contact the researcher Sarah Michelle Ogden – email: XXXXXXXXX or phone XXX-XXX-XXXX

Appendix C: Script for Five Beds to Home Executive Director in approaching current and past residents regarding the research project

Note: Five Beds to Home is known as "living downstairs" by staff and the youth who live there now and in the past. Therefore the ED may refer to Five Beds as "living downstairs" when she approaches potential participants.

ED: I was recently approached by a Wilfrid Laurier University Master of Social Work Student, Sarah Ogden. She is very interested in supportive housing for youth. She has decided to write a major research project, her thesis on this topic. She has decided to study the impacts of living at Five Beds to Home (downstairs) on the youth who live there. She is looking for participants, such as yourself to participate. Do you want me to tell you more about this?

If the answer is yes, continue. If the youth is not interested, then no further discussion on the study is needed.

ED: The goals of Sarah's study are to discover the impacts of Five Beds on the youth who live there. She is interesting in finding out about both the strengths and challenges of Five Beds, and to provide the residents who live there now and in the past, a chance to share their experiences in the hopes of making not just Five Beds better but improving services to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness in general. Sarah wants to have one-on-one interviews with the youth and other participants in August 2012. The interviews will be private and participant's identifying information will be kept confidential at all times. Sarah is offering participants a $20 honourarium for their interview to express her appreciation for participants' time. She will be giving youth and other participants her contact information so that they can contact her if they move before the study is completed so that she am still able to share the results of the study and answer any questions participants may have as the study progresses. You will need to sign a consent form to confirm your interest in participating. Your identity will be kept confidential at all times and no identifying information will be used in the final study. The final study may be published and available to the public. Sarah's project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB). If you are interested in participating, or have questions, you can contact Sarah confidentially at: Email: XXXXXXXXX or Phone XXX-XXX-XXXX

Appendix D: Consent Form - In-Depth Interview

Research Study: "Living Downstairs" - The Impacts of Supportive Housing on Male Youth: the Five Beds to Home Supportive Housing Facility in Cambridge, Ontario

You are invited to participate in a research study looking at the ways Five Beds (or living downstairs) has impacted the youth who live there.

INFORMATION

I am a Master of Social Work student at Wilfrid Laurier University and I am very interested in supportive housing for youth. I have decided to write my thesis on this topic. The goals of my study are to discover both the strengths and challenges of Five Beds, and to provide the residents who live there now and in the past, a chance to share their experiences in the hopes of making not just Five Beds better but improving services to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness in general. Another potential outcome of the study is increased support for funding for facilities such as Five Beds. I want to have one-on-one interviews with the youth and other participants in late July and August 2012. I will be giving youth and other participants my contact information so that they can contact me if they move before the study is completed so that I am still able to share the results of the study and answer any questions they may have as the study progresses.

☐   There is no use of deception in this study.

☐   To ensure accuracy of information gathered, the researcher would like to audio record interviews, however, participants must consent to this. There is a section on this consent form which asks participants to check yes or no if they consent to being audio recorded. Participants can still participate if they do not consent to their interview being audio recorded.

RISKS

☐   There are no known physical or social risks to participants in engaging in this research.

☐   There may be psychological or emotional risks to participants in engaging in this research. Participants may feel emotionally upset due to some information they are asked about. The current and past residents have likely experienced or were at risk of experiencing persistent homelessness. These experiences may have been very difficult and discussing them may cause emotional upset. Participants will also be asked if they face any challenges (which can include, mental, physical, emotional etc). They will also be asked to discuss their housing, relationship, and family situation. Discussing these issues with a relative stranger (the researcher) may also be uncomfortable for the participants and create emotional upset. The researcher will make every effort to alleviate the risk of emotional upset through asking questions in a sensitive fashion, allowing participants as much time as needed to respond, giving participants the option of not answering certain questions, taking breaks from the interview if the participant needs this, and making counseling available.

☐   Counseling will be made available via phone through the Ontario 211 service if you need to speak to someone. You can also have a counseling session with the researcher if you prefer. You can also withdraw from the study at any time. You also have the right to chose not to answer questions.

BENEFITS

☐ For the researcher, it is a chance to learn more about supportive housing for youth – an area of great interest to the researcher. For the participants, it is a chance to be asked their opinion on where they live/have lived and how to improve it by a researcher, something that may be empowering. Another benefit to the current and past residents, staff and society at large is that the project may lead to improvements in the agency as well as provide information on how to improve services to youth at risk of or experiencing persistent homelessness. It may also help to see funding increased for the agency and other similar facilities. The research community would benefit because the literature on supportive housings' impacts on male youth is lacking.

CONFIDENTIALITY

☐ Confidentiality is strictly maintained by the researcher, except as required by law (i.e., reporting current suspected abuse of a minor, court order).

☐ I (the researcher) will be meeting privately with all participants and their information will be kept locked at my office. Only I will have access to the information. Any electronic material will be stored on my secure computer. My thesis committee will be reading drafts of my thesis but all identifying information will be removed from these drafts.

☐ I (the researcher) will be using coding to identify all participants (i.e.: Participant A, change names, etc).

☐ Your information will be stored in a locked cabinet in the principal researcher's office until the end of the study. Your information, without your name attached, will be used for analysis and publication purposes and will be destroyed when all products such as articles and workshops are complete, or within five years of the collection of the material.

COMPENSATION

☐ You will receive a $20 honorarium from the researcher for the interview you complete. This is to express the appreciation of the researcher for your participation and to recognize the vital contribution you are making to the study through your participation.

CONTACT

☐ This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (XXX-XXX-XXXX). If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study)

you may contact the researcher Sarah Michelle Ogden phone XXX-XXX-XXXX. You can also contact Dr. Peter Dunn, thesis supervisor: phone XXX-XXX-XXXX.

PARTICIPATION

☐ Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate in this research without any repercussions whatsoever. If you do agree to participate, you will still be able to withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation. You will be paid $20 for your interview the day of your interview just prior to the interview beginning. You will not have to return this money if later you decide to withdraw from the study.

☐ Your participation or non-participation in this study will have no impact on your housing, living arrangements or employment at Five Beds or Argus Residences for Young People, nor any services/programs you access through the facility.

☐ If you identify as having a mental or physical health challenge which results in diminished decision making capacity or you face another challenge which in some way affects your ability to participate, please make the researcher aware as you may require a third party (guardian, etc) to sign the consent form on your behalf. Your health information, as well as all your identifying information, will be kept confidential. The researcher will ensure your needs are accommodated so you are comfortable during the interview. In addition, if you do not identify as facing some type of challenge, but would like a third party (guardian, etc) to sign the consent form on your behalf, please make the researcher aware of that.

☐ The in-depth qualitative interviews will take roughly 1-2 hours each but will not be held to this time line (i.e.: can be longer or shorter). You will be asked regularly if you want to take breaks, and if you want to do part of your interview on one day, and the rest on another day, that will be accommodated.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

☐ Combined group data and transcript passages from this study will be included in future publications or presentations.

☐ The final study will be available to the public. It will be shared with whoever is interested. Participants will receive a copy of the final study. The final study will be shared with Argus Residence for Young People, including Five Beds to Home. The study will also be submitted to academic journals for consideration of publication.

☐ Your quotes and things you say may be used in presentations or publications if you consent. Your identifying information will not be attached. At the end of this consent form, there is a section where you are able to indicate whether or not you consent to your

direct quotes being used. You will be given a list of your quotes that the researcher wants to use in the final study and if there is anything you do not want included, the researcher will take it out. The researcher will make every effort to contact you to vet quotes however if you cannot be located, your quotes will not be used.

I have read and understand the above information. I have been provided a copy of this form by the researcher. By signing my name, and printing the date below, I consent to participation in this study.

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature:_____

Date:_____ _____

Researcher Name:___Sarah Michelle Ogden_____

Researcher Signature:_____

Date:_____ _____

By signing my name, and printing the date below, I give permission for the researcher to use my direct quotes in the final study which may be published and shared publically. No identifying information will be used and participants' privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all times. Note to participants: You can still participate in the study if you do not consent to your direct quotes being used.

Participant Name:_____ ____

Participant Signature:_____

Date:_ _____

Researcher Name:__Sarah Michelle Ogden___

Researcher Signature:_____

Date:_____

Participants: Do you consent to your interview being audio recorded (check the YES or NO box):

YES [ ]

[ ]

NO

Appendix E - Honorarium Receipt

Honorarium Receipt

Research Study: The Impacts of Supportive Housing on Male Youth: the Five Beds To Home Supportive Housing Facility in Cambridge, Ontario

This is to verify that I have received $20 for my interview, given to me this day by the researcher.

Participant Name:_____

Participant Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher Name: Sarah Michelle Ogden_

Researcher Signature:_____

Date:_____

Appendices F-H: Interview Guides – exact question wording and order may vary somewhat in actual interviews. Interviews will flow in a conversational way.

A note: Most of the participants in this study know Five Beds as "living downstairs." This is reflected in the guides. As well, all current and past tenants first lived in the emergency shelter system before moving to Five Beds.

Appendix F - Interview Guide for current tenants of Five Beds
1) What has it been like to move from the emergency shelter upstairs to downstairs? *(Probe: how has this affected you?)*
2) What brought you to the agency? How did you find out about it? *(Probe: areas to touch on include housing, relationships, challenges, successes) (Probe: How long have you been here?)*
3) What are your previous living arrangements? (Discuss where you have lived in the past and for how long) *(Probe: Has the agency helped with your long term housing goals?)*

4) How much has the program helped in your employment, education, happiness, contentment with life and your overall health during your time there? Have there been any changes in these areas of your life? Please explain. *(Probe: It may be helpful to think about your life during the months leading up to when you moved in to Five Beds and compare that to how you feel now).*
5) What do you think about the staff here?
6) Do you feel involved in what happens at the agency? What leads to you being involved? *(Probe: Why or why not?) (Probe: Do you feel that the staff at the agency listen to you? Why or why not?)*
7) Have you attended any of the groups at Five Beds? (Examples could be the house meetings) *(Probe: Why or why not?)*
8) Do you get along with and trust the other tenants of the program? Please explain.
9) Does Five Beds feel kind of like home? *(Probe: How?)*
10) Do you think there should be more places like this in the community? (*Probe: Should there be a place like this for young women?)*
11) What changes would you suggest to improve this program? (If any)
12) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix G - Interview Guide for past tenants of Five Beds

1) Looking back, what was it like to move from the emergency shelter to downstairs? *(Probe: how has this affected you?)*
2) Thinking back, what brought you to the agency? What caused you to leave?
3) Did you feel involved in what happened at the agency? What led you to become involved? *(Probe: Why or why not?) (Probe: Looking back, what types of groups did you participate in at the facility or through the agency? (if any))*
4) Did Five Beds feel kind of like home? *(Probe: How?)* Did you trust the other tenants and get along with them? Please explain. *(Probe: Have you kept in touch with the staff or other former tenants at the agency? What type of relationship/contact do you still have?)*
5) When you were at the agency, what was your employment and education status? Please note any changes that occurred while you were there. How much did the program help you in these areas? Were there any negative impacts? *(Probe: what is your current status in these areas?)*
6) Were there any changes in your level of happiness and contentment with life, and overall health during your time at the agency? Were there emotional changes you went through? Please explain. How did the agency help with these areas? *(Probe: It may be helpful to think about your life during the three months leading up to when you moved in to Five Beds and compare that to how your life was when you lived there).*
7) What were your living arrangements like before living at the agency? What has it been since? *(Probe: Has the agency helped with your long term housing goals?) (Probe: How did it help?)*
8) Do you think there should be more places like Five Beds in the community? *(Probe: Should there be a place like this for young women?)*
9) What changes would you suggest to improve the program? (If any)
10) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix H: Interview Guide for staff of Five Beds

1) What do you see as the impacts of Five Beds on the youth who reside(d) there? What changes do you see in the youth?
2) Tell me how youth come to be at the agency (recognizing that each youth comes to the program for their own unique reasons and with their own personal background).
3) The agency states that the goal of the program is to "helping people create opportunities for hope, healing, empowerment and better autonomy." The program also says it creates an environment that is "caring, client centered, respectful and responsive." Do you feel the agency meets its goal(s) and how does it do this?
4) What do you do to try to engage youth in the services offered at and through the agency? (recognizing that there may be a diversity of approaches) *(Probe: Tell me how youth respond to these attempts. How successful or unsuccessful are your attempts?) (Probe: What attempt(s) at engagement do you find to be the most successful?)*
5) Do you regularly ask the youth what their perspectives on the program are and what their ideas are to make it better? *(Probe: Do you implement their ideas? Please offer examples.)*
6) What percentage, of youth who identify as having a challenge upon intake, stabilize, overcome (if possible) or take significant steps to overcome their challenge, during their time in the program? (Examples could be mental health, addictions, relationship(s) challenge, etc). *(Probe: While always respecting confidentially, provide examples).*
7) What percentage, of youth who identify as having a personal goal(s) upon intake, reach, or take significant steps to reach, their goal(s) during their time in the program?
8) How much, if at all, do you feel staff contribute to helping youth work towards or overcome challenges, reach personal goals, improve education and employment status, levels of happiness and health? *(Probe: If they do help, what is it that they do, and what is it about the agency, that helps for each of these areas?)*
9) What is the average housing history of youth who come to the agency? *(Probe: Has the agency helped with the youths' long term housing goals?) (Probe: How?)*
10) Do you think Five Beds feels at all like home, family or friends to the youth who live there? *(Probe: Why/why not and how?)*
11) What are some challenges you face in the operation of the facility and how have you dealt with them? *(Probe: possible areas could be challenges with engagement, challenges with funding, etc)*
12) What percentage, if any, of youth who move out of the agency would you say keep in touch with the staff and for how long? *(Probe: Why?)*
13) Do you think there should be more places like Five Beds in the community?
14) Is there anything else you would like to add?

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