

August 21, 2019

Concurrent Workshops

Developing skills to serve as a steward for supportive environments

Six concurrent workshops will be offered to enhance skills in practice and policy that support environments to promote population child and youth mental health through the life course.

3. Developing Your Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness: Case Studies and Tools from A Way Home Canada, Saint John and St. John's

Presenters: Mary-Jane McKitterick & Bruce Pearce, A Way Home Canada; Greg Bishop, Saint John Human Development Council

Over the next year, communities across Canada will be developing their new plans to end homelessness. The federal government's recently announced Reaching Home strategy provides an opportunity for communities to target priority populations such as youth, develop strategies to reduce the "in-flow" into homelessness (homelessness prevention), and to work toward more sustainable exits from homelessness (outcomes beyond housing such as social inclusion, well-being, and attachment to education, training and employment).

This session is designed to showcase what communities across Canada have learned about effective homelessness strategy development and implementation. The session will also feature key learnings from Saint John and St. John's specific to developing and implementing strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness. Finally, the session will close with an overview of the Youth Homelessness Community Planning Toolkit, a practical tool to support communities in their plan development, and will engage participants in discussion about how they can use the kit in planning for supportive environments that prevent and find sustainable exits from homelessness in their own communities.

How does your workshop make a connection with the theme Supportive Environments for Child and Youth Mental Health – Our Shared Responsibility!?

A Way Home Canada, the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and Turner Strategies launched an innovative initiative in 2018 known as the "Systems Planning Collective" in order to better support communities and all orders of government to take a cross-systems approach to preventing and ending homelessness. The work of the SPC is to develop free tools and resources to build community and individual capacity to do this work well. The SPC builds on the collective learning of a 5-year initiative known as "Mobilizing Local Capacity to End Youth Homelessness." Saint John, NB was one of the official pilot communities of the MLC program testing strategies on the ground for preventing and ending youth homelessness. In addition, St. John's was closely involved in similar work and engaged in our process of shared learning.

What will others learn from your workshop?

- Lessons learned from Canadian communities concerning developing and implementing plans to prevent and end homelessness
- Atlantic Canada-specific case studies
- How the Youth Homelessness Community Planning Toolkit and other Systems Planning Collective resources can support communities in their upcoming planning and implementation efforts

Presenters:

Mary-Jane McKittrick
Community Planning Manager, A Way Home Canada

Mary-Jane McKittrick brings over 25 years progressive experience in Canada and abroad to the role of A Way Home's Community Planning Manager. This includes community engagement, systems planning, and research in the fields of homelessness, HIV/AIDS, education and social justice. She hails from both the small town and the megacity and her experience is supported by relevant graduate degrees in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Greg Bishop
Saint John Human Development Council

Greg Bishop is a project manager with the Human Development Council, a social planning and research office in Saint John, NB, and oversees community investments and strategy for the federal government's Homelessness Strategy, Reaching Home. Greg has worked throughout New Brunswick engaging with community to develop plans to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.

Bruce Pearce
Advisory Board member, A Way Home Canada

Bruce Pearce is an Advisory Board member of A Way Home Canada which is dedicated to ending youth homelessness. From 2002-2019, he was the community development worker for End Homelessness St. John's, guiding local planning and investments under Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Bruce helped establish the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network in 2009, and was President of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association from 2010-2012, leading efforts to create a pan-Canadian network of communities working to end homelessness. Bruce recently served on the Advisory Committee on Homelessness convened by Canada's Minister of Families, Children & Social Development Jean Yves-Duclos to guide the creation of Reaching Home, Canada's homelessness strategy within the National Housing Strategy. Between 1988-1998, Bruce was executive assistant and policy advisor to elected officials in Toronto, including Councillors Jack Layton & Liz Amer, and MPP Rosario Marchese.