

Transitional Housing to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness

Final Report

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**Report for the YES Shelter for Youth and Families
Regarding Transitional Housing in Ontario Communities.**

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Introduction

This project is in contribution to the YES Shelter for Youth and Families efforts to develop new transitional housing for Peterborough youth. Some key points of interest that were taken into consideration throughout the research process were, community support, who are they aiming to serve, and how to increase the number of youth served. Transitional Housing is defined in this report as, temporary housing accommodations with supportive services that acts as an intermediary between the stages of homelessness and successful permanent housing for homeless individuals, or individuals at-risk of homelessness (Gaetz, 2014; Barrow & Zimmer (1998); Community Development Halton, 2007). Recently the President of the National Alliance Against Homelessness announced that funding bodies would no longer be investing in transitional housing (Personal Communication, January 13, 2017) unless it was specifically for youth, demonstrating the importance that these types of facilities play in assisting youth on their life journey to successful independent living. Although there is significant praise regarding the efficacy of transitional housing, Eberle et al., (2007) (as cited in Gaetz, 2014) addresses some limitations that should be considered by organizations wishing to implement transitional housing. The first limitation being that youth are rewarded for their success in the program by being required to move on, disrupting the stability they had established. The second limitation is especially significant to Peterborough, noting that transitional housing programs can only be successful if there is safe and affordable independent housing available to transition to.

Methodologies

This research began with an environmental scan focusing on transitional housing facilities located in communities comparable to Peterborough. Some key parameters were if the community has a University or college, communities with transitional housing for both youth and adults, and population size. I decided to use these parameters to locate communities that have potentially similar municipal funding allocations, as this is a major source of funding for many transitional housing facilities. However, using this scope means that other youth transitional housing models in smaller or larger communities were not analyzed. Out of the identified organizations, I connected with two separate organizations. I conducted thirty minute telephones interviews to collect information based on the questions outlined in Appendix A.

I chose to look at two different youth transitional housing models, and one congregate living model directed at Indigenous adults. I connected with Youth Haven in Barrie, and Brantford Native housing; I am currently still working to connect with Joanne's House in Ajax and will follow up with any information I obtain from them.

A Summary of Best Practices for Transitional Housing

Key themes emerging on best practices regarding transitional housing through interviews with Brantford Native Housing, Youth Haven Barrie, and from a review of relevant literature (Barrow, S., Zimmer, R., 1998; City Spaces Consulting Ltd. 2008; Collaborative Community Health Research Centre 2002; Community Development Halton, 2007; Gaetz, S. 2014; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012) identified some commonly recommended best practices. Listed below are some of the best practices pertinent to the development of transitional housing in Peterborough.

- Establish network connections and relationships with stakeholders; youth, community members, service providers, community based organizations
- Availability of a range of housing services depending the variations of the resident's needs
- Housing/Program Services longer than one year, ranging from 2-3 year, and for high-complex clients (those hardest to house) up to 10 years
- Smaller facilities or Scatter Site facilities move away from the institutional environment, and offer a sense of community. No more than 35 units to maintain the sense of community
- Scatter Site transitional housing that converts to permanent housing has multiple benefits; cost effective, avoid, or reduce stigma, and maintains stability
- Physical location should be away from the down town core, or areas with high drug activity, but accessible to shops and public transit.
- No more than 30% of a resident's income should be spent on rent/programming
- Youth need to be included, and invested – feel a sense ownership and choice
- High-demand/High Acuity individuals, and young teens may thrive better in highly structure congregate living situations with on-site services
- Transitional Facility should, if possible, blend aesthetically into the community
- Integrated approach to meet youth's needs; addressing disorders and homelessness as one and providing necessary services
- Offer of life-skills programming focusing on budgeting, nutrition, health care services, crisis intervention, house keeping, vocational training, basic educational skills development (math, higher reading level, written and oral communication), family support, employment services, and socialization for community integration.
- Offer culturally appropriate resources
- Dedication to the idea that eviction is not an option

Although these are frequently cited recommendations for best practices, there is no singular formula to create youth transitional housing, therefore the needs of the target youth population should be considered in conjunction with the best practises recommendations. This

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list is by no means exhaustive of all the recommendations, rather they are geared towards developing transitional housing in Peterborough. Further recommendations can be found through the resources I consulted outlined in Appendix B.

Current Transitional Housing Models

Transitional housing models can be separated into four major categories as outlined by Barrow and Zimmer (1998), clustered or scattered site, stand-alone facility, combination housing, and convertible housing. The most common model being employed in communities comparable to Peterborough would be the stand-alone facility, with congregate and co-habitant living situations, often a result of budgetary constraints. Appendix C outlines current models of transitional housing that are successfully employed in some Ontario Communities.

1. **Cluster or Scatter Site:** units dispersed through the community. The units are characterized as not having staff on-site, but rather on-call with visits to residence slowly tapering as youth transition to higher levels of independence. Risks associated with this model can be feelings of isolation; not well suited for youth considered high-demand.
2. **Stand-alone Facility:** a singular, congregate living facility. This approach is suggested to be beneficial to youth with complex needs or have a high acuity, and promote a sense of community and family. Risks associated with this facility are community push back and increased stigma, as well as internal tensions among residents.
3. **Combination Housing:** transitional and permanent housing units located in the same building. Often requires a new build to meet requirements which can lead to complicated financing (tax breaks, grants, construction loans). Well suited for individuals whose progression to independent living could be considered non-linear. Suitable for youth on varying levels of the SPDAT¹ scale.
4. **Convertible Housing:** converting the transitional tenancy to a permanent tenancy, often stems from the scatter site model. Recommends that funding should be redirected to creating new transitional housing after the full costs are taken over by the tenant, while offering post-transitional supports.

While variations of these models have been made accessible to youth, the ability to determine which models are successful for youth is dependent on the demographic being

¹ Youth may benefit from this approach as it offers multiple housing options that can meet varying needs of youth based on their acuity.

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served. A successful model for youth it is dependent on what definition of success is being used. If success is simply remaining housed and breaking the cycle of chronic homelessness, then each of these models have served that purpose to a homeless youth. However, if success is considered a youth who has addressed the root causes to their homelessness, and are on an effective healing journey with no intent to self-sabotage while remaining housed, it is much more challenging to discern what type of model will be the most successful. Karabanow and Naylor (2008) posit that youth that classify themselves as successful acknowledge some form of personal transformations that offered a sense of being autonomous and feeling self-sufficient. Understanding success from the perspective of street involved youth does not indicate any specific model as being the most successful for transitional youth, rather it would seem that matching the appropriate model for transitional housing first requires an identification of the general characteristics of the youth an organization is trying to serve, followed by youth engagement. For youth with more complex issues, there is a consensus that a program lasting longer than one year would be beneficial in assisting them break the cycle of self sabotage which can manifest around the 8-month mark of being engaged with stable housing (Kidd et al, 2013; Personal Communication Doolittle January 9, 2017; Personal Communication Sykes January 13, 2017), it also ensures that they have more time to locate permanent housing outside of the facility rather than entering a saturated market, and then beginning the transitional process again.

Presently the common transitional housing model for youth, congregate living, is successful for some individuals while others experience higher rates of recidivism. Finding a balance between congregate and independent living may allow for more youth to experience the personal transformation required for them to identify as successfully transitioning away from homelessness.

Examples of Transitional Housing Models and their Organizational Incorporation.

Brantford Native Housing

Brantford Native Housing has multiple site congregate living, separated into a women's and a men's facility. Both facilities are categorized as independent living with supports and are directed at Indigenous adults, but do accept youth if necessary (however additional services must be provided). All program participants are expected to be substance free, or not using substances in the house; if residents are under the influence they are asked to not come back to the house until sober to avoid triggering other residents. Brantford Native Housing does not currently receive funding for their transitional living facilities, they are rent based programs that either obtain the maximum shelter allowance from individuals on ODSP or Ontario Works, or charge 30% of an individual's income if they are employed. The initial implementation and

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construction of the transitional living facilities received funding through the Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Initiative via the Indigenous Friendship Centre.

The women's facility, Ojistoh House, is a triplex, each with two bedrooms, shared washroom, kitchen, and common area, with the basement renovated to contain 3 more bedrooms, and a common space. All together there are 14 beds in the facility. The facility is open to single women, and women with children – each resident is offered a choice between a supported rapid rehousing stream consisting of a six week to eight week stay, or a one year healing journey. The supports offered are relevant to Indigenous cultures focusing on the “celestial way of doing things and supporting women who are heavenly bodies” (Personal Communication, January 9, 2017) to address the causes behind their homelessness so they can move beyond them and into successful independent living. It is important that individuals are focused on their healing journey and addressing their personal needs. After the initial opening of Ojistoh house there was staff on-site to mediate any negative community reactions to ensure the safety and security of the residents, the staffing on-site was eventually ended.

Karahkwa House is their male facility, it is a single home with five beds, and a one year transitional housing program that requires the residents to engage in culturally significant programming that has been reconfigured to consult traditional Mohawk teachings in conjunction with the Anishinabek seven grandfather teachings. There is the *I am a Kind Man* that teaches men to live a violent free life style, and *I am a Great Father* that teaches men how to appropriately interact with children.

Brantford Native Housing offers an array of services, many culturally significant geared towards the Mohawk of the Haudenosaunee Territory, such as agriculture, court work, healing and wellness, youth outreach, and cultural development. They found that the scope of services offered increased after the Brantford Friendship Centre closed, leaving many without the supports they needed. The organization consulted with the Board of Directors to have the mandate changed so that they could include the provision of services that would have been covered by the Friendship Centre, without suffering from mission drift.

Although this model is not specifically catered to youth, I believe it is important to look at an organization that focuses on the Indigenous population, and culturally relevant service, due to the disproportion number homeless Indigenous people in the Peterborough area according to the 2016 point-in-time count (United Way of Peterborough and District, 2016). While this type of congregate living situation may not be conducive to youth considered ‘hard to house,’ elements of this model could be applied to a youth focused model. Two key elements being the involvement of the Friendship Center to develop culturally relevant programming for Indigenous youth that access transitional living facilities, and the concept of having two different program streams that youth can engage with based on what they believe they can handle after consulting with a case manager. While the program provider I spoke with is pleased with the transitional housing model, and is confident in the work that they are doing, he believes that things can always be better, he's just not sure what that looks like at this time.

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Youth Haven Barrie

Youth Haven Barrie is a stand-alone congregate living facility. The physical structure is a duplex, with one side of the house containing the emergency shelter, and the other side containing a five-bed transitional housing pilot. They are currently exploring options to expand their transitional living facilities. Youth Haven Barrie has chosen to focus on youth with high acuity base on the SPDAT, they aim to “intervene on a serious long-term level” (Personal Communication, January 13, 2017), offering a one-year program. They use a life-skills co-ordinator who also does case management to develop self directed goals with the youth, and their only major requirement is engaging with staff so they can make steps towards their goals daily. The program director and staff recognize that youth with some of the most complex needs will often not have a linear progression towards independent living, and give youth the space to focus on deeper goals of healing, which can include going back to school, but it is not required. Youth Haven Barrie does not receive any external funding for the transitional housing program at this time, youth can access 24/7 emergency services that are provided through their core funding. Youth engaging in the transitional housing program, the Bridge Program, file an intent to rent with Ontario Works or ODSP that cover an occupancy cost each month.

Benefits of this stand-alone model is the ability for youth to access 24/7 services and staffing should a crisis arise, as well, the implementation of this transitional housing did not receive community push back because the emergency shelter was already established. Youth engaged in the Bridge Program have their own space in terms of sleeping areas and washrooms, but they go to the emergency shelter for meals and to access common areas. While the proximity to the emergency shelter and its services have their benefits, the director identified some challenges with this model.

Based on youth feedback it is challenging to disaggregate the reasons why some youth do not complete their stay at the Bridge Program, on average “they don’t quite hit the 8-month mark” (Personal Communication, January 13, 2017) but some possible factors are the chaotic energy and strong emotions that surround being at the emergency shelter, and not feeling like they truly have their own space. This is one of the key reasons that Youth Haven Barrie is currently in the process of developing a new transitional housing facility, they also found that the housing market in Simcoe County is abysmal and a new facility will increase housing stock. Furthermore, there is feelings of distrust from landlords about renting to youth, and it is speculated that the image of young renters is not assisted by the large number of college students renting in the area.

It has not yet been outlined how youth will be engaged in the creation of the new transitional housing facility, however involving youth, and incorporating their voices in the services that are offered is important to Youth Haven Barrie. An example of how youth are currently involved is in the creation of house rules and consequences, done in a round table type format. This type of engagement promotes youth feelings of ownership of the space that

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they are in, and greater accountability for the consequences of their actions if they break the house rules.

While the director is pleased with the path they chose to establish initial transitional housing based on the need for it in the Barrie community, he believes there are ways that it can be better, citing mostly the negative factors of the proximity to the emergency shelter. He noted that adjoining facilities can work and do offer significant benefits, but that may be dependent on the size of the building (ex. comparing Covenant House in Toronto to the single building duplex where they are currently located).

Presently, it is unknown how they will progress towards transitional housing geared towards youth with high acuity, continued communication may offer some insights into how they plan on achieving this.

Community Partnerships

Suggestions for potential community partners to develop transitional housing, and programming in Peterborough are based on supporting literature and the community partners identified by the two organizations that were contacted.

- Health services including mental health, nutrition services, family planning, addiction services and counselling
 - Peterborough Regional Health Centre, CMHA, Kawartha Sexual Assault Clinic, Tailored Healing Nutritional Services², Fourcast, Peterborough Family Resource Centre, Peterborough Public Health.
- Employment agencies and organizations willing to take on internship positions for skills development.
 - The Staffing Connection, Watton Employment Services, Employment Planning and Counselling Services, Peterborough Economic Development, Workforce Development Board, Peterborough Native Learning Program, Agilec Ontario Employment Services.
- Other community housing services.
 - Peterborough Housing Corporation.
- Indigenous community services, both on and off reservation
 - Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, Nijkiwendidaa Anishnaabekwewag Services Circle, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation.
- Police services
- City and County Government)
- Churches (offer more direct connections to the certain segments of the community)
- Legal offices

² Potentially offer guidance on proper nutrition and maintaining personal health

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- Baker and Cole Barristers and Solicitors³, Peterborough Legal Community Centre, Legal Aid Ontario
- Recreational and Community centers
 - YMCA Peterborough, Queen Alexandra Community Centre, Community Living Peterborough
- Construction and development organizations
 - Habitat for Humanity, Home Depot Foundation, Home Grown Homes, Fleming College Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program, Endeavour Centre,
- Community advancement/invested organizations; Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Club, Kinsmen etc.
- University and Colleges
 - Trent University and Fleming College
- Local Landlords

This list suggests some possible community partnerships that might aid in the development and implementation of new transitional housing for youth in Peterborough, ranging from the construction phase to services provided. This is not an extensive list of every organization, rather it highlights some key players in each field. The suggestion to engage with local landlords is not necessary for the development or implementation of the transitional housing, and likely another project all together, but the literature suggest it is important to facilitate these networks so that youth can sustain safe independent living once they transition out of the program.

Youth Engagement

Consulting youth on existing and possible future services to aid in their transition from homelessness to independent living, has been identified as a critical factor in the youth's overall success in transitioning away from homelessness and the threat of homelessness (Community Development Halton, 2007; Holtschneider, 2016; Nebbit Et al., 2007; Mitchell et al. 2015) After speaking with Brantford Native Housing and Youth Haven Barrie, their approach to youth or resident engagement, appeared to be open consultation in a round table scenario. Indigenous individuals in various stages of homelessness and transitioning from homelessness were consulted during a feasibility study; but significant involvement in creating and choosing which programs were incorporated was not identified as something of much interest to participants according to the community relations administrator. Youth Haven Barrie identified that involving youth voice whenever they can, is important to them, and at this point they have

³ Law company with a focus on Real Estate law and dedicates themselves to community involvement

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meetings with the youth to discern house rules and consequences. However, it is unclear if they have engaged youth during the creation process of the new transitional facility they are hoping to build.

While I did not connect with an organization that successfully engaged youth to develop new transitional housing, a review of literature focusing on engaging youth voices suggests some possible ways to connect with youth so their voices and suggestions can be incorporated into the transitional housing.

Who: with youth, or adults who are considered post-discharge users, whether they left prematurely (before independent living was secured) or successfully completed their stay in the program, they will have had time to reflect on what was most useful to them, or what they really could have used while engaged with the program. Engage with post-discharge users up to 10 years after the last time they were directly involved with the program.

How: Recruitment from transitional housing after-care programs or client lists, who had consented that the organization may contact them after they left the transitional facility. Second stage recruitment was recommended to either increase sample size, or engage with individuals who had never encountered the transitional facility even though they experienced, or were currently experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The most practiced form of data collection was open-ended in-depth semi-structured interviews, either in-person at easily accessible locations or over the phone.

What: Nebbit et al. (2006) suggest four categories to develop research questions. 1. Pre-shelter experience, 2. Youth experience in shelter/transitional housing program, 3. Assess critical components of youth entrance into shelter/transitional housing program, 4. Identify the critically important individuals in the shelter/program that played a role in their experience

Why: From an ethical and rapport building stand-point, engaging in one-on-one interviews seems to be the best way to hear what youth truly think about their transitional housing experience. Engaging with youth, or adults who were previously homeless youth in this way reduces the risks of vulnerability, and establishes relationship building.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Community engagement and support is an important factor to consider during the creation of new transitional housing. However, effective ways of engaging with the community to elicit support, or combat public opposition (often termed 'NIMBY'⁴ Not In My Back Yard), remains a gap in the literature. Scally (2012) identified common responses organizations have attempted in response to NIMBY regarding the creation of affordable housing. These include "disproving fears, shifting public opinion, regulating equity, and or circumventing opposition" (Scally 2012,

⁴ NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) is a social phenomenon that manifests in community attitudes and action often shaped by fear of possible change of social dynamic in a community, in this instance, with the addition of youth transitional housing.

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722) however she argues that none of these methods are significantly successful in dealing with NIMBY syndrome. Supporting this claim, the two organization I interviewed suggested that the reason they could proceed with their current transitional housing facilities is because they kept it quiet, under the public radar. Brantford Native Housing shared with me that when they went to council to review a possible zoning change for a property, community members began making racist remarks about Indigenous people and the council member did not interject to stop the harassment. This event, coupled with Scally's (2012) findings, suggest that political attitudes during the time of transitional housing development can play a role in the general acceptance or opposition of transitional housing, however there is no way to control that on an organization level. Therefore, there is no tested and proven way of dealing with NIMBY in a positive way, and it is likely because NIMBY represents the manifestation of systems of power that seek to benefit those with greater privilege NIMBY is an essentialized identification of racism, ageism, classism, sexism, and socio-economic status in the community. It is beyond the responsibility of a single organization to address, though, Youth Haven Barrie offered a constructive suggestion on how to begin conversations with community members who may have been opposed, and that is to find common ground. The example is to begin a discussion on the general state of the housing market and from there discuss how this impacts different members of the community.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Would you like to start by telling me how you became involved with the organization, and how long you have been there?
2. Could you share with me what your staffing model looks like, as well as your funding model?
3. What have you noticed are some characteristics of your selection process and the individuals you serve? What are your expectations of them during their time in the transition house?
4. How long is the residency period at the Transitional Facility? Are you finding this length of time to be suitable for youth to succeed once they leave your facility?
5. Were voices of the youth incorporated in the creation of your transitional housing model? If so, how?
6. Did you notice any significant positive or negative reaction from the community to the creation of the transitional housing? If you received negative reactions, how did you handle this situation to move forward?
7. Are you pleased with the current model you have; would you do anything differently if you had to do it again?
8. Would you be willing to share some documents regarding your transitional housing with me? (Application form, design tool, building plans, youth agreement)
9. Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions or feedback for me?

Appendix B: Best Practices Resources

Barrow, S., Zimmer, R. (1998) Transitional Housing and Services: A Synthesis. *The National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. Retrieved from:

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http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/Housing%20and%20Outreach%20Strategies_final.pdf

Appendix C: Environmental Scan and Housing Options

Organization	Housing Model	Type of Housing	Number of Resident	Community	Youth Population (16-24) 2011 Census
Youth Haven Barrie	Stand Alone Single Site Duplex	Congregate Living	5	Barrie	17,440
Brantford Native Housing	Scattered Site: 1 Triplex for Women, 1 House for Men	Congregate living	14 Women 4 Men	Brantford	11,120
Wyndham House	2 separate houses one male one female	Congregate	Two 8 Bed facilities	Guelph	15,735
RISE	Stand Alone Single Site: previous seniors home	Single Occupancy	single occupancy residencies 21 units - 8 =transitional; 13 are long term housing	Kingston	17,615
Youth Habilitation Quinte Inc Transition Home Program	Single Site Stand Alone Transitional House and Convertible Housing (13 other homes purchased over last 25 years)	Congregate Living	Transitional:9 beds, 6 rooms in one house in transitional housing. Convertible: 58 beds (some for single moms) Some houses have 4 living	Belleville	11,855
Nightlight Youth Services-- Niagara Falls	Single Site Stand Alone transitional housing for male youth (under 30) who apply from attached emergency shelter, or other emergency shelter	Congregate living	8 bed, individual locked rooms.	Niagara Falls	9,435

Appendix D: Brantford Native Housing Transcribed Interview

Monday January 9, 2017

**Interview with Pete Doolittle of Brantford Native Housing
Melissa Hunt - Trent University**

Conversation Begins at 1:01

PD: Hello this is Pete.

MH: Hi Pete, this is Melissa calling, how are you?

PD: Hey Melissa, I'm good thank you, how are you doing today?

MH: I'm well, I have a bit of a cold, can you hear me okay?

PD: Uhh...Yes, I can, I could probably turn my phone up a little bit, it might help me hear you a little bit better.

MH: Yeah, I've got the cold that seems to be going around, and it's just unfortunate that it's landing on interview week, but I'll try to speak loudly for you

PD: That's not good that you're not feeling well.

MH: No, um, and things are good with you this week, you had a good break?

PD: Umm

MH: Did you get any... (time off [thought finish])

PD: No (chuckle)

MH: No? Oh, I'm sorry to hear that

PD: (Chuckling) no rest and relaxation, it's just go go go go go, I have a lot of work things going on you know, and I'm going to be out of the office for a couple of days this week and um, (breath) yeah, it's just been crazy

MH: Yeah it is a really busy time of year...

PD: Yeah there's a homelessness summit going on in Toronto...

MH: Oh Okay...

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PD: on the 11th and 12th and um, they've invited me to be a presenter there

MH: Wow, that's fantastic!

PD: Yeah, talking about um, a PIT count Brantford did earlier this year. PIT count is Point In Time.

MH: Is this PIT count online, is it accessible do you know?

PD: UM there will be information about it, um, my PIT count report is not online yet

MH: Okay

PD: But I did want to put it up on there sometime soon

MH: Peterborough recently did a PIT count, and so theirs was just published online, so that why I was interested

PD: Yeah, go to homeless hub.ca

MH: oh, it's on there, perfect!

PD: Um they would have a lot of information on their website

MH: Okay great, um, so before we get started I just want to, I know you said in your digital confirmation that you said you were okay with doing this, so I'm just going to double check that you understand and do confirm that your okay with doing this interview and with the questions I am going to be asking?

PD: Yes

Question 1

MH: Okay Great. Um so we'll just start kind of casually, if you could tell me a little bit about how you became involved with Brantford Native Housing and how long you've been there?

PD: Um, I've been with Brantford Native Housing for close to 20 years now {Melissa: Wow) and um, you know a job opening came up and I applied for it (laughter)

MH: wow that's awesome!

PD: 20 years ago!

MH: Um so were you always interested in the field of, you know, social change work with homeless individuals?

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PD: Yes, um, before I came to work for Brantford Native Housing, I was working for the YM/YWCA in their housing program, uh, both their YMCA housing residences for men, as well as a not-for-profit housing program that the Y had sponsored. And so, I was working for them for a number of years before I came to Brantford Native Housing. And before that I was in construction building house (upward inflection) so housing has been a large portion of my life

MH: That's fantastic, were you involved in the creation of any of the transitional houses?

PD: Yes.

MH: Oh, that's fantastic, because I did see here that Brantford Native Housing will be, did celebrate 30 years last year, right, 1986 was when it was founded?

PD: Correct

MH: so, you've been there for quite a long portion of its life

PD: Yes

Question 2

MH: So, in relation to the transitional housing would you be able to share with me what the staffing model looks like as well as your funding model?

PD: Back in 2003...through the urban aboriginal homelessness initiative, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, I'll refer to them as OFIFC, Indigenous Friendship Centres now, they had channelled some dollars from the federal urban homelessness initiative, you know, specifically for aboriginal populations, and so Brantford was selected to be one of those communities that were to receive that money(MH: Okay) and so...from 2003 uh we had created a group of aboriginal indigenous people and services, we called ourselves, or call ourselves the Brantford Aboriginal Homelessness Alliance [BAHA] and so we had long chats in regards to what we could do as a community to eradicate native homelessness, indigenous homelessness with the 263,000 that was allocated to this community. And so there was, like I said, a round-table at that time we did have a Friendship Centre in the city of Brantford, Pine Tree Native Friendship Centre, it's no longer in operation, and then we had Brantford Native Housing, the Aboriginal House Centre, the Woodland

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Cultural Centre, a couple of Indigenous services in mainstream agencies, such as the Children's Aid Society - they had an Aboriginal Services unit, and so staff from there all sat around and discussed what we could do with this 263,000 to eliminate and eradicate aboriginal homelessness within the five year timeframe. And so, that was a very lofty (MH: yeah [understandingly]) expectation, or requirement, or...hope (positive inflection) and so the end result was that we would create a transitional housing program for women, for aboriginal women, and women with children. And so, that's where we create Ojistoh House, stands for star...

MH: oh, that's lovely

PD: So, you know, looking at the celestial way of doing things and supporting women who are heavenly bodies to look at the causes behind their homelessness and so in 2005 is when Ojistoh House opened up, so, you know, we've been in operation for just over 11 years now close to 12 years and we had our grand opening in 2006. (MH: That's great) Yeah, and so that was the first phase, because BAHA, the Brantford Aboriginal Homelessness Alliance, we had no intent of stopping with just creating a transitional housing program for women, we had a number of other goals and priorities, and so with additional funding from other sources, Brantford Native Housing and BAHA has been able to look at some other services such as; a transitional housing program for men, so we call it Karahkwa House[Phonetically: Go-walk-wa House], you've had access to our website right?

MH: Yeah, I've looked at all of the information here yeah

PD: Okay, so you'll be able to get the spellings and you know, so forth like that

MH: Yeah, it was helpful to hear you say them though so I can write them out phonetically, cause I'm still a little rusty with how I pronounce, cause is this Mohawk, the language?

PD: Yes, yes

MH: So my Mohawk is not great (laughter)

PD: (Laughter) neither is mine (laughter), so that another service we had started, was Karahkwa house, and so we treat them as transitional housing programs, meaning that in order to get access has to be, um, some buy-in from the individual who wants to work on their healing journey, so we do ask that the

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individual be substance free, or at least not be using substances inside the house

MH: Okay

PD: we also ask them not to come back to the house if they're under the influence of substances, because for those men and women who are choosing to lie clean and healthy, we don't want them to have triggers

MH: Yeah, exactly...yeah

PD: and over the years, it was quite really successful in getting people to adhere to, you know, the few regulations we have in regard to substance use...

Long Pause

MH: So...

PD: we also

MH: Oh...sorry

PD: pardon me?

MH: sorry I...

PD: Go ahead

MH: sorry I was just going to ask about the ages for the women and men in the transitional house, do you take on any individuals who would be classified as youth? Anyone from the age of 16-24?

PD: Yes, yes

MH: that was just the one question I had, sorry I didn't mean to interrupt you there...

PD: for 16 and 17-year old's there has to be additional services that are providing support to the individual, and we would prefer not to house 16 and 17-year old's um but you know we recognize that they get aged out of CAS and there's a lack of other services available

MH: mmmm, yeah there is a gap there

PD: there's huge gaps in regards to you know 12-18 year olds

MH: Um and I know you said you have the major initial funding to get the project started, but in terms of the, for the

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transitional house, is it staffed 24 hours or is there some on call staff?

PD: No, it's independent living with supports

MH: Okay, and then it's reduced rent, right? It's 25-30% of their income?

PD: Yeah, um, for Ojistoh House we sort of treat it like subsidized housing, if the individuals source of income is Ontario Works or ODSP, then we just charge the maximum shelter allowance for their family size (MH: Okay, sounds good [note taking]) for the men, for Karahkwa house it's either the maximum shelter allowance or \$350 (MH: Okay) if their source of income is employment then we just charge them 350 a month

MH: Okay, and so there's not...do you have any external funding that comes in to help keep the rent reduced

PD: No

MH: Okay

PD: No, we don't

Question 3

MH: Okay, um and so we'll jump onto the next Question here: What have you noticed are some of the characteristics of your selection process and the individuals you serve? Meaning, like, are there certain characteristics you look for in taking on individuals, do you serve fairly low risk, or do you take on some higher risk clients?

PD: Um, well they have to be aboriginal, um that's one of the common characteristics. AS far as the gaps there, if an individual exhibits um, signs of cognitive impairments, mental health disorders, if they are not taking medication then we refer them to other agencies that have the services necessary to appropriately house and individual with untreated mental health disorder, condition

MH: And what are your expectations of the individuals during their time in the transitional house?

PD: That they take care of their own personal needs, so you know, they have to share in the chores. For um, the men's program, Karahkwa House, we have additional services such as *I am a Kind Man*, um, *I am a Great Father*, which teaches men how to

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live a violent free life style - *I am a Kind Man*. And the *I am a Great Father* teaches men how to appropriately interact with children. And so, they would have to participate in those services

MH: Okay, so that's required of them

PD: Yes

MH: And are those based on traditional Mohawk Teachings? Did the lesson plans come out of that?

PD: Well the um, Kizhaay, *I am a Kind Man*, when it was developed it was, um...oh geez what's that word...Ojibway teachings (MH: Oh Ojibway, Okay) Ya, and Anishinaabek teachings, and so seeing that the majority of individuals that are participating are Onkwehonwe, you know, then we have tailored the teachings keeping in mind still the Grandfather teachings, the seven Grandfather Teachings, so have tailored that a little bit to incorporate you know, the Haudenosaunee teachings around the same philosophies. Um, and it was created by the OFIFC (MH: Oh...Okay) the Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin program, but you we have just tailored it towards our own personal needs (MH: oh that's great) ya

MH: I was just wondering about the...you have the two transitional houses divided into male and female, is that what you're finding works best for you? And I was just wondering about anybody who identifies as two-spirited, do you have any kind of accommodation for them that way?

PD: We would make accommodations, but so far it hasn't come across as a requirement

Question 4 16:43

MH: And so I did see that the residency period at both transitional houses...I see that there's two streams at the in the women's transitional housing, um but the longest span is a year...are you finding that the year length of time is suitable for the residency to succeed once they leave the facility?

PD: um...that's a hard question to answer, in the aspect that you know, what determined to be a success, what's determined to have reached a goal in their healing journey...um...we find

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MH: If this might help answer the question a little better, I was kind of thinking of success as in, a non-repeat stay in the transitional housing

PD: Right, and right now I would say a year's not long enough...um only because like, you know, most of the time people come to us in crisis (MH: mmhmm) and you know, their crisis could...crisis affects could last for, you know, up to four months and sometimes longer until they're actually capable of wanting to look at the causes to their homeless like state. And so having an additional eight months to look at the root causes of their homelessness, and then look at ways to alleviate the effects of those causes and then to put those into play and its practice into their daily living, you know, I see a year as being too short, uh but we are sorta' tied (MH: Mmhmm) in the fact that you know, there use to be a clause that if an individual stayed in a residence for 365 days, as far as transitional housing is concerned, that they then became tenants. And so, we did not want that to occur within the transitional housing program, because we're not at that stage where we've eliminated or eradicated native homelessness yet, we still have constant people on our waiting list and so we had said you know, no, it's 364 days um, and then you have to move out and so, you know, we have had some recidivism but not as much as I thought we would

MH: Oh, but that's great though, that it's on the upswing

PD: yeah it is

MH: And is um, how long is the wait for the transitional housing roughly

PD: To get into the transitional housing program right now we're looking at a month to two months (MH: oh okay) um, but again that does just depends on availability (MH: that's true ya) If we have nothing available, and every individual says "no I want to stay on the year long healing journey stream" (MH:ya) the wait could be much longer

MH: it is so tricky to try and balance that, I mean it is fantastic though that you have altogether, with men and women included, 18 units that you can use

PD: Yes

Question 5 20:12

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MH: And, um, were the voices of the residents incorporated in the creation of the transitional housing model?

PD: In the model? (positive inflection) There were some people, that, with lived experiences that sat around the table um, but as far as the model no, we created the model based on the feasibility studies that we had, did. So you know, you could sort of say that the voices were listened to, in the feasibility study uh, but you know people for the most part, they don't really want to participate in programs and services, and so we're sort of making them participate. They would prefer to just live there for a year and you know, once they're done their year then they would just go onto their next thing. I don't see that as um, conducive to eradicating homelessness, people need life skill development.

Question 6 21:21

MH: And so when you were bringing forth the proposition to put in transitional housing in 2005, was there any significant positive or negative reaction from the community to the creation?

PD: Uh, we kept it quiet because we know for a fact that if publicly it was, people were told, there would be a lot of NIMBYISM going on (MH: ya that's...ya) because we were looking at properties, prior to the one we selected, we were looking at properties and we had said "okay, well let's have a community meeting" with the council, with the city councillors, and we had to put in a request for a zoning change in one of the properties we were interested in buying and the outright racism because we were looking for aboriginal specific, the outright comments of racism were appalling (MH: mmmm) uh..., happening inside open council chamber meetings and the city councillors allowed the individuals just to rant on, and on, and on, without putting any significant attempts to stop racist behaviours

MH: Oh, that's so frustrating...

(23:00)PD: It is! I recently came across an old article, that was in the Brantford Expositor, in regards to this, um and they had names and quotes and everything like that (chuckle) what, what(looking for the right word)...what a jerk (laughter)

MH: Well I mean, there are a few other words but they're not quite appropriate (both laughing)

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PD: (Still chuckling) I was trying to find the correct one, you know because you're recording this right...

MH: Ya (both laughing) I mean, it's not necessarily going to be verbatim [in the report] and you will get a copy of the transcripts as well, so anything that you're like "ex that out" I can always do that as well

PD: Right... so there's, so when we you know, the place that finally selected was already a residential, you know, zoning area. We were outside of the other group home circles, because each community has those circles right, between where you cannot create group homes uh, within certain areas of other group homes and so we did all of that, you know, and uh the place that we selected was a residential setting so we didn't have to go through those council chamber hearings for zoning changes and we just kept it quiet, because we knew what the outcome would be already

Question 5B 24:30

MH: Mhmm, when it eventually came out that it was open, did you...like...receive any further negative reactions other than just what happened in the council, and you know, how did you kind of move forward with that?

PD: Uh when we first started we had uh staffing in the house and so we were able to circumvent some of those things, by keeping people uh...[looking for word]

MH: sort of like, acting like a filter kind of thing?

PD: yeah, yeah, yeah and so we were able to minimize that, since we haven't had individuals in the house we haven't had many issues in regards to outright racism within the community uh so it's been pretty good that way.

Question 7 25:28

Mh: Um and are you pleased with the current model you have? You know if you guys could do it over again, would you want to do anything differently?

PD: Yes (laughter) only because I one of those believers that there's no such thing as somethings that's perfect, and there's always room for improvement, so you know when I rate something out of, you know on a scale of 1-5 I typically always circle 3 because you know it could be worse, the presentation could have

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been worse, but it also could have been better. Uh so there's always room for improvement. I would say you know, our transitional housing programs can...could be better, um I don't know how at this present moment, because I have a lot of faith in the services that we do provide

MH: Yeah, you have a lot of services (PD: Yes we do) ya it's fantastic

PD: Um, and the reason that we have so many services is because we no longer have a Friendship Centre in the city of Brantford

MH: Oh yes, okay

PD: Right, so we felt compelled to have to step up to the plate and start doing things. You know, our mandate is to provide housing, uh, and so a couple of years we had to have to Board of Directors change the mandate a little bit to incorporate some services, um because I don't necessarily see our Friendship Centre coming back to this community, which is unfortunate

MH: Yeah that is really unfortunate (PD: ya) and I mean it is, and it's also, you know, important that the services all work together because everything in the end, is all related

PD: yes, there's a common goal, or at least you should have a common goal, right? It's for the individual that walks through your door that's looking for services (MH: Mhm) How do you best provide adequate services to fulfill the individual need, and everybody should be striving towards that goals

MH: Exactly, and it is disheartening I guess when certain organizations take a different approach than that (PD: yes)

PD: And you know, it does take staff buy in too right? Um because you know even staffing from those organization if they're not all on the same page and they come at things with a different perspective then it can throw a wrench into the overall outlook of the organization

MH: Yeah, exactly. Just really quickly about the women's transitional house... is it, are they 14 individual units or is it...

PD: No, 14 Beds

MH: and is it 1 home/1 building?

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PD: 4 different locations, so what the building is that we used to buy, or that we bought, was a triplex. You know, was two bedroom houses and so we put double beds, bunk beds, whatever the case may be into each bedroom, and in the basement, because they all had their own basement, we had knocked out a couple of walls to make it one big space and we created 3 bedrooms down there with common space, kitchen, living room type thing.

MH: Ya

PD: and so it's 14 beds

Question 8

MH: Okay, I understand. So thank you for all that information, I was just wondering are you, would you be willing to share some of the documents regarding the transitional housing with me, like application form, design tool, building plans if you have them, perhaps even the feasibility study you were talking about and maybe even that article of when you went to council.

PD: Yeah Sure, um so...

MH: You can get them to me anytime

PD: I've got to write this down because if I just say yes and don't write it down (chuckle) the answers no (laughter)

MH: I can also send you (laughter) would you like me to send you an e-mail as well, so you can just respond to that?

PD: that would be phenomenal! Ya!

MH: I'll do that

PD: Ya, requesting the information you want, because you know I'm a believer in sharing stuff, but I typically only share what is being asked of me

Question 9

MH: Yeah, understood. And so we're just going to wrap up here it's been about 30 minutes, is there anything else you'd like to add, or do you have any questions or feedback for me?

PD: Um yeah the thing that I would like to add is, when we're doing services like this, and you know we did one for women we've done one for men, we've also created an elders building (MH: Yes I did see that) and um, a lot of the elders that got into this place you know, it wasn't the homelessness perspective

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but a lot of them were inadequately housed, and so that was a big eye opener that you know our elders population is underserved and is a gap as well, and then we also recognize now families as another area and so we're looking at those, and looking at way we can provide enhanced services for youth as well as for uh couples with or without children

MH: So the organization that I am currently working with is the YES Shelter for Youth and Families, so if there's anything that you're interested in terms of maybe information regarding how they've incorporated families, now they have a family emergency shelter section, if you're interested in any of that I can also send some along to you as well

PD: Yeah, absolutely, we'll be looking at that in the next little while, the Brantford Aboriginal Homelessness Alliance again, uh works very closely with Brantford Native housing and you know, they, the BAHA throws the idea out there and somehow Brantford Native Housing incorporates that idea into long term planning for services. So I'm quite happy with the coordination that has happened between those two entities. But yeah, we will definitely be looking for more information later on, you know if we don't have to do another feasibility study then why would we right?

MH: Exactly! Okay great, well thank you so much Pete for taking the time to speak with me today, I really do appreciate it and uh...

PD: You're welcome

MH: I am aiming to have the transcription done of this all next week so I'll send you a copy and I'll just get you to okay on it, that you're okay with how everything sounds and I'll make any adjustments id you'd like me to make adjustments um, because I'm going to be doing the final report for the YES Shelter mid February

PD: Oh really eh? Wow, that's a quick turn around

MH: (Chuckle) It's coming up quick ya. (Both laughing) So if you would like a copy of the report you're also welcome to have one

PD: Okay thanks Melissa, I probably will take you up on that offer.

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MH: Okay sounds good, and I'll send you the e-mail as soon as we end the call here okay?

PD: Okay, thanks Melissa

MH: Thank you, have a great day.

(Ending Salutations)

Appendix E: Youth Haven Barrie Transcribed Interview

Friday, January 13, 2017

Interview with Nathan Sykes of Youth Haven Barrie

Melissa Hunt - Trent University

Salutations not recorded.

MH: So, Just before we get started, I know have agreed to do the interview obviously, But I just want to go over the, make sure that you read the consent form and make sure that you understand the research that's going to be done and what I'm collecting and all that?

NS: Yep

MH: Okay perfect, so I just got your verbal consent there, if it's not too much trouble if you could just send a quick little email afterwards, perhaps saying, just like, for formalities so I can submit it to the department, saying I consent to Melissa doing this interview

NS: Sure, will do.

Question 1

MH: That would be great thank you so much. Um okay, so do you want to start by just telling me how you became involved with Youth Haven and how long you've been there?

NS: Sure, um, I became involved in 2009. I applied for a frontline position. So I started working as the evening shift supervisor

MH: That's great

NS: Yeah

MH: And so, did you kind of work your way up through starting there on the frontline

NS: I di...I worked frontline for about 8 months, I actually left to go to University. (MH:Oh very nice) uh but I stayed on as a volunteer, and I mean it's a small organization so I knew the staff and I kept, you know, coming back and then I actually joined a couple of the committees (MH: Oh that's great) Yeah in 2012, and then the executive director was leaving and they were

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looking, obviously, for another one and so I applied and received...and got the position

MH: Oh that's very cool, and so you were there in 2009, did you, were you involved at all in helping the move back to wellington street in 2010?

NS: Um I not involved in terms of the logistics, just the moving

MH: The physical stuff, the good stuff

NS: (Chuckle) yeah

Question 2

MH: And so I'll just jump to the next question if that's okay?

NS: Sure

MH: Would you be able to share with me what your staffing model looks like as well as your, you know, your funding model for the transitional housing?

NS: Sure. The transitional portion actually doesn't receive any funding (MH: Okay) so we receive, Youth Haven receives block funding from the County of Simcoe which is based on, it was based on our average per diem amounts for 2010,11,and 12. So it was averaged out, and so we receive a quarterly payment from the county and the difference was that before, uh, we received funding based on our numbers, but there was a, many shelters still have this, there was a 30 day cap per calendar year for someone to stay at Youth Haven (MH: Yeah) and the issue that we ran into was that 30 days was not nearly adequate for so many of the young people who are coming to us with complex needs and what happened was the 30 days would be up and they would shelter hop. SO that was one of the, that was one of the main determining factors for switching to block funding and so what it meant was that we received the same amount of funding regardless of how many clients we had, and so we were able to extend stays based on needs. And what we decided to do was convert one side of the house, which was emergency, and turn it into a transitional pilot. So we don't receive any formal funding from that but what we do receive is, uh, the young people who are staying in the transitional side they will, they'll, a lot of times it through Ontario Works or ODSP, they'll apply for an intent to rent and we'll receive funding

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that way from the government, cause they'll pay an occupancy cost every month.

MH: Okay, so the transitional and emergency housing, it's all one home, is it a duplex?

NS: Yes, it is yeah

MH: I went on the website and was looking at the pictures

NS: (Chuckles) yeah, and so basically what we did was we decided, okay well we're going to do this even though we don't receive funding 'cause we want to see what happens when we give youth the opportunity to stay for an extended, a year minus a day basically.

MH: Okay, um and so in terms of the youth that go into the transitional housing, it's the Bridge Program, right?

NS: Yeah

Question 3 5:30

MH: Um, What are some of the characteristics in your selection process of the individuals you serve and you know, what are your expectations of them during their time there?

NS: For the most part the uh, the criteria for eligibility in that side of the house is based on the SPDAT. So the SPDAT is a triage assessment tool, and it monitors, well it doesn't monitor, but it gives us an idea of acuity, so how at risk somebody is of chronic and long term homelessness. And that's probably the biggest tool that we use, there used to be uh six questions that you could ask a young person based on another study, and every time they answered yes to one of those questions it would increase the likely hood of struggling long term with homelessness and they actually incorporated that into the SPDAT. (MH: Oh Very good) So that's mainly what we do, we do it based on acuity um, and we take the highest acuity for transitional because, I mean obviously the higher the acuity, sometimes, the more complex the needs and there are more behaviour issues but they're also the ones that we, frankly, worry about the most because if we can't really intervene on a serious and long term level then the chances of them never being able to get out of the system are increased as well.

MH: Yeah, and so do you have certain ways, of maybe, handling youth that are higher risk? So it's six beds right, in the

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transitional house? (NS: Uh 5) Five beds in the transitional house so is it like a co-habited living situation with them?

NS: Two of the rooms they have a room mate, and then the one is a single room

MH: So one is a single room, but they are share a kitchen and main living room area

NS: Well that's actually, they share the same kitchen and living area as the youth in the emergency side, so the only thing that they have completely to themselves is a bathroom.

(7:21)MH: And so what are your expectation of the youth during their time in the bridge program?

NS: Well um, we have a life skills co-ordinator who also does case management and uh, really the goals are self directed and so you know we'd like to say our expectations are school or work or something, but again, because we tend to have the clients with the most complex needs it depends on where they are, us our main expectation is participation, which basically looks like meeting with the staff and figuring out what it is they want or need and then every day kind of taking a small step towards that. And it's not linear of course, you know its always, you can take two step forward and one step back, and sometimes you take one step forward and two steps back so...(chuckles), but really what it gives, for them, it's an opportunity to be in one spot for an extended period, and uh and gives them an opportunity to focus on deeper goals. So a lot of times they do want to go back to school and this gives them an opportunity to do that

Question 4 8:38

MH: And so kind of speaking to that, you mentioned the length of stay already, is a year less a day, are you finding this length of time suitable for youth to succeed in terms of not having any repeat stays once they you facility?

NS: That's a good question...um I would say in general it would be nice to have options to stay longer, like, 2-3 years for sure, but it's a little difficult to measure that because there are some other issues that come about as well, because they're still in the emergency shelter per se you know, there is still that energy, and they're still a lot of people, and there's only one common area one living room and one kitchen that everyone share,

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so it doesn't really, it's not...I wouldn't say it's a true fidelity to a transition house, where they sort of have all their own space, and have the opportunity to feel they're really learning those skills. So in that sense it's a little tricky as well, cause ideally it would be off site the nice thing about it being on site is that there is always that staff there, there is always a staff there, but uh, so there are some other things that make the program a little less than ideal largely revolving around space and it's hard to separate whether the length of time is inadequate, or whether the layout is inadequate, it's probably both. (10:16)

MH: Yeah, I had been doing some readings where I had started to notice around the 8-month mark people were identifying a time of crisis, and so that's kind of where that questions sort of came from, was the curiosity if a year was enough time to give them that space to recoup after that 8-month little blip in their progress I guess

NS: Yeah, and it's for a lot of them actually we find that they don't quite hit the 8 month mark, and the feedback that we do get is they just, they're still kind of uncomfortable, it's still a very chaotic environment uh, still very noisy with a lot of people and so, you know if you had a house where it was only two or three people living in there, there'd be so much more space, and freedom, and quiet and probably more extensive "I could stay here forever" where as a lot of them, and a lot of them still have that association with Youth Haven when they first come to the door and all the emotions that come with that, so, I definitely provides a challenge and we are currently looking at trying to acquire property outside of there

MH: Oh, okay very interesting

NS: so it's an interesting study, we thought, let give it a try and there have been a lot of results that we didn't really anticipate

MH: so you're doing a study right now that's looking at land outside of the one you currently have?

NS: Yes

MH: That's what the organization I'm working with now is looking at, building another transitional home and this is kind of working to help the pilot. So obviously if the report that I find (the one I will write) and any work that comes from that

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you're more than welcome to have access to if you think that will help?

NS: Oh thank you that would be wonderful.

Question 5 (12:05)

MH: Ya, so I'll just jump to question five here...were the voices of youth incorporated in the creation of transitional housing, you know, sort of programming side of it?

NS: Yes Definitely. Yeah we try our best to have the youth voice in everything we do

MH: yeah that's awesome, I was seeing a lot on your website about that

NS: Well even our house rules on the emergency side, if something's not working, then we'll sit the youth down and say "alright what do you guys think?" you know, "what's a good process for this, or what's a good consequences for that" and that way it does two things it, it gives them more uh, sense of uh...what's the word I'm looking for (MH: Agency?) ownership and then the other thing that it does is it uh, when a consequence is given you can say "well you guys are the ones that came up with this so..." you know, (laughter) so then kind of go oh yeah oh that's right

MH: SO did you sit down and sort of have a round table with them, kind of, to do that?

NS: Yeah

Question 6

MH: Okay, and this is sort of...I'm going to jump to the next question if that's okay? I just know that it's been tough getting together and I don't want to take up too much of your time (NS: oh it's okay) Did you notice and significant positive or negative reaction from the community to the creation of the transitional housing?

NS: No, the cool thing is because we simply converted what was already the emergency shelter to the transitional, we, I mean we didn't even really have to tell the public because we didn't make any changes other than "okay well these rooms will be transitional" I would say the reaction, when I do public speaking or when I talk to a church group or something it's

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positive, the feedback is positive, I think cause they recognize you know when we...where are you located?

MH: We're in Peterborough

NS: Oh in Peterborough okay, so I don't know what the housing situations like in Peterborough but in Simcoe County it's terrible (MH: Yeah it's not great here) Oh no, ya, the stock is so low for home ownership and the vacancy rate of rental properties is so low that prices are extremely inflated. And one of the greatest challenges we find is even when a young person says "okay I don't want to be here any more, I think I'm good, I think I'm ready to live on my own" finding that affordable housing that's also safe and clean is such a challenge, cause even if they can find something, there's you know, there are 100 people applying for that unit, and so when I have the conversation with the public about, you know, the housing concern, then suddenly they go well it's a good idea that we offer that longer term stay for those youth while we work on issues such as housing

MH: and Kind of speaking about the housing, are you finding...do you think, cause there is a university or college campus in Barrie right? (NS: Yes) Do you think the influx young students renting is impacting the ability to find affordable renting?

NS: Definitely...definitely. And uh, in terms of the numbers going down because of students, definitely, in terms of the reputation of young people is not really assisted either because, it's kind of like "oh geez college kids" they you know, are either going to trash the place or party and then the third area is that actually the college in Barrie has residents and it's pretty much empty for the entire summer and there are often unit that are empty during the school year, and yet they can only rent them out to students, so you might have 16 dorm room vacant and we had that conversation of "well can we use them?" and it's "sorry it's only for students" so...

MH: Yeah there's a bit of a gap there

NS: Ya

MH: and so in the study that you're doing looking for land outside of it, have you encountered any kind of community reactions, or is it still kind of in the quiet phase right now?

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NS: it's still in the quiet phase, um, of all the people that are helping us, you know like a real-estate agent, it's all positive feedback, but they're all engaged in Youth Haven in some way, even if it's just knowing about it and so they're, you know, they would be considered supporters to... we haven't gotten to the public phase where we've selected a piece of land and the NIMBY can happen

MH: Yeah, NIMBY is definitely something that has come up quite a bit in my readings

NS: (chuckles) yeah, oh yeah

MH: Um and do you think that maybe the length of, how long it's been established, you guys celebrated 30 years, or are celebrating 30 years this year, do you think that will kind of maybe influence the community at all because you have been established for so long

NS: I hope so, I'm not exactly sure how it will be, (laughter) sorry my kids are both home sick (MH: It's that time of year) (chuckles) yeah it definitely is. I think so, a lot of people in the community still don't know that we exist

MH: Okay

NS: and then when we tell them this is our 30th year, it's kind of like "what?!" so I think it does lend some credibility. We're working with the city of Orillia, the city is really, right now, has a very progressive council that's aware of this issue of homelessness and so there's a task force set up with one of the councillors looking at transitional housing in Orillia. And so I'm part of that task force, because they said "man you guys have been doing this for 30 years, like come and tell us what, you know what this will look like" cause we can all read the Way Home community planning tool kits and all that but you know, how does that translate to real life. So in that sense there's positive feedback

MH: That's good, I'm glad to hear that it's been you know a positive journey for you

NS: Yeah it has been

Question 7

MH: And I think we kind of touched on this a little bit when you were talking about some of the difficulties but also some of the

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benefits of having the transitional housing and the emergency together, but the next question is, are you pleased with the current model you have, and would you do anything differently if you had to do it again? But I guess you guys are kind of in that phase, of you're starting to look at doing it a bit differently right?

NS: Yeah, I think if we had to do it again I would have done it the same um, because, simply because we didn't have another location but we recognize the need for it, but um for sure the model, I mean, I'm not entirely pleased with it because we find there is a lot of, um, negative factors being that it's in the emergency shelter. You know I think of Covenant House in Toronto, and I mean the place is so big that you would never (laughter) you just don't bump into people that often it's a separate entrance and everything so that's set up a little bit differently, but for us it's a smaller house so...

Question 8

MH: and so this is kind of winding down the interview a little bit, but would you be willing to share some documents regarding the transitional housing with me, or just your facility in general, so maybe the application form, the design tools, youth agreements and if you have any building plans coming up for your new one, would you be willing to share that with us as well?

NS: Sure!

MH: would you like me to send an e-mail maybe, just kind of jot notes...

NS: Please (laughter)

MH: No Problem

Question 9 20:10

MH: So is there anything else that you'd like to add about the Bridge Program that I didn't quite touch on that you think is important?

NS: Um...I think the one area that's very interesting when it comes to transitional housing is uh, it's a dying idea. Uh and for families for adults there's this recognition, for the most part they don't need transitional housing they need permanent

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housing and the one area where transitional housing is still a factor is with youth. Cause they're not adults yet, and so that opportunity for that long term skill development in a semi-supportive environment is still really key, Um it, actually geez, I'm trying to remember her name, she's the president of the National Alliance Against Homelessness down in the United States, uh she was up at the Canadian Alliance Against Homelessness notional conference in London and was addressing the crowd and basically said you know "we're not putting money into transitional housing anymore, unless it's about youth. So I've had a lot of conversations with people who said "well transitional housings not a..." and I go "well yeah but these are not individuals who have had a lot of life experience on their own who can sort of get back on their feet these are a lot of times young people who have never had that experience"

MH: Yeah, noticing that there's like a distinct separation between youth homelessness and adult homelessness is definitely key

NS: And we find a lot of times, especially with the younger residence, when they initially come to us they, I mean they don't want to be in a shelter, which is understandable, so they'll get in a...you know they'll find a room or an apartment and move out and within, sometimes within a matter of a couple of days they'll be back. You know, what they don't realize is suddenly they're responsible for all the bills and all the cleaning and getting up on time and doing all those adulting tasks, and they find it overwhelming and they'll sabotage their tenancy, or they'll simply leave, and so that to me is another indicator of how important transitional housing can be, cause you can say "well here you go this is your place for an extended period, but you're not in this alone"

MH: Yeah, maybe there needs to be a nuanced understanding of what transitional housing is so that when people think of it they think of youth first instead perhaps what transitional housing was before

NS: Yes, definitely

MH: Um so do you have any questions for me, or any recommendations for me, um regarding this interview?

NS: um...hmm

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MH: and I mean if you think of questions afterwards you can e-mail them to me too

NS: Okay, no I think in terms of the recommendation it's mostly the reading which I'm sure you've already done...

MH: Yeah, quite a bit of reading

(Both laughing)

NS: I Bet

MH: But I mean if there are any key articles that you think are useful, I would also be more than willing, like I'll send you that e-mail, if you want to suggest them to me I will also look them up

NS: Sure, sure that'd be great

(Ending Salutations)