

August 20, 2019

## Concurrent Sessions

### *Updating the Evidence - Presentations and Conversation*

*Five concurrent sessions will be offered in thematic areas. Each session will feature three presenters who will have 15 minutes to share evidence that complements and adds to our understanding of supportive environments for child and youth mental health. Presentations will be followed by general discussion on the following questions:*

- *How does this work fit into and advance the ASI Call to Action?*
- *What are the implications for upstream investment and a whole society approach to mental health promotion?*

*Results of these discussions will be included in the final plenary session on August 21st.*

## Session 5: Having a Place Called Home - the Impact

### a) "At-risk Youth" - Journey to Wellness

Presenter: Sarah Brown, Case Manager, St. John's Homestead Inc.

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My presentation will take you through my journey as a child/at-risk youth who struggled immensely with trauma and mental illness, to a woman who is now thriving in her mental wellness as a Case Manager who supports individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with complex needs. I will provide insight into what this journey looks like for children and youth with mental illness, highlight what supports were effective and gaps in service delivery, as well as the long term implications of these strategies. I would like to instill hope, that mental wellness is always possible and potential is endless for the children and youth in our community despite the adversity some may face. I highlight the power and importance of lived experience, not only in my own life and the lives of clientele, but as a crucial part of all solutions and service delivery.

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

My presentation connects with the theme as when I take participants through my own journey to wellness, I will share real life accounts of the long term impacts of a strengths/empowerment based, whole-society approach with a child/youth battling mental illness and the successes that are possible.

**What will others learn from your presentation?**

Others will learn philosophies and strategies that were effective in my own journey to wellness as well as awareness of gaps in service delivery, effective methods I now utilize with clients, and a demonstration of how lived experience is a crucial piece in supporting mental wellness for our children and youth.

## **How does your presentation demonstrate implications for policy and practice in fostering supportive environments?**

My presentation demonstrates implications for policy/practice as my lived experience story places emphasis on long term evidence of the positive impact fostering supportive environments can have on children and youth battling mental illness.

### **Presenter**

Sarah Brown  
Case Manager, St. John's Homestead Inc.  
[sarah@sjhomestead.com](mailto:sarah@sjhomestead.com)

Sarah is the Case Manager for The Homestead Program in St. John's, Newfoundland, supporting individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with complex needs. She is an advocate for lived expertise in all levels of service delivery for vulnerable populations and was the 2017 recipient of the Young Woman of Distinction Award (YWCA) for her work in the community.

## **b) Preventing Youth Homelessness: Enabling Lived Experience to Guide Policy, Planning and Practice**

Presenters: Stephen Gaetz, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness; Melanie Redman, A Way Home Canada

Communities across Canada are recognizing that we need to do more than simply manage the problem of youth homelessness. While communities have been moving in the direction of supporting chronically homeless people exit homelessness through Housing First, until recently little attention has been paid to how we might prevent the problem. The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness is designed to help provide a conceptual framing for the prevention of youth homelessness, but also draws on international and local examples to show how this can be done. The session will reflect on the story and insights of a person with lived experience of youth homelessness. We will then highlight results of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) & Away Home Canada (AWC) pan-Canadian consultation with youth with lived experience and how this consultation informed the Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness.

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

We will provide practical strategies on prevention for communities of every size, couching these interventions in community-based systems planning.

## **What will others learn from your presentation?**

- Insights and recommendations from a person with lived experience of youth homelessness
- Results of the COH & AWH pan-Canadian consultation with youth with lived experience of youth homelessness with recommendations.

## **How does your presentation demonstrate implications for policy and practice in fostering supportive environments?**

We will provide practical ideas (grounded in evidence) for preventing youth homelessness that any community, policy-maker, service provider or funder can adopt from the Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness.

### **Presenters**

Melanie Redman

President and CEO, A Way Home: Working Together to End Youth Homelessness; Partnership and Implementation Director, Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

Melanie Redman is the co-founder, President and CEO of A Way Home Canada, a national coalition reimagining solutions to youth homelessness through transformations in policy, planning and practice. A Way Home Canada has inspired communities and countries around the world to adopt the A Way Home brand as a way to participate in a growing international movement for change. Melanie also leads the National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness in Canada, which is a pan-Canadian community of practice for youth homelessness service providers.

Dr. Stephen Gaetz, CM

Professor, York University, Toronto Canada; President, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness/Homeless Hub; Scientific Director, Making the Shift – Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

Dr. Stephen Gaetz is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at York University, in Toronto Canada. He is a leading scholar on homelessness, and is director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness at York University as well as the Scientific Director of the newly established Making the Shift – Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab. He focuses his efforts on working in collaboration with partners in order to conduct research and mobilize this knowledge so as to have a greater impact on solutions to homelessness. Stephen has played a leading international role in knowledge mobilization and homelessness research through the Homeless Hub. In 2017 he was awarded the Member of the Order of Canada.