

Elizabeth
Fry t o r o n t o
Hope. Strength. Justice.



Housing Needs Assessment

FACILITATING ACCESS TO
HOUSING FOR CRIMINALIZED
WOMEN IN TORONTO

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Acronyms Used in the Report

CASH – Coordinated Access to Supportive Housing

RGI – Rent Geared to Income

TCHC – Toronto Community Housing Corporation

ODSP – Ontario Disability Support Program

OW – Ontario Works

HOT – Housing Opportunities Toronto

CMHC – Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

ASH – Addiction Supportive Housing Program

MOHLTC – Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care

Elm Centre – YWCA Elm Centre

HC – Housing Connections

CAMH – Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

GVI – Grant Valley Institute for Women

NIMBY – “not in my backyard”

Introduction

Elizabeth Fry Toronto provides support to women who are, have been or who are at risk of being in conflict with the law. It provides supportive services, community based programs and transitional¹ housing to help criminalized² women create meaningful changes in their lives for the benefit of themselves, their families and the community as a whole.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto places women's experiences and their life contexts at the centre of its work. When women can access the information, tools and supports they need they have more options to move forward in their lives and avoid further conflict with the law. With support, criminalized women are empowered to sustain positive changes in their lives, and to become actively engaged in their communities. Elizabeth Fry Toronto maintains that, with a better understanding of the issues that criminalized women face, key stakeholders, including policymakers and funders, will be better equipped to support alternatives to incarceration leading to a decrease in the criminalization of women.

During its most recent strategic planning, Elizabeth Fry Toronto identified housing as a key service need and policy issue facing criminalized women in Toronto. As such a strategic objective for Elizabeth Fry Toronto is to engage with stakeholders to develop a housing strategy for criminalized women. As a first step, Elizabeth Fry Toronto identified the need to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment to develop a better understanding of housing needs and issues facing criminalized women.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto contracted with SN Management to conduct the Housing Needs Assessment with the following objectives in mind:

- Identify the housing needs of criminalized women in Toronto;
- Explore current housing options and key gaps in housing and housing supports for criminalized women;
- Identify housing models/promising practices/innovations employed in Toronto and other jurisdictions;
- Explore opportunities that may be available in the short and long term to improve access to housing for criminalized women, and
- Prepare recommendations and a high level strategy/plan that can provide a roadmap for Elizabeth Fry Toronto and/or stakeholders to move forward in addressing the housing needs of criminalized women living in Toronto.

¹ Elizabeth Fry Toronto operates a half-way house for women on probation or parole.

² The terms “criminalized women”, “women in conflict with the law”, “incarcerated women” and “women involved in the justice system” are used interchangeably throughout the report.

2. Methodology

Elizabeth Fry Toronto established an Advisory Committee to support the Needs Assessment Study. The Committee was comprised of Elizabeth Fry Toronto staff, women with lived experience, service providers and two City of Toronto councilors (see Appendix A for the list of members). With the support of the Advisory Committee, the following were identified as key questions for the study:

1. What are the housing needs of women involved in the justice system?
2. What are the barriers to housing for women involved in the justice system?
3. What kind of services/supports do women involved in the justice system need to be able to secure housing?
4. What enables women involved in the justice system to live a fully integrated life? How does housing fit into this?
5. Are there best practices/programs/models that have been shown to support women involved in the justice system to attain and retain housing?

The table below describes the sub-questions and information sources that were identified for each of the key questions.

Key Question	Sub Questions	Source
What are the housing needs of women/women involved in the justice system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the needs of women with mental health issues? What are the needs of women with children? Which women are experiencing particular barriers; who has the most difficulty getting their needs met? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients Service providers Web -based review
What are the barriers to housing for incarcerated women/women involved in the justice system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many referrals to CASH come from Elizabeth Fry Toronto and what is the wait list for CASH? What is the availability of rent geared to income and supportive housing for women? Are women using shelters? What happens to a women's housing when she is incarcerated (e.g., RGI)? What are the gaps in terms of housing currently available for women? What are the policy barriers (i.e., at TCHC, ODSP, OW)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients Service providers Web -based review
What kind of services/supports do incarcerated women/women involved in the justice system need to be able to secure housing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do incarcerated women have access to case management to support transition to housing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients Service providers Web -based review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What enables incarcerated women/women involved in the justice system to live a fully integrated life? How does housing fit into this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the relationship between housing and employment? What kind of supports do women want to engage with post incarceration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients Service providers Web -based review
Are there best practices/programs/models that have been shown to support incarcerated women/women involved in the justice system to attain housing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there funding available for transitional housing programs? How do different housing models finance themselves? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web -based review Key informant interviews

To answer these questions it was decided that the following information collection activities would be undertaken:

- Review of pertinent literature
- Focus groups with service providers, including Elizabeth Fry Toronto staff
- Interviews with key experts, including housing providers
- Case study interviews with up to 2 clients
- Focus groups with clients/women with lived experience

The Advisory Committee provided support to SN Management by:

- Reviewing key findings
- Identifying overall themes and themes by sub-groups (e.g., women with mental health issues, youth, mothers, Aboriginal women, etc.)
- Discussing implications for Elizabeth Fry Toronto
- Proposing preliminary recommendations for programming and advocacy

3. Literature review

3.1 Search protocol

The following search methods were used in the review:

- Review of articles (scholarly and grey literature) shared by Elizabeth Fry Toronto
- Data base review (e.g., National Registry for Evidence Based Programs, Scholars Portal, TRIP Data Base, Google (grey literature))

The following keywords were used for the database search:

- Various combinations of: women; criminalized women; criminal justice system; justice system, Aboriginal; First Nations; supportive housing; housing first; wrap around; homeless; substance abuse; mental health; support models; affordable housing, supportive housing

The types of evidence retrieved focused on:

- Effectiveness (e.g. in re-integrating women into the community)
- Housing and service needs (health; mental health; substance use)
- Housing considerations for implementation

The search was restricted to publications from the past 20 years.

3.2 Introduction

Despite decreasing crime rates, the rate of women federally incarcerated in Canada is steadily increasing. In 2003 there were 822 federally sentenced women, 374 of whom were in prison. By 2006-07, 476 women were in federal prisons (Pollack, 2008). The fastest growing group of incarcerated women is Aboriginal. Between 1996 and 2004, the rate of imprisoned Aboriginal women grew by 74.5%, and 32% of all federal female prisoners are Aboriginal (Pollack, 2008). Overall female adult offenders are more likely to be younger, single and Aboriginal than women in the general population. The proportion of federal female offenders at risk of re-offending is increasing. Between 1997 and 2007 it rose from 19% to 33% (Statistics Canada, 2008).

The literature review found that research on women who are involved in the justice system has been limited. In particular, there is very little information from criminalized women themselves regarding their experience integrating (Pollack, 2008) back into the community. The research that does exist paints a bleak picture about the post-prison lives of women and suggests that very little assistance and support is provided for women's transition from institutions³. Further, there is a dearth of evidence based (e.g., evaluated studies) information regarding effective housing models for criminalized women, and very little research that examines the attitudes of public and private housing providers towards criminalized women. While housing research examining pathways to housing for the general population has focused on outcomes such as housing stability, housing problems, psychiatric symptoms, substance use, service utilization and perceived housing choice, the studies have not examined other important outcomes such as community integration, social functioning, employment, recovery or physical health.

The Creating Choices Task Force Report (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990) recommended that the federal government develop a community-release strategy

³ The terms “institution”, “jail” and “prison” are used interchangeably in the report.

that would expand and strengthen residential and non-residential programs and services for federally sentenced women on release. The report proposed that a range of facilities be developed by community groups, and other interested agencies, including halfway houses, Aboriginal centers, satellite units, home placements, addiction-treatment centers, multi-use women's centers, mixed-group housing, and mother and child care centers. In response to this proposal, the Ministry of the Solicitor General opened a minimum-security institution for female offenders in Kingston to provide inmates with the opportunity to prepare for release into the community. Instead of expanding facilities, the province eliminated half-way houses for men (they still exist but have not been expanded for women) and transitional housing programs in favour of house arrest. While house arrest provides an alternative to incarceration, it does not include providing people with access to support programs.

3.3 Women's Issues and Needs

Returning to the community after a period of incarceration can be very stressful for women. Imprisonment triggers a process whereby women are extracted from society and are forced to adjust to a closed, structured and artificial world where they have little responsibility. Upon release they are expected to resume life in the community, exercise independence of thought and decision making and cope in a fast past environment. As such, the first six months of release is a risky time for offenders (Lasovich, 1996), particularly for women who have mental health and substance use issues to deal with.

The literature shows that there is a lack of housing options for women leaving institutions (Rogers and Hutchison, 2012). With limited options, women are often forced to return to the same situations (e.g., negative relationships) that precipitated their involvement with the law in the first place and which is likely to result in women coming back into conflict with the law (Hutchison, 2010). The interconnections between criminalization and homelessness have been documented. Many people released from prison wind up homeless and many homeless people wind up in prison (Gaetz and O'Grady, 2009). One Toronto study indicates that 20% of women leaving jail are homeless. In fact, only a small number of women have homes to return to; some stay with family members and friends, some draw on savings to rent in the short term; some use the shelter system and see it as an avenue to subsidized housing and some use motels as a last resort (Pedlar, 2008). A Vancouver study (CMHC, 2005) confirms that women have a high degree of housing instability. On a practical level, providing safe housing is the most basic way of supporting women to stay in the community — and out of jail (Lasovich, 1996).

Obtaining housing within the context of limited housing options is further complicated by lack of education, substance use, mental health and previous homelessness. On every significant measure women offenders have serious personal barriers that limit their successful re-integration into the community after prison (CMHC, 2005). A majority of women have complex histories of physical and sexual abuse and many women struggle with mental health and addiction problems. Not surprisingly, drug use/relapse is one of the most salient factors in women's recidivism (Richie, 2001). Most women have limited education (e.g., 42% have completed high school as their highest level of education), employment and/or life skills. However, a woman's access to income and employment has the most significant impact on her housing decisions. In addition, women typically lack family support and have few positive social and community supports. Most women are single parents and have childcare responsibilities. Many women prefer to go their old community upon release with the hope that they can regain access/custody of their children (Pedlar, 2008). One study found that staying in the same community as family and friends can give women a sense of purpose for getting ahead and staying out of jail (Brown and Ross, 2010).

Women need access to health services upon their release to address the long term impacts of drug and alcohol use, chronic poor nutrition, dental problems, etc. There

is a basic need for safety and protection from abusers as well as violence prevention / post-traumatic stress disorder /mental health services. Many studies document the need for enhanced discharge planning that is initiated within the institutions, work release programs, mental health and addictions supports and employment supports as keys to successful integration (Pedlar, 2008). Among Aboriginal women there is a need for support on substance use issues, connection to culture, healing from trauma, and support with motherhood issues (Poole, N., Urquhart, C. and Talbot, C., 2010). The literature also suggests that community organizations need to work together with each other and prisons to provide individualized, wraparound / case management support for women leaving prison, including formal and informal supports (Brown and Ross, 2010).

Women have directly participated in several qualitative studies, and therefore there is some literature that indicates what women with lived experience are seeking upon release from jail/prison:

- Privacy and independence in their housing and for housing⁴ with access to unstructured programs (Lasovich, 1996)
- Housing that provides: peer support, a clean and sober environment, shared decision making on household chores and rules, pro-active help to access educational upgrading and job skills training, transportation to medical services, basic life skills, including money management, and voluntary participation in counselling and healing circles
- A place to get away from drugs and violence and the help of others who understand their struggle to survive (Lasovich, 1996)
- Transitional housing so that women do not have to stay in shelters after leaving the institution as this puts them in situations where they are likely to re-offend (HOT, 2008)
- Substance use treatment as a first step post incarceration followed by movement immediately into housing (HOT, 2008)
- Safe, private and affordable housing that enables women to reunite with their children
- Programs that facilitate access to the private housing market.

The CMHC (2005) study found that women would want to be able to stay in transitional housing between six months and two years, with many women indicating a preference to stay “as long as needed” to get settled in permanent housing. Studies regarding best practices in relation to homelessness and re-integration have found that women indicate a preference for housing that includes the following:

- On-site counselling and voluntary participation in counselling;
- Clean and sober environment (no drug/alcohol use)
- Basic life skills training, including money management and communication skills
- Stable resident population (no short-term crisis beds)

⁴ “Transitional housing” and “2nd stage housing” are terms used in this report to refer to housing which provides a range of support services to residents (criminalized people) upon leaving the institution. In the health system reference to “supportive housing” typically refers to housing which includes support services for people who are at risk for homelessness due to mental health and/or substance use issues, or who have developmental, cognitive or physical issues or disabilities. Typically “supportive housing” is long term and not designed with criminalized populations in mind. However, supportive housing models have been studied to determine the impact of the model on rates of recidivism and justice system involvement.

- House rules on curfew, visitors, chores, etc., and shared decision making among residents on household chores and rules
- Peer support from ex-prisoners and “buddy” programs (e.g., community volunteers/peers that introduce women to public transportation, banking, shopping, skills training, recovery support groups, etc.)
- Access to recreation, sports and crafts
- Access educational upgrading and job skills training
- Transportation to medical services.

Many women (i.e., mothers or those seeking to re-unite with children) want a violence and drug-free living environment shared with others who understand their issues and struggles to reintegrate; however the preferences of women involved with drugs and sex trade workers are not clearly articulated in the literature.

3.4 Current Housing Options

Overall, the literature demonstrates that a range of housing options and services should be available to meet the needs of diverse populations of women and also their changing needs over time. For example, the CMHC (2005) study found that safe, private, secure and stable transitional housing is critical for women who are leaving prison and re-entering the community. However, publicly funded low income housing options are in fact disappearing for criminalized women (Richie, 2001). Further, while the literature indicates that a range of housing models is preferred and that one size does not fit all, access to the few options that do exist for women (e.g., shelters, halfway houses, transitional housing, long term supportive housing, subsidized independent housing, private rooming houses, etc.) are in fact limited.

3.4.1 HALFWAY HOUSES

The halfway house is typically the option for women on conditional release. Unfortunately, halfway houses are often not located in communities where women want to eventually settle and therefore do not support women to reintegrate with her children/family or chosen community upon release. Moreover, the halfway house is often located in areas where there is an active drug culture and therefore has the potential to contribute to criminal behaviour. However, with enhancements, there is the potential for the halfway house to provide an effective transitional housing option for women. While there is a dearth of evidence-based research on “what works” in halfway houses, interviews conducted to supplement the literature review indicate that environments which provide independence and support and which feature trained staff, case management and strong partnerships are desired.

3.4.2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The number of affordable housing units created in Canada annually fell from 20,000 to 1,500 when the federal funding for social housing was cancelled in 1993 (Hulchanski, 2002). Since 2001 less than 10% of new housing starts were intended for the rental market. At the same time there has been an overall increase in condominium rentals with an average vacancy rate of 2%, which is well below the balanced vacancy rate of 3%. The rental demand is pushing up prices and driving down the affordability of rental stock in Toronto. Outside of Vancouver, the Greater Toronto Area (e.g., Halton, Peel, York and Toronto) has the most expensive rental prices (e.g., \$1,050 to \$1,075 for a two bedroom apartment) (CMHC, 2010). Not surprisingly, there are currently, 161,000 people on the wait list for subsidized housing in Toronto.

Women in prison receive between \$6.90 per day if they are on a program and as little as \$1.00 per day if they are not. Therefore, many leave the institution with little money for housing. At the same time, most criminalized women rely on the private market place where they experience many challenges, including: lack of affordability, improper personal documentation, stigma of criminal history, community objection due to concerns with safety (Berman, 2005) as well as sexual harassment/exploitation. Subsidized housing is critical in addressing the gap between the cost of housing and women's incomes, which at this time is inordinate (Pedlar, 2008). Interestingly, studies have shown that subsidized housing models that provide supports have higher rates of success in achieving permanent housing than non-subsidized housing without supports.

3.4.3 TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Research shows that those who gain permanent housing after transitional housing are likely to remain stably housed. Transitional housing offers housing for periods ranging from three months to two years. Transitional housing moves beyond basic survival needs, often through the inclusion of services aimed at treatment and training for vocational and life skills. The congregate settings of many transitional housing models allow individuals to learn or hone skills for independent living while participating regularly in treatment and rehabilitation services on- or off-site. Low-demand and high-demand housing are distinguished by their rules, expectations, and methods of service delivery. Low-demand housing models typically have few rules outside of normal tenant and lease arrangements. On the other hand, high-demand housing is typified by an extended set of rules, regulations, and expectations. These programs usually expect residents to participate in certain activities, treatment and therapy to remain in the program. High-demand and low-demand housing both provide an array of support services that help clients to move towards housing stabilization. Housing and relocation assistance are indispensable services for transitional housing residents. Without permanent housing upon discharge, residents risk continued housing instability, mental health, and substance abuse problems. According to Barrow and Zimmer (1999), permanent housing services should include: identifying housing options; preparing for landlord/tenant group interviews/applications; transportation; childcare; understanding financing or lease arrangements; budgeting; furniture; deposits and moving expenses, and helping transition to a new community.

Supportive housing is a combination of affordable housing with supportive services, intended to help residents, particularly with mental health and substance use issues, maintain residential stability. Depending on the support service provider(s), supportive services may include coordinated case management, mental health and health services, substance abuse treatment, and vocational and employment services, among other services. Currently, there are 4,343 supportive housing homes in Toronto and 3,195 people on the waiting list. Supportive housing programs for criminalized women in Toronto have not been studied; the barriers to supportive housing for criminalized women are not documented; nor have appropriate housing support models been explored.

However, the provision of supportive housing to individuals with homelessness and mental health histories has been shown to reduce their use of and costs to the corrections, emergency services, and shelter systems (Burt and Anderson 2005; Culhane, Metraux, and Hadley 2002; Culhane, 2007). For example, the CMHC (2005) Vancouver study compared a co-ed supportive housing program (Pathways) with a co-ed residential facility (Colombia Place) that provides lower levels of support and found that the supportive housing model results in lower subsequent criminal charges or returns to custody and concludes that supportive housing is a priority if re-offending is to be avoided. The same study saw higher improvements in terms of health status, reduced alcohol/drug use, higher involvement in job readiness programs, improvements in housing status among the supportive housing comparison group. Further, an evaluation of supportive housing in Ohio, USA found that a supportive housing approach is the key to success.

Coordinated Access to supportive Housing (CASH)

CASH is made up of twenty eight mental health and addiction agencies who serve individuals living with mental health and addiction challenges; there are 4,434 health-funded supportive housing units within the partner agencies. To apply for supportive housing for persons with mental health challenges including addictions, clients must:

- Be challenged with mental health issues, be at least sixteen years of age, and qualify for a housing subsidy under the criteria set by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC).

To apply for supportive housing for persons with problematic substance use, clients must:

- Have a severe and active substance use challenge, be at least sixteen years of age, be homeless or marginally housed, be a high intensity service user of emergency departments, withdrawal management systems, hospitals, and/or the justice system, and qualify for a housing subsidy under the criteria set by the MOHLTC.

To apply for the Mental Health and Justice Supportive Housing Program, clients must:

- Be challenged with mental health issues, be at least sixteen years of age, be homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness, have current involvement with the criminal justice system at time of housing intake, be referred from a priority referral source, and qualify for a housing subsidy under the criteria set by the MOHLTC.

Key partners for the Mental Health and Justice Supportive Housing Program are: Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto, LOFT Community Services, COTA and Houselink Community Homes.

3.4.4 HOUSING FIRST

Housing First is a housing model developed in the United States that provides a homeless persons, in particular those with concurrent disorders, with immediate access to housing and abstinence from drugs or alcohol is not a prerequisite. Housing First approaches are based on the concept that an individual's first and primary need is to obtain stable housing, and that other issues that may affect the individual can and should be addressed once housing is obtained (Tsemberis, S., Gulcur and L. Nakie, M., 2004). In contrast, many other programs operate from a model of "housing readiness" — that is, that an individual or household must address other issues that may have led to the episode of homelessness prior to entering housing. A feature of the Housing First model is that housing is subsidized. In Toronto, the Streets to Homes initiative was launched in 2005 and has demonstrated some success (e.g., 90% of participants have remained housed). It was developed for rough sleepers and it is not known if the approach is effective among different sub-populations (e.g., defined by gender, age, presence of concurrent disorders, Aboriginal status, ex-prisoners and immigration status). In particular, it is not clear whether the model can be effective with criminalized women (e.g., unlike rough sleepers, women coming from prisons have spent time in highly structured environments). In fact, the literature suggests that housing-ready models may be more effective for women with a history of conflict with the law and substance abuse problems.

3.5 Housing in Practice - Some Examples

Elizabeth Fry Society, Kingston has operated Joyce Detweiler House, a 10-bed halfway house, since 1970; and manages a one-bedroom satellite apartment for federally sentenced women on conditional release. The Society also runs Kaye Healey Homes, a program for low-income single persons and families, which provides twenty five rent

geared-to-income apartments in eleven properties scattered throughout the city and one twelve unit apartment building. Women coming out of prison are eligible to apply for Kaye Healey Homes; however, waiting lists are more than a year and the Society gets requests for housing assistance “on a regular basis” from women released from the federal prisons. It is of note that Elizabeth Fry Kingston prioritized housing many years ago, invested significantly in business development capacity and has become highly entrepreneurial in its approach to developing housing in Kingston.

The Step Two, England and Wales, has provided semi-independent accommodation for women ex-prisoners since 1984. The goal of Step Two is to maximize housing opportunities for its residents by: providing a secure base from which to search for permanent housing in the community; helping women to make applications and claims for welfare benefits, assisting them to overcome problems which had affected their housing in the past, including basic life skills and communication skills, money management, and paying off bad debts acquired before they went to prison. Most women remain at Step Two for nine to twelve months. Women with serious drug or alcohol misuse problems or diagnosed psychological problems, who require more than minimal support to find long-term housing, are not considered appropriate referrals.

Huntington House/Women’s Prison Association, New York City is a transitional residence designed to assist homeless women who are coming out of prison or jail to rebuild their lives in the community and to reunite with their children. It is a six-story building with twenty eight apartments and can accommodate thirty seven women, nineteen families and eighteen single women, who are working toward family reunification. It is drug-free environment with twenty four hour supervision and rules that are strictly enforced, including no drugs, no weapons, no unexcused absences, no physical violence and no spanking children. House services include comprehensive case management, substance relapse prevention, HIV/AIDS education and services, peer support, life skills and parenting skills programs, educational/vocational referrals, on-site child care, supervised family visits and activities, and permanent housing placement. Women can remain at Huntington House for up to two years, but the average stay is between six and eighteen months. Women with a history of substance abuse problems must complete a treatment program and enter the program drug-free. Huntington House does not accept women with severe mental illness or a serious communicable disease.

Community Connection Resource Centre (CCRC), San Diego provides re-entry and recovery services for prisoners and ex-prisoners, including residential and non-residential programs. Community residences for women include Freedom House, a highly structured twenty bed re-entry home for women on parole, where residents stay for between nine months and a year, followed by an individualized six-week aftercare program in the community. CCRC also operates Stepping Out, a nine-bed clean and sober house as the first stage in community resettlement.

Columbia Place and Pathways, Vancouver is run by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Vancouver. Columbia Place can provide a supportive and monitored environment to ten women who have been in conflict with the law or who are in need of transitional housing. The goal of Pathways is to provide stable, transitional, safe, secure and flexible housing, supportive programs and counselling for high risk women offenders in order to increase their ability to live independently and to assist their social integration into the community so that they do not commit further crimes or return to prison. Columbia House provides individual support, goal planning and program referrals, but is not considered transitional housing. The programs have been evaluated and shown to have a positive impact. Elizabeth Fry Vancouver, like its sister agency in Kingston, has also prioritized housing over the past two decades.

Jean’s Place, Portland is a transitional housing program for women with a variety of issues that have prevented them from securing a safe and stable housing situation. Jean’s Place houses a total of fifty-five women in a dedicated building and provides a

range of services to address the diverse issues and needs of their residents. Jean's Place takes a consumer- centered approach, providing every woman with a personal case manager. It has a zero-tolerance policy for drug and alcohol. Urine and blood analysis are conducted regularly, and women are required to abide by curfews and use the sign in/out logs. Violence and theft are not tolerated. Evaluations of the program indicate that 70% of women who complete the full program remain stably housed at one year follow-up. Numerous anecdotal reports from prior residents demonstrate the program's success in helping women to stabilize their lives.

3.6 Housing Women with Substance Use Needs

The right combination of housing and support programs is the key predictor of success for women with substance use needs (CMHC, 2005). Critical success factors include:

- A harm reduction approach - which provides the context for flexibility and a client centered approach in working with program participants/residents
- Flexible and intensive case management – based on a trusting and respectful relationship, including a relationship that helps provide hope, optimism and real opportunities for moving beyond homelessness;
- A high level of support - particularly being available in the evenings and on weekends
- The role of staff - an approach which includes an attitude of helpfulness and respect
- Collaboration among agencies – particularly between the housing and social service providers
- Connections with community services - to help participants get involved in community activities and be able to contribute to the community
- Social activities for the program participants/residents - including communal meals
- Stable funding
- Eviction on a case-by-case basis – whereby behaviours that endangers staff and residents are not tolerated, but all means are explored to resolve issues before a person is evicted.

3.7 Summary of the literature and Considerations for Developing Housing

Housing first models have been shown to positively affect tenure for long-term shelter dwellers, the hardest-to-house and for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. However, the literature suggests that housing-ready models may be recommended for persons with a history of conflict with the law and substance abuse problems. There is a lack of evidence regarding which approach works best with criminalized women; however some studies indicate the women prefer violence and drug free environments and/or women only buildings.

The literature also indicates a critical need for short and long term second stage housing (e.g., short term transitional housing for women post release and safe and affordable long term housing). Overall, the literature shows that one size does not fit all; housing models may include:

- Clean and sober residence for women who have addictions histories;
- Low threshold residence for women who are drug/street involved;
- Apartments for women whose community re-entry plans may include going back to

school, job skills training/placement, or participating in community-based programs which encourage and support family reunification;

- Apartments for women with diagnosed mental illness, with access to case management;
- Apartments for HIV-positive women, with access to health care services, and
- Housing specifically designed for Aboriginal women.

The literature (FCM, 2012) also suggests that housing is a challenging business and that providers should think about the following before pursuing housing initiatives:

- Cost/affordability
- Funding availability and models (see below)
- Appropriate staffing (e.g., skilled, qualified and present)
- Addressing resident support needs (see women's needs above)
- Managing conflicts and resolutions (e.g., clear rules and procedures)
- Choosing appropriate housing program design (e.g., engage tenants in design)
- Promoting tenant empowerment (e.g., involve tenants in program and building design, rules, program planning)
- Addressing zoning, building design (e.g., interior and exterior building design)
- Addressing NIMBY issues (e.g., clear communication, being a good neighbour, by-law regulations and limitations, etc.)
- Availability of programs and program space and coordinated services (e.g., life skills training, addictions services, mental health programs)
- Stakeholder relations and partnerships (e.g., meaningful relationships that will enhance sustainability and success)
- Considering long term success for residents (e.g., maintaining a high level of staff and resident support)
- Considering specifics for diverse populations of criminalized women.

Funding

Lack of stable, adequate funding has been and continues to be the greatest limiting factor to the planning and delivery of housing and the situation is unlikely to change any time soon. Funding models need to take into account: development costs, capital start-up costs, one time start-up costs, building occupancy and maintenance (e.g., administration, security, collections, etc.) and support service costs (counsellors, case managers, etc.). Funding models can include combination of self-financing (e.g., for purchase of property and staffing) and government funding (e.g., for subsidized housing, construction, operating subsidies). Fundraising and social enterprise are options used to pay for housing expenses. Partnerships (e.g., between housing providers and support service providers) should be considered to provide the full range of support services.

4. Stakeholder Consultations

In order to supplement the information available through the literature, the following stakeholders were consulted:

- Key Informants: fourteen interviews were conducted with housing service providers, support service providers and community agencies that work with criminalized women (please see Appendices for a list of participants)
- Elizabeth Fry Toronto staff: eight staff participated in a focus group session, and
- Women with lived experience:
 - Twenty women participated in a focus group session
 - Two women participated in case study interviews

Standardized interview and focus group guides were used to promote a consistent approach to information collection (please see Appendices for the interview guide).

4.1 Service Providers

Findings from the key informant interviews and staff focus group are presented below. They have been organized into key themes.

4.1.1 BARRIERS TO HOUSING

Financial Barriers

Those interviewed were in strong agreement that criminalized women face numerous financial barriers to accessing housing and provided the following as examples.

- There is a lack of rent supplements and affordable housing available to criminalized women.
- Increasingly many housing providers or agencies that hold head leases require insurance from tenants. This means women need a bank account and criminal reference checks which is problematic for women who have a history of theft or fraud. As such, women it would benefit women to have the standard requirements (deposits and references) waved in order to secure housing.
- At this time, a woman's access to ODSP or OW is cut off when she is incarcerated; this can result in women going into arrears on rent/mortgage and being evicted or falling into big debt. Many women could avoid losing their housing if they could meet bail conditions and avoid having to be in custody.
- Because they have been criminalized it is so hard for women to get work (even volunteer work). As such, women need a program that supports their access to employment.
- Women who are living in half-way houses are further disadvantaged because they do not qualify for OW or ODSP. Rather they receive a \$4.10 per-diem (e.g., \$125 per month) for basic needs. Without access to employment they struggle to find affordable housing.

Gendered Concepts of Home, Safety and Relationships

Neither the justice nor the housing systems are designed to view criminalization through a gender lens. For example, men and women have different concepts of home which is informed by concepts of safety and relationships. Women are relational and it is not

uncommon for a woman to look for a relationship after leaving jail. A woman's home is understood as the place where relationships are lived out. As such, women seek to be proud of their homes and want to be able to furnish and decorate their homes. While a man may be satisfied with a bachelor unit, typically, many women are not; however the system tends to penalize women who are "picky" about the housing that is offered to them.

On the flip side, key informants stated that, due to financial barriers (e.g., most women end up in minimum wage jobs or subsidized housing), women can get housing faster in neighbourhoods that return them to the conditions and relationships that put them at risk for re-offending and/or losing their housing (e.g., near people who are threatening, dangerous or whose illegal activities put them at risk). Alternatively, they may get housing in areas far removed from the services that they need and cannot afford to travel to (e.g., many women are housed in Ajax). Fortunately, women who are on probation or parole can return to the half-way house for support, but often women are more focused on establishing themselves and their families and the half-way house limits their ability to move forward.

For sex trade workers, there is a lack of recognition that women are involved in the sex trade and that the home is used for this business, and that housing case workers need to address this in their planning (e.g., safety).

Current Housing Services and Systems

Those interviewed also agreed that housing programs and systems pose barriers for criminalized women. Currently there are 74,000 active applications for subsidized housing, the wait period is ten to fifteen years, and the wait list is managed by Housing Connections (HC). Women who have applied for subsidized housing need to contact HC annually to confirm their interest in staying on the waiting list; this is challenging for women who are homeless or living precariously. Further, Housing Connections is a mail based system, which may make it difficult to communicate with women who are in jail/prison. Further, and particularly relevant for incarcerated women who live in subsidized housing, HC rules stipulate that people who do not occupy their units for ninety days, will lose their housing, even if they can continue to pay rent.

As with HC, there are numerous barriers to system access and navigation related to Toronto's shelter system, which is managed by Central Intake. Where in the past women could phone a particular shelter directly or have their workers call Central Intake on their behalf; now women have to call Central Intake directly and on their own. The process is often invasive and women are asked many questions even before they are told whether there is a shelter bed available. The process has created more barriers, less efficiency and agitates women or scares them off. While the central intake process was seemingly designed with efficiency and access in mind, it has created barriers to access and should be revisited. Further, there are very few shelters that have staff with the skills and qualities needed to work effectively with criminalized women, and Central Intake system does not take this into account when referring women to a shelter.

Similarly, supportive housing models and staff typically do not have the knowledge and skills to address the particular barriers experienced by criminalized women.

Further, the lack of coordination between the housing system and children's services was noted as highly problematic for women who are trying to establish a case to be reunited with their children but who cannot qualify for the required two bedroom units. Those supportive housing programs that are designed to work with more marginalized women (e.g., Elm Centre) have long wait lists and are often not accessible for women who could benefit from the supports offered.

Discrimination and Stigma from Public AND pRIVATE Housing Providers

Because the vacancy rate in Toronto is so low, landlords pick and choose who they want as tenants (i.e., single women; women who are not on OW). Criminalized women experience discrimination by landlords who become very suspicious if women are not able to say where they have been living or paying rent (e.g., while incarcerated). Landlords also assume that women coming from the justice system will bring violence with them into their new homes. Even the most supportive landlords in the private market draw the line on drug use and will move quickly to evict. As such, there is a need to “coach” women on how to engage with landlords in honest ways that do not jeopardize their housing status.

Transwomen/people experience significant discrimination from landlords in the private market. Those interviewed suggested that they may experience intolerance from other women in women only housing; however over time women can build compassion and understanding. However, there was agreement that Toronto Community Housing is not safe for transwomen/people and transwomen should not be in coed or men’s facilities.

Trauma Informed Mental Health/Substance Use Supports

There was also strong agreement that women with serious mental health and substance use needs should not be in jails or halfway houses but in housing programs that can provide the specialized supports that they need. Women with mental health and addiction needs are at very high risk of losing housing (should it be secured) and of re-offending. Unfortunately, while women need access to mental health and addictions programs and supportive housing, there are 300 people on the CASH and Addiction Supportive Housing (ASH) wait lists, and the system does not prioritize criminalized women who do not admit to or do not have a diagnosis of serious mental health/substance use. There is some addiction housing that is not abstinence based and which provides women with choices in a housing system with little choice and in which many housing providers are not interested in accepting women with active addiction. If a woman does get into supportive housing, there are often problems related to active substance use and providers are quick to evict on this issue. There are safe beds available at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH); however a bed can only be accessed by a referral, which makes it difficult for a woman to have access to a bed when she needs it.

In addition, criminalization complexifies women’s experiences of trauma (e.g., as a result of sex work, having had children removed, abusive partners, addiction, etc.) and services for women should be provided through a trauma informed lens which recognizes that being in jail and incarcerated brings its own trauma and associated behaviours. Many interviewees stated how critical it is that service providers have the knowledge and skills to work effectively with criminalized women (e.g. well trained case managers/ housing workers that have experience with mental health, addictions and criminalization). For example, service providers need to be able to engage with women, but be able to call women on behaviours that put their housing at risk, and they need to use multi-disciplinary, trauma informed, harm reduction and case management approaches.

Trust

Women’s experiences with institutions have been so negative that there is a fundamental distrust of the system. Criminalized women do not trust that the system will be responsive to their needs or respectful and there is hesitation to access police support even when necessary (e.g., to deal with violent incidences) because they fear that they will not be treated fairly or will be treated negatively. Therefore, when a service provider does establish a helping relationship in jail/prison/half way house, the transition/referral to another worker should be handled very carefully to ensure that the trust is maintained and that the woman has continued access to the support she needs.

4.1.2 ENABLING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Transitioning from Jail to Housing /Community

As stated, maintaining housing can be challenging, particularly for women who have been institutionalized for a long time as this involves going from a very highly structured environment with no independence to unstructured settings with high independence. Women learn to live in jail in a way that they do not normally live on the outside and it takes a long time to change institutional behavior and thinking (e.g., survival thinking). Further, many women have had little life experience that did not involve criminal behavior, and may be scared by their freedom and of repeating the cycle of behaviour that led to being incarcerated. Women also experience loneliness upon release from jail/prison; they have lost friends or do not want to associate with old friends on the outside and /or may have experienced family breakdown and are no longer surrounded by women like they were in jail.

Many of those interviewed agreed that more halfway houses or transitional houses are needed to support women's transition from a high to low/no structure environment. At this time, shelters are the only option for many women and these are not appropriate for most women, especially for those with mental health or substance use issues.

Further, women who have experienced trauma and incarceration are not going to respond well to highly intrusive environments. Rather than duplicating institutional systems, engagement models that are low barrier, low demand should be used to provide housing and housing supports to women.

Collaborative and coordinated Housing Solutions

It is important for service providers to work with and refer out to likeminded agencies. In particular, collaboration among likeminded agencies is needed to create and test new housing options that are "ideal" for women. For example, several of those interviewed suggested that women's groups come together to explore the possibility of developing housing which is barrier free/low barrier (few eligibility criteria), high support (services are available), low demand (no or low requirement to participate in programs/use services) and trauma informed. It was also suggested that EFT collaborate with housing providers and participate in housing tables to coordinate service delivery and ensure that limited resources are used as effectively as possible.

At the same time, there are currently public housing providers and landlords that have developed collaborative relationships with service providers who work with criminalized women and who are more open to housing women with substance use issues and criminal charges. For example, a number of interviewees suggested that the support staff at some agencies, such as the Salvation Army's Harbour Light, are using a harm reduction approach and women using the services of these agencies experience little discrimination. Unfortunately, there are few examples of working partnerships and models and those which do exist have not been documented by the sector as good practices.

Justice System Coordination

At this time, the justice system operates in a silo and does not coordinate with service providers to effectively support women. For example, there is a need for system coordination between the justice system/institutions and Ontario Works to ensure that women do not go into arrears because their income support is cancelled when they are arrested. Further, service providers such as Elizabeth Fry Toronto do not know when a woman is being released, either from jail or the courts. This makes it hard to put in place a housing plan and supports that will help a woman to avoid re-offending on her first nights out of custody. As such it would be useful to implement a collaborative program between the courts and service providers whereby any woman released from a court house is linked to a housing support worker.

Housing Services in Jails/Prisons

Women's ability to plan for housing while in jail/prison is limited (e.g., she cannot make phone calls to landlords). In other jurisdictions (i.e., the United Kingdom), there are workers in institutions focused exclusively on housing. In Ontario the Elizabeth Fry Societies coordinate their services to provide as much coverage as possible in the system; however, they are not able to deliver their services in a coordinated manner with the institutions.

Interviewees consistently identified the importance of having dedicated housing workers available in institutions to build trusting relationships with women prior to their release. In this capacity, housing workers can engage with women to develop long term housing plans that ensure housing is in place for women upon their release and that there are housing supports in place to facilitate women's longer term integration into the community. Housing plans should be unique and reflect the optimal housing situation for each woman, and housing workers should discuss the full range of housing options (e.g., not steer women to one option) with women prior to release to inform women's individual housing plans. Also, in order to maintain trust, housing support workers should follow women when they transition into the community and help to build trust and effective linkages between women and other housing support workers/housing case managers.

Community Based Housing Case Workers and Supports Services

Interviewees stressed that women need stable housing in order to focus on and begin to address other issues in their lives, and further, that women would benefit from housing case managers/housing support workers who have specialized training regarding the needs of criminalized women. Housing case workers would meet regularly with women (e.g., weekly) over a period of two to three years to facilitate their transition to the community. They should provide education regarding housing rights and options (i.e., especially for women in sex trade work), education and information about tenant rights and responsibilities (i.e., what it means to hold a lease, have guests, be responsible to neighbours, effectively address concerns), be available to negotiate with landlords, and provide supportive accompaniment (e.g., during visits to buildings).

Women also need programs/supports to help build social support, navigate the employment market, address counselling needs (i.e., trauma informed and case management needs (for mental health)). Many young women will go back to school but need access to flexible educational programming so that they can address trauma, mental health and/or substance use issues. Further, an engagement/relationship model should be used in service delivery with criminalized women.

Transitional Housing

Transitional or second stage housing can help to provide women with access to affordable housing and the supports that are needed to integrate back into the community. However, in Ontario there are only two transitional housing programs specifically designed for criminalized women. At the same time, developing or providing transitional housing is challenging and not always financially viable. Several of those interviewed suggested that organizations need to adopt an entrepreneurial culture and develop significant financial/banking expertise to be in the housing industry. To this end, Elizabeth Fry Toronto may have an opportunity to explore the feasibility of leveraging its current resources (e.g., property) to secure financing for new housing. At the same time, it can learn from those who have established best practices in this area.

Transitional housing should provide a balance of on-site support, on-call support and programming whereby women have access to 24 hour supports provided by trained staff. Transitional housing programs should avoid institutional frameworks as rules replicate the institutional pain that women, in particular Aboriginal women, have experienced through incarceration. Both congregate/clustered and scattered transitional housing

models can work with appropriate management structures and systems in place. While clustered housing models may allow for peer support and the development of a woman driven community, scattered housing may provide women with anonymity and women may feel less stigmatized in a scattered model. At the same time, clustered models may bring up issues related to institutionalization for women (e.g., it is difficult to leave the group setting). Overall, interviewees stressed the importance of providing women with as many options as possible (e.g., apartment for mothers; congregate units for women with high support needs, etc.).

For Aboriginal women, the scattered model may be preferred as it enables Aboriginal women to integrate into the community and reduces potential stigma and/or experiences of harassment that can occur when a building is identified as Aboriginal specific. It also reduces the risk of problematic behaviours that tend to occur more in groups (e.g., excessive drinking) and which jeopardize housing. Some of the interviewees suggested that Aboriginal housing should be dry while others suggested a harm reduction model.

Women Centered Models /Women Driven Programming

Different women have different needs. As such, it is important to engage women in decision making and work with each woman to determine the kind of housing environment and the support services that are best for her based on her unique needs and context.

Because there is no single housing solution, women should be provided with choices and options and an environment in which women can establish their own housing goals and plans for achieve these goals. This could include independent units for moms trying to reunite with their children or high support units for women with addictions.

Peer based models should be used to build positive social networks and develop social skills among women. This includes using models where women are accountable to each other. In a congregate housing environment this would involve women establishing their own house rules and running their house meetings. In a scattered situation, this could include establishing a “peer sponsor” program whereby women connect with their sponsor immediately upon release from jail.

4.2 Women with Lived Experience

Findings from the focus group and interviews held with women with lived experience are presented below.

4.2.1 WHAT WOMEN WANT

Below are comments women provided to describe what they had hoped for after being incarcerated.

- To go home (e.g., for those not originally from Toronto)
- To be with family; to stay connected to family
- To have my own space; my own apartment; not a space that I need to share
- Connections to services such as trauma counselling, life skills counselling, support with financial management, employment supports and intensive housing support services for a long period of time
- Access to income/resources until I am settled in a house or find a job
- Housing first so that I can get settled

4.2.2 WHAT WOMEN ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE

Many of the women interviewed described their experiences after leaving jail as being quite different from what they had hoped. They stated that many women leave jail without a housing plan and as such many do not have a place to spend their first night upon release. Many of those interviewed stated that women leaving jails end up at shelters which they described as worse than jail. In particular, single women's shelters are not designed for criminalized women due to the rules, regulations and policies which replicate the experience of incarceration. Nevertheless, for many women a shelter is often the only option, but due to the Central Intake process, gaining access to a shelter can be challenging. Many women believe that they do not have a choice or an option when it comes to housing and that "having a place to sleep is better than being on the street".

Women discussed their experiences and frustration with long wait lists for subsidized and supportive housing and for support programs, such as those available at Elizabeth Fry Toronto. Many women discussed their challenges with finding employment and their struggle to find employers who would consider hiring women with criminal records. Women connected their housing situations to their employment status and stated that it is "hard to work when you are living out of a backpack". Other women talked about the challenges of living on fixed and limited incomes. For example, OW does not provide enough to cover actual rental costs for many women. Even if a woman finds housing upon release from jail, she has a hard time holding onto it because she cannot afford to pay the rent. As such, many women talked about having to live in neighbourhoods and environments that are tempting; that is, in neighbourhoods where access to old relationships or behaviours puts them at risk for reoffending. Many women also expressed frustration with not being "troubled enough" to meet the eligibility criteria for supportive housing (e.g., CASH), while others stated that supportive housing providers are "prejudiced" against criminalized women. For example, many women have faced eviction because their behaviours (i.e., substance use) are perceived as troubling by housing providers.

4.2.3 WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO A WOMAN'S ABILITY TO FIND AND RETAIN HOUSING

Women who were interviewed suggested that the following contribute to criminalized women's ability to find and retain housing:

- Personal motivation/readiness
- Mental health supports and programs
- Connections to other women with lived experience (e.g., peer support)
- A housing plan which will support them to regain access to/custody of their children
- Housing support services provided by skilled staff who understand the issues facing criminalized women
- Housing plans and supports that are initiated in jail/prison and which follow women for 2- 5 years. Each woman's housing plan and supports would be unique to her situation and would enable her to access and retain housing over the long term
- Income support for a period of time (e.g., until a women is stabilized in housing and employment)
- Services or supports for women who are entrepreneurial
- Service providers who recognize that all women are different and the need to work with each women in the context of her unique situation

- Service providers who are responsive and flexible and whose systems do not pose barriers for women who need support and/or are looking for help (e.g., wait lists should not create barriers for women who are ready to make a change)

In addition, the women suggested a number of concrete and practical solutions for supporting their access to housing.

Housing Services and support programs

Women suggested that trained and dedicated housing support workers and housing support services should be made available inside jails/prisons, and that women start working with dedicated housing support workers at least one month before release to develop their housing plans. They also suggested that a “direct referral program” be initiated whereby, at a minimum every woman leaves jail/prison with a safe place to stay on her first night upon release.

Those interviewed agreed that women also need to be linked to housing support workers in the community and that these workers should be available over a long period of time and function as their “housing case managers”. Women suggested that attachment to a long term housing program could provide regular follow up and the following services and supports over a period of several years:

- Support with landlord negotiation;
- Provision of information about tenant rights and responsibilities, and
- Form filling and monitoring (i.e., completing Housing Connections forms properly, determining eligibility for priority housing and helping women to stay in the queue for housing).

Housing

In addition to housing services, those interviewed suggested that there is a need for more halfway houses to support their immediate transition from jail/prison to the community. At the same, they stated that women also need access to longer term transitional or second stage housing that can provide stability for several years as they work to stabilize their lives (e.g., addressing mental health, reunification with children, educational, employment training needs, etc.). Access to a private room of one’s own and the ability to come and go freely were identified as minimum requirements in any housing model.

Employment and Income Supports

Women interviewed suggested having access to skilled employment workers who understand issues facing criminalized women and who can support women with employment related issues such a criminal reference checks. For example, some women leave jail/prison and are ready to start working right away, but they need supports that will connect them to employers who are willing to hire women with records.

They also suggested the introduction of a guaranteed income /income supplement program (e.g., not rent geared to income) which recognizes that the pathway to community integration may take several years of investment. This program would allow women to make incremental improvements in their lives without penalizing them financially. Alternatively, they suggested that there may be funders who would support a program whereby a woman’s contribution to her rent is “matched” by an organization for a period of time.

Women Centered Programs and Services

Above all, women agreed that housing models and support services need to be appropriate to each woman's unique needs and context. To facilitate women's integration back into the community they strongly suggested that criminalized women themselves be hired/engaged wherever possible to make decisions about programs, deliver services and support each other.

5. Program and Advocacy Suggestions

The table below presents a range of program and advocacy ideas that emerged through the review of the literature and stakeholder consultations.

Needs and Barriers	Direct Service Ideas	Collaborative Programming Ideas	Advocacy/Public Policy Ideas
Financial Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce staff who work specifically with women on employment related options • Develop or bridge women to meaningful volunteer work experiences • Develop a “savings” plan with women whereby earnings over a period of time are invested in a housing plan • Develop a “matching” program for women who are saving their earnings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate with the province to have deposits covered by agencies; this will avoid landlords having to assume risk • Advocate for alternatives to incarceration such as house arrest that are linked with support services
Gendered Concepts of Home, Safety and Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use engagement/relationship models in service delivery to establish and promote trust 		
Current Housing Services and Programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a direct referral relationship between Elizabeth Fry Toronto and Aboriginal supportive/subsidized housing providers • Develop a direct referral relationship between Elizabeth Fry Toronto and Elm Centre for women with mental health/substance use needs and/or for Aboriginal women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to the City for changes to Central Intake to create enhanced access for women • Advocate to the City to have criminalized women added as a priority group (e.g., at Housing Connections, etc.) • Advocate to the City of Toronto for increased coordination between Housing Connections and Children’s Services
Stigma and Discrimination from Housing Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create relationships with supportive private market landlords • Work closely with women using substances to develop harm reduction/housing/safety plans that will not put women’s housing at risk (e.g., identifying alternative locations for using substances) • Maintain a focus on transwomen 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to the City to ensure that transwomen are housed appropriately
Trauma Informed Mental Health and Substance Use Supports		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with mental health organizations to offer trauma informed programming for women • Set up a partnership with CAMH to develop safe beds for criminalized women with mental health/substance use 	
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a housing support program that is initiated in jail and which provides follow up support in the community, either by the same staff or through a referral process that is focused on maintaining trust with women and continuity in service delivery • Develop a follow up service to ensure that women who leave the half-way house are linked with housing support workers in the community that they trust 		

Enablers	Direct Service Ideas	Collaborative Programming Ideas	Advocacy/Public Policy Ideas
Transitioning from Jail to Housing and the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a “direct housing referral” program to ensure that all women leaving jail have a safe place to spend the night • Implement a dedicated housing worker in jail to develop housing plans with all women prior to their release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility of setting up “Justice Beds” (e.g., through collaboration with CAMH) to provide alternatives to shelters for women with addiction 	
Collaborative Housing Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing services in an area of the city where there are identified gaps rather than trying to provide city wide coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together a group of women’s housing service providers to identify best practices and explore opportunities to develop collaborative housing (e.g., start developing plans now to be prepared for future opportunities) • Set up collaborative agreements with housing providers whereby the housing providers reserve a certain number of units for Elizabeth Fry Toronto clients and Elizabeth Fry Toronto provides housing case management services to criminalized women 	Develop an organizational housing advocacy plan which identifies the most strategic alliances/networks for achieving housing goals

Needs and Barriers	Direct Service Ideas	Collaborative Programming Ideas	Advocacy/Public Policy Ideas
Justice System Coordination		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot an initiative with the justice system to attach a housing case manager to women released directly from the court house 	
Housing Services in Jails and Prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a direct housing referral program whereby all women leaving an institution have a safe place to sleep for a period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot test a provincial housing support program within either GVI or Vanier through collaboration with the institutions and Elizabeth Fry Societies 	
Housing Case Workers and Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot test a housing case worker program • Provide housing support in areas that are not well served (e.g., Scarborough) 		
Transitional Housing Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing assets (e.g., finance a second property) to: • Expand the half-way house • Provide transitional or second stage housing 		
Women Centered and Driven Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect women who are getting out of jail/prison at the same time to each other so that they can support each other with community integration • Integrate peer components into housing support programs and services 		

6. Considerations and Conclusion

This study found that criminalized women have unique and often unmet needs which impact their ability to attain and retain housing. The study also identifies a number of activities that Elizabeth Fry Toronto can consider as it develops its strategy to improve housing for criminalized women. The study produced a broad list of potential solutions which range from delivering housing support services and programs to developing and providing new housing through collaborative initiatives and advocating for changes to policies and procedures that impact criminalized women's access to housing.

At the same time, resources for developing or providing housing or housing supports are extremely limited. As such, the study also stresses the need to undertake activities in collaboration with likeminded agencies or through strategic advocacy with institutions such as Vanier Centre for Women or Grand Valley Institution for Women. While it has a mandate to serve criminalized women, Elizabeth Fry Toronto is a small organization with limited resources. As such, it should assess how to allocate its resources to have the greatest impact. It may wish to consider pilot testing initiatives that result in short term wins but have limited impact while pursuing longer term initiatives that lead to more substantial results.

Further, a particular kind of organizational culture and management skills set is required to be in the housing business. Elizabeth Fry Toronto may wish to engage with the Canadian Association of Residential Options for Criminalized Women (CAROW) for strategic advice and direction about organizational requirements for developing housing and the feasibility of investing its substantial assets in creating new housing. At the same time, to be effective in increasing access to housing for criminalized women, Elizabeth Fry Toronto's leadership needs to be more visible in the housing sector; with name recognition as a housing advocate, Elizabeth Fry staff will have an easier time advocating for their clients with service providers, institutions and funders.

Overall, this study demonstrates that stakeholders are interested in working with Elizabeth Fry Toronto to enhance housing for criminalized women, and provides Elizabeth Fry Toronto with tangible suggestions for moving forward with this key strategic priority.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Advisory Committee Members

Michelle Coombs, former Executive Director, Elizabeth Fry Toronto⁵

Karen Brown, Project Lead, Elizabeth Fry Toronto

Kathryn Mettler, Jean Tweed

Caroline Rabbat, YWCA Toronto

Diane Robinson, Peer, Elizabeth Fry Toronto

Romelia Gariba, Peer, Elizabeth Fry Toronto

Kristyn Wong Tam, Councillor, City of Toronto

Rebecca Burrows, Board Member, Elizabeth Fry Toronto

Eleni Samartzis, Housing Connections

Adam Vaughan, Councillor, City of Toronto

Appendix B: Community Stakeholders Consulted

Robin Cuff	Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Tara Wilson	City of Toronto
Richard Skipper	City of Toronto
Joan Campbell	Ontario Non Profit Housing Association
Eleni Smartzis	Housing Connections
Kathryn Mettler	Jean Tweed
Teresa Tucci	City of Toronto
Pamela Gawn	Central Neighbourhood House
Kirsten Schmidt	Scarborough Centre for Healthy Community
Sheryl Lindsay	Sistering
Shawn Bayes	Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
Trish Crawford	Elizabeth Fry Kingston
Linda Brett	Coordinated Access to Supportive Housing (LOFT Community Services)

⁵ Michelle Coombs left Elizabeth Fry Toronto in December 2013, just as this project was wrapping up.

Appendix C: Interview Guides

KEY INFORMANTS:

1. Introductions

- Name
- Association with Elizabeth Fry Toronto, if any

2. Describe the services that your organization provides.

- How does your organization address housing needs, if at all?

3. What are the barriers to housing/housing needs of criminalized women?

- Do these differ for different groups of women?
- Women with mental health issues and/or substance use issues?
- Women with children?
- Youth?
- What happens to a women's housing when she is incarcerated (e.g., RGI, private housing)?

4. What services are available to support criminalized women to address housing barriers and meet their housing needs?

- Are women using CASH?
- Are women using other supportive housing for women with mental health and/or substance use issues?
- What is the availability of rent geared to income?
- Are women using shelters?

5. What are the gaps in terms of housing and housing supports currently available for women?

- What is the relationship between employment and housing?
- Is there a need for case management?

6. What kind of housing model (s) would be useful for criminalized women?

- What are promising practices (e.g., with transitional housing, supportive housing, the private market and landlords)?
- Are different models needed for different women?
- Mental health and/or substance use?
- Mothers?
- Youth?

7. Are there opportunities to develop housing (e.g., supportive, transitional) for criminalized women?

- What are the starting points?

Final comments?

WOMEN WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

1. Introductions

2. Think about the kind of home and community that you would like to live in after leaving jail/prison. Describe the kind of home or housing that would help you to transition back into the community and to achieve your goals? Probes:

- Independent living or group living?
- High support or low level of support?
- Type of neighbourhood?
- Short term, transitional, long term?

3. What kinds of services, if any, would you want provided to you, either in this home or off-site? Probes:

- What is the relationship between employment and housing?
- Is there a need for case management?
- How does housing help women achieve goals?

4. What do different women want or need in their housing? Probes:

- Mental health and substance use?
- Mothers?
- Youth?

5. How does your current housing situation compare what you described?

- Probes:
- What is your current situation (e.g. subsidized, type of neighbourhood)

6. What challenges do women who are leaving jail/prison face when trying to find housing? Probes:

- Do barriers differ for different groups of women (women with mental health issues or substance use issues, women with children, youth)?
- What happens to women's housing when incarcerated (e.g., RGI, apartment, house/ mortgage, etc.)?
- Other barriers - Income supports, employment supports, choice of neighbourhood and safety?

7. What kind of support would you have found useful to help you find housing after leaving jail/prison? Probes:

- Immediate support with applications for subsidized housing or programs like CASH?
- Ongoing support during the wait for subsidized housing (to prevent getting lost in the system)?

8. What kinds of housing services are currently available and used by women?

- Are women using CASH?
- What is the availability of rent geared to income?
- Supportive housing for women with mental health and/or substance use?
- Are women using shelters?
- Are any of these programs helpful?
- Are women aware that Elizabeth Fry Toronto has a housing support worker/ housing support program? Are women using it? Why or why not?

9. Final comments?

CASE STUDY

1. Introductions

2. Where were you living before the first time you went to jail?

3. Where are you living now?

4. Is there where you want to be living?

5. How long did it take you to find housing?

6. How much do you pay?

7. What is preventing from being in the kind of home you want to be in?

8. Think about the kind of home and community that you would like to live in after leaving jail/prison. Describe the kind of home or housing would be useful for women to support your transition back into the community?

- Independent living or group living?
- High support or low level of support?
- Type of neighbourhood?

9. What kinds of services, if any, would you want provided to you, in the home or off-site?

- What is the relationship between employment and housing?
- Is there a need for case management?
- Does the type of housing help women attain goals?

10. What would different kind of women want or need in their housing?

- Mental health and substance use?
- Mothers?
- Youth?

11. How does your current housing situation compare to this?

- What is your current situation (e.g. subsidized, bad neighbourhood)

12. What are the barriers to housing facing criminalized women leaving jail/prison?

- Do these differ for different groups of women (women with mental health issues or substance use issues, women with children, youth)?
- What happens to women's housing when incarcerated (e.g., RGI, apartment, house/ mortgage, etc.)?
- Income supports, employment supports, choice of neighbourhood and safety?

13. What do women need to support them to access housing after leaving jail/prison?

- Support with applications for subsidized housing or programs like CASH?
- What kind of support during the wait for subsidized housing – this can be up to three years?

14. What kinds of services are currently available to support criminalized women to address housing barriers and meet their housing needs?

- Are women using these services?
- Are they useful?
- Are women using CASH?
- What is the availability of rent geared to income
- Supportive housing for women with mental health and/or substance use?
- Are women using shelters?
- Are women aware that Elizabeth Fry Toronto has a housing support worker/ housing support program? Are women using it? Why or why not?



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