

The Impact of Housing on Quality of Life

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Community-based research exploring HIV, housing & health

Housing is key to health and well-being.

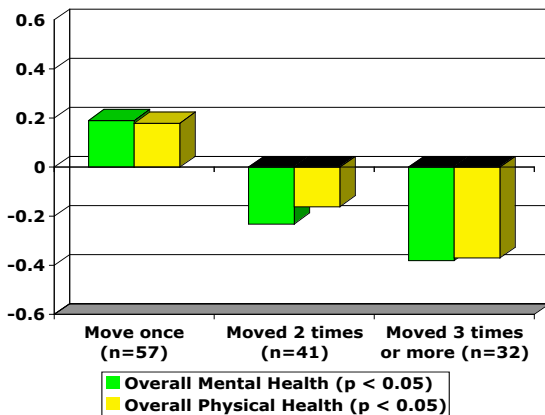
When people with HIV have stable housing and feel they belong in their neighbourhoods, they are healthier. When they don't have to move more than once in a year or worry about losing their housing, they enjoy better quality of life. On the other hand, when their housing is threatened, both their mental and physical health suffers: they have much lower quality of life than those who can make ends meet.

The Challenge

Almost half of people in Ontario living with HIV have problems with housing. In 2006:

- 75% had incomes of less than \$1,500 a month
- 4 out of 10 found it difficult to pay their rent
- 1 out of 3 was at risk of losing housing
- one-third were worried about being forced out of their homes
- one-quarter did not feel they belong in their neighbourhoods
- 1 out of 5 people surveyed had moved in the last year: 9% had moved once, 7% had moved twice and 5% had moved three or more times.

Impact of Moving on the Mental and Physical Health of People Living with HIV



Some Solutions

What can support workers in AIDS service organizations do to help clients find and keep stable, affordable housing?

- Make housing needs part of case management: ask people living with HIV about the stability and affordability of their housing.
- Provide assistance in finding and keeping stable, affordable housing in neighbourhoods where clients feel they belong: develop formal partnerships with local housing providers and let them know about the issues that people with HIV face.
- Use volunteers or peers to help provide support services, such as calling clients once a week or meeting them and helping them get to know their neighbourhood.

For more information, see healthyhousing.ca

Positive Spaces, Healthy Places is the first longitudinal community-based research initiative in Canada to examine housing and health in the context of HIV and AIDS. It is following people with HIV from across the province to learn more about their housing status, the housing options available to them, and the factors that affect housing access and stability. Positive Spaces, Healthy Places is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, the Wellesley Institute, the AIDS Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Ontario AIDS Network.