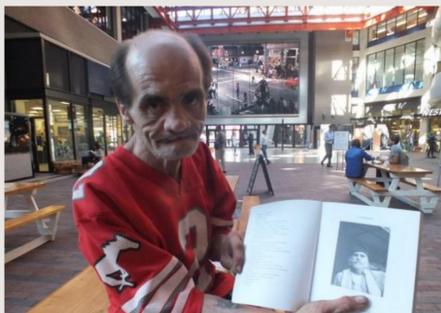


Talking about Housing First: Engaging the expertise of peers in homelessness research and advocacy

Faith Eiboff PhD(c) | Aaron Munro | Vancouver's Housing First Speakers Bureau
University of British Columbia | RainCity Housing and Support Society | Vancouver BC | Canada

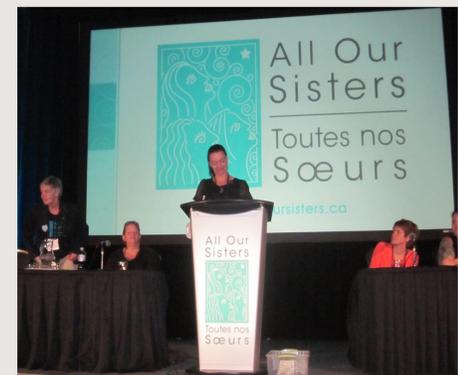
Vancouver's Housing First Speakers Bureau is a peer-led initiative formed in 2011 by participants from the Vancouver site of the landmark Canadian At Home/Chez Soi study – the world's largest demonstration project on Housing First for homeless individuals with mental illness in five cities across Canada (October 2009 – March 2013).



“Leaders, policy-makers and researchers who shape our health and housing strategies find it hugely beneficial to hear the voices of people with lived experience.”
City of Vancouver



“This was the most powerful session I attended. Hearing from people with lived experience was very impactful.”
“This was an incredible session!! It's not very often we bring the public into public health!!”
CPHA Delegates



“Here we all have our voices. We all have an opportunity to speak...”

- The Speakers Bureau is a group of people housed by the At Home/Chez Soi project who got together as a collective strategy to engage society and talk about mental health and homelessness.
- They received media training, and through a peer-support model, speak to a variety of community, policy, and academic audiences throughout the year.
- When the At Home/Chez Soi project ended, the Bureau partnered with the non-profit agency RainCity Housing to continue their work, and extended their reach through a community-academic collaboration with the University of British Columbia and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- Members of the Bureau are brave and generous individuals who share their 'insider' knowledge of what it's like interacting with their community of choice and creating a safe place to live.
- They have received accolades from community stakeholders for generating candid, engaging and educational discussions, challenging myths and stereotypes associated with chronic homelessness.
- Speakers Bureau presentations create opportunities to advance mutual learning, promote more informed and balanced policy discussions, and share power in decision-making with people who are often excluded from conversations about policies and programming that directly affects their lives.

- PEER SUPPORT MODEL**
- Monthly meetings and check-in
 - Members provide mutual support to one another
 - Preparation for and debriefing of presentations and media interviews
 - Development of public speaking skills; media training and guest speakers
 - Review and vet new speaking opportunities as a group
 - Speakers selected for engagements by consensus to ensure equal participation
 - Peer-support person available to speakers at engagements
 - Members provided with honoraria for meetings, speaking engagements and travel
- NOTABLE MEDIA AND PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**
- Media: The Globe and Mail; The Vancouver Sun; French CBC Radio Canada
 - *Here At Home*, Web documentary by the National Film Board of Canada
 - All Our Sisters: National Forum on Women's Homelessness (London ON, May 2014)
 - Canadian Psychological Association Annual Convention (Vancouver, June 2014)
 - Housing First Principles into Practice Workshop and Video Series (Oct 2014)
 - Mayor's Roundtable on Mental Health and Addictions (Vancouver, Oct 2014)
 - Canadian Public Health Association Annual Conference (Vancouver, May 2015)
 - American Public Health Association Annual Meeting (Chicago, Nov 2015)
 - Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness National Conference (Montreal, Nov 2015)



Introducing our Speakers Bureau members:

Angela	Bonnie	Dave	Laszlo	Oliver	Scott
Andrew	Colin	Gary	Mad Dogg	Royal	Thomas
Bobbie	Colleen	James	Nicholas	Sara	Trevor

For more information and to view some of our work please visit:

<http://athome.nfb.ca/#/athome> www.raincityhousing.org



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