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HOUSED by CHOICE, HOUSED by FORCE - Homes, Conflicts and Conflicting Interests

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Architecture_MPS, University of Cyprus; Cyprus Institute

Please send this fully completed document as an attachment.

The document must be in **Microsoft Word**.

Begin the title of the attachment with your first name, followed by the surname.

Example:

Joanna Smith_Housed by Choice_Housed by Force

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: A preliminary assessment of the Emergency Warming Centre in Inuvik, Canada: Qualified support for harm reduction through housing first

2. Format: Verbal Presentation

Written paper / verbal presentation / screening / short film / other – please specify

3. Author(s) Name: Michael G. Young,

4. Email contact details: Michael.young@royalroads.ca

5. University or Company Affiliation: Royal Roads University

6. Abstract (300 words):

Homelessness in Inuvik Canada represents a significant problem requiring unique solutions. Visible, chronic and hidden homelessness in Inuvik Canada emerged as a significant problem in the 1990's. The majority of homeless persons are Aboriginal and many suffer from concurrent disorders (i.e. addiction and mental health problems). Given the geographical and rural context, homeless persons are at high risk of injury, illness and premature death. While some community support services are available, there are gaps in service and coordination problems for homeless persons with concurrent disorders. A homeless transition shelter with 18 beds is available, but sobriety is required for access.

The present research examines the effectiveness of the Emergency Warming Centre (EWC) that operated in the Anglican Church in 2014-2015. The EWC holds up to 20 persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol providing they are not violent or disruptive. Loosely based on a philosophy of housing first, the EWC follows a harm reduction model wherein the intention is to reduce the risk and incidents of mortality and morbidity. Evaluation of the EWC's effectiveness involved interviews about residents' experiences at the centre and an assessment of their social health using the SF-12. To determine the impact of the EWC on lifestyle change, residents also completed the Readiness to Change Questionnaire (RCQ).

Overall, the results indicate that the EWC was effective at preventing mortality, but its effect on morbidity was less clear. The interviews show that residents benefitted from a safe place to stay and that they felt better about their overall health. However, the results of the SF-12 and RCQ between time 1 and time 2 do not demonstrate significant differences. Comparing these results with research on wet shelters in other jurisdictions in New Zealand, Great Britain, the United States and other areas in Canada reveals that harm reduction based housing first models for homeless populations with concurrent disorders require significant investments in infrastructure. In Great Britain, the importance of community outreach and integrated case management are essential for homeless populations with concurrent disorders. Additionally, the importance of non-judgmental, professionally trained staff to work with these populations is highlighted in Europe, New Zealand and North America. However, a lack of financial, professional and infrastructure resources stymie the success of housing first models in rural locations. Yet, the lessons learned other jurisdictions might be extrapolated to communities like Inuvik providing the strategies are sensitive to the unique socio-economic, cultural and geographical challenges faced by homeless persons with concurrent disorders in the Canadian north.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):

Dr. Young holds a B.A. and an M.A. in criminology and an interdisciplinary Ph.D. from Simon Fraser University. His dissertation on social workers' attitudes toward euthanasia

and assisted suicide in the U.K. was completed in spring, 2006. Dr. Young has been involved in the Justice Studies Program at Royal Roads University in some capacity since its inception; he joined the program as a core faculty member in January, 2008. Currently, he teaches courses on comparative legal systems, social policy and culture, and research methods.

Other topics of interest to Dr. Young are in some way or another related to social justice. He has conducted research on youth gangs, euthanasia and corrections and has several publications in academic journals and books. Dr. Young's research interests include an exploration of the linkages between homelessness, mental disorder, substance abuse and crime, and the development of policies and programs which can reduce the severity of these social problems. To this end, he is involved in the proposal for a therapeutic community in the greater Victoria area.

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