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HOMELESSNESS

Poverty, housing and homelessness . . . how far have we come? County Poorhouses of the 1800's in Ontario referred to the residents as "inmates," a term used at the time to describe anyone living in an institution. Social reforms followed and a social safety net evolved but have we progressed much since then?

The [annual report](#) of the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) tabled November 2, 2009 makes several recommendations for addressing the lack of mental health services in Canada's federal prison system. The report highlights the need to improve the care and treatment of federal inmates with mental illness. In Ontario, 39 percent of inmates have been diagnosed with a mental illness, have a current psychiatric medication order in effect or are receiving ongoing evaluation or psychological intervention. The report calls for increased hiring of mental health professionals and the implementation of intermediate mental health care units across Canada. On the surface the call for more service seems logical; however, is this not replacing one institution for another?

[Exploring the Circle: Mental Illness, Homelessness and the Criminal Justice](#)

System in Canada an April 2004 Library of Parliament paper indicated that between 1960 and 1976 the number of psychiatric beds decreased by 68%. The policy of deinstitutionalization was to be coupled with an increase in the availability of community-based treatment and support services. The paper argues that this commitment was not fulfilled to the extent needed and that there is a strong inter-relationship between prison, homelessness and mental illness.

- Approximately 66% of homeless persons have a lifetime diagnosis of mental illness. This is 2-3 times the rate in the general population.
- Approximately 66% of homeless persons have a lifetime diagnosis of substance (i.e., drug and/or alcohol) abuse. This is 4-5 times the rate in the general population. ([Exploring the Circle](#))

Many homeless persons state that the loss of a job was the reason for landing on the street. It is generally accepted that those with a mental illness can expect their illness to worsen and their time on the street to be prolonged as a result.

"Some will die. The sick will get sicker, the well will become ill. In the spring, the survivors will be grateful for warmth. It will be safe again

Events

Halton

February 9, 2010 Community T.A.M.I. Presentation on Depression 7:00pm-8:30pm. Oakville. Please contact: [Cathy Thompson](#)

Hamilton

March 8th, 2010 Celebrate International Women's Day by tuning into an OTN event about youth depression and resources. Please contact [Cheryl Vrkljan](#)

Niagara

Making the Connection Work: Identification & Support for Older Adults with Mental Health and/or Substance Use Problems. March 25, 2010, 9:00am - 4:00pm at the Ina Grafton Gage - Auditorium, St. Catharines. Cost of Event: \$75.00. [Please Register](#)

Waterloo

Under One Roof: A Workshop for Housing Providers Serving People with Concurrent Disorders. March 26, 2010. Please contact [Pat Allan](#)

Additional information:

to sleep in the parks and on the riverbanks. Those are homelands in the country of the poor.” – June Callwood, The Globe and Mail, 1987

The Mental Health Commission of Canada recently launched the [At Home/Chez Soi project](#). Housing is at the core of this model: establish housing first then treatment and resources to follow. "It's unlike anything else anyone in the mental health field has been able to do before," says CAMH's Dr. Paula Goering of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's (MHCC) national \$110 million homelessness research initiative. Under her guidance, the MHCC has developed a unique and comprehensive national research plan to help the growing number of homeless people who have a mental illness. Providing safe and sustainable housing is paramount and unconditional in this model. People who have a mental illness and are homeless are more responsive to interventions and social support when they have a safe and sustainable place to live. The outcomes of this initiative will begin to open the door to change.

Local CAMH in the Community Projects

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[Tobacco Free Sports & Recreation](#) | [Suicide Prevention Research and Knowledge Exchange](#) | [Concurrent Disorders Young Women and Depression Prevention \(VALIDITY\)](#) | [Talking About Mental Illness](#) | [Seniors Medication and Alcohol Resource](#) | [Youth Mental Health Promotion](#) | [Drug Awareness Initiatives Education and Training](#) | [System Planning Prevention Program for Families](#) | [Anti Stigma Programs](#)

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[Education and Training](#) | [System Planning and Development Primary Care](#) | [Diversity, Inclusion & Health Equity](#) | [Drug Strategy Strengthening Families](#) | [Concurrent Disorders](#)

CAMH Resources

Innovative [housing initiative](#) gives long-term CAMH clients new options

CrossCurrents Housing and Homelessness articles: [Beyond shelter](#): Youth-work program provides long-term solutions to homelessness | Youth homelessness in Canada: [The numbers on the streets](#)

CAMH Research

[CAMH scientist](#) leads national homelessness research initiative

Learn more about the [At Home/Chez Soi project](#)



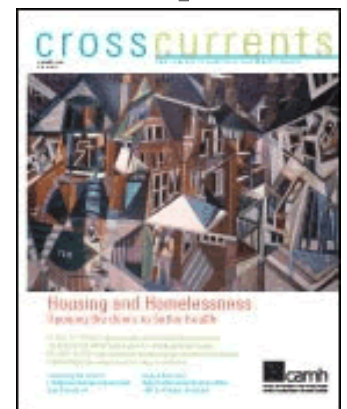
Letters to a Street Child

A 25 minute docu-drama based on the letters the filmmaker received from her father while she was addicted on the streets at age 13 - 14.

The Ontario Deprivation

Index is a poverty measurement of the actual standard of living of the poor. Of the 10 items on the index 4 relate to stable housing.

[Making Good on the Promise Evaluating Year One of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)



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CAMH Public Policy and Health Promotion

[Joint Submission](#) to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Long-term Affordable Housing Consultation Session, July 22, 2009

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