

WHAT MAKES A HOUSE A HOME? AN EVALUATION OF A SUPPORTED HOUSING PROJECT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LONG-TERM PSYCHIATRIC BACKGROUNDS

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ABSTRACT

Supported housing (as distinct from supportive housing) emphasizes the values of consumer choice; independence; participation; permanence; normalcy; and flexible, ongoing supports. As a model, it has only recently become popular in the literature and therefore little is known of its effectiveness in serving people with long-term psychiatric backgrounds. In 1989, Homeward Projects, a community mental health agency located in Metropolitan Toronto, established a supported housing project. Homeward included an evaluative component in its program from the outset. In order to give equal weight to the tenants' opinions, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed. In the quantitative component, residential milieu, social support, and service delivery were examined. The qualitative component involved an ethnographic study which allowed the tenants to voice their experiences of living in such a setting. Results provided a rich understanding of the model. Overall, the tenants eventually came to describe their house as a home.

Discussion of supported housing has become increasingly popular in the mental health literature (Carling, 1990). Supported housing, as distinct from supportive housing, is based on the constructs of consumer choice, permanence, normalcy and flexibility, and ongoing supports (Posey, 1990). The more traditional supportive housing models, on the other hand, stress a linear continuum of service whereby a resident "begins his or her progress along the continuum, moving from the most restrictive and intensely staffed setting to less restrictive alternatives" (Ridgway & Zipple, 1990, p. 12). From the perspective of the service recipient or resident, however, the distinction between these two approaches can mean the difference between participating in a "housing program," or settling into a real home in the truest sense of the word (Posey, 1990). Consumer preference

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studies indicate that consumers want a permanent home with flexible supports (Everett & Steven, 1989; Goering, Durbin, Trainor, & Paduchak, 1990). Supportive housing, based on the continuum model, forces consumers to move when they reach a certain level and this disrupts their relationships.

In 1989, Homeward Projects, a community mental health agency located in downtown Toronto, established a supported housing program in order to serve adults with long-term psychiatric backgrounds. As there are very few examples of this newer form of housing in Canada, scientific investigation of its effectiveness is required (Goering et al., 1990). Ridgway and Zippel (1990, p. 27) caution us that "any new model ought to be thoroughly evaluated and its efficacy demonstrated."

Traditionally, most studies examining housing outcomes have focused on resident characteristics as predictors of success (Kruzich, 1985), yet environmental variables have been shown to be better predictors of outcome (Cournos, 1987). In a review of 33 studies, Brekke (1988) found that there is little or no empirical understanding of what programs do or how they do it. Consequently, it is difficult to replicate those that are successful or explain the failure of unsuccessful ones. In addition, the philosophical underpinnings of programs are frequently not explicitly identified in research and as a result, it is difficult to judge whether first, a coherent programmatic value base did exist and secondly, if it was translated into a workable conceptual model of service delivery (Brekke & Test, 1987).

More importantly, consumer voices have typically been ignored in research or drowned out by those of mental health professionals (Lord, Schnarr, & Hutchison, 1987; Ridgway, 1988). Additionally, when consumers' opinions have been solicited, methodological concerns have arisen with respect to acquiescent bias (Elbeck & Fecteau, 1990). Only very recently has listening to consumers as experts and teachers been recognized as having the potential to enrich and expand both the knowledge base and ability to provide meaningful and effective services (Wilson, Mahler, & Tanzman, 1990).

It now seems clear that the methodology selected for program evaluation must give a voice to the recipients of services which allows them to speak their minds without fear of reprisal. In order to accomplish this task, there is a growing recognition of the usefulness of qualitative methods (Lord et al., 1987). A comprehensive evaluation requires not only a quantitative, but also a qualitative approach to data collection. This paper describes an evaluative study of the Homeward supported housing project which utilizes both these methodologies.

HOMEWARD PROJECTS: MODEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY

In the fall of 1989, Homeward opened an apartment building in Toronto's inner city where the goal was for 14 individuals with long-term psychiatric backgrounds to find a home, rather than a therapeutic environment. To accomplish this goal, the agency developed a program based on a consumer needs and preference study conducted by consumers themselves (Everett & Steven, 1989). The critical issues identified formed the basis for a clearly articulated value system which informed and directed all aspects of the Homeward program.

Specifically, the study stressed consumer involvement above all, while additionally recognizing as important all those values associated with a supported housing model (consumer choice, permanence, normalcy and flexibility, and ongoing supports). Other consumer housing preference studies were also reviewed and incorporated into the Homeward project. These studies suggested that what was also desired was a setting that minimized system maintenance variables such as staff control, rules, regulations, and programming while maximizing relationship variables (Ridgway & Zippel, 1990). In other words, consumers wanted support, not supervision (Everett & Steven, 1989).

The residence itself is a low-rise apartment building comprised of 14 bachelor units. There is provision of common space for collective activities and for on-site visits by Homeward support staff. Tenants were made aware that Homeward staff wished to be seen as support persons not supervisors. In order to drive home this message, tenants were assured that, with the exception of emergency situations, no support staff could enter their apartment without invitation.

Consistent with Homeward's values of normalcy and permanence, the agency did not ask that the building's owner and the tenants' landlord, the Supportive Housing Coalition, seek any exemption from the provincial Landlord and Tenant Act. Therefore, all occupants entered a typical tenant relationship and no other rules or regulations governed tenure in the apartment building. It should be noted that in Ontario, the Landlord and Tenant Act (April, 1989) is designed to protect the tenant and eviction can only occur under very specific conditions. For example, tenants were made aware that often forbidden behaviours such as alcohol use, overnight guests, low standards of cleanliness, or non-attendance at tenant meetings did not and, in fact, could not constitute grounds for eviction. Thus, the primary role of the service recipient became that of tenant/householder rather than patient/client.

There was also no requirement that tenants be in a program of any sort. Any services needed were linked to the tenant as an individual and not to the housing itself. In this way, the service or supports could be introduced or withdrawn as the tenants themselves dictated. Further, in order to promote participation, voluntary tenant meetings were held bi-weekly at which a Homeward staff member attended as facilitator. The meetings were intended as a forum for problems, general communication, and social interaction. Finally, to ensure agency-wide participation, a representative from the tenant group was asked (and agreed) to sit on the Homeward Board of Directors.

Research Objectives

1. The first objective of this evaluation is to describe the residential milieu itself in terms of the social climate of the housing which includes:
 - (a) the prediction that scores on certain COPES (our measure of the social climate) subscales will be higher than scores on other subscales, for both staff and tenants;
 - (b) the prediction that staff would perceive greater emphasis on those supported housing values that were integral to the building; for example, that they would perceive more autonomy and less staff control than would tenants;

- (c) an examination of changes over time on COPEs subscales as perceived by staff and tenants; and
 - (d) an examination of qualitative data from tenant interviews regarding social climate.
2. The second objective of this research is to examine the number and nature of the social supports available to tenants which includes:
- (a) the prediction of change over time from formal to informal supports; and
 - (b) an examination of qualitative data from tenant interviews regarding social support.
3. The third objective is to examine staff-tenant contacts over the one year period through:
- (a) the prediction of less contact over time; and
 - (b) an examination of qualitative data from tenant interviews to see if staff are viewed as supports rather than supervisors.

Unlike traditional quantitative research, the ethnographic methodology chosen for the qualitative portion of the present study specifically guards against the formation of a priori hypotheses (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). The researcher is thus free to analyze data as they are collected in order to develop an ever deepening understanding of the milieu under study.

METHODOLOGY

Triangulation was the research approach chosen for the evaluation of the supported housing project. This term is borrowed from navigational language and refers to the necessity of plotting one's course from at least two points on the compass. In the case of research, triangulation highlights the need to examine a particular problem from a number of perspectives. It is a well respected (although not widely utilized) methodological technique (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1983; Webb, Campbell, Swartz, & Sechrest, 1980), which is broadly defined as the use of two or more sources of data, observers, methods, and theories (Greene & McClintock, 1985). This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the goal of which was to strengthen the validity of overall findings through congruence and/or complementarity of the results from each method. Congruence refers to the similarity, consistency, and convergence of results, whereas complementarity refers to one set of results enriching, expanding upon, clarifying, or illustrating the other.

Participants

The current research focuses on 14 individuals (10 women and 4 men) who reside in Homeward's apartment building and who remained in the residence over the course of the study year. All tenants provided informed consent, which ensured confidentiality, and their right to refuse to participate at any point in the study without prejudice to their tenure in their home. All tenants agreed to participate and were provided with monetary compensation for their contribution to the research effort.

Chronicity was measured by Minkoff's Criteria for Chronicity Scale (1978), which utilizes the three "Ds" of diagnosis, duration, and disability. This scale was completed by a Homeward counsellor/tenant support worker when a client was referred to her for housing. The Criteria for Chronicity Scale indicated that seven of the 14 tenants had a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia, four were labelled personality disordered and the remaining three, affective disorder. Eleven tenants had at least a 10-year psychiatric history, five or more admissions, as well as at least one year of continuous inpatient treatment. The group was found to be competent in the skills of daily living but had needs in the areas of use of leisure time, social networks, and interpersonal skills. The mean age of the tenants was 42 years, approximately two-thirds were single, none were competitively employed, and the majority received social assistance (Family Benefits Allowance).

The following quotes illustrate how tenants viewed "chronicity."

You have a lot of problems just as a result of being in and out, in and out of hospitals, being rejected here and being rejected there. . . .

It's scary sometimes. Especially when you hear the (hospital) doors bang shut . . . click . . . click . . . click.

Psychiatric patients are treated like dirt.

Once you're on FBA (social assistance), they can get into your bank account anytime. Everybody has access to every part of my life.

It's hard to explain your life . . . like why you're not working.

I take (public transit) just to be among people even though they are strangers. Even though I don't talk to them . . . just the feeling of being among people.

It's called, uhm, something schizophrenia . . . active or disaffective . . . affective, yeah, that's it. I asked my Social Worker what does that mean and she said it means we don't know what's wrong with you.

They used to label me crazy because I was withdrawn. Thought I was stupid.

I'm not part of society. Not real society.

Measures

In order to assess the residential milieu, Moos and Otto's (1972) Community Oriented Program Environment Scale (COPES) was used to examine how both staff ($n = 5$) and tenants ($n = 14$) perceived the environment. This instrument is composed of 10 subscales comprising three main dimensions: (a) relationship, (b) personal growth, and (c) system. The use of the COPES allowed for an objective and replicable description of the Homeward model of service delivery over time.

The COPES subscales have acceptable internal consistencies and moderate to high average item-to-subscale correlations as demonstrated by the use of Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. In addition, the items are more highly correlated with their own than other subscales and the COPES has adequate test-retest reliability and high profile stability. Research findings support the construct, concurrent, and predictive validity of the COPES dimensions (Moos, 1988).

The Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire was used to assess the degree of emotional support (love, respect, affirmation, and empathetic listening), tangible

aid (money, transportation, etc.), and direct caregiving assistance that individuals felt they received from others in their lives (Norbeck, Lindsay, & Carrieri, 1981). Test-retest reliability for the subscales and items ranges from .85 to .92 and internal consistency is .89 or above for each of the subscales. Moderate levels of concurrent validity have been found and predictive validity has been established (Norbeck et al., 1981). The COPES and the Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire were administered to individual tenants by Homeward's Agency Coordinator.

Following Brekke and Test (1987), the Daily Contact Log (DCL) was used to monitor the delivery of service. It provided daily data on the content, duration, frequency, and location of all staff contact with the tenants and, in addition, provided systematic, empirical knowledge of the kind of service delivered.

Homeward employs five staff in total (an Executive Director, an Agency Coordinator, and three Counsellors/Tenant Support Workers). Throughout the study period, one Homeward staff member in particular was assigned the task of providing primary support to the tenants. However, as is typical in a small agency, all staff interacted with the tenants at one time or another and these interactions were recorded through the use of the DCL as well. For the purposes of this research, the DCL was modified slightly and its internal consistency was found to be high (Cronbach's Alpha = .86).

All of the above measurement instruments were administered at the time of entry to the housing project (Time 1) and were (with the exception of Minkoff's [1978] Criteria for Chronicity Scale) re-administered again at the one-year point (Time 2).

Ethnographic Data Collection

The qualitative approach selected for the study was that of ethnography. Ethnography is a form of cultural anthropology practised at home rather than in a far-away location. Typically, an ethnographer examines a particular sub-group of his or her own culture (in this case people with long-term psychiatric backgrounds).

Participant observation, the core technique of ethnographic research, was used to locate the researcher inside the socio-cultural context of the tenants' environment. Such ethnographic observations have only recently been recognized as being a particularly appropriate means of learning about experiences of people living in such residential settings (Goering et al., 1990). The ethnographic component of the study consisted of 26 in-depth interviews with tenants and attendance at bi-weekly tenants' meetings and social events held over the one-year period of study. Thirteen of the tenants were interviewed on two separate occasions. The remaining tenant, although agreeing to the study, found all interview appointments inconvenient. Interviews took place from September, 1989 until August, 1990.

Over the study year, the ethnographer devoted 10 hours per week to the project, taking part in a natural and unobtrusive way in the daily activities of the tenants. Interactions and activities were reconstructed in field notes on the spot or soon after the event. The ethnographer was immersed in the lives of the tenants, asking questions and listening to what they had to say.

Interviews, although conceived as open-ended, were geared to allowing the tenants to express details of their experiences as they perceived them but were also focused enough to probe dominant patterns as they emerged in the ongoing analysis. An interview guide was not used in the ethnography. The researcher was simply asked to let the tenants tell her their story; their experience of living in such an environment. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for a coded, line-by-line analysis (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Data reported in this study are based solely on information from the interviews and not from observations of the meetings or social events.

The ethnographer chosen for this research project had never provided nor received mental health services. She also had no prior knowledge of Homeward, its value base or its programmatic aims. She did, however, have a proven track record of being an expert and sympathetic listener and a careful and detailed recorder.

To assist the ethnographer's entry into the setting, all tenants were made aware of her role in the research and agreed to her presence. Also, as is typical in ethnographic research, her exit from the setting at the completion of the project required sensitive handling. In this case, the inherent sadness in saying goodbye seemed to be eased by the extraordinary delight the tenants derived from a discussion of what, to the ethnographer, had seemed obvious; all along she had been researching the staff as well as the tenants. The consensus was that the ethnographer had conducted herself in a fair and proper manner by considering staff as research participants too.

Finally, it is important to note that, as the ethnographic portion of the study produced over 600 pages of textual data, each theme reported in this paper will be illustrated by only a few of the most representative statements out of the multitudes of examples available.

Feedback

Results from the research were reported back to both tenants and staff of Homeward. A draft of the paper was circulated to all and their comments and suggestions were encouraged. Tenants indicated that they were satisfied with the final product. They felt that their views were expressed and actually had a bit of fun trying to determine which tenants were quoted. In addition, staff of Homeward actively contributed their comments and suggestions regarding revisions to the paper.

RESULTS

The Residential Milieu

As hypothesized, after a period of one year (at Time 2), both staff and tenants came to perceive the environment to be above average (according to the norms established by Moos & Otto, 1972) in the areas of involvement, support, and spontaneity (relationship dimension); above average in autonomy, practical orientation, and personal problem orientation (personal growth dimension); and below average in staff control (system dimension).

Table 1 reports the means and standard deviations of the COPEs subscales separately for tenants and staff. When staff perceptions of the milieu were specifically compared to those of the tenants, some differences emerged. At Time 1, tenants and staff differed in their perceptions on four of the 10 COPEs subscales. Staff felt that, from their perspective, there was significantly more emphasis on autonomy, $F(1,18) = 8.92, p = .008$; personal problem orientation, $F(1,18) = 9.28, p = .007$; and the open expression of anger and aggression, $F(1,18) = 8.36, p = .010$. On the other hand, tenants felt there was a higher emphasis on staff control, $F(1,18) = 14.19, p = .002$. At Time 2, one year later, the differences between the two groups on the COPEs had lessened. They differed significantly on only one measure; staff still perceived significantly more emphasis on the open expression of anger and aggression than did tenants, $F(1,18) = 9.98, p = .006$.

Additionally, when staff and tenant perceptions of change in the residential milieu were compared separately over time, repeated measures analysis of variance indicated that staff perceived a significant reduction in the level of tenant involvement over the study year, $F(1,9) = 5.28, p = .050$. Tenants reported a significant increase in the extent to which they were encouraged to understand their feelings and personal problems (personal problem orientation), $F(1,27) = 7.76, p = .009$. Finally, both staff, $F(1,9) = 18.05, p = .003$, and tenants, $F(1,27) = 53.94, p = .0001$, noticed that the tenants had learned a number of practical skills over the study year (practical orientation).

The qualitative portion of the study, as it relates to residential milieu, offered far less discrete information than the quantitative portion. It is possible, however, to relate the qualitative and quantitative data in two areas. First, the quantitative component of the study was able to confirm that the milieu in the Homeward

TABLE 1
COPEs Subscale Means and Standard Deviations for Staff and Tenants*

Subscales	Staff		Tenants	
	Time 1 \bar{X} (SD)	Time 2 \bar{X} (SD)	Time 1 \bar{X} (SD)	Time 2 \bar{X} (SD)
Involvement	8.80 (1.10)	6.20 (2.28)	5.93 (3.20)	5.50 (2.74)
Support	8.20 (1.10)	8.80 (1.10)	6.93 (1.82)	7.29 (2.05)
Spontaneity	7.80 (2.28)	8.00 (2.35)	6.71 (1.77)	6.86 (2.18)
Autonomy	9.40 (0.89)	8.60 (1.52)	7.21 (1.53)	7.14 (1.70)
Practical orientation	4.40 (1.82)	8.20 (0.84)	3.50 (1.61)	7.29 (1.07)
Personal problem orientation	6.80 (2.77)	6.80 (2.59)	3.36 (1.95)	5.43 (1.99)
Anger & aggression	6.40 (2.07)	6.60 (1.14)	3.71 (1.68)	4.07 (1.64)
Order & organization	5.40 (1.14)	7.00 (1.73)	6.57 (1.91)	7.00 (1.92)
Program clarity	7.80 (2.77)	8.60 (1.14)	6.50 (2.10)	7.00 (1.80)
Staff control	0.40 (0.55)	1.40 (1.14)	3.64 (1.86)	3.00 (1.88)

* COPEs, Community Oriented Program Evaluation Scale (Moos & Otto, 1972).
Each subscale has 10 items.
 $N = 14$ tenants, 5 staff

housing project was one which emphasized relationship and personal growth values over staff control. The ethnographic data show that some of the tenants had mixed feelings regarding this type of environment while others eventually came to heartily endorse it.

Here you're independent. You are on your own. That scares me. I like to be independent, but I like someone overseeing me.

Well, it's alright having meetings but I think Homeward should have a say in it . . . not just go by what the tenants say. After all, we've been sick and we're not that good at planning and . . . I mean Homeward should be able to observe what we need as a group.

(It's) a free building. Where there's no supervision . . . and now I have my own space. It makes a big difference.

. . . at first when I moved in, it took weeks to get over the feeling that I'd been a prisoner and had been released.

Additionally, as the quantitative data clearly demonstrate, staff were justified in reporting a significant drop in involvement (defined as participation in the bi-weekly tenants' meetings). Tenants simply did not value these meetings.

I guess the meetings are to bring up problems people are having with the apartment but where I lived before, you just called the superintendent.

I just feel (the meetings are) kinda like back to the hospital. (There) every week or so they round people up and they sit in a circle and look at each other and ask if anyone has any problems with the ward, you know.

I came to every meeting. I didn't know if it was optional.

You see, (in those meetings), C. sets off that psychiatric thing.

I don't like meetings, that's all.

I go down to the meeting and it brings me right down . . . it says . . . yeah, I'm here because I'm a mental patient.

They go on and on.

Tenants' Supports

The Social Support Questionnaire (Norbeck et al., 1981) administered at entry to the housing indicated the tenants had an average of six significant others in their personal network compared to 13 for Norbeck's normative population (Norbeck et al., 1981). Repeated measures analysis of variance showed that, contrary to the study's hypothesis, there was no significant difference found in the number or sources of social supports in the tenants' networks over the study year (Table 2).

In ordinary circumstances, non-significant results do not occasion further comment. However, thematic analysis of the ethnographic portion of the study allows us to, tentatively, shed some light on the quantitative data reported above. In the ethnographic interviews, tenants consistently indicated how important their families were to them. Reports, however, took on opposing forms; an account of the pain and loneliness experienced when family members rejected them and expressions of love and longing.

I kinda feel bad . . . like, you know . . . I'm the charity case of the family.

Like my sister, she won't have anything to do with me. She had a reunion and she invited absolutely everybody but me.

I would go to them on weekends but they have families of their own and I would feel like a burden.

But with my family, I don't like to talk about it. I just like them to visit and to treat me as a well individual.

(Yes, I have a relationship with my family) but not enough to interfere with their lives, you know.

They're not always hanging out here . . . I wish they would but I can't expect it, you know.

That's why I screamed out that day . . . I lost my sister's phone number or something . . . but now she sent me a nice Christmas gift and I sent her a nice Christmas gift and she's coming in February. I hope she'll like it here.

I have dreams about them. They rejected me a lot. Awful dreams. They, themselves, have a lot of guilt. And I do feel bad about that. Cause I do love them. I do want them to be happy for me and to be pleased.

TABLE 2
Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire*
Subscale Means and Standard Deviations

Subscales	Time 1 \bar{X} (SD)	Time 2 \bar{X} (SD)
Affect	7.66 (1.91)	7.77 (2.09)
Affirmation	7.44 (2.12)	7.17 (2.16)
Aid	5.33 (2.93)	6.59 (2.98)
Duration	3.10 (1.46)	4.00 (1.21)
Frequency	3.34 (1.25)	3.30 (1.25)
Source	1.73 (0.84)	2.00 (0.89)

* $N = 14$ Tenants

TABLE 3
Daily Contact Log — Hours per Month

Activity	1st Quarter Sept-Oct-Nov 1989 \bar{X} (SD)	4th Quarter Jun-Jul-Aug 1990 \bar{X} (SD)	Significance*
Consultation	39.7 (17.5)	15.3 (6.6)	—
Tenant Meetings	5.6 (2.1)	6.6 (5.0)	—
Documentation	11.7 (2.5)	2.0 (1.7)	.008
Rec./leisure	29.0 (7.0)	1.7 (2.0)	.018
Travel	10.3 (6.0)	4.0 (4.4)	.014
Support	28.3 (3.5)	13.7 (4.5)	—
Counselling	41.0 (32.7)	11.3 (4.0)	—

* t -test procedure
 $N = 5$ staff

We're all in the same boat. We understand each other. We all know what it's like to be different from the rest of the family.

Staff Contact

The Daily Contact Log allowed for analysis of the proportion of staff time spent in various domains of service delivery during the study period. Specifically, it described where and when the service occurred, the nature of the service, how long it was provided, and how the amount and nature of the services changed over time.

There was a decrease of 59.7% in staff time spent on service delivery to the supported housing project over the study year. *T*-tests were performed between the first and the last quarters of the study year. Table 3 indicates the greatest decreases in staff time occurred in the areas of support, $T(4) = 6.5$, $p = .02$; recreation and leisure, $t(4) = 9.4$, $p = .01$; and documentation, $t(4) = 5.5$, $p = .008$. As a point of interest, the DCL asks that staff report time spent in crisis intervention. Fortunately, crises were so few that it made no sense to report these data separately.

Support for our hypothesis that tenants would come to view staff as supports rather than supervisors cannot be verified from the quantitative data. However, there is some evidence, albeit tentative, from the qualitative data. Over the one-year period of the study, the ethnographic data showed the tenants' perceptions of staff did alter. At the inception of the study, tenants interacted with staff only over instrumental matters. (Note: C, D, and B refer to Homeward staff members.)

They delivered the wrong couch and they were obnoxious when I told them, so I phoned C. and she sorted it out.

C. went with me to get the carpet.

C. spent a lot of time with S. (fellow tenant). She helped her get organized.

C. gave me the number so I called.

I hear other people say, "Oh well, I have a problem so I'll just phone C."

As the ethnographic portion of the study progressed, references to staff remained rare but changed in tone; from an emphasis on brief interactions focusing on practical help to the identification of staff members as people tenants could talk to in times of trouble.

I might talk to C. about it. C. goes and sees people when they want to see her.

D. told me that she wanted to see C. about getting some support . . . someone she can talk to when she needs to.

I think I would phone C. I don't know all the Homeward people but I know C. and D. and they are nice.

Like C. has always said any time I want to go and talk with her . . . I guess I don't want to become dependent . . . if I have a problem, I'll phone C.

The staff are excellent. C. puts so much into it and she goes a long way.

I see C. sometimes after meetings. I'm pretty nice to talk to, you know.

I hope she likes her job and stays because I like C. a lot.

I feel comfortable talking to B. or D.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to learn if, over time, 14 people with long-term psychiatric backgrounds would come to call a supported housing project their home. In order to help them do so, Homeward Projects developed a program which tried to emphasize people and their needs over rules and regulations. The methodology chosen to evaluate the program triangulated data from both qualitative and quantitative approaches and, as such, was intended to give equal credibility to both professional and tenant perspectives on whether or not the program had achieved its goals.

Quantitative data confirmed that the residential milieu emphasized relationships and personal growth rather than staff control with its attendant rules and regulations. This finding is not surprising given that Homeward espoused a value base that expected tenant independence. In response to their new milieu, some of the tenants initially reported feelings of nervousness but many eventually came to define as freedom what at the outset appeared to be abandonment. Given that supportive housing models assume residents require a lengthy and gradual shift along a continuum of restrictive to less restrictive housing (Ridgway & Zippel, 1990), it seems that Homeward tenants adjusted to their independence relatively quickly (within a year). This finding appears to confirm Cournos' (1987) position that the setting or environment, rather than any particular individual characteristics, is the prime predictor of outcome (in this case, independence).

Also, consistent with a number of other studies (e.g., Moos, 1988), COPES data showed that staff and tenants differed on their assessment of the residential milieu at Time 1. At Time 2, however, there was only one remaining difference; staff reported the milieu emphasized the open expression of anger and aggression to a greater extent than did tenants. Given that the tenants would be more likely to call upon staff in times of conflict than of peace, it follows that staff could come to the conclusion that there was more emphasis, from their perspective, on anger and aggression. Tenants, on the other hand, could perceive times of conflict merely as interwoven with their entire experience of living in the setting and thus, less salient. Consistent with the findings of Depp, Scarpelli, and Apostoles (1983), we also found there was a significant increase in the personal problem orientation of the COPES. However, we found a significant increase in practical orientation, whereas they did not. These findings suggest tenants perceive they are encouraged to develop skills and engage in personal growth in the setting.

Additionally, the tenants' meeting, which is so much a hallmark of housing projects in general, was identified (through both quantitative and qualitative findings) as being considerably less than useful. The idea for Homeward's bi-weekly tenants' meeting was drawn directly from supportive housing practices. However, from the perspective of normalcy, one of the values of supported housing (Posey, 1990), it is reasonable to assume that tenants' meetings are in fact rarely a feature of so-called normal apartment living. If tenant involvement is desired, as it was with Homeward Projects, a less contrived forum must be

sought. In Homeward's case, tenants' views were listened to and formal meetings have been replaced with occasional social events organized by and for the tenants. A Homeward staff member is present if invited.

Further, although an increase in tenants' informal social networks did not occur during the study year as was hoped, there is a lesson to be learned from the completion of the scale itself. Clearly, tenants reported far fewer people in their social support networks than the normative population, but the true meaning of this finding was contained in an informal report from the Homeward staff member who administered the scale. She found tenants took an extraordinarily long time to answer each question and were often moved to tears when it became clear how very few (if any) people they knew who were supportive or loving. Moreover, qualitative data indicated tenants appeared to hold dearly the goal of regenerating familial relationships, but recognized ambivalent feelings both within themselves and their family members.

Finally, a finding that requires particular note is that in addition to coming to view Homeward staff as supports rather than supervisors, tenants needed them less and less over the study year. Although the present authors predicted a fall in staffing hours, the extent was surprising (almost 60%). It may be that these two findings are quite closely related. Support, after all, is asked for and received on an as-needed basis while supervision must be, by definition, ongoing. It is possible that, once tenants became confident that Homeward staff were there if needed (for example, in times of conflict), they were free to relax their demands. Such a finding, however, has its major impact when related to how agencies plan staffing levels and ratios. It may be that supported housing projects, while requiring attention at their inception, eventually "stabilize" when tenants become comfortable with their independence. Staff could then be reassigned to new projects or devote their time to maintenance of larger ones.

CONCLUSIONS

Studies which combine both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are as new (at least in the mental health field) as are supported housing projects. It is, therefore, wise to consider the findings reported here as encouraging. Triangulated research methodology, however, is particularly suited to emphasizing consumer input while retaining the professional viewpoint. Additionally, one set of results enriched and expanded upon the other. Clearly, it is beyond the scope of this research to conclude that the Homeward model of supported housing was successful in offering the tenants a home in the true sense of the word. We think, however, that it is in the spirit of the entire project to leave the last word to the tenants themselves.

Sometimes I think, how could I go back to that and I just couldn't . . . it would kill me to live in a group home.

I'd say it's coming slowly, like I'd say it's more like a home than any place I've been in.

This place, there's nothing to compare to getting your own place. There just isn't . . . there's been so much improvement living here.

I feel more secure because I can stay in that building as long as I want.
 . . . it helps my mental health a lot.
 I was lucky . . . I found here . . . a place that is private.
 If I didn't have this housing, I'd probably still be in the hospital.
 I don't want to lose this apartment.
 I don't want to lose this unit.
 . . . this is mine.

RÉSUMÉ

Les programmes de logement avec soutien communautaire (à distinguer des appartements supervisés) mettent l'accent sur les valeurs du consommateur : l'indépendance, la participation, la permanence, la normalité, et un soutien flexible et continu. En tant que modèles, ce n'est que récemment qu'ils sont devenus populaires dans la littérature spécialisée. En conséquence, on connaît peu de choses quant à leur efficacité auprès des personnes qui ont des antécédents psychiatriques à long terme. En 1989, le Projet Homeward, un service de santé mentale de Toronto, a mis sur pied un projet de logement avec soutien communautaire. Une composante d'évaluation a été incluse au projet dès ses débuts. Afin d'accorder un poids égal aux opinions des locataires, on a utilisé des méthodologies à la fois quantitatives et qualitatives. Le milieu résidentiel, le soutien social, et la prestation des services furent étudiés suivant l'approche quantitative. La composante qualitative comprenait une étude ethnographique afin de permettre aux locataires de rendre compte de leur expérience. Les résultats ont apporté une meilleure compréhension du modèle. En général, les locataires en viennent à décrire leur logement comme leur chez-soi.

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