

## SERVICE DESCRIPTION

# MENTAL HEALTH HOUSING SUPPORT

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### **DESCRIPTION:**

This service provides a range of supports to assist individuals with a serious mental illness to locate and maintain housing appropriate to their needs. The service also identifies, develops and supports diverse housing resources and options within the community for individuals with serious mental illness.

### **HISTORY:**

This service was developed on Salt Spring Island in 1994 in order to provide support services for individual with serious mental health issues who were hard to house. The service expanded in 2008-09 adding case management capacity and a rent subsidy component.

### **POPULATION SERVED:**

The target population is adults who have a severe and persistent mental illness and/or addiction issue and who require housing and related supports. They should be capable of living independently with moderate supervision and/or support needs.

### **GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

1. Improve skills and supports that enable the person to be successful living in the community.
2. Increase knowledge, skills and ability to manage mental illness.
3. Increase ability to think clearly and make healthy decisions.
4. Increase problem solving and life skills.
5. Improve family, social and other significant relationships.
6. Increase ability to function without reliance on hospital care and/or decrease visits to hospital.
7. Increase housing resources in the community for persons with mental health/addictions issues.
8. Decrease financial barriers to securing housing.

### **SERVICE DELIVERY PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES:**

1. Service delivery will be caring, respectful, safe and open.
2. People will be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Services will be provided in a discreet and confidential manner.
4. Services will include the promotion of wellness, healthy development and independence.
5. Service delivery will be person-centered including being flexible, individualized and involving the person served in setting the direction of service.
6. Services will be responsive and timely.

#### **SERVICE DELIVERY ACTIVITIES:**

1. **Assessment and Goal Planning.** Program staff work with persons served, their social supports and other helping resources to develop realistic housing plans.
2. **Individual Counselling.** Program staff provide person-centered and solution-focused short term counselling. Counselling is strength-based and may include social and life skill development.
3. **Monitoring and Support.** Program staff assist persons served to maintain compliance with treatment plans by monitoring psychiatric symptoms, medications and medical and other appointments. Program staff provide supports that may help to encourage and maintain an effective treatment plan and associated lifestyle.
4. **Crisis Intervention.** Program staff provide support for persons served facing unusually difficult life situations.
5. **Conflict Resolution, Mediation and Problem Solving.** Program staff assist persons served in resolving tenancy or tenancy-related issues.
6. **Case Management and Coordination.** Program staff communicate relevant ideas, goals and information between persons served and community supports to ensure services are delivered in an effective and holistic way.
7. **Referral and Advocacy.** Program staff may refer persons served to other SSICS or community services as needed, and act on their behalf when needed to obtain resources and services.
8. **Rent Subsidies.** Program staff assess financial capacity of persons served and provide rent subsidies for those who are eligible and in need.

9. **Resource Development.** Program staff identify, or foster the development of, housing opportunities in the community for individuals with mental health and housing challenges.

**LOCATION:**

Services are based at the main SSICS building at 268 Fulford-Ganges Road. The building is wheelchair accessible and has private counselling offices and group/family meeting rooms. Services are provided in the office, in person's homes or other community locations as needed.

**Hours:**

Services are typically available Monday-Friday 9 am to 4 pm, however times may vary to include after hours and weekends as required.

**STAFF RESOURCES:**

A team of part-time workers provide 28 hours per week of service. The staff report to the Director of Adult and Outreach Services, and are part of the Outreach Services Team including mental health counsellors, nurse, addictions worker and consulting psychiatrist.

**ACCESS TO SERVICE:**

The primary referral source for service is mental health practitioners within SSICS and mental health practitioners in the community.

**STANDARDS/REFERENCES/BEST PRACTICES:**

1. CARF accreditation standards
2. Best Practices in Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Health Services

**FUNDING/SPONSORSHIP:**

The service is funded by Mental Health and Addictions Services division of Vancouver Island Health Authority.

**PARTNERSHIPS/KEY CONNECTIONS:**

1. Vancouver Island Health Authority
2. Physicians
3. BC Non Profit Housing Association