The Salvation Army Operating Principles for Emergency Shelters - Glossary of Terms

### accompaniment

⧫ when a worker physically goes with a client to meet another service provider, access a resource, or attend an appointment. Accompaniment helps to reduce the barriers clients may face, including financial (e.g. transportation costs); systemic (e.g. discrimination); disability-related (e.g. limited access to locations; cognitive disabilities that make remembering dates, times, and other instructions difficult); and communication barriers (e.g. if the client speaks another language or is not able to read or understand applications and other forms). Accompaniment also seeks to build on existing relationships of trust with current service providers in order to form new relationships of trust with different service providers.

### behaviour-based criteria

⧫ these allow a client to gain admission to and maintain their bed at an emergency shelter if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol as long as they are not behaving in a way that poses a risk to themselves or others.

### best practice

⧫ “intervention, method or technique that has consistently been proven effective through the most rigorous scientific research and has been replicated across several cases or examples.” (The Homeless Hub).

### chronic homelessness (see also episodic homelessness)

⧫ “ refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e. have spent more than 180 nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation).” (The Homelessness Hub).

### community partner

⧫ other agencies with which The Salvation Army collaborates in order to meet the needs of its clients. Community partners may include other health and social services (both public agencies and non-governmental organizations), non-profit and market-based housing providers, nearby business owners, other faith groups, as well as members of municipal, provincial, federal and First Nations government.

### community-based support services

⧫ a range of services and people who support a person in the housing of their choice (often scattered-site housing), helping to ensure housing stability and secure tenancy. These may include the following: health care (including mental health services), long-term/intensive case management, peer support for substance use disorders, system navigation help, assistance with daily activities (meals, transportation, cleaning, etc.). These supports may be provided by volunteers or paid workers and are often administered in addition to the help of neighbours, friends, family members, and other caregivers.

### congregate housing (see also scattered-site housing)

⧫ a type of permanent housing run by a non-profit organization that offers a number of subsidized and/or supported units in one building. Congregate housing includes government-run social housing or public housing. It also includes a range of models of supportive housing, including: housing for seniors; people with developmental disabilities; people with serious and persistent mental health challenges; people with substance use disorders; and people who have experienced long periods of homelessness.

### cultural sensitivity

⧫ recognizing that people come from a range of cultural backgrounds which may shape their worldviews, values, behaviours, and modes of communication; it refers to a set of skills that help service providers learn and understand the similarities and differences that exist between themselves and their clients.

### emergency shelter

⧫ a distinct form of residential programming (different than transitional, interim, or stable housing) which provides temporary accommodation and specific supports to people experiencing homelessness and housing exclusion. Emergency Shelter Programs serve basic, essential human needs (e.g. food, bed, hygiene, safety) but also assist clients to find housing, connect to external agencies, and to access community-based resources for ongoing support. Length of stay in an Emergency Shelter is short-term but relative to individual needs and the availability of stable housing options. Emergency Shelters are part of a crisis response system that aims to rapidly (re)connect people to stable housing.

### episodic homelessness (see also chronic homelessness)

⧫ “refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation for a certain period, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or place).” (The Homelessness Hub)

### follow-up support (also called aftercare supports)

⧫ services that help a client settle into a new home, make connections with other service providers in the area (e.g. primary care doctor, support groups, language classes, legal clinic), develop a safety net of support (e.g. friends, family, sponsor, faith community, etc.), and identify local resources (e.g. library, food bank, thrift store). Follow-up supports may be offered by case workers, peer support workers, other community-based specialists, or trained volunteers. These supports may be provided by The Salvation Army, or by an external agency in partnership with The Salvation Army.

### harm reduction (see also low-barrier shelter)

⧫ refers either to a set of specialized programs or a set of general principles, all of which seek to lessen the negative consequences associated with substance use or other risky activities. While The Salvation Army does not offer harm reduction programs directly (e.g. managed alcohol or needle exchange programs), its services are guided by the following harm reduction principles: respect, understanding, compassion, non-judgement, practicality, and using the opportunity of a stay in emergency shelter to help clients address their substance use disorders and access needed resources.

### holistic approach

⧫ an approach which ensures that the client has access to supports for their physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs. The Salvation Army believes that spiritual care plays an essential role in supporting people to transform their lives. Salvation Army emergency shelters dedicate chaplains to this work who are trained to assist individuals to identify, affirm, and use their own spiritual and religious beliefs, human values, and faith to support and sustain them in times of crisis, need or recovery.

### homelessness

⧫ “describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.” (Stephen Gaetz, 2013)

### housing exclusion

⧫ a form of social exclusion, whereby certain groups of people are systematically prevented from accessing stable housing. From a ‘housing exclusion’ perspective, homelessness is not simply a matter of individual experience or deviance, but also a question of the processes and systems which make it difficult for people to exercise their right to housing; forces which collude to block access to stable housing for some people and not others over long periods of time.

### Housing First

⧫ “a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.” The housing must be affordable and the supports must be offered at the level of intensity and frequency that a client chooses. ‘Housing First’ defines itself in opposition to ‘Treatment First’ where a person must meet certain conditions before being offered access to housing (e.g. abstinence from alcohol or drugs; management of mental health.) The basic principle is at once philosophical – housing is a human right – and practical – people are more successful in addressing substance use disorders, mental health issues, and other challenges if they have a stable home base. (S Tsemberis & Eisenberg, 2000; Sam Tsemberis, Gulcur, & Nakae, 2004)

### low-/minimal-barrier shelter (sometimes called ‘damp’)

⧫ shelters which permit people who are intoxicated to gain access, do not require people to commit to a treatment plan or other programs, and do not exclude people based on their criminal history, mental health diagnosis, or lack of identification. These shelters often permit pets, and offer more storage for clients’ personal effects. (Note: ‘No-barrier’ shelters may even permit substance use on-site; The Salvation Army does not operate no-barrier shelters.)

### organized departure

⧫ occurs when a client leaves a facility because they have chosen to move on to another type of housing that better suits their current needs; ‘better’ will often mean more permanent, and/or more ‘supportive’ than an emergency shelter. An organized departure will necessarily involve client self-determination and choice from a range of appropriate and affordable options. When a client is discharged from a facility and goes to another shelter, sleeps rough, or returns to an abusive or exploitative household, the goal of an organized departure has not been met.

### outcomes

⧫ evidence-based reporting that tracks client success (i.e. finding housing and improved housing stability) instead of organizational output (e.g. bed nights, meals served, money spent, etc.); both quantitative and qualitative measures of what’s working, how well, for whom, and for how long.

### peer worker (peer support)

⧫ an individual with lived experience of homelessness, substance use disorder, and/or mental health challenges whose is employed to provide support to clients through a number of possible services (e.g. accompaniment, counselling, case management, follow-up, harm reduction services). Peer workers are hired as part of the staff team or may provide services on a volunteer basis. Peer workers can be certified professionals.

### planning tables

⧫ system-wide responses to homelessness and housing exclusion which are coordinated at the local level; groups planning a collaborative solution to homelessness for their region/municipality.

### scattered site housing (see also congregate housing)

⧫ a model of non-profit service provision that involves making private market housing accessible to people who are experiencing housing exclusion. In a scattered site model, a non-profit service provider may liaise with landlords, assist a client to access a rent supplement, and/or ensure the provision of community-based supports in order to shore up the client’s housing stability. Units are “scattered” throughout the community in mixed-income buildings and neighbourhoods

### stable housing

⧫ accommodation that is affordable, well-maintained, and has enough bedrooms to accommodate the household; the person had choice in location and roommates and they have security of tenure. Stable housing provides a living space where the person feels safe and comfortable, and may or may not include supports. Stable housing is the main objective of all crisis response interventions for people experiencing homelessness.

### transgender

⧫ an umbrella term used to describe individuals who do not self-identify according to conventional gender norms. This includes people who identify as transsexual (meaning someone who identifies in a way which differs from their assigned sex at birth), people who identify as androgynous, as well as people whose sense of self falls somewhere along the spectrum of gender, shifts from time to time or includes multiple points along that spectrum, rather than fitting into ‘male’ or ‘female’ categories.

### trauma-informed approach

⧫ services which recognize that trauma is a very common factor among people who are experiencing homelessness and takes this into consideration in all aspects of service delivery. Using a trauma-informed approach means placing priority on a client’s need for safety, seeking to avoid re-traumatization, and working collaboratively and flexibly with clients to ensure they have choice and control.

### women escaping violence shelter (WEV) (sometimes called ‘violence against women shelter’ or VAW)

⧫ accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence or abuse. These shelters may have short-, medium-, long-term, or indefinite lengths of stay. Depending on admission and discharge criteria, a WEV shelter may be classified either as an emergency shelter or as transitional housing, and will have special supports in place to meet the needs of this particular population.