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Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society Housing First

Theme: Wrap-around Supports for Women

The Safe Families Intervention Team (SFIT) is a partnership that was formed between the Medicine Hat Police Service and the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society (MHWSS). This newly formed unit is housed in the Medicine Hat Police Service building and consists of one MHPS Constable and two MHWSS outreach workers. The mission of this unit is to provide a collaborative, timely and effective team response in partnership with support agencies to assist families in dealing with incidents of family violence.

Critical Elements

- Housing-first option was first initiated six years ago to address a gap in service for women who were homeless and had addictions and mental health issues.
- The program has three staff and a manager. They place individuals in housing and provide wrap around intensive case management.
- The program is delivered in partnership with multiple community service providers, including Medicine Hat Community Housing as well as the local landlords.
- All housing-first referrals go through a centralized intake system and are reviewed by a community committee, which uses an assessment tool (SPDAT) to determine acuity levels that inform specific program placement.
- The program started as domestic violence housing first – focusing on women experiencing domestic violence, but has since expanded to include all individuals who are homeless.
- Housing first staff are well-informed about family violence and, with their knowledge of community resources can connect individuals immediately with the resources they need.