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# Homelessness: Community Response

## Many Ways to Home

Changing the Face of Our Community,  
Our Role, Our Response

## Discussion

Research Matters: Read, Listen,  
& Watch to Find Out More

“Not in my backyard” Watch the linked videos on a modular housing solution in B.C. Discuss the biases, and fears, around homeless people. Where should the homeless be housed?

[Housing crisis - are modular houses the solution?](#)

[How BC is addressing homelessness with modular housing](#)

## At a Glance

1. What is the Communities Responsibility
2. What You Can Do
3. Listening to People with Unique Needs
4. How to Talk to the Homeless
5. Community Involvement: Making a Difference
6. Finland: Housing First

# What is the Communities Responsibility

LISTEN

Listen to experts, people at risk of, currently, or has experienced homelessness

LEARN

Learn the causes of homelessness and how people can leave a life of poverty

PLAN

Plan what can lead to the prevention and elimination of homelessness

EXECUTE

Execute that plan

Learn More: [Housing Vancouver strategy: Three-year action plan](#), [National Housing Strategy](#)

# What You Can Do

1. **Inform** (word of mouth, peer support workers, presentations, printed material, social media, apps & websites, storytelling)
2. **Consult** (focus groups, interviews & conversations, motivational interviewing, surveys)
3. **Involve** (tenant meetings, workshops, community liaisons, commissions)
4. **Collaborate** (partnerships in decision making, advisory committees)
5. **Empower** (speakers bureaus, decision making, participatory budgeting, training)

[\(Community Social Planning Council. City Spaces. 2017\)](#)

Learn More: [Victoria homelessness resources](#), [Engagement Toolkit](#)

# Listening to People with Unique Needs

People with Drug or Alcohol Dependencies	People with Mental Health Issues	Indigenous People	Youth & Young Adults	People with Disabilities
<p>Pick a location that works for them</p> <p>Afternoon meetings work best, if they are staying in a shelter or sleeping rough</p> <p><a href="#">Engagement Toolkit Posters</a></p> <p>(Community, 2017)</p>	<p>Be respectful, honest and a good listener</p> <p>Be understanding; acknowledge hallucinations, but don't pretend you see them too</p> <p>Give the person their space when they need it</p> <p>Respect their input. They may not agree with everything you say</p>	<p>Meet with an elder ahead of an engagement, and invite them to be involved</p> <p>Partner with indigenous organizations, include culturally sensitive practices</p> <p>Consider using "talking circles"</p> <p>Acknowledge the traditional territory</p> <p>Ask people who are coming who else to invite</p>	<p>Use creative engagement methods, art music, dance, radio, theatre</p> <p>Have 'eye catching' promotional materials</p> <p>Don't be afraid to tackle complex issues</p> <p>Use online forums and social networks</p>	<p>Give extra time when needed</p> <p>Go to them, instead of making them travel to you</p> <p>Time should work with a bus schedule</p> <p>The space must be accessible</p> <p>Give option to participate online</p>

# How to Talk to the Homeless

1. **Body Language:** make the person like your equal
  - a. Smile, make eye contact
2. **Basic Greeting:** a basic hello can turn into a conversation
  - a. Don't be offended if they don't want to talk (you are a stranger)
3. **Give Money:** refrain from telling them how to spend it
  - a. Alternative: buy them food instead
4. **Give "Blessing Bags":** small items of everyday needs
  - a. For example: gloves, socks, shampoo, water, granola bars, etc.
5. **Be Safe:** make safety your top priority
  - a. Instead of offering a ride or shelter, enlist the help of professionals

[\(wpengine, 2018\)](#)



# Finland: Housing First

Finland looked at the homeless situation and eliminated the whole support system in the first place. Instead of taking an emergency approach (shelters, food banks etc.) they developed a 'Housing First' approach. A permanent rental flat, with a unique rental contract.

## POSITIVES

- People do not need to earn or justify their right to shelter.
- It is much easier to get help when you have a place of your own
- Pride of ownership

Learn More: [How Finland is eradicating homelessness](#), [What can the UK learn from how Finland solved homelessness?](#), [Helsinki's radical solution to homelessness](#)



# Resources

Blondesachmo. (2015). *Dandora - Changing Faces Competition*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VK3B1MrCO70>

Community Social Planning Council, City Spaces. (2017). *Engagement Toolkit | People with lived experience in BC's capital region*. Poster. Retrieved from [https://victoriahomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/170630\\_crd\\_toolkit.pdf](https://victoriahomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/170630_crd_toolkit.pdf)

Wpengine. (2018). *3 Ways to respond to homelessness*. United Way. Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. Retrieved from <https://unitedwaymassbay.org/blog/3-ways-to-respond-to-a-homelessness/>

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