Cheryl Forchuk, RN PhD, Associate Professor/Nurse Scientist, School of Nursing, UWO,
Bill Cline, BA, Executive Director, WOTCH,
Rick Csiernik, CSW PhD, Assistant Professor, Kings College, UWO,
Betty DaCosta, RN BScN, Victorian Order of Nurses,
Brent Hall, PhD, Professor Urban and Regional Planning, University of Waterloo,
Jeff Hoch, PhD, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UWO,
Elsabeth Jensen, RN MSN, Lawson Health Research Institute/UWO,
Geoff Nelson, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University,
Susan Ousley, MEd, Executive Director, Can-voice
Mark Speechley, PhD, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UWO,
Catherine Ward-Griffin, RN PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, UWO

ABSTRACT:

STABLE HOUSING AND MENTAL HEALTH:
EVALUATING THE ALTERNATIVES

Problem:
Individual differences across psychiatric consumer survivors have tended to be overlooked when considering placement in appropriate housing. A good person-housing fit increases tenure in the community, reduces re-hospitalization and increases quality of life. In addition, supports from family, peers and professionals have a key influence on the sustainability of housing tenure. However, variables associated with the individual, the housing model and the housing facility are seldom controlled for in studies of housing outcomes. There is no single type of housing that meets the diverse needs of persons with severe mental illness. This study was designed to elucidate a typology for predicting a good person housing fit based on gender, quality of life, costs and level of functionality.

Methods:
The investigation includes interview data on 300 subjects and specifically collects data on quality of life, severity of illness, demographics, costs, characteristics of housing and available supports and services.

Partnerships:
A range of supportive housing projects are participating in the project including emergency shelters, housing specifically for women, transitional, permanent housing and Ministry of Health and Long-term Care sanctioned Homes for Special Care. The partners were instrumental in recruiting the 300 participants (150 females, 150 males) representing a full range of available housing in London. This study is being conducted under the umbrella of a larger project aimed at increasing the capacity of community and academic partners to conduct research relevant to the needs of the community. The Research team consists of investigators from seven different departments spread over three universities, and three different community agencies.

Results:
Data analysis is currently underway and will be available in January 2002.

Implications:
Nurses involved in health promotion and discharge planning will need to be aware of available housing options and how particular types of persons with severe mental illness may respond to their housing choices.