



AWAC Community Services

Association Advocating for Women and Community



AWAC has been in operation for **28 years** opening its doors in 1994 as a community response to provide **safe supportive housing** to vulnerable street-entrenched women and girls.

- Known as “**the shelter of last resort**”.
- Provided emergency shelter, supported recovery program, supported housing program and modified college program.



What we started to see



No structure.

The need to **connect more** with the women coming through our doors and offer more than emergency supports and services.

Most of the women wanted housing but faced many barriers to acquire and sustain housing.

We needed to offer more intensive supports ie. housing, opportunity for recovery and advocacy.



Shift of Focus



Create structure in women's lives.

Create a housing continuum which is fluid and supportive.

Provide more supports for individuals accessing addiction recovery resources.

In 2015, through the development of our Housing First Program shifted outreach supports to include men.

Started to adapt and create programs to **meet the needs** of our community.



AWAC Programs



- 24-hr Emergency Shelter
- Drop-in
- EOPS
- Outreach
- Housing Outreach
- Evening Outreach
- Health & Wellness Program
- Personal Storage Program
- Mark's Place
- Housing First Program
- Supported Recovery Program
- Housing Readiness Program
- Olive's Branch
- Victoria Towers Housing
- Rental Supplement Program

Housing Continuum Visual



24 Hour Emergency Shelter/Drop-in



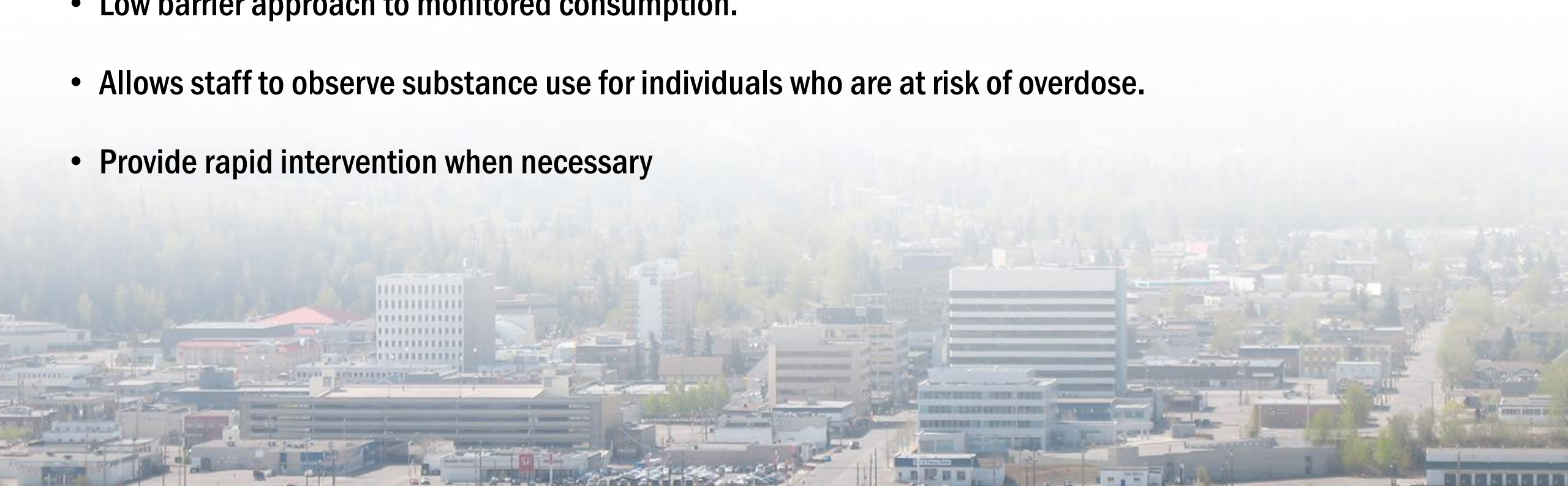
- Shelter beds for women.
- Drop-in open for both women and men (separate areas).
- Through drop-in services individuals have access to support workers as well as Housing Worker who can assist with finding housing.
- Access to laundry and showers.



Episodic Overdose Prevention



- Episodic Overdose Prevention Response Services.
- Attempts to eliminate a barrier to access shelter.
- Low barrier approach to monitored consumption.
- Allows staff to observe substance use for individuals who are at risk of overdose.
- Provide rapid intervention when necessary





- Team provides support services to individuals who are unhoused in our community.
- Supports individuals to access services such as health care, income supports, addiction recovery and culturally appropriate services and/or indigenous community linkages
- Provide life skill supports to individuals housed in the community
- Works collaboratively with other community support teams
- Participates at the Spirit Table





- **Specialized worker** that delivers services with the purpose of breaking the cycle of homelessness.
- Housing Worker completes individualized assessment to ensure the right housing fit.
- Worker provides 24hr supports to landlords to assist with any tenant challenges/concerns.
- Advocates with housing providers and landlords for placement.
- Participates in BC Housing's Coordinated Access Table.



Evening Outreach



- This Outreach Program works between 7:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m connecting with individuals during hours when support services are generally not available.
- Staff provide hot beverage, sandwiches, warm winter clothing and encourages individuals to access shelters.
- Provides transportation to shelters. Works collaboratively with RCMP, hospital and other shelters to ensure individual's access.
- Supported with Peer workers.



Health and Wellness Program



- Aims to improve the health of those living homeless on the streets by combining outreach supports with health care services.
- Individuals who are unhoused encounter barriers to health care despite having greater needs for care.
- Barriers such as mistrust of the health care system, experiences of discrimination from providers and transportation creates challenges accessing health care.
- These barriers lead to missed appointments, delayed care, and missed or delayed medication use.
- These consequences may lead to poorer management of chronic illness which results in poorer health outcomes.
- Personalized supports at appointments and transportation are basic but necessary steps for ongoing health care and medication access.
- Individuals who are homeless encounter daily struggles for the essentials of life, accessing health care is a lower priority.
- By collaborating health care providers and outreach services, it facilitates the continuity of care, and increases overall health outcomes.



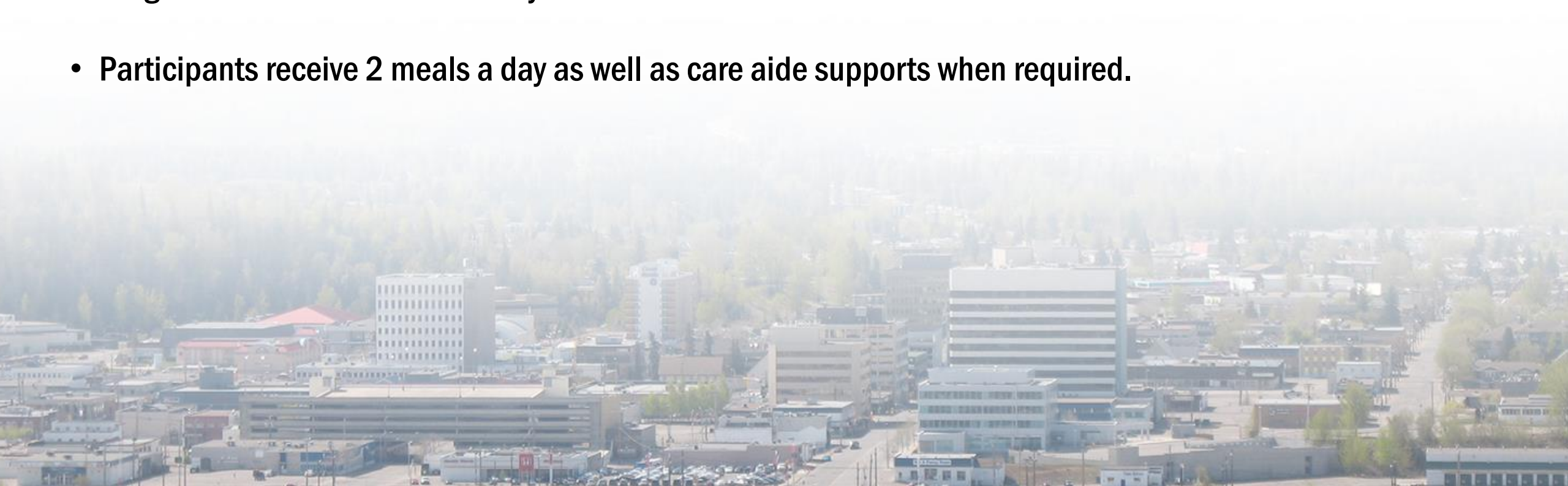
Personal Storage Program



- 80 small lockers where individuals can lock and secure personal identification, wallets, cell phone, etc.
- Program provides opportunity to build relationships with male population and opportunity to properly advocate for housing needs.
- Offers individuals opportunity to store personal belongings long term.
- Clients must check-in once a week to confirm storage is still needed.
- Through this program men can leave laundry overnight to be done by staff and picked up next morning.



- A low-barrier option where participants do not have to abstain from alcohol or substances to participate in the program.
- Program is staffed 24 hours a day.
- Participants receive 2 meals a day as well as care aide supports when required.



Housing First Program



- Program for chronic or episodically homeless individuals.
- No barriers to housing, do not have to attend programming or need to be clean or sober.
- Only requirement is to meet with their AWAC Support Worker once a week in their home.



Supported Recovery Program



- Provides safe space for individuals who want to begin the process of overcoming substance misuse.
- The space is shared and separated from the emergency shelter to allow those in the program the ability to refrain from connecting with those who could hinder their recovery.
- Program consists of supporting individuals at the beginning stages of Recovery.
- Most often, this consists of acquiring a bed at detox, connecting them with a drug and alcohol counsellor, mental health physician and/or medical physician.



Housing Readiness Program



- Once individuals have demonstrated a willingness to move forward in their lives through the Supported Recovery Program, they can transition to our Housing Readiness Program.
- Here individuals have their own bedroom and share communal kitchen, common area and bathrooms.
- Program introduces individuals to more in-depth work on emotional well-being.
- Participants attend workshops Monday to Friday such as; Well-briety, life-skills, volunteer work and extra-curricular.
- Individuals must attend workshops.





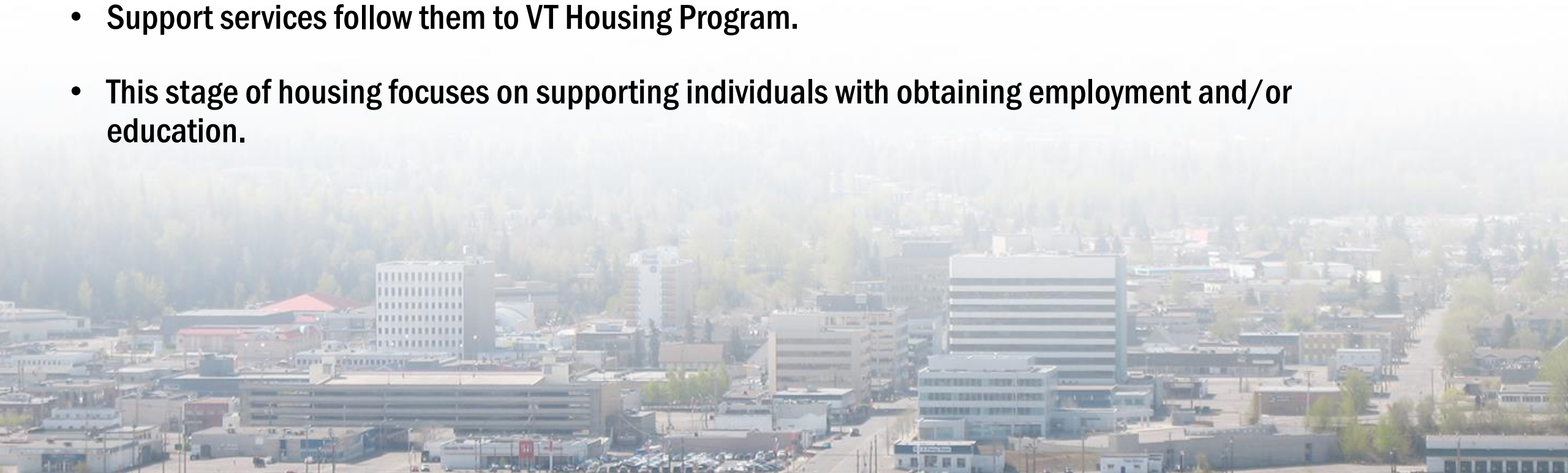
- **28-unit Sober Living Facility** opened in 2019.
- Units are fully furnished bachelor style with microwave and mini fridge.
- Shared common areas and fitness room.
- Staffed 24 hours including case managers, peer support and counselling services.
- Program offers wrap around supports and programming to individuals who have begun their own unique journey of sobriety.
- **Follows 12-step based recovery.**



Victoria Towers Housing Program



- One- and two-bedroom self-contained furnished units.
- Individuals who have worked through the Supported Recovery, Housing Readiness and Olive's Branch programs can transition into Victoria Towers.
- Support services follow them to VT Housing Program.
- This stage of housing focuses on supporting individuals with obtaining employment and/or education.



Rental Supplement Program



- In partnership with BC Housing the Rental Supplement Program provides individuals in identified at risk groups facing homelessness with rental supplements and support services to help access rental housing in the private housing market.
- Rental Supplements can assist with items such as rent, damage deposit and access to utilities (for example heat and water).
- Can be supported up to one year.



Housing Continuum



AWAC's Housing Continuum consists of 6 levels of housing options that allow individuals to transition through the various stages with the ability to move back and forth within the levels.

The back-and-forth movement is often required when individuals destabilize and require more supports and prevents individuals from being discharged to the streets.

From start to finish individuals accessing our Housing Continuum can have supported housing for **up to 6 years**.



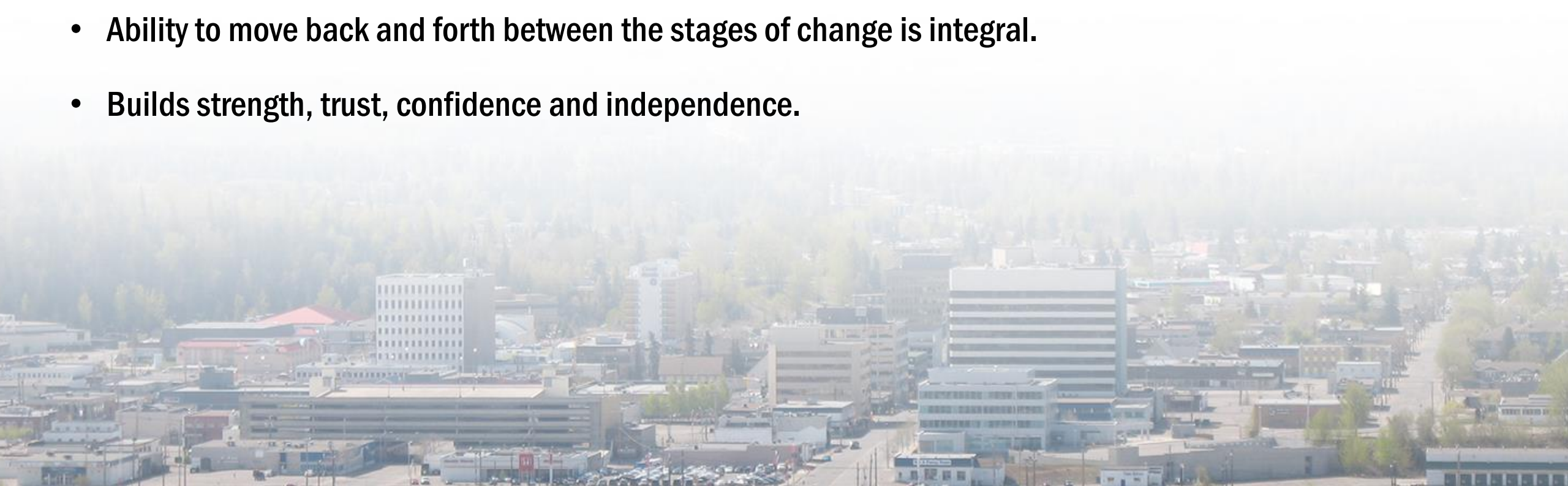
Housing Continuum Visual



WHY Housing Continuum



- Individuals wanting to turn their lives around often struggle with both substance misuse and some form of mental health diagnosis for a number of years.
- **Relapse is a part of addiction** and shouldn't be punished.
- Ability to move back and forth between the stages of change is integral.
- Builds strength, trust, confidence and independence.



Housing Continuum Success Story



Jody, who suffered from substance misuse, accessed our emergency shelter for several months. Deciding she wanted a change and moved into our Supported Recovery Program. After completing detox and further stabilizing in this program she transitioned into our Housing Readiness Program with a goal to move into our Victoria Towers program. While in the Housing Readiness Program, she relapsed, and we moved her back to the Supported Recovery Program to stabilize. Once stabilized she moved back to the Housing Readiness Program where she continued to work on developing a solid foundation.

Weeks away from transitioning to Victoria Towers Jody relapsed again....



Jody Story cont..



Instead of exiting her from the program, we encouraged her to attend an abstinence-based program for 30 days. Despite her apprehension, she went and completed the 30-day abstinence program then she moved into our Victoria Towers Housing program. There she continued to build her foundation of recovery and worked with her AWAC Support worker.

She completed schooling, found a job and had her children returned to her care. Eventually she transitioned out of the program into her own apartment and has continued to raise her children while in recovery for the last 5 years





- In partnership with the College of New Caledonia, AWAC provides an opportunity for individuals who have experienced exclusion, poverty, homelessness, unemployment or barriers to education to attend a modified college program at CNC.
- AWAC Peer Support attends classes to offer support for participants.
- Participants who complete the program receive a certificate of completion.



James's Story



“While I was waiting in the parking lot at Olive’s Branch, James went in to grab the application form. James came back out and told me that I have a room here at Olive’s Branch, that all the higher management from AWAC are here and that they are taking me in right away. These ladies that I gave a hard time at AWAC were reaching out their hearts to me, to help me feel the love that people have, to truly help persons with addictions. What a moment!!” ...



James's Story cont..



“I walked in and started crying. My gratitude to Connie, Kim, Tammy, Alanna, Danielle and especially James O that didn’t give up on me. There are many wonderful things that are taking place at Olive’s Branch. I am growing a foundation of recovery, and healing is taking place. I have hope, and the greatest gift I could ever get int the love of truly wonderful people that care about our lives”. – Mark



In Conclusion



AWAC understands that severe complex trauma often results in a dependency on illicit substances which often leads to exacerbated symptoms of and a decline in mental health and overall well-being.

AWAC intervenes in this complex cycle by providing a **safe environment**, meeting people where they are at, **without judgement**, developing individualized supports through a trauma-informed approach, providing structure, love, and acceptance, and **bridging connections** into a healthy community of supports.



Contact



It is **our mission** to offer individuals opportunities to recover and rebuild their lives. We have **proven success** in transitioning individuals from living on the streets, struggling with substance mis-use and/or mental health, into lives free of substances and maintaining safe, stable housing.

For more information about our programs and support services:

info@awaccommunityservices.org

www.awaccommunityservices.org

Telephone: 250-562-6262

