

multiple and complex
health and welfare
needs



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Your Care | Our Passion

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Research Questions/Aims

- What are the unmet needs of people with mental illness and D&A problems who reside in boarding houses?
- What is the potential for managers, operators or caretakers in these boarding houses to be able to meet some of these needs?
- How willing are managers to support these needs?
- What information or other resources are needed to support managers?



Presentation Outline

- Issues of homelessness, mental health and boarding house accommodation
- Research process and descriptives
- What has been learnt so far?
- Research issues and challenges
- Next steps
- Conclusions



Research Process/Descriptives

- Target sample size (n= 25)
- 21 qualitative semi structured interviews
- 2 research sites (Sydney/Petersham)
- 11 analysed
- Focus on unlicensed/unregistered Boarding Houses



Descriptives

- Approx 57% BHM's live on premises
- Numbers of residents in each house range from 4 to 85 (mean = 25)
- 86% Dept of Housing as referral source
- Length of stay ranges from 1 day to 7 years
- Weekly rental ranges from \$90 - \$300p/w



Emerging Trends From Research

1. BHM Indicate An Awareness Of Co-morbidity

- Prevalence – 89%
 - Ranges from one to all residents
 - " they all [on] drugs ok?"*
 - Types of mental illness - mostly schizophrenia, followed by depression
- Types of substance abuse - mostly marijuana followed by alcohol.



2. Perceived Changes in Rates of Co-morbidity

- Most responses indicated perceived increases
 - *"This last lot of tenants I've had are the worst I've ever had."*
 - *"Big increase" – (in the number of residents with mental illness).*
 - *"Drugs are definitely more prevalent, more and definitely worse"*



3. Issues with Co-morbid Residents

- Noise/disruptive during the night
 - *“He’d be screaming and yelling and swearing all night.”*
 - *“Going early in the mornings. Sometimes all night...they are up and down, up and down...”*
- Rooms being damaged
 - *“Then you’ve got rooms that were totally and utterly trashed.”*
 - *“They smash up the room when they’re high.”*
- Stealing
 - *“Stuff getting pinched...DVDs going out the window.”*
 - *“The rooms have, did have, DVDs and TVs in them, they’ve been hocked.”*



Issues with Co-morbid Residents (cont'd)

- Not paying rent
 - *They don't pay rent. You're chasing them and you're chasing them for rent."*
 - *"I'm chasing rent constantly."*
- Violence
 - *When they[re] high they don't know, they hit something or they punch."*
 - *"Two guys had a go at me with knives, they were alcoholics."*



4. Living Skills (problems with hygiene/room cleanliness)

- *"He shit in the shower and just walked off and left it."*
- *"..... has a problem with hygiene. I went and told him to have a shower...his room absolutely reeked."*
- *"They stuff food while they are living there and they are too lazy to go to the garbage bin...whether it's the remain[s] of a pizza or a hamburger they stuff it in the wardrobe, under the wardrobe, on top of the wardrobe, in the drawers."*



5. Support Provided By BHM

- When asked 3 out of 7 indicated that they did “nothing.”
 - *“As far as assisting medically or mentally we just can’t do that.”*
 - *“It’s not really our responsibility.”*
- However during interviews it was revealed that nobody did “nothing”



Support Provided By BHM (cont'd)

- Amount of additional support ranged from minimal to extensive
 - Installing needle disposal units - *" we put bins in there to put their needles in"*
- Accidental Counsellor
 - *" They trust me, so they come to me."*
- Referral Support
 - *"I approached him and I said 'do you want me to get help for you?' So I rang Mental Health."*



Support Provided By BHM (cont'd)

- General Support
 - *“There were dirty cups and plates all through the room. I’d just, in the end, go in and grab them.”*
 - *“You haven’t had a shower recently, go and have a shower.”*
- Financial Support/Rental Assistance
 - *“We give them some time to either come up with the money...”*
 - *“I don’t put them out on the street with no money, I normally put them out and refund their rent to them.”*



What BHM Say They Need

- Background information about residents mental health and substance use status
 - *“I need more background when people are coming in.”*
 - *“For people who are on medication...we should be informed about it.”*
- Relationship with additional services
 - *“I need mental health to be in contact with me.”*
 - *“You just got to have the case worker who is here on 24 hour call, easy access.”*



What BHM Believe Residents Need

- Living skills programs.
 - *" There needs to be more...living skill programs, to teach them that 'this is how you wash up, this is how you do this...'"*
- Relationship with, knowledge of additional services.
 - *"I [could] just say 'look I know a place that you can talk to and have a mix with, with people.'"*
- Community Involvement.
 - *"Get a community bus on the go."*



Social Inclusion and Community Space

- 4 out of 6 BHM indicated they don't encourage social interaction, but they say the environment can give rise to a community atmosphere
 - *"Well the boys, they've got a good crew over there...they come out and say 'oh I haven't seen such and such for a day or so."*
 - *"If you've got, say one person living next to you, you know I mean they always say hello."*



Research Issues and Challenges

- Finding and making contact with BHM
- Overcoming hesitancy and suspicion
- Significant time restraints
- Securing interview times
- Administrative and equipment challenges
- Safety issues



Next Steps

- Conclusion of interviews and further analyses
- Scoping of current and previous boarding house support programs ie:
 - Boarding House Buddy Program (Rozelle Community Centre)
 - Boarding House Outreach Program (Newtown Neighbourhood Centre)
- Commencement of boarding house residents interviews



Conclusion

- Both BHM and residents have unique needs many of which are not being met
- BHM potentially provide a gateway to improved services and care for high needs and isolated residents
- It appears there are service opportunities that can be developed



Contact Details

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