

# FROM NIMBY TO NEIGHBOUR

BROKERING A DIALOGUE ABOUT HOMELESSNESS AMONG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND THE COMMUNITY



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS



- 1 What perceptions exist among community stakeholders regarding homelessness, especially in relation to crime and public space?
- 2 What types of interactions do law enforcement have with people experiencing homelessness?
- 3 How, and in what ways, do the experiences and narratives surrounding homelessness, crime and public safety converge and diverge among people experiencing homelessness, law enforcement, and the community?

This study will interrogate perceptions about people experiencing homelessness as inherently deviant and dangerous, and build a new narrative premised on knowledge sharing and enhancing community resiliency.

The Advisory Group, made up of people with lived expertise of homelessness in each of three cities, will support the development, implementation, and analysis of the research

## OBJECTIVES



- To uncover perceptions of homelessness;
- To help Brantford, Cambridge and Guelph communities address unique challenges;
- To allow members of disparate groups to engage in a respectful exchange with the aim of fostering empathy and community resiliency.

## 1ST PHASE

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- Explores documentation produced over the last 10 years pertaining to policy and planning, council minutes, public resources, by-laws, and law enforcement strategies.
- Uses this documentation to establish a spectrum of official responses to homelessness in mid-sized Canadian municipalities.
- Situates Brantford, Cambridge, and Guelph along this spectrum
- Insights inform understandings of institutional responses to homelessness.

### MEDIA ANALYSIS

- Explores 5 years of newspaper articles from Brantford, Cambridge and Guelph on topics related to homelessness.
- Explores how narratives differ between cities and over time; the language used to communicate policies; and how homelessness is framed in the media.
- Sheds light on how citizens are informed of, and react to, the official responses to homelessness identified in the environmental scan.

## 2ND PHASE

### INTERVIEWS

- Interviewing key stakeholders: people with lived experience of homelessness; law enforcement, social service, providers, business and residential associations.
- Understanding their perceptions of homelessness, crime, dangerousness, use of public space, and interactions with law enforcement.

## 3RD PHASE

### BROKERED DIALOGUE

#### What?

- A productive exchange among people experiencing homelessness, law enforcement, and community stakeholders.

#### How?

- Members of each group discuss their perspective on the issues, which we synthesize and share with members of the other groups in a series of interviews.

#### Why?

- Individuals are able to speak openly and listen in a way that is safe and appropriate for those who may not otherwise have an opportunity to engage in in-person dialogue.
- Clarifies the nature and scope of disagreements between groups, while uncovering possibilities for change

## RESEARCH TEAM

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Wellington County  
Canadian Observatory on Homelessness  
Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition



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