

Language Matters

LET'S TALK ABOUT HOUSING

Instead of ...

- Homeless Person
- Street Person
- Transient
- Bum

• Wet Housing

• Dry Housing

Try ...

- Person experiencing homelessness
- Person without a home
- Neighbour in need

- Housing
- Supportive housing
- Low barrier housing

- Housing
- Supportive housing
- High barrier housing
- Housing that does not allow substance use on site

The words we use to describe people without homes can increase stigma and be a barrier to seeking help.

Use person-first language. Labels such as “homeless” dehumanize people and takes away from our individual identity.

These terms are often associated with negative and harmful stereotypes.

Avoid language that suggests a personal or moral failing.

Use language that is inclusive, positive and empowering.

The causes of homelessness are often a complex combination of social and economic issues, systems failures and individual circumstances.

