

# 6 Myths about Homelessness



**Myth 1: Homeless people are dangerous and violent.**

**FACT: Homeless people are more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators.**

- This is a commonly held myth yet research does not support it. [1]. In fact the opposite is true!
- People experiencing homelessness are much more likely to experience violence than those committing violence



**Myth 2: Supportive housing reduces property values.**

**FACT: Toronto provides a variety of supports for people experiencing homelessness in different neighbourhoods and property values continue to climb.**

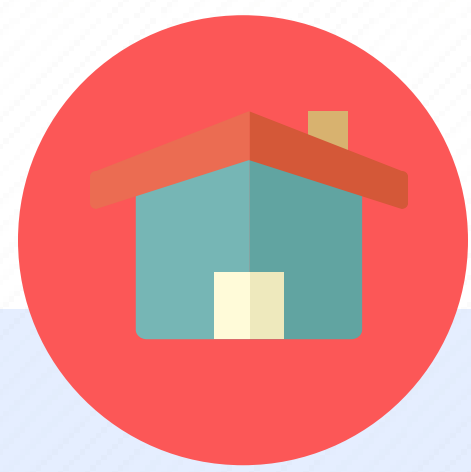
- Research has shown in cities across North America, including Toronto, that supportive housing **does not** reduce property values [2].



**Myth 3: All homeless people are drug addicts and alcoholics.**

**FACT: Only a percentage of homeless people have substance abuse issues.**

- Similar to general population, only a percentage of people describe dealing with substance abuse issues [3].
- Many people experiencing homelessness start to use substances to deal with the shame, fear and stigma of not having a home



**Myth 4: People experiencing homelessness don't want housing.**

**FACT: No one wants to be homeless and no one chooses homelessness.**

- 94% of people experiencing homelessness want permanent housing, when asked in 2018 [3]. This also doesn't mean 6% don't. Reasons for this included that they were moving away or didn't feel options were safe.



**Myth 5: Providing people experiencing homelessness with housing is too expensive.**

**FACT: Providing people with housing is significantly cheaper.**

- It is significantly cheaper to provide people with *Housing First*, a solution that focuses on providing immediate housing without imposing significant eligibility or residency conditions [4].



**Myth 6: It is their fault they are homeless.**

**FACT: No one deserves to be homeless. Homelessness is often a result of series of factors, such as a job loss, trauma/abuse, high rent costs.**

- There are a variety of factors which contribute to homelessness, including trauma. One third have experienced trauma as youth[5].

## References

[1] Novac, S., Hermer, J., Paradis, E., & Kellen, A. (2009). More sinned against than sinning? Homeless people as victims of crime and harassment. *Finding home: Policy options for addressing homelessness in Canada*, 660-671.

[2] De Wolff, A. (2008). *We are neighbours: The impact of supportive housing on community, social, economic and attitude changes*. Wellesley Institute.

[3] 2018 Toronto Street Needs Assessment: <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/toronto-street-needs-assessment-2018-results-report>

[4] Jadidzadeh, A., Falvo, N., & Dutton, D. J. (2020). Cost Savings of Housing First in a Non-Experimental Setting. *Canadian Public Policy*, 46(1), 23-36.

[5] Chilcoat, H., & Menard, C. (2003). Epidemiological investigations: Comorbidity of posttraumatic stress disorder and substance use disorder. In P. Ouimette & P. Brown (Eds.), *Trauma and substance abuse* (pp. 9-28).