

February 2020

# Larwill Place Modular Supportive Housing Resident Outcomes

Results at Six Months after Opening



**BC HOUSING**

**RESEARCH CENTRE**



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### **RESEARCH CENTRE**

BC Housing’s Research Centre works in collaboration with housing sector partners to foster excellence in residential construction and find innovative solutions for affordable housing in British Columbia. Sharing leading-edge research and advances in building science and new technologies encourages best practices.

The Research Centre identifies and bridges research gaps to address homelessness, housing affordability, social housing challenges and the needs of distinct populations. Mobilizing knowledge and research expertise helps improve the quality of housing and leads to innovation and adoption of new construction techniques, Building Code changes, and enhanced education and training programs.

Learn more about the Research Centre at [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org). Sign up to receive the latest news and updates at [www.bchousing.org/subscribe](http://www.bchousing.org/subscribe).

## Acknowledgements

BC Housing gratefully acknowledges MPA Society for sharing their insights on Larwill Place, a modular housing development in Vancouver, and for supporting this study. We also acknowledge the contribution of the City of Vancouver for assisting in the development of this research and for reviewing the data and this report. We would like to sincerely thank all the residents who shared their perspectives through the resident survey as part of this study.

In Vancouver, the Rapid Response to Homelessness program is delivered as Temporary Modular Housing (TMH).



This snapshot shows outcomes for residents of Larwill Place, a modular supportive housing development in Vancouver, B.C., six months after the building opened.

Please refer to page 15, Research Methodology for information about data sources.



# LARWILL PLACE



Housing provider, MPA Society operates Larwill Place, providing on-site support coverage twenty-four hours every day of the week and helping residents to:

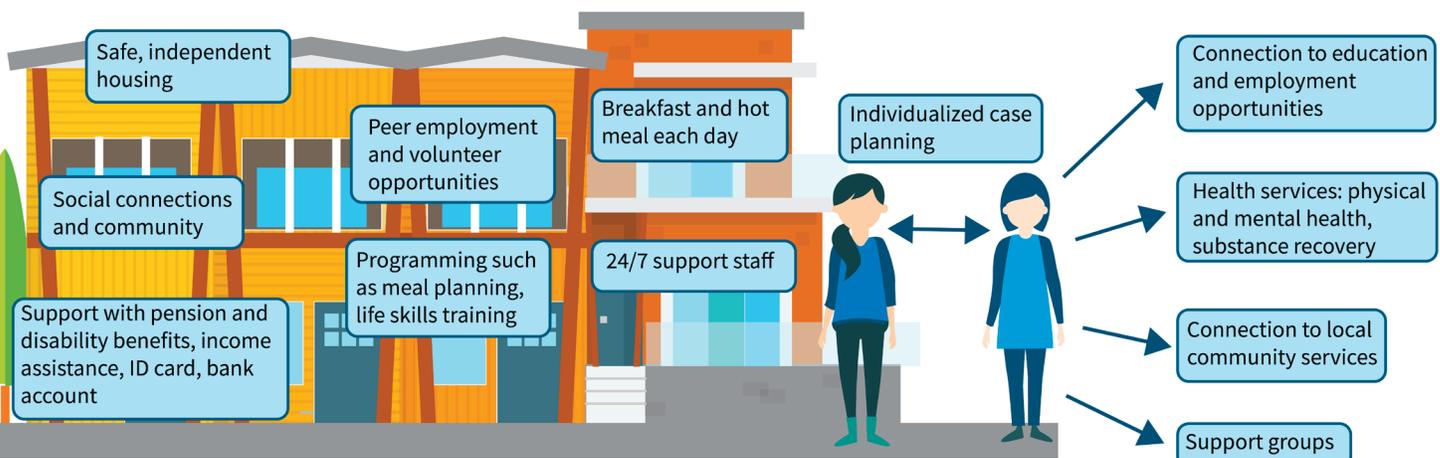
- › Maintain their homes
- › Enhance their life skills, including learning to cook
- › Connect with education, employment, health services, and independent housing
- › Access community information, social and recreational programs
- › Participate in case planning and needs assessments
- › Access income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits, and apply for B.C. Identification
- › Open a bank account
- › Access food

## Modular units funded under Rapid Response to Homelessness program deliver results

Larwill Place opened in November 2018 and is funded under the Rapid Response to Homelessness program. Larwill Place provides 98 units of housing in two buildings for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The buildings are located in Downtown Vancouver.

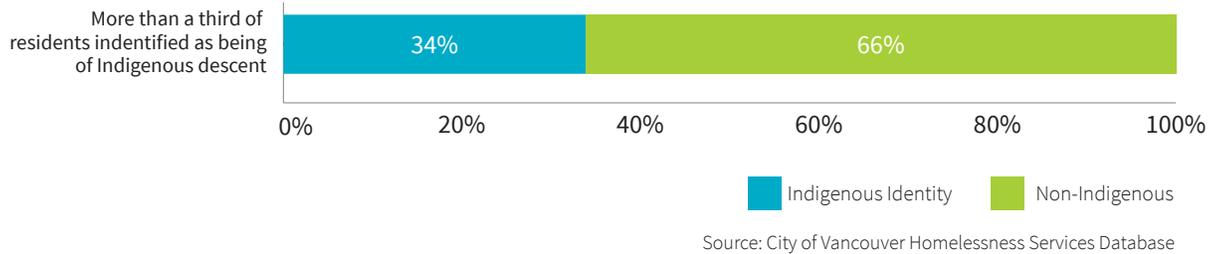
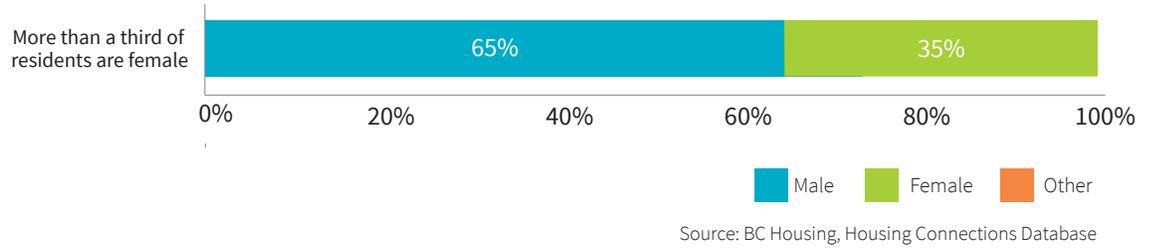
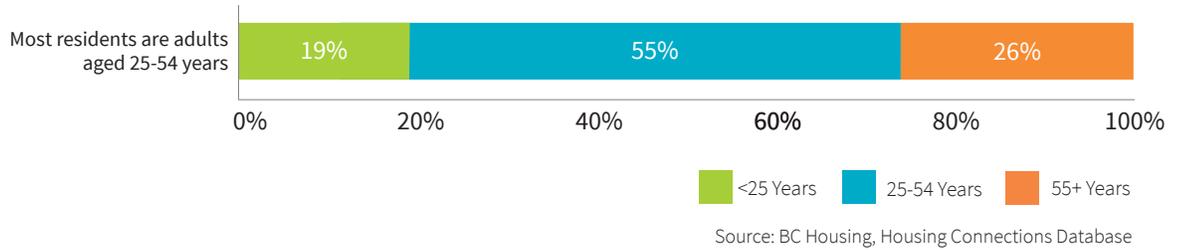
The Government of British Columbia (B.C.) announced the Rapid Response to Homelessness program in 2017 as an immediate response to homelessness across B.C. The Province committed \$291 million over two years to build 2,000 modular supportive housing units for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. In addition, \$170 million was committed over three years to provide staffing and support services for residents.

Each self-contained studio apartment is 320 square feet and includes a 3-piece bathroom, 2-burner stovetop and a full-height fridge. Each building includes 2,000 square feet of amenity space with a commercial kitchen, TV lounge, dining area, and small breakout rooms. Six units on the first floor of each building are wheelchair accessible.

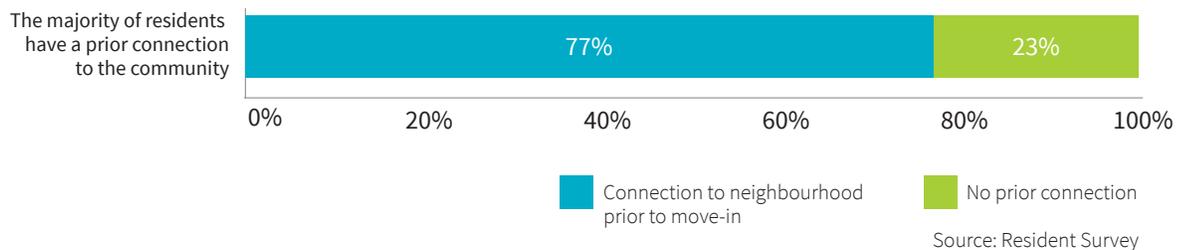


## Resident Profile

Larwill Place provides housing for a mixed community of residents. This includes residents with different genders, ethnicities, ages, vulnerabilities and support needs. Residents also have a mix of vulnerabilities and support needs. Twenty of the units are prioritized for individuals with complex health needs.



The majority of survey respondents indicated that they had a prior connection to the neighbourhood. These connections included living in the neighbourhood either previously or immediately prior to moving to Larwill Place, having friends or relatives in the neighbourhood, and using services located in the neighbourhood. Staff reported that individuals referred to the building were either exiting the health care system or experiencing homelessness in the neighbourhood. Staff made a concerted effort to house individuals who were already living close to the Larwill Place site.

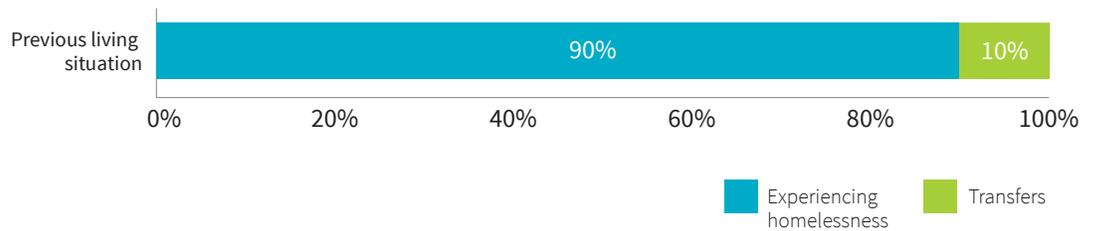


## Experience of Homelessness

### OUTCOME: DECREASED

Ninety per cent of residents were experiencing homelessness immediately prior to moving into their Larwill Place home.

Ten per cent of residents were living in housing that did not meet their support needs.

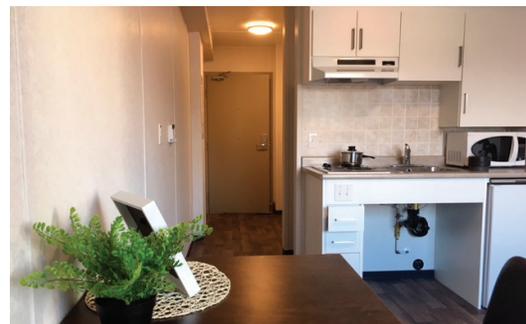


Source: City of Vancouver Homelessness Services Database

## Housing Stability

### OUTCOME: INCREASED

Ninety-two per cent of the first Larwill Place residents to move into the building remained housed there six months after moving into their homes. Seven residents were no longer housed at Larwill Place. Among those who left before the six-month-mark, two residents passed away, one person returned to homelessness, and the others went on to other housing situations.



Source: City of Vancouver

## Quality of Life for Residents

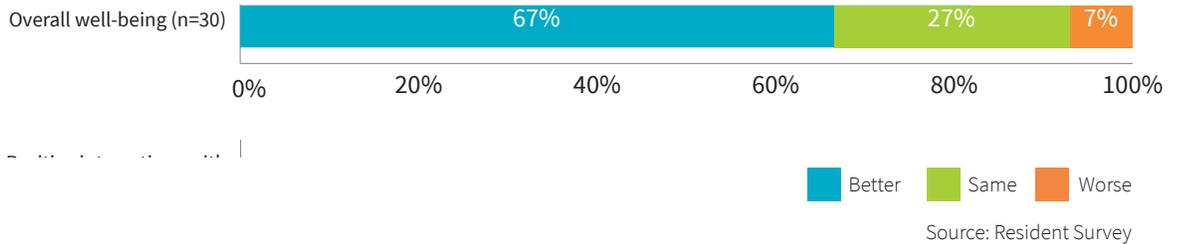
### OUTCOME: IMPROVED

#### Overall Well-being

Sixty-seven per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in their overall well-being, while 27 per cent of survey respondents reported that their well-being remained the same.

*“Positive changes include everything from having clean clothes, to being able to access a shower, food, and a hair cut program. As far as the residents’ personal health, I’ve noticed a significant change.”*

– Larwill Place staff member

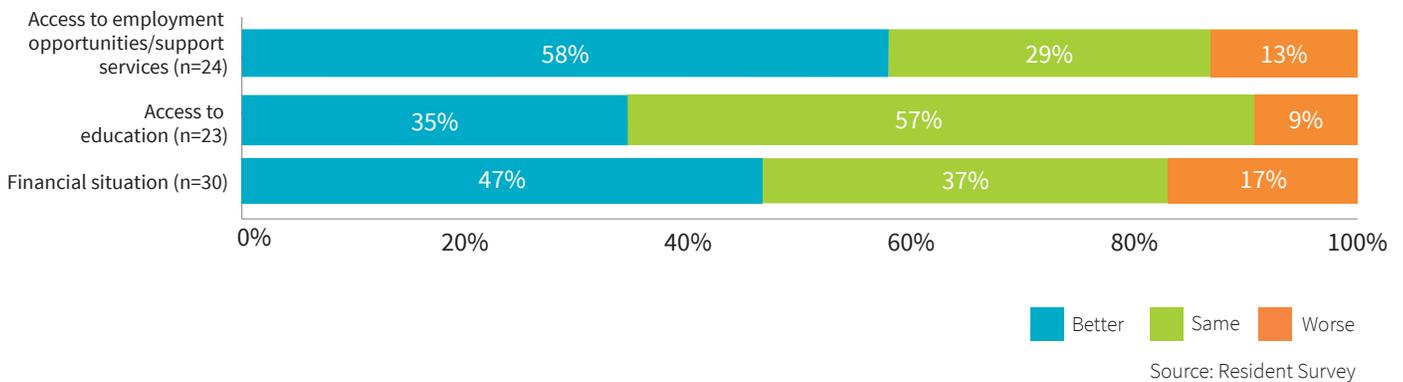


#### Employment, Income and Education

Fifty-eight per cent of respondents reported better access to employment opportunities since moving in, while 35 per cent reported better access to education.

Forty-seven per cent of survey respondents reported that their financial situation had improved, while 17 per cent of survey respondents reported that their financial situation had worsened.

Staff reported that the focus for the building at six months after opening has been on improving health and increasing contact with doctors, however, one resident has joined the workforce fulltime since moving into the building.

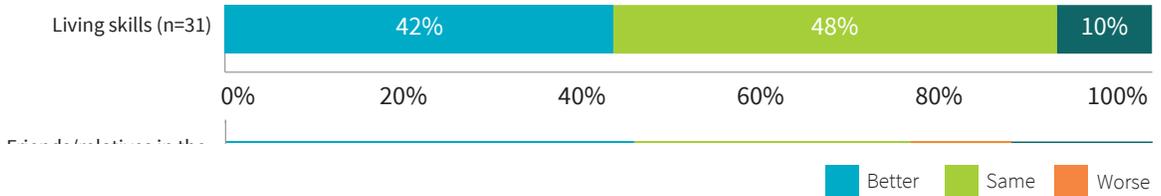


## Living Skills

Forty-two per cent of survey respondents reported that their living skills had improved, while these skills remained the same for 48 per cent of residents. Staff reported that re-learning living skills can be a challenge for individuals exiting homelessness, and that staff are there to support them.

*“Learning how to be housed takes time. Relationships are essential to help people improve their life skills.”*

– Larwill Place staff member



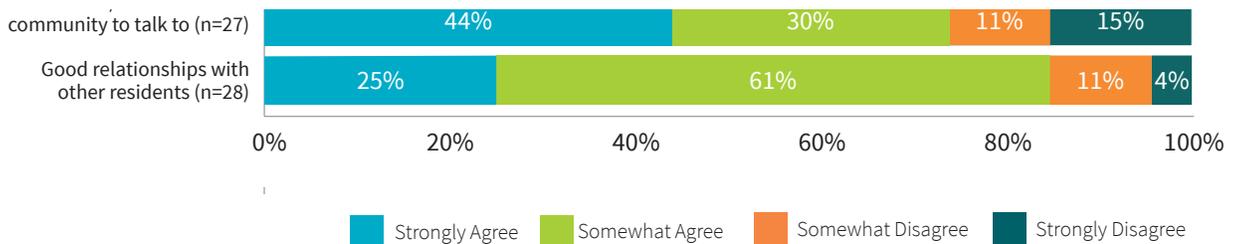
Source: Resident Survey

*“One of the biggest things I see is that residents are building trusting relationships with staff, and this helps people access more support.”*

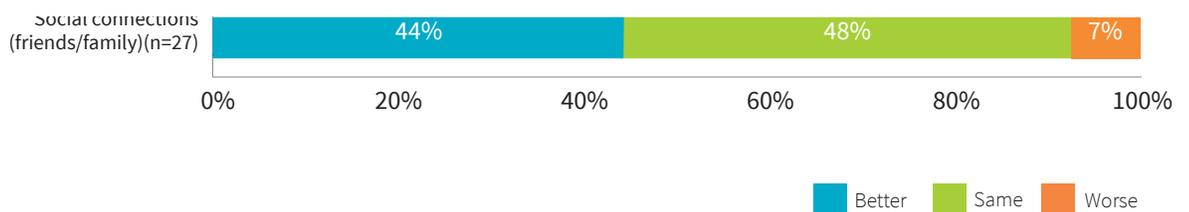
– Larwill Place staff member

## Social Connections

Larwill Place residents reported improved social connections. Seventy-four per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they have friends or relatives in the community to talk to, while 86 per cent reported good relationships with other residents. Forty-four per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in their social connections.



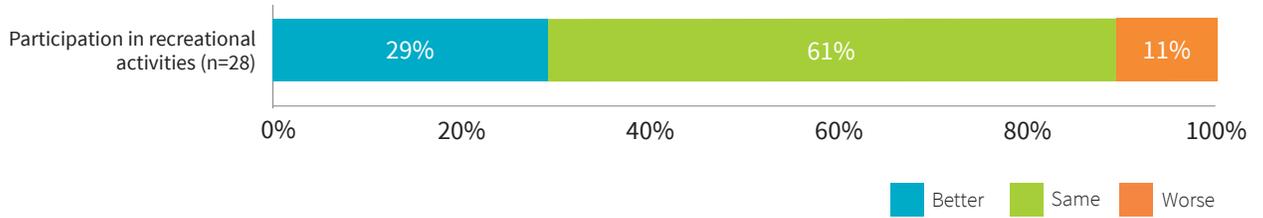
Source: Resident Survey



Source: Resident Survey

## Recreation

In the resident survey, 29 per cent of respondents reported improved participation in recreational activities, while participation remained the same for 61 per cent of respondents. Staff reported that they have recreational programs on site and residents participate in activities such as TV nights, watching sports events, and gardening in the on-site community garden.

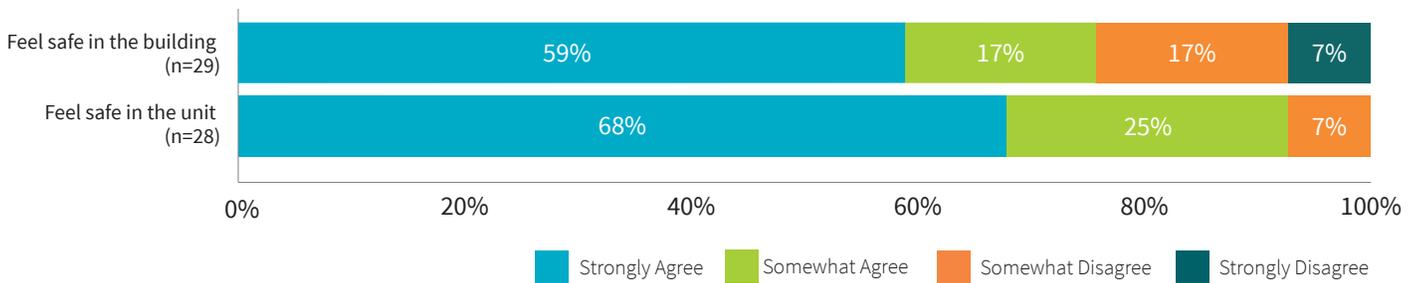


Source: Resident Survey

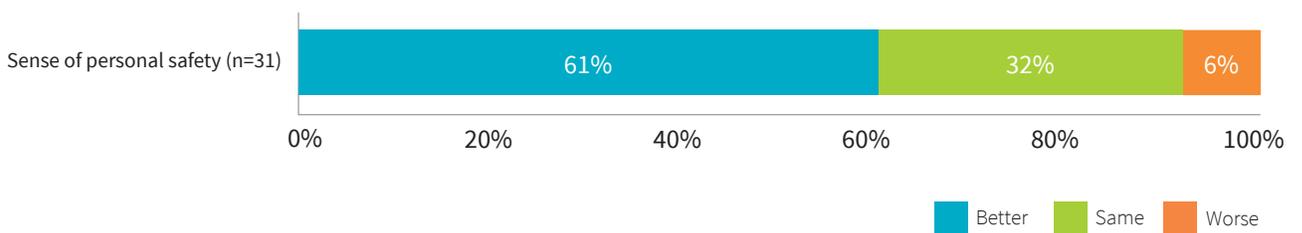
## Safety

The majority of survey respondents (76 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that they felt safe in the building, while 93 per cent noted that they felt safe in their home.

The majority of survey respondents (61 per cent) reported an improvement in their sense of personal safety.



Source: Resident Survey

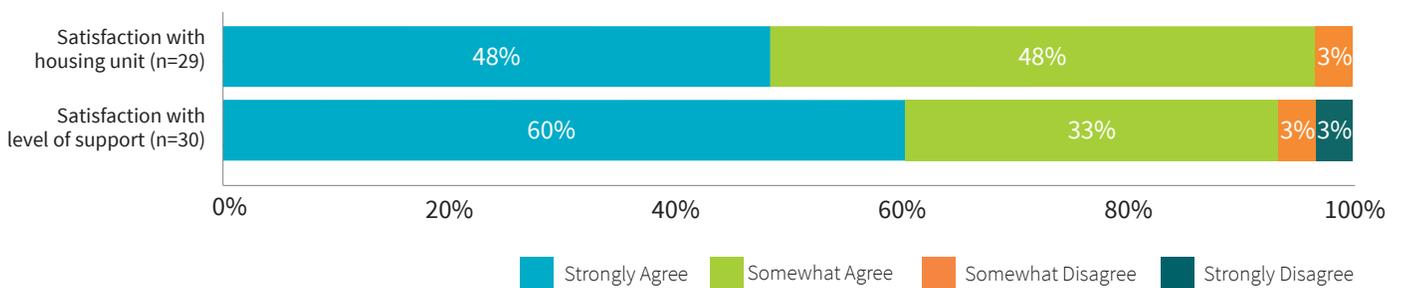


Source: Resident Survey

## Satisfaction with Housing and Supports

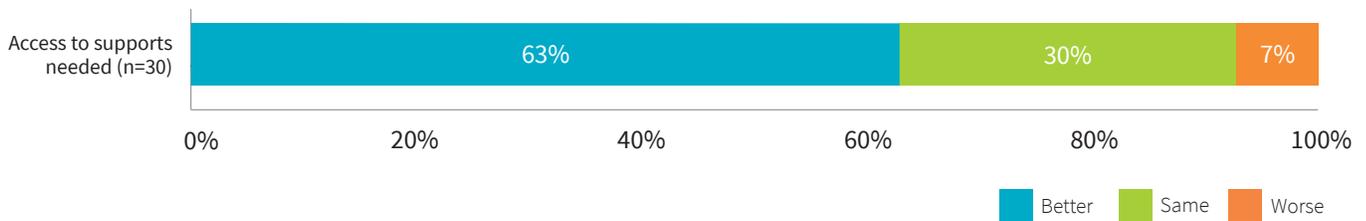
Most survey respondents (96 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their housing unit, while 93 per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the level of supports they receive at Larwill Place.

The resident survey supports staff perceptions that residents are satisfied with their housing and supports. Staff reported that the majority of residents are satisfied with their housing situation at Larwill Place. The Larwill Place staff noted that they hear a lot of positive feedback, including gratitude for the care and help that staff provide, and for the cleanliness of the building. Staff also felt that some residents are still in the process of stabilizing in their housing, which may affect their level of satisfaction.



Source: Resident Survey

Most survey respondents (63 per cent) reported that access to the supports they need has improved, while 30 per cent reported that access has stayed the same. Larwill Place staff reported that residents access a range of supports, including primary mental health care and legal support. Staff also indicated that it is easier for outreach services to find residents now that they have a permanent address, and that residents are able to get more consistent care from those outreach services. Larwill Place is conveniently located, as it is close to the services in the Downtown Eastside.



Source: Resident Survey

## Challenges

Some Larwill Place residents have experienced challenges since moving to their new home. Staff mentioned that adjusting from living outside to living inside has been a challenge for some residents. Residents have to learn to live in a community, to trust staff in the building, and to consider how their lifestyles may impact others in the building.

Staff also mentioned that the harm reduction approach in the building can be a challenge for residents who do not use drugs or who are in recovery. If an individual wants to leave Larwill Place because of this challenge, staff will connect them with other housing resources.

Larwill Place staff also identified challenges related to the modular building design, including:

- Doors which are too heavy for some residents. As a result, they may leave the door open for long periods of time, creating a safety concern
- Issues with accessibility into the building for residents who require a mobility scooter
- Not enough space for wheelchairs to manoeuvre easily in hallways or in adaptive suites
- Issues of overheating in the building, especially on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

## Residents' Health

### OUTCOME: IMPROVED

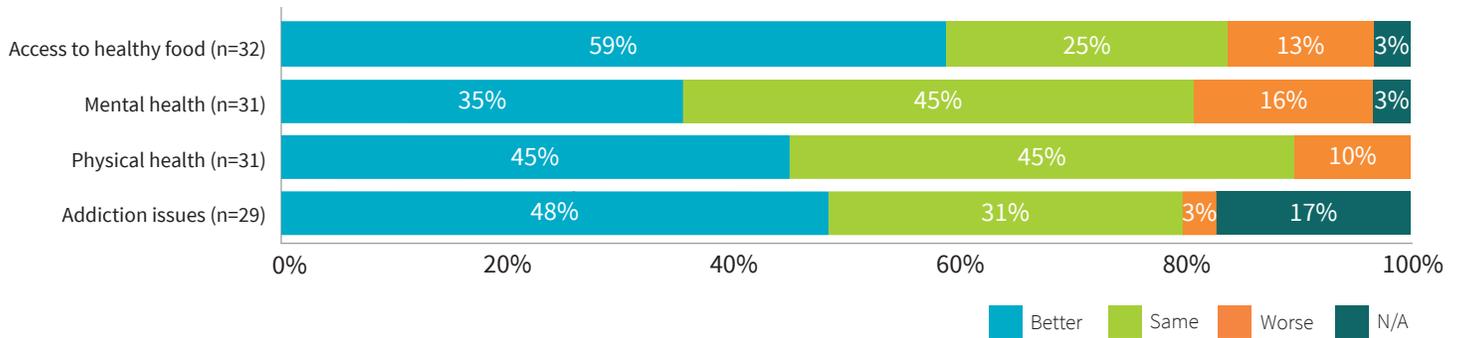
Fifty-nine per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have better access to healthy food since moving to Larwill Place.

Thirty-five per cent of survey respondents reported improvements to their mental health since moving into their home and 45 per cent of survey respondents reported an improvement in their physical health.

Forty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in addiction issues, while 31 per cent reported that their addiction issues had remained the same, and 17 per cent reported that this question did not apply to them.

*“People who typically have nothing in their fridge are eating twice a day. We take the time to offer food to people who have a hard time asking. We support people without fear of judgement.”*

– Larwill Place staff member



Source: Resident Survey



## Health Care System Usage

### OUTCOME: CONTINUED USE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

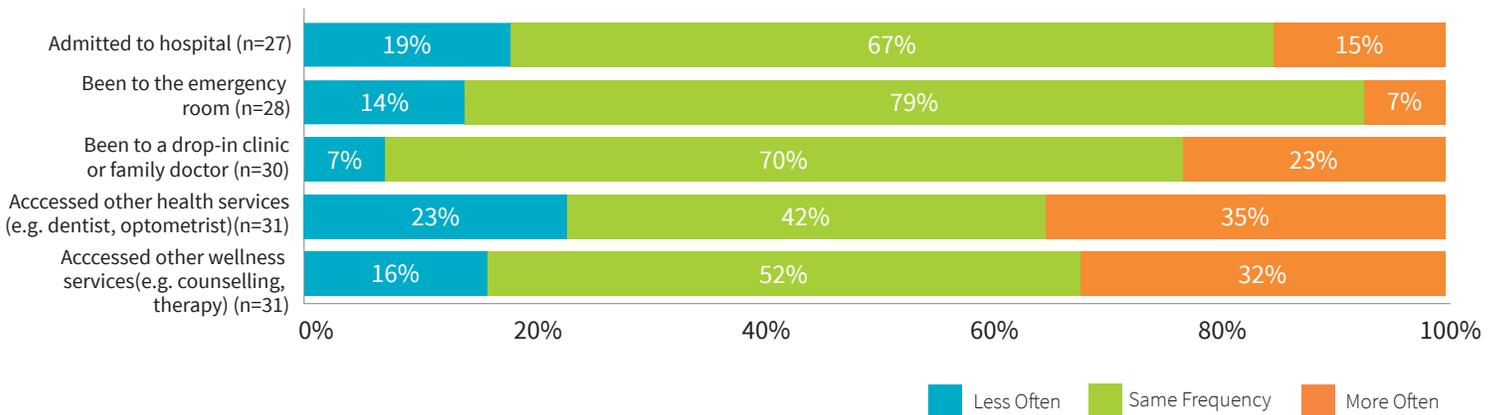
A low percentage of residents reported that their use of emergency health services has decreased at Larwill Place. This is likely due to the complexity of the health needs of many residents at Larwill Place and the fact that many residents moved into the housing directly from hospital.

Nineteen per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have been admitted to hospital less frequently since moving to Larwill Place, while 67 per cent reported they had been admitted to hospital with the same frequency.

A similar trend was seen in trips to the emergency room, with 14 per cent of survey respondents reporting they had been to the emergency room less frequently, and 79 per cent reporting they had been to the emergency room with the same frequency.

Twenty-three per cent of survey respondents reported that they had been to a drop-in clinic or family doctor more frequently since moving into Larwill Place, while seven per cent reported that they had accessed these services less frequently.

Thirty-five per cent of survey respondents reported accessing other health services (such as dentist or optometrist) more frequently, while 32 per cent of survey respondents reported accessing other wellness services (such as counselling and therapy) more frequently since moving into Larwill Place.



Source: Resident Survey

## Community Relations

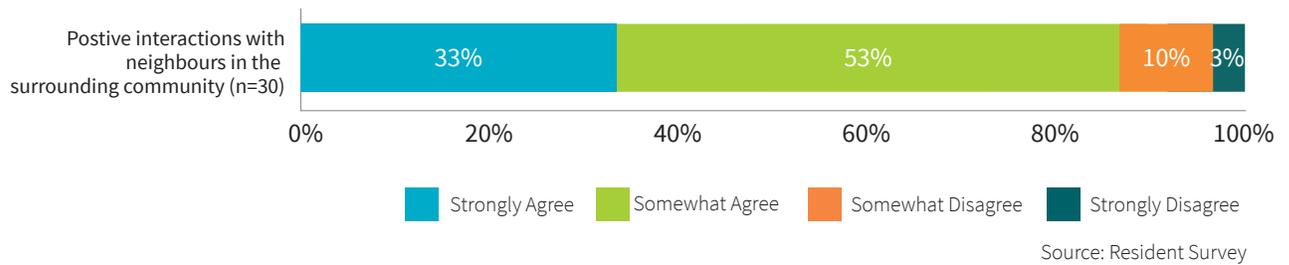
### OUTCOME: POSITIVE

Larwill Place staff indicated that a positive relationship with the wider community exists. Staff felt increased awareness of people experiencing homelessness in the neighbourhood and a desire for solutions, were strong reasons for the high level of community acceptance.

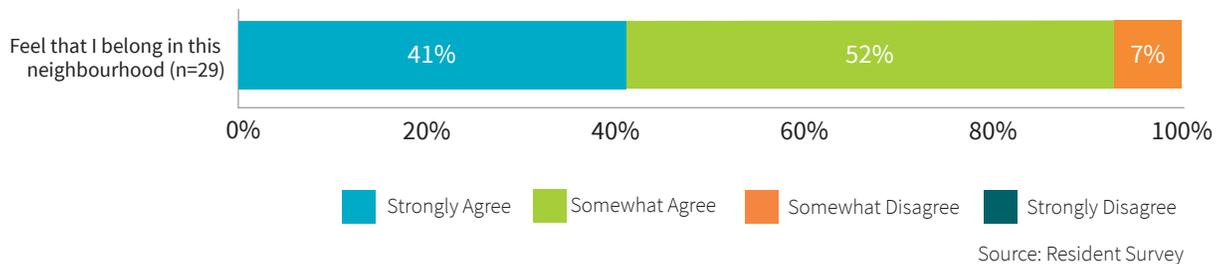
Staff reported that they regularly do perimeter checks of the building and pick up debris, which helps with community relations.

Resident survey responses supported staff perceptions. The majority of survey respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that they have experienced positive interactions with the surrounding community (86 per cent).

*“In the downtown area of Vancouver, it’s difficult to ignore issues with homelessness, and a lot of neighbours really want to see solutions.”*  
– Larwill Place staff member



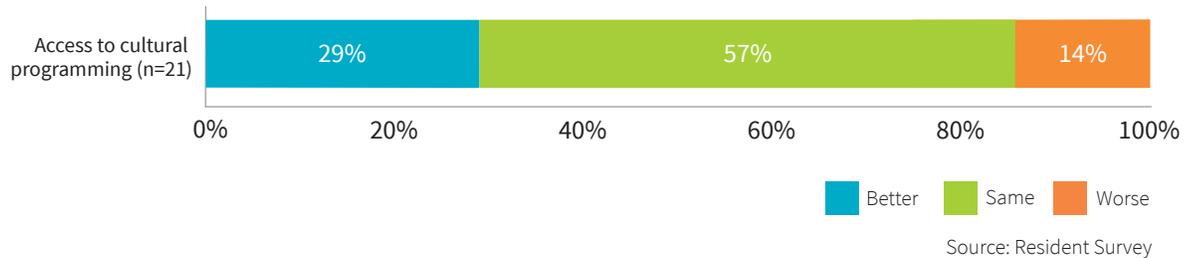
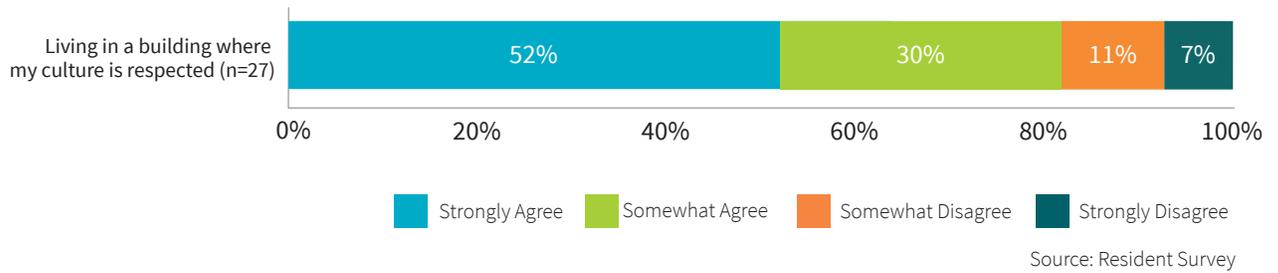
Ninety-three per cent of survey respondents felt that they belong in the neighbourhood.



## Access to Cultural Programming

### OUTCOME: POSITIVE

Larwill Place houses individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds. Eighty-two per cent of survey respondents reported that they feel that their culture is respected at Larwill Place. Twenty-nine per cent of survey respondents felt that their access to cultural programming had improved, while 57 per cent of survey respondents felt that their access had remained the same.



Data provided in this report was collected six months after Larwill Place opened. The outcomes from this report are based on residents who moved into the building when it opened. Outcomes may change over time as the resident mix in the building changes.

## Resident Survey

A resident survey was made available to Larwill Place residents in June 2019. The objective of this survey was to measure the change in well-being and quality of life that residents have experienced because of the supportive housing development. The resident survey results are self-reported by residents.

- Thirty-four per cent of Larwill Place residents responded to the resident survey.
- Not all survey respondents chose to answer all questions.
- Data for each question is based on those who answered.

## Housing Provider Interviews

Housing provider interviews were conducted with three MPA Society staff in June 2019. The objective of these interviews was to gather information about the change in well-being and quality of life that residents have experienced because of the supportive housing development.

## Housing Connections Data

Data on housing stability, and some demographic information was sourced from BC Housing's Housing Connections Database for the first residents who moved into the building. Percentages presented in this report are based on those individuals for whom data was available.

## City of Vancouver Data

Data on some resident demographic information and previous living situation was accessed from the City of Vancouver Homelessness Services Database.

## Partners

This study is being undertaken at modular supportive housing developments across the province in collaboration with non-profit housing societies and other partners. In Vancouver, the Rapid Response to Homelessness program is delivered as Temporary Modular Housing (TMH).