

May 2021

Spero House Modular Supportive Housing Resident Outcomes



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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.

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Acknowledgements

BC Housing gratefully acknowledges Ask Wellness Society for sharing their insights on Spero House and for supporting this study. We would like to sincerely thank all the residents who shared their perspectives through the resident survey as part of this study.



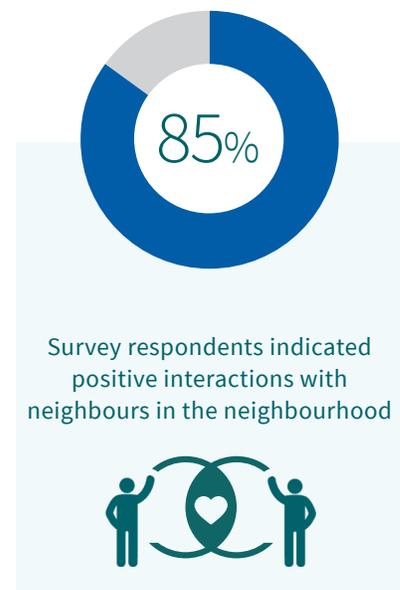
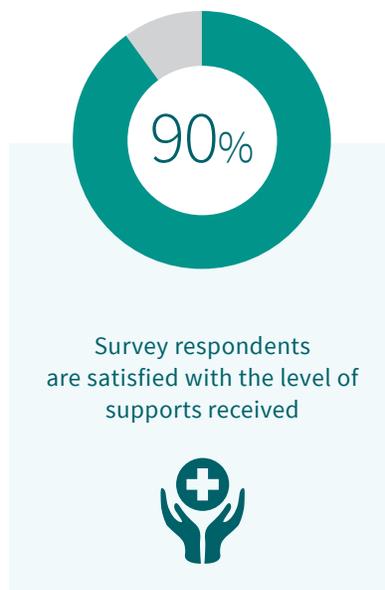
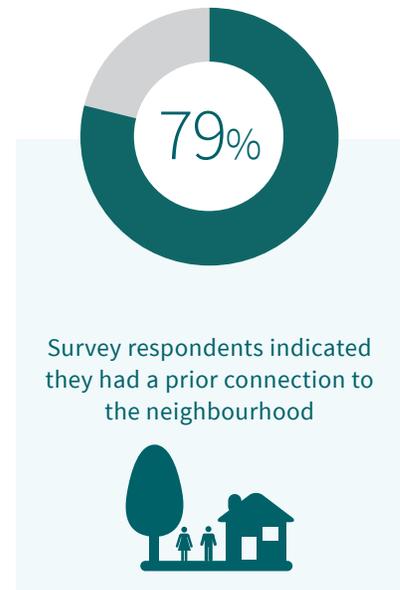
Wellness Society

KAMLOOPS / MERRITT / PENTICTON

Streets → Homes → Health → Employment

This snapshot shows outcomes for residents of Spero House, a modular supportive housing development in Kamloops, B.C., eight months after the building opened.

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



SPERO HOUSE



Housing provider, Ask Wellness Society operates Spero House, providing on-site support coverage twenty-four hours every day of the week and helping residents to:

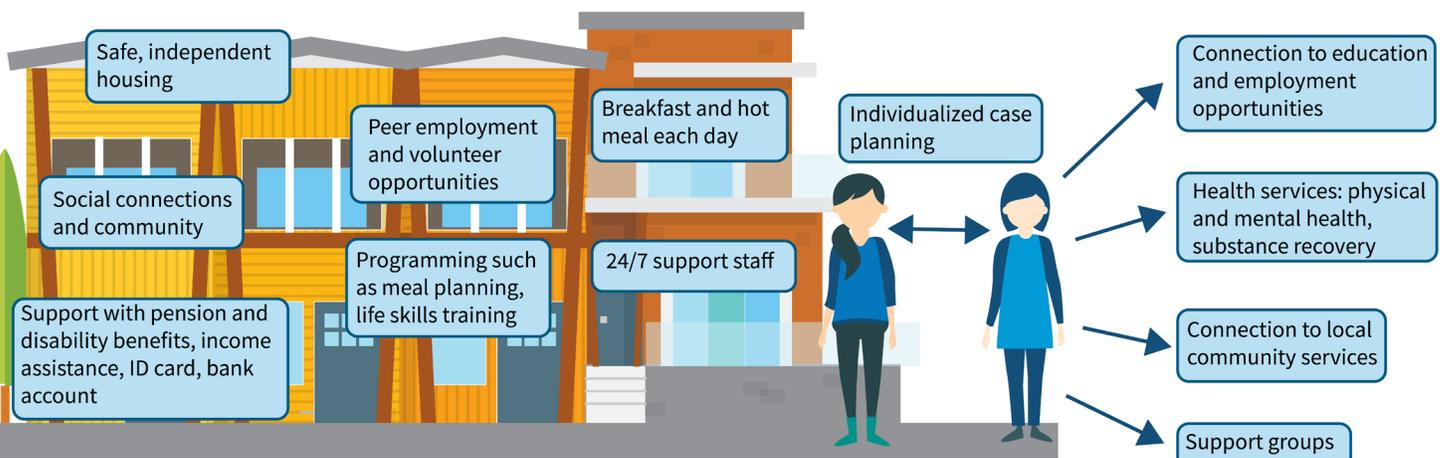
- › Maintain their units
- › Enhance their life skills, including learning to cook
- › Connect with education, employment, health, and independent housing
- › Access community information, social and recreational programs
- › Participate in case planning and needs assessments
- › Access income assistance,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

Modular units funded under Rapid Response to Homelessness program deliver results

Spero House opened in March 2019 and is funded under the Rapid Response to Homelessness program. Spero House provides 62 units for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Fifty-eight of the units are long-term supportive housing, while four units are designed as short-term suites. The building is located in Kamloops, British Columbia.

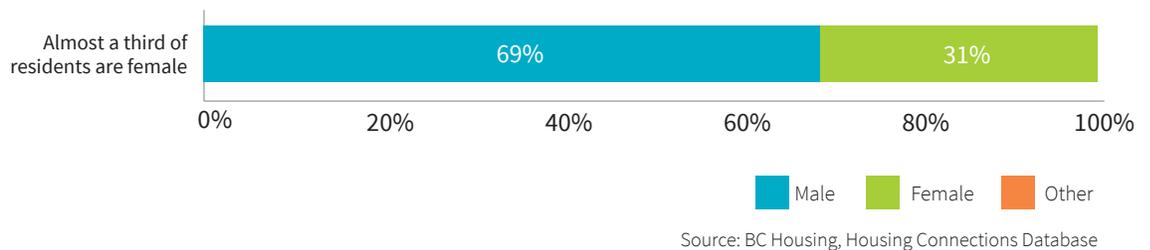
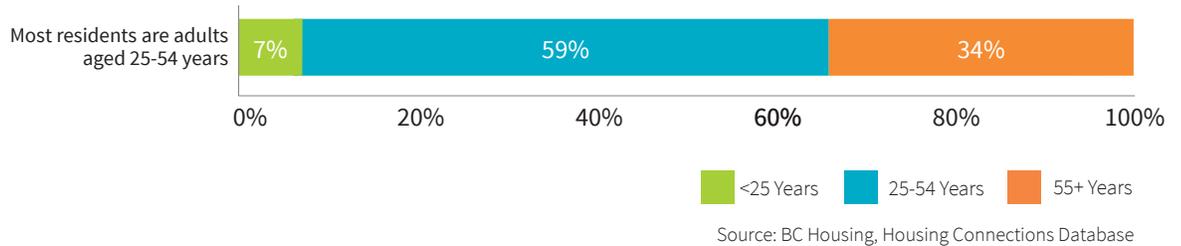
The Government of British Columbia announced the Rapid Response to Homelessness program in 2017 as an immediate response to homelessness across the province. The Province committed \$291 million over two years to build 2,000 modular supportive housing units for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. 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. The building includes 2,000 square feet of amenity space with a commercial kitchen, TV lounge, dining area and several small breakout rooms. Six units in the building are wheelchair accessible.

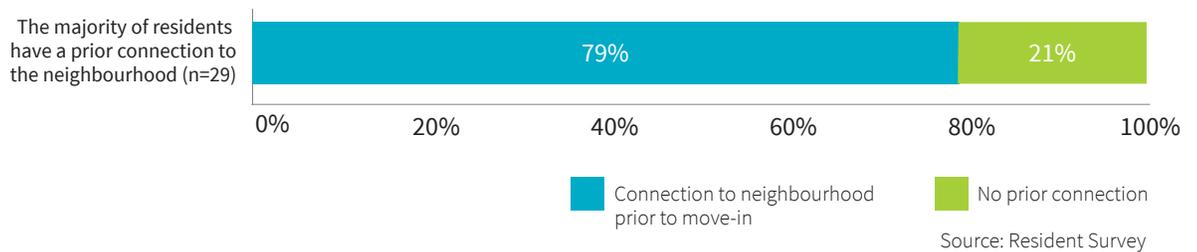


Resident Profile

Spero House provides housing for a mixed community of residents. This includes residents with different genders, ethnicities, and ages. Residents also have a mix of vulnerabilities and support needs.



Seventy-nine per cent 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 Spero House, having friends or relatives in the neighbourhood, and using services located in the neighbourhood.

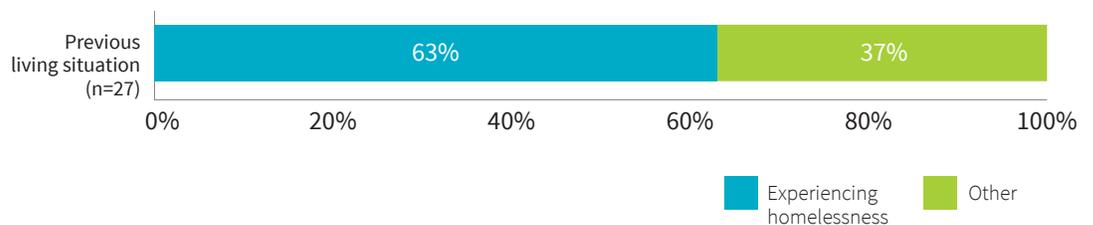


Experience of Homelessness

OUTCOME: DECREASED

Staff reported that Spero House residents came from a mix of previous living situations. While many individuals had been experiencing homelessness, several were living in housing that did not meet their needs, were staying with family or friends, or were in hospital.

Sixty-three percent of survey respondents identified their living situation as sheltered or unsheltered homeless prior to moving into the building, while 37% of survey respondents identified their previous living situation as “other”.



Source: Resident Survey

Housing Stability

OUTCOME: INCREASED

Seventy-four per cent of the first Spero House residents to move into the building remained housed there six months. Fifteen residents moved out prior to six months. Reasons included having health issues that meant that the unit was no longer appropriate for their needs, the resident was asked to leave the program, or the resident gave notice or abandoned their unit.

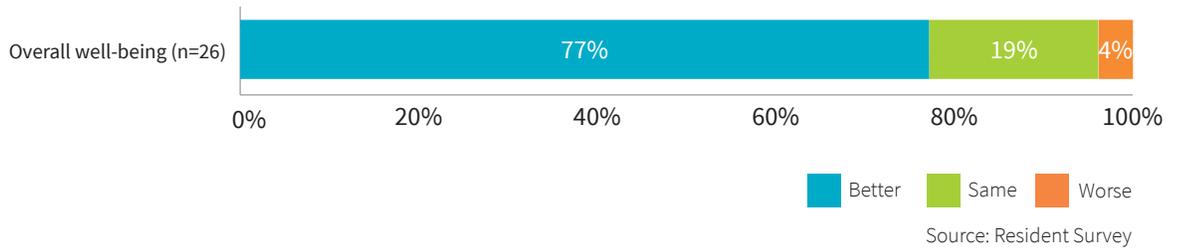


Quality of Life for Residents

OUTCOME: **IMPROVED**

Overall Well-being

Seventy-seven per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in their overall well-being.

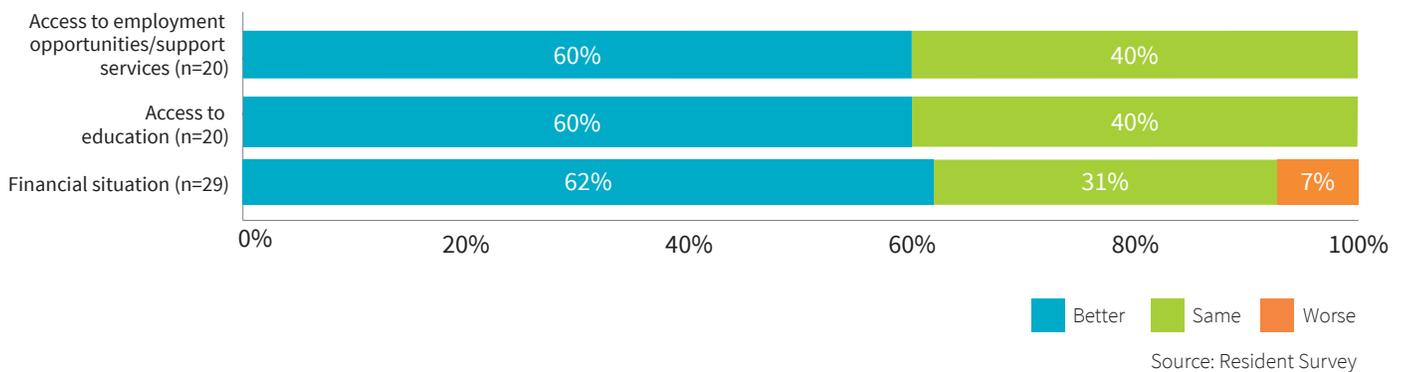


Employment, Income and Education

Spero House staff reported that some residents are connected with an employment agency in Kamloops that offers day-to-day employment. Several residents are also working on their resumes and have connected with Volunteer Kamloops and WorkBC. The school district has a program that comes to Spero House to assist residents in finishing their high school education.

Sixty per cent of survey respondents reported better access to employment opportunities since their move, while 60 per cent reported better access to education.

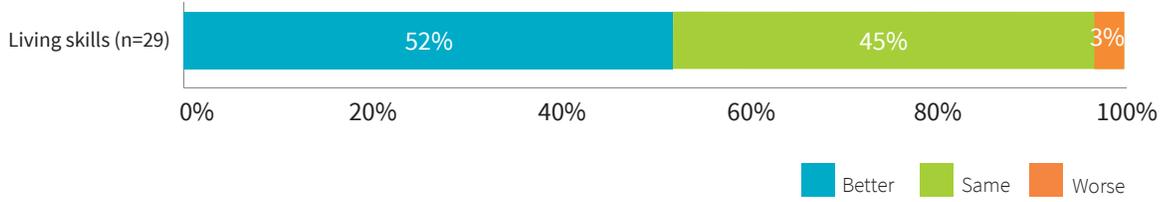
Sixty-two per cent of survey respondents reported that their financial situation had improved, while seven per cent of survey respondents reported that their financial situation had worsened.





Living Skills

Fifty-two per cent of survey respondents reported that their living skills had improved, while 45 per cent reported their living skills remained the same. Staff noted that residents are settling in and making their units into a home. Life skill enhancement offered at the building includes cooking, developing appropriate communication and conflict resolution skills necessary to maintain housing, decision making and problem solving. Other life skill enhancements include basic hygiene maintenance, social system navigation, health system navigation, and financial management.



Source: Resident Survey

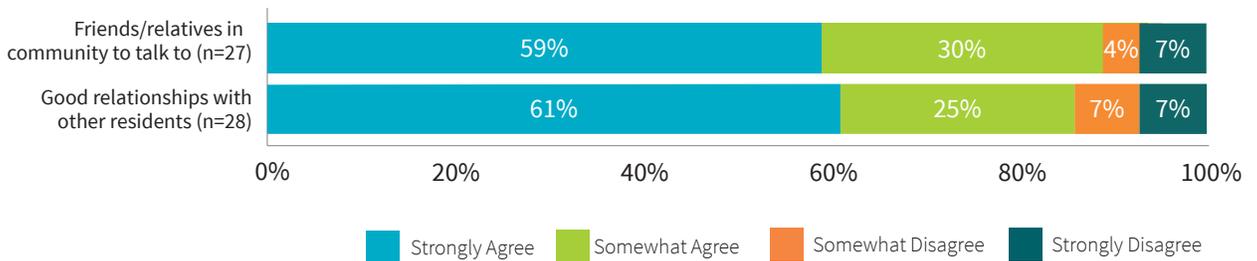
Social Connections

Spero House residents reported improved social connections. Eighty-nine per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they had friends or relatives in the community to talk to, while 86 per cent of residents reported good relationships with other residents. Fifty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in their social connections.

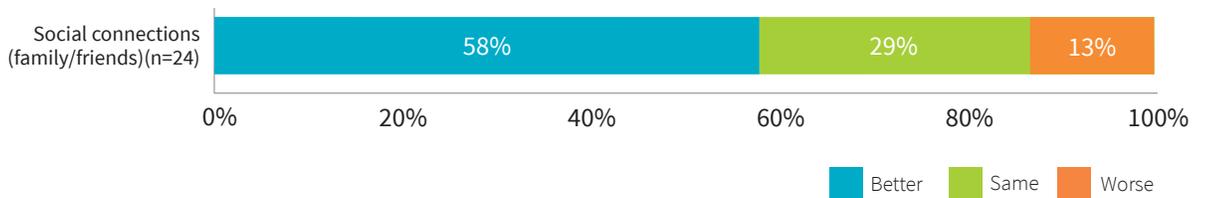
“Residents have created lasting relationships through this program. Lots of people have made really great friends in the building that they may have not made otherwise.”
 – Spero House staff member

The sense of community at Spero House was remarked on by staff members. Staff felt that a sense of community was key to the success of the program and that building relationships with staff and other residents has been incredibly positive for residents.

“The residents have created a family dynamic. They care about one another and step up to help each other when necessary.”
 – Spero House staff member



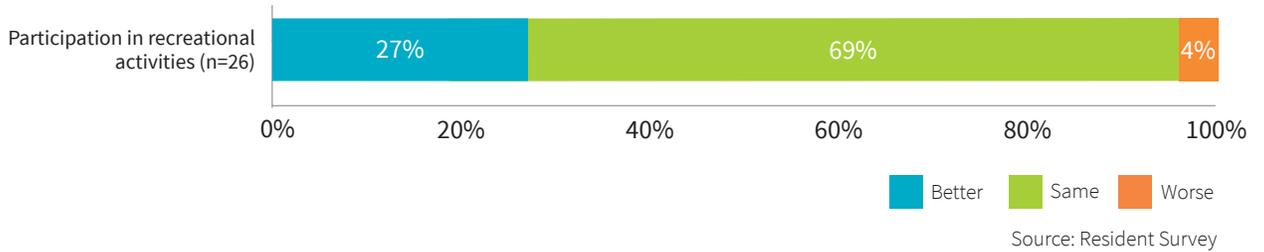
Source: Resident Survey



Source: Resident Survey

Recreation

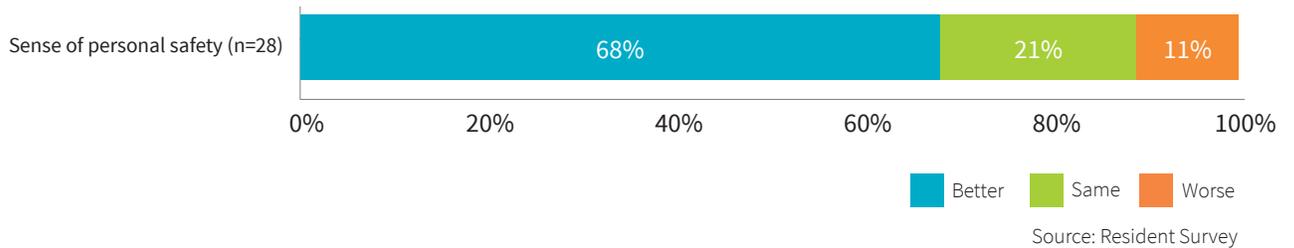
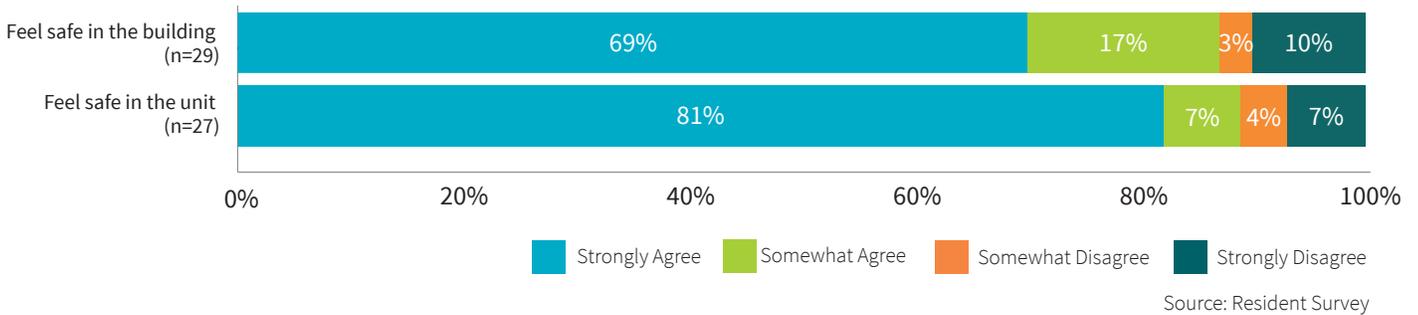
Twenty-seven per cent of survey respondents reported improved participation in recreational activities, while participation remained the same for 69 per cent of respondents. Staff reported that many residents have obtained a community pass that is available for low-income residents and provides access to the local community centre and pool. Staff also host activities in the building including a painting night, movie nights and games nights.



Safety

The majority of survey respondents (86 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that they felt safe in the building, while 88 per cent agreed that they felt safe in their unit.

The majority of survey respondents (68 per cent) reported an improvement in their sense of personal safety.



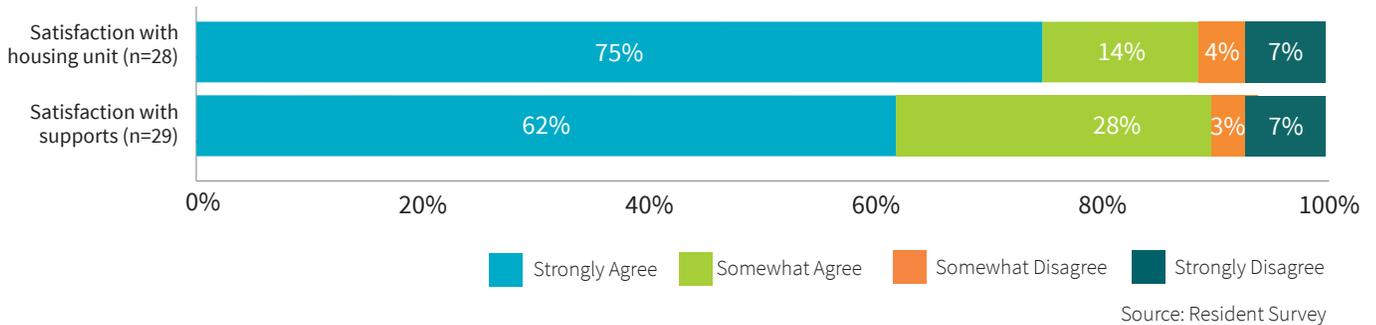


Satisfaction with Housing and Supports

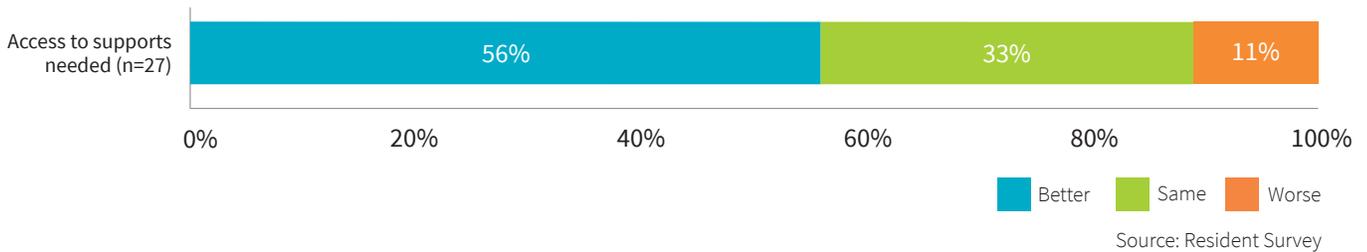
Staff reported that the majority of residents are satisfied with their housing situation at Spero House.

Most survey respondents (89 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their housing unit, while 90 per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the level of supports they receive at Spero House.

“I think overall, people are grateful for the home they have been provided with here.”
 – Spero House staff member



Most survey respondents (89 per cent) reported that access to the supports they need has improved, while 33 per cent reported that access has stayed the same. Staff reported that residents are accessing a range of supports, including counselling services and health care, that they were accessing less frequently or not at all prior to being housed.



Challenges

Some Spero House residents have experienced challenges since moving to their new home. Staff mentioned that for residents who are in recovery from substance use, it can be difficult to be around other residents who are not at the same stage in their recovery.

Staff also mentioned that some residents have had interpersonal challenges with others in the building, which they felt was to be expected when living in close quarters. Staff have also observed theft in the building and several residents have been asked to leave the program due to criminal behaviour.

Spero House staff also identified challenges related to the modular building design, including:

- Components of the building that have required fixing, including stoves and the heating system in some rooms.
- Smoke detectors that are too sensitive.
- The challenges of operating an industrial kitchen has been a learning curve for the non-profit housing operator.

Staff suggested involving non-profit housing operators in the modular building design upfront, in order to ensure the building meets the needs of the program.

Residents' Health

OUTCOME: IMPROVED

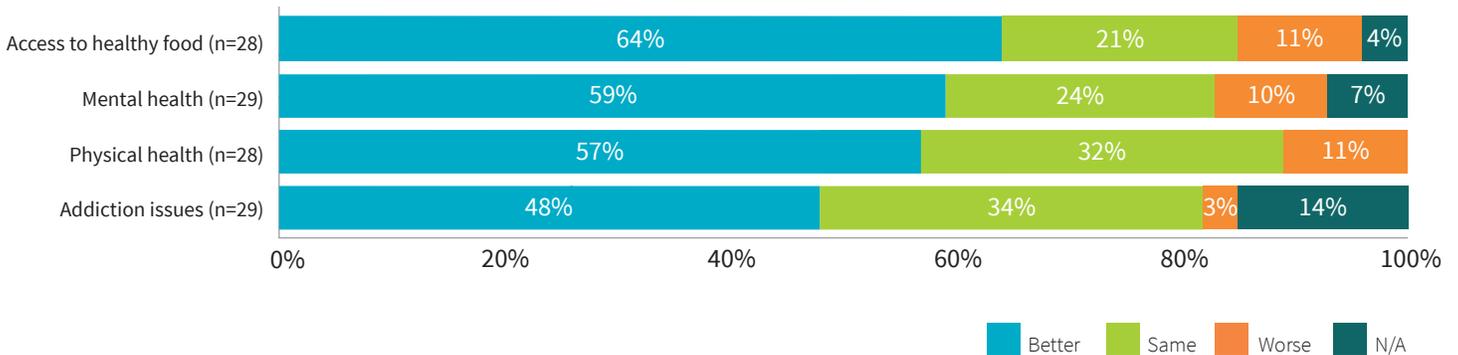
Staff reported that residents' health has improved since moving into Spero House. The fact that Spero House residents receive two meals a day has created positive changes in health. In addition, residents are more connected with primary medical services and are better able to access and take medication consistently.

Spero House employs a full time licensed practical nurse (LPN) who supports and encourages residents' physical and mental wellness. As part of a large team, the LPN monitors general wellness, connects residents to community health providers, and provides on-site wound care and injections as required. The LPN also communicates with hospital and community health care services, supports a local addictions doctor to host a weekly Opioid Agonist Treatment therapy clinic, and supports on-site overdose prevention services.

Sixty-four per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have better access to healthy food since their move to Spero House.

Fifty-nine per cent of survey respondents reported improvements to their mental health since moving into their modular unit and 57 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 34 per cent reported that their addiction issues had remained the same, and 14 per cent reported that this question did not apply to them.



Source: Resident Survey



Health Care System Usage

OUTCOME: REDUCED USE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

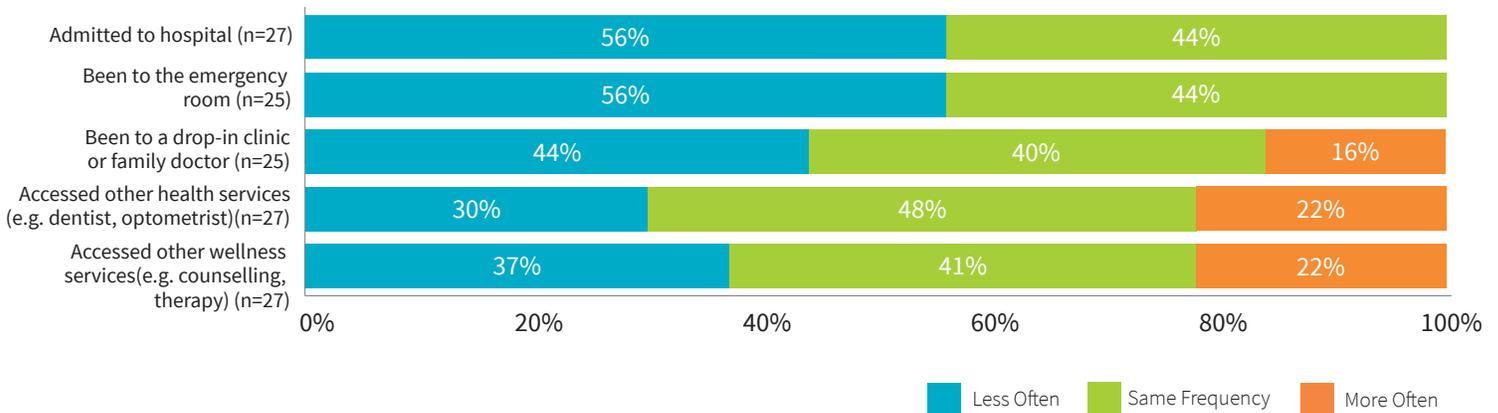
Some residents reported that their use of emergency health services has decreased. Fifty-six per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have been admitted to hospital less often since moving to Spero House, while 44 per cent reported they had been admitted to hospital with the same frequency.

A similar trend was seen in trips to the emergency room, with 56 per cent of survey respondents reporting they had been to the emergency room less often, and 44 per cent reporting they had been to the emergency room with the same frequency.

Forty-four per cent of survey respondents reported that they had been to a drop-in clinic or family doctor less

often since moving into Spero House. Twenty-two per cent of survey respondents reported accessing other health services (such as dentist or optometrist) more often, while 22 per cent of survey respondents reported accessing other wellness services (such as counselling and therapy) more often since moving into Spero House. Access to these services remained the same for the majority of survey respondents.

Staff reported that there is a lack of family doctors in Kamloops and therefore some residents have no choice but to access the hospital for their health care needs.



Source: Resident Survey



Community Relations

OUTCOME: POSITIVE

“I feel like we do a good job of being a good neighbour and being respectful of the community.”

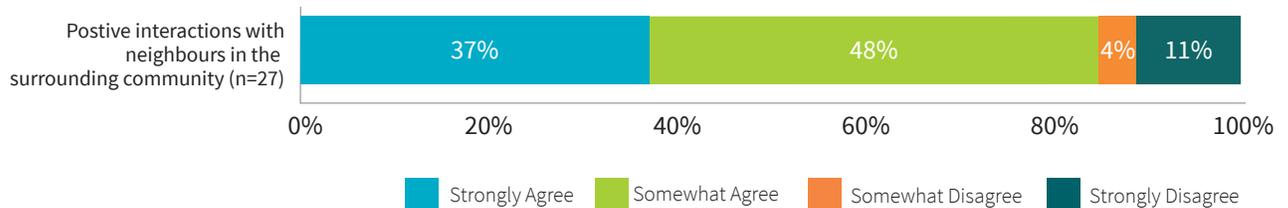
– Spero House staff member

Although the building originally experienced pushback from the community, staff reported that interactions with the surrounding community are now fairly positive. Staff believe that their efforts to be thoughtful neighbours has influenced perceptions regarding the building. Residents go out with outreach workers to help pick up needles

in the neighbourhood and staff ensure that individuals do not loiter in front of the building. The fencing surrounding the building helps ensure privacy for residents and neighbours.

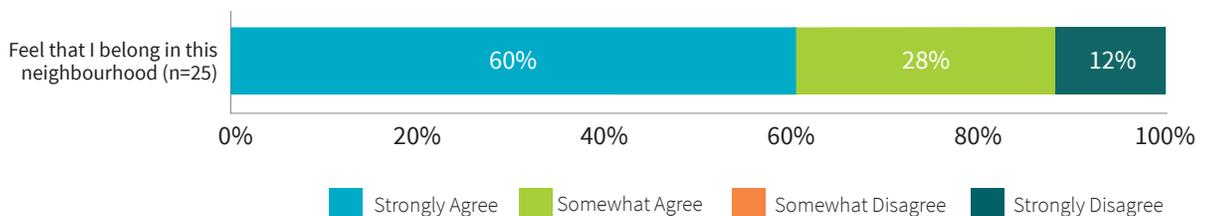
Staff also reported that Spero House is located in an area of town where individuals experiencing homelessness congregate and that in some cases building residents are mistakenly blamed for criminal activity that happens in the neighbourhood.

Resident survey responses supported staff perceptions. Eighty-five per cent of survey respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that they have experienced positive interactions with the surrounding community.



Source: Resident Survey

Eighty-eight per cent of survey respondents felt that they belong in the neighbourhood. Staff reported that the building is well integrated into the quiet residential neighbourhood. However, staff also mentioned the community opposition to the building prior to opening may have left some residents feeling that they are not welcome in the neighbourhood.

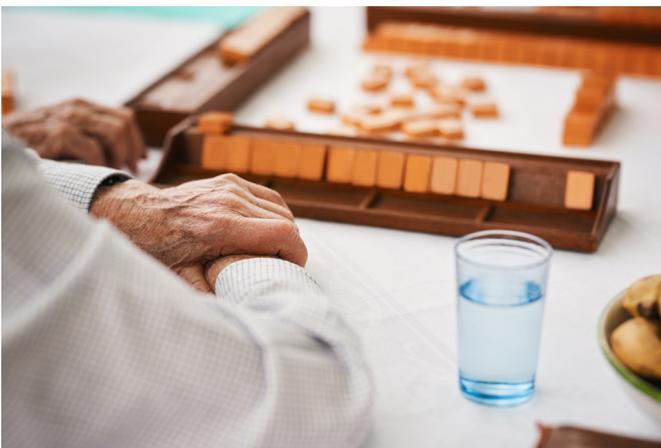
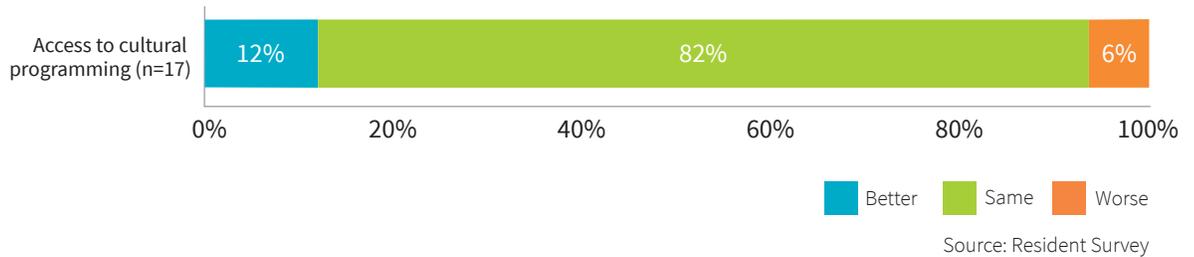
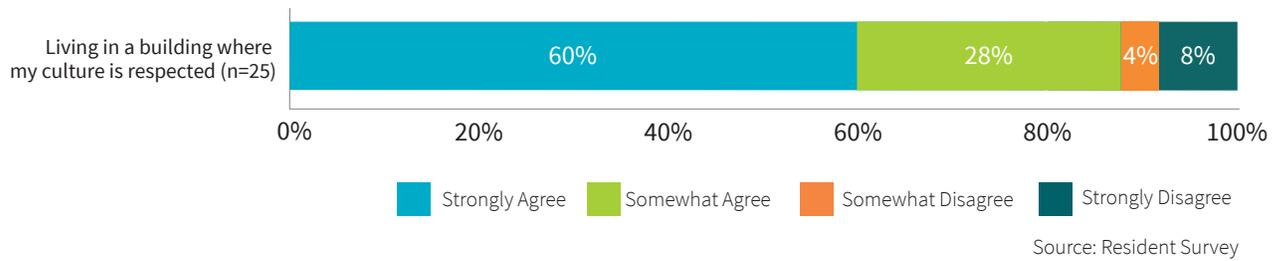


Source: Resident Survey

Access to Cultural Programming

OUTCOME: POSITIVE

Individuals living at Spero House come from a range of cultural backgrounds. Eighty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported that they feel that their culture is respected at Spero House. Twelve per cent of survey respondents felt that their access to cultural programming had improved, while 82 per cent of survey respondents felt that their access had remained the same.



Data provided in this report was collected eight months after Spero House opened. Data from the Housing Connections database is from six months after the first residents moved into the building to be comparable across reports. While all evaluations were originally planned for six months after the buildings opened, some of the later surveys and interviews were delayed. Outcomes may change over time as the resident mix in the building changes.

Resident Survey

A resident survey was made available to Spero House residents in November 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.

- Forty-seven per cent of Spero house 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 Ask Wellness Society in November 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 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.

