



3

DEFINED TERMS

3 DEFINED TERMS

The following definitions reflect the meanings of terms as they are used in the implementation and operation of the TSS. Defined terms are linked to this section throughout the TSS so that clicking on a defined term will bring you to its definition. For further clarification of these or related terms, please contact SSHA.

Abstinence-based Shelter

A shelter that prohibits the use of alcohol, illicit drugs or misuse of substances as part of their service model, or a shelter that limits its service to clients who choose not to use or be exposed to alcohol, illicit drugs or clients who misuse substances (related term: Harm Reduction).

Admission

The process of admitting a client to a bedded program by using SMIS to assign a client to a bed.

Alternative Sleeping Arrangement

Any temporary sleeping arrangement that is not in a designated sleeping area, but is otherwise appropriate and safe (e.g., allowing a client to temporarily sleep on a cot or couch in a supervised area of the shelter).

Bedded Program

A shelter program that includes overnight sleeping accommodations in addition to other support services.

Board

Refers to the volunteer Board of Directors of a shelter provider.

Capital Reserve Fund

An account kept by a shelter provider for the purpose of financing the replacement or repair of capital assets, including but not limited to building components and systems.

Child

For the purpose of determining shelter service eligibility, a person who is 15 years of age or less.

Cleaning/Maintenance Staff

Shelter staff who are involved in the cleaning or maintenance of a shelter facility, including but not limited to cleaners, custodians, maintenance workers, handypersons and superintendents.

Client

Any individual who is in receipt of any kind of support services provided by a shelter (related term: Resident).

Client Support Staff

Shelter staff who provide counseling, case management or support for clients, including but not limited to counselor, client service worker, case worker, housing help worker and social worker.

Conflict of Interest

A situation in which private interests or personal considerations may affect a person's judgment in acting in the best interest of their organization or client. It includes using a person's power derived from a position of authority, confidential information, time during working hours, material or facilities for private gain or advancement or the expectation of private gain or advancement. A conflict may occur when an interest benefits the person, any member of the person's family, friends or business associates.

Curfew

A pre-determined time by which clients must be physically present within a shelter. Curfew is a tool for managing available beds in the shelter that allows shelter providers to assign an unoccupied bed to an incoming clients (related terms: Held Bed and Occupied Bed).

Dietary Staff

Shelter staff who are involved in the handling, storage, planning, preparation or serving of food or meals, including but not limited to kitchen staff, cooks, dietitians, nutritionists and servers.

Discharge

The process of concluding a client's stay at a shelter, including the use of SMIS to release a client's assigned bed (related terms: Planned Discharge and Unplanned Discharge).

Discrimination

An action or decision that treats an individual or group negatively and/or denies social participation and/or human rights for reasons that include, but are not limited to, an individual's or group's perceived or actual: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, the receipt of public assistance, substance use, medical status, mental health status, physical appearance or hygiene.

Emergency Shelter

A shelter that is accessible by an individual or family experiencing homelessness with or without a referral, with the intention of providing short-term accommodation and the support services required to move clients into housing (related term: Transitional Shelter).

Emotional Support Animal

A companion animal that provides comfort, emotional support or therapeutic benefit, such as alleviating or mitigating some symptoms of a mental or psychiatric disability (related term: Service Animal).

Extreme Weather Alert

An official alert issued by the City of Toronto's Medical Officer of Health when the outdoor temperature is likely to cause detrimental effects on human health. These alerts can be

issued when the temperature reaches a prescribed threshold that is either very high (i.e., Heat Alert, Extreme Heat Alert) or very low (i.e., Cold Alert, Extreme Cold Weather Alert).

Gender Expression

How a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender (related term: Transgender Person).

Gender Identity

A person's subjective experience of their own gender which may not match their biological sex or physical appearance (related term: Transgender Person).

Food Allergy

An immune system reaction that occurs soon after eating a certain food and which can be life-threatening. Even a tiny amount of the allergy-causing food can trigger signs and symptoms such as digestive problems, hives or swollen airways.

Food Intolerance

A digestive system reaction that occurs soon after eating a certain food and which results in difficulty digesting a particular food. This can lead to symptoms such as intestinal gas, abdominal pain or diarrhea.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is both a philosophy and set of practical strategies aimed at reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences associated with substance use (both legal and illegal) in ways that are non-judgmental and non-coercive. Harm reduction may include abstinence-based shelter programs providing a client with the choice to participate or seek other forms of treatment or support. (related terms: Abstinence-based Shelter, Safer Crack Smoking Equipment, Safer Injection Equipment and Safer Sex Products).

Held Bed

A bed that has been assigned to a client who is not physically present in a shelter. Beds may be held for incoming clients or clients who have arranged to arrive after a shelter's curfew (related terms: Curfew and Occupied Bed).

Hostel Services Directive

A communication bulletin notifying shelter providers of new service requirements or prescribed action(s) required under the authority of the Operating Agreement, TSS, City Council resolution or other legislation. Hostel Services Directives may also be used to clarify an existing shelter standard or to issue interim service requirements or standard(s).

Housing First

A service approach that focuses on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and then connecting them to supports and services as needed in order to stabilize their housing.

Incident

Any occurrence or event that takes place on shelter premises or involves active shelter clients or staff which may compromise the health, safety or well-being of those involved (related term: Serious Occurrence).

Intake

The process of assessing a client's needs, eligibility and suitability for shelter service and recording the results of the assessment in SMIS.

Leave with Permission

Authorized overnight leave to allow a client to spend nights away from a shelter.

LGBTQ2S

An acronym that refers collectively to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning and two-spirited people. While terms and identities frequently change and more inclusive acronyms may be introduced elsewhere (e.g., LGBTQQIP2SAA, LBGTQIA), LGBTQ2S will be used as an all encompassing term in the TSS (related term: Two-spirited People).

Management Staff

Shelter staff who are involved in supervising or managing other shelter staff or programs, including, but not limited to shift leaders, supervisors, managers, senior managers and executive directors.

Medication

Any prescribed or over-the-counter substance used to treat disease, injury or relieve pain, including but not limited to medicine, drugs, supplements and remedies (related term: Opioid).

Medication Management Program

A formal program that involves prescribing (by a physician), transcribing (i.e., medication administration record), dispensing (by a pharmacist), administering (by a nurse or qualified caregiver) and monitoring (by nurse or physician) of medications that a client takes to confirm that he or she is complying with a medication regimen, while also ensuring the client is avoiding potentially dangerous drug interactions and other complications.

Methadone

A synthetic opioid used most commonly to treat addiction to other opioid drugs such as heroin, oxycodone (e.g., Percodan, Percocet), fentanyl (e.g., Duragesic, Sublimaze) and hydromorphone (e.g., Dilaudid) (related term: Opioid).

Occupied Bed

A bed that has been assigned to a client as indicated in SMIS, including clients who have been granted permission to arrive after curfew or clients who are temporarily out of their beds but present elsewhere in a shelter during the final bed count (related terms: Curfew and Held Bed).

Operating Agreement

A contract between the City of Toronto and a not-for-profit organization that sets out the terms and conditions of providing services on behalf of the City to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Opioid

A class of powerful drugs that are primarily prescribed to treat severe pain. Opioids include illicit drugs such as heroin as well as prescription medications such as Percocet, morphine and codeine. Opioids are an effective medication when used as prescribed, but carry a risk of addiction because of their powerful effects. Opioids are also referred to as narcotics (related term: Methadone).

Planned Discharge

A voluntary or anticipated discharge that results from a client meeting the goals of their service plan or to facilitate a client's transfer to housing or more appropriate programs/ supports (related terms: Discharge and Unplanned Discharge).

Resident

A client who has been admitted to a shelter's bedded program (related term: Client). A separate definition of resident applies in the context of reporting a death of a shelter resident and is found in the Death of a Shelter Resident Guidebook (see Appendix D: Links to References and Resources).

Safer Crack Smoking Equipment

Equipment used to help people who smoke crack cocaine to reduce the potential harm to themselves (e.g., to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases). Safer crack smoking equipment may include Pyrex stems, brass screens, chop sticks and mouthpieces (related term: Harm Reduction).

Safer Injection Equipment

Equipment used to help people who inject drugs to reduce the potential harm to themselves (e.g., to prevent the transmission of blood-borne diseases). Safer injection equipment may include syringes in various sizes and brands, sterile water, alcohol swabs, tourniquets, filters, acidifiers and cookers (related term: Harm Reduction).

Safer Sex Products

Products used to help individuals reduce the potential harm (e.g., to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases) associated with sexual practices. Safer sex products may include condoms and lubes (related term: Harm Reduction).

Savings Program

A financial support program focussed on assisting clients to actively save funds in support of their service plan goals (e.g., housing). Savings programs have elements of a safekeeping program (e.g., holding client valuables), but have more controls and documentation requirements in order to accurately account for clients' savings.

Serious Occurrence

An incident that involves death, fire, serious assaults, serious accidental injuries, attempted suicide requiring acute medical attention or the possession or use of a weapon (related term: Incident).

Service Animal

An animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to their disability (related term: Emotional Support Animal).

Service Disruption

A situation that renders a shelter unable to provide its regular services and/or maintain a high standard of service delivery. Service disruptions can be either planned (e.g., renovations scheduled weeks or months in advance) or unplanned (e.g., structural damage to a shelter building that results from severe weather).

Service Plan

A formally documented, individualized plan for a client that sets out the client's objectives, responsibilities and the course(s) of action necessary to help the client to achieve their goals. Service plans may include sub-components (or sub-plans) depending on the needs of a client (related term: Support Services).

Service Restriction

Restricting a client's access to shelter services for a limited length of time due to a particular incident or behaviour.

Shelter Provider

A not-for-profit organization that is contracted by SSHA to provide shelter services through an Operating Agreement or shelter services that are directly operated by SSHA.

Shelter Staff

Employees of a shelter provider.

SMIS

The Shelter Management Information Systems is a secure, web-based application used to collect, store and retrieve client information and to facilitate efficient access to shelter services by identifying available beds in real time, case management and service planning. The use of SMIS is mandatory at all City-funded shelters.

Support Services

Any program or service offered by a shelter provider or service provider to help clients meet their goals or needs including, but not limited to a shelter's bedded program, meal program, housing help services, employment program, etc. (related term: Service Plan).

Transgender Person

A person whose gender identity or gender expression does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. A transgender person may not feel the need to physically change their body. Transgender will be used as an umbrella term to include clients who identify as

genderqueer, two-spirited or gender non-conforming for the purposes of the TSS. (related terms: Gender Expression, Gender Identity and Two-spirited People).

Transitional Shelter

A shelter that is accessible, by referral only, to eligible individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with the intention of providing longer-term accommodation and specialized supports required to move clients into housing. Transitional shelter providers are designated as such in their Operating Agreement (related term: Emergency Shelter).

Two-spirited People

This term is culturally specific to North American Aboriginal communities and refers to queer Aboriginal people who identify with both a male and female spirit. This term is not exclusive to gender identity and can also refer to sexual orientation (related terms: LGBTQ2S and Transgender Person).

Unplanned Discharge

An involuntary or unanticipated discharge that results from a client's unilateral decision to discontinue receiving service from a shelter (e.g., failure to return) or a service restriction (related terms: Discharge and Planned Discharge).

Weapon

Any object that is used or intended to be used to cause harm to a person or threaten harm to a person.

Youth

For the purpose of determining shelter service eligibility, a person who is between 16 and 24 years of age, inclusive.