



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.

2SLGBTQ+

An acronym that refers collectively to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and queer people. While terms and identities frequently change and more inclusive acronyms may be introduced elsewhere (e.g., LGBTQQIP2SAA, LBGTQIA), 2SLGBTQ+ will be used as an all-encompassing term in the TSS (*related term: Two-spirited People and Transgender Person*).

Abstinence-based Shelter

A shelter that prohibits the use of alcohol or illicit drugs 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 or illicit drugs (*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 (*related terms: Intake and STARS Intake and Triage Module*).

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).

Bed Check

A daily check of assigned beds to confirm that they are occupied by the designated client. Beds found vacant are immediately released for new admissions.

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, including contracted 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, including contracted 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.

Coordinated Access

A systems-level approach for addressing homelessness that provides a consistent way to assess, prioritize and connect people experiencing homelessness to City-funded housing and supports (*related terms: STARS Intake and Triage, STARS Housing Checklist, STARS*).

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, including contracted 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 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., Extreme Cold Weather Alert).

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.

Gender Expression

The way people communicate or express their gender identity publicly, including through chosen names and pronouns, behaviour and physical appearance (e.g., dressing, the length and style of hair, or by emphasizing, de-emphasizing or changing physical characteristics). Gender expression is completely separate from sexual orientation (*related term: Gender identity, Transgender Person*).

Gender Identity

A person's subjective experience of their own gender which may not match their birth-assigned sex or physical appearance. Gender identity is linked to a sense of self, the sense of being woman, man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum (non-binary). Gender identity is completely separate from sexual orientation (*related term: Gender Expression, Transgender Person*).

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a philosophy, approach, set of practical strategies, and policies or program, 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 as a philosophy and approach can align with abstinence-based shelter programs (*related terms: Abstinence-based Shelter, Opioid Agonist Treatment, Naloxone, Safer Crack Smoking Equipment, Safer Injection Equipment and Safer Sex Products*).

Health Information Custodian

A health information custodian (HIC) is a regulated health care practitioner whose primary function is to provide health care to an individual and who has responsibility for the collection and management of a patient's personal health information. *The Personal Health and Information Protection Act (PHIPA)* sets out the rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information by HICs. An example of a HIC in the shelter system are nurses employed by a shelter to provide health care for clients.

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*).

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. An Intake can lead to a referral or admission (*related terms: Admission, Referral, STARS Intake & Triage, and Referral*).

Leave with Permission

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

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.

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.

Naloxone

A fast-acting medication used to temporarily reverse the effects of opioid overdoses. Naloxone is also referred to as an opioid antagonist since it is used to counter the effects of opioid overdose.

Next of Kin

An emergency contact which could include but is not restricted to a client's closest living relative/relatives that has been documented in the Shelter Management Information Systems (SMIS). This information would be shared with other service providers, police and coroner in cases of death. The absence of providing this information does not preclude a client from receiving service.

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 Agonist Treatment

An effective treatment for addiction to opioid drugs such as heroin, oxycodone, hydromorphone (Dilaudid), fentanyl, and Percocet. The treatment involves taking the opioid agonists methadone or suboxone to prevent withdrawal and reduce cravings for opioid drugs.

Personal Information

The information collected to register and identify an individual in the homelessness system. This information includes the information collected during an Intake in SMIS, information collected through case management supports and services, and physical and mental health documentation.

Personal Health Information

The information collected from an individual in the homelessness system that relates to providing health care to the individual, including identifying (a) health care provider(s) for the individual. This information would be held by a designated health care information custodian and in accordance with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA) and all applicable professional regulations

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*).

Referral

Following an Intake, the process of connecting a client to an alternative bedded program or service. During case management, a referral is the process of connecting a client to a resource, support, or service outside of the shelter where they are staying (*related terms: Admission, Intake, and STARS Intake & Triage*).

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.

Rounds

A routine scheduled walk through a facility to maintain regular oversight of the site, promote staff visibility and help ensure quick responses as issues arise. Includes conducting facility review/assessment.

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.

Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) tool

A common assessment tool that provides a standardized way to understand service users' support needs and assist staff to connect service users to housing and resources
(*related terms: Intake and STARS Housing Checklist Module*).

Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) Housing Checklist Module

The STARS Housing Checklist is used by caseworkers to support service planning for securing and maintaining housing. The Housing Checklist is part of Toronto's common assessment tool, the Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) tool (*related terms: Admission and Intake*).

Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) Intake and Triage Module

The STARS Intake and Triage module captures a client's general information and service needs. The Intake and Triage module is part of Toronto's common assessment tool, the Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) tool (*related terms: Admission and Intake*).

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) 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. SSHA Directives may also be used to clarify an existing shelter standard or to issue interim service requirements or standard(s).

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, including contracted staff, 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

An umbrella term that describes people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man in society. Trans' identities include a person whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the gender associated with their sex assigned at birth. A transgender person may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments to align their bodies with their internally felt gender identity. The term also includes, but is not limited to clients who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross-dressers or gender non-conforming (gender variant or gender-queer) for the purposes of the TSS (*related terms: Gender Expression and Gender Identity*).

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 Indigenous communities to describe from a cultural perspective people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, or intersex. The term can also describe a societal and spiritual role that certain people played within traditional societies, where they filled a role as an established middle gender. This 2SLGBTQ+ term is not exclusive to gender identity and can also refer to sexual orientation (*related terms: 2SLGBTQ+ 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.

Wellness check

A brief check-in with a client focused on their general wellbeing and safety through personal engagement while in their living environment. Consideration should be given to the time at which wellness checks are conducted, avoiding mealtimes, early morning or when clients are sleeping; with the exception of when the client safety plan requires it.

Youth

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