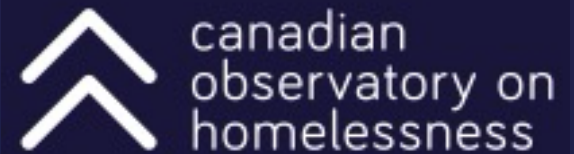


People, Process, Paper: Evaluating the STARS Supports Assessment Tool

OMSSA Exchange Conference
May 14, 2025



Presenters



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Overview



Coordinated Access and
the STARS Supports Assessment Tool



The federal government's **Reaching Home** program requires designated communities to use a **common assessment tool** to allocate housing and support resources in a **Coordinated Access** system.



Key elements of Toronto's Coordinated Access System

Uses the Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) tool, which has 3 components:

1. STARS Intake & Triage
2. STARS Housing Checklist

3. STARS Supports Assessment



Key elements of Toronto's Coordinated Access System

- ✓ The STARS Supports Assessment is **used only at the point of connecting a client to housing & support programs** available through Coordinated Access.
- ✓ The STARS Supports Assessment **does not use a numerical score** and **is not used to prioritize people** for housing.
- ✓ The STARS Supports Assessment is used to **match** the person to an available program that will best meet their needs, goals and preferences.



Housing and Supports Available through Coordinated Access



STARS Supports Assessment Sections

1. Program

Basic questions about the Coordinated Access program and eligibility criteria

2. Assessment

- A. Client & Household Information
- B. Housing History
- C. Support Provider Menu of Services
- D. Existing Supports
- E. Support Preferences



3. Administrative Information

- F. Client & Program Eligibility Details
- G. Document Uploads
- H. Referring Agency Information



Purpose of STARS Supports Assessment

Use of STARS Supports Assessment in Coordinated Access

To **connect clients** with the City-funded **housing and support** programs that will best meet their needs, goals and preferences

Used by Coordinated Access team to **bridge** between



Types of support **requested**



Types of support **offered**

Level of support **required**



Capacity to meet level of
support



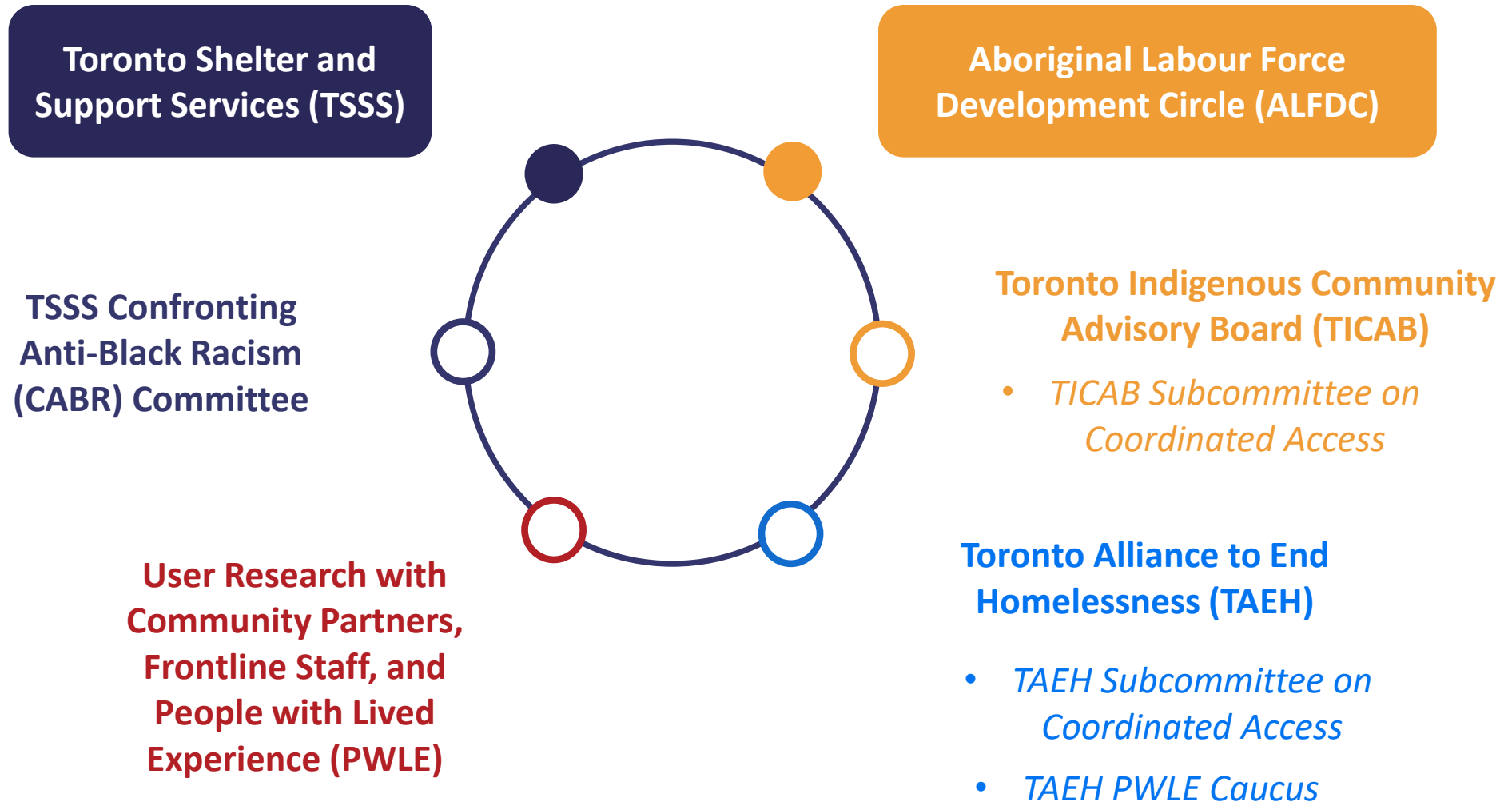
About the Evaluation



Development of
the STARS Supports Assessment Tool



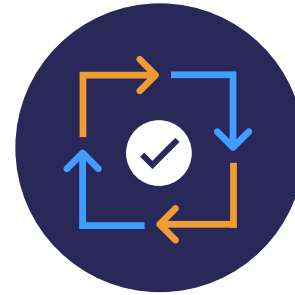
Collaboration with Community Partners



Objectives of the Evaluation



How **effective** is the tool in identifying needs and matching people to the types of support and level of support needed?



How **consistently** do different readers of assessments interpret the level of support?



Qualitative Data

83 people in 
interviews & focus groups

27 Clients

18 Coordinated Access Staff
(City of Toronto & ALFDC)

38 Service Provider Staff

Quantitative Data

245 anonymized 
client data

Completed STARS Supports
Assessments (Oct 2022 – Mar 2023)

Associated data from Toronto's
Shelter Management Information
System (SMIS)



Demographic Findings

Qualitative Analysis - **27 Interviews**



67%

ADULTS
(25-58 years)



48%

WOMEN



40%

INDIGENOUS



29%

BLACK



11%

REFUGEES



Quantitative Demographic Findings

Quantitative Analysis - **245** Anonymized Client Data



62%

ADULTS



50%

WOMEN



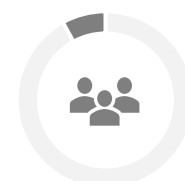
47%

INDIGENOUS



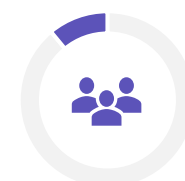
21%

BLACK



8%

REFUGEES



11%

ACCESSIBILITY
ACCOMMODATIONS



Findings



Effectiveness of
STARS Supports Assessment Tool

Consistency in
Levels of Supports

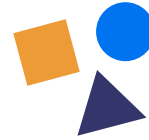


Summary of Findings

1

Person-centred
Wholistic
Effective

✓ Identifying
Needs



✓ Matching



2

Consistent on
levels of support



=



Interpreter 1

Interpreter 2

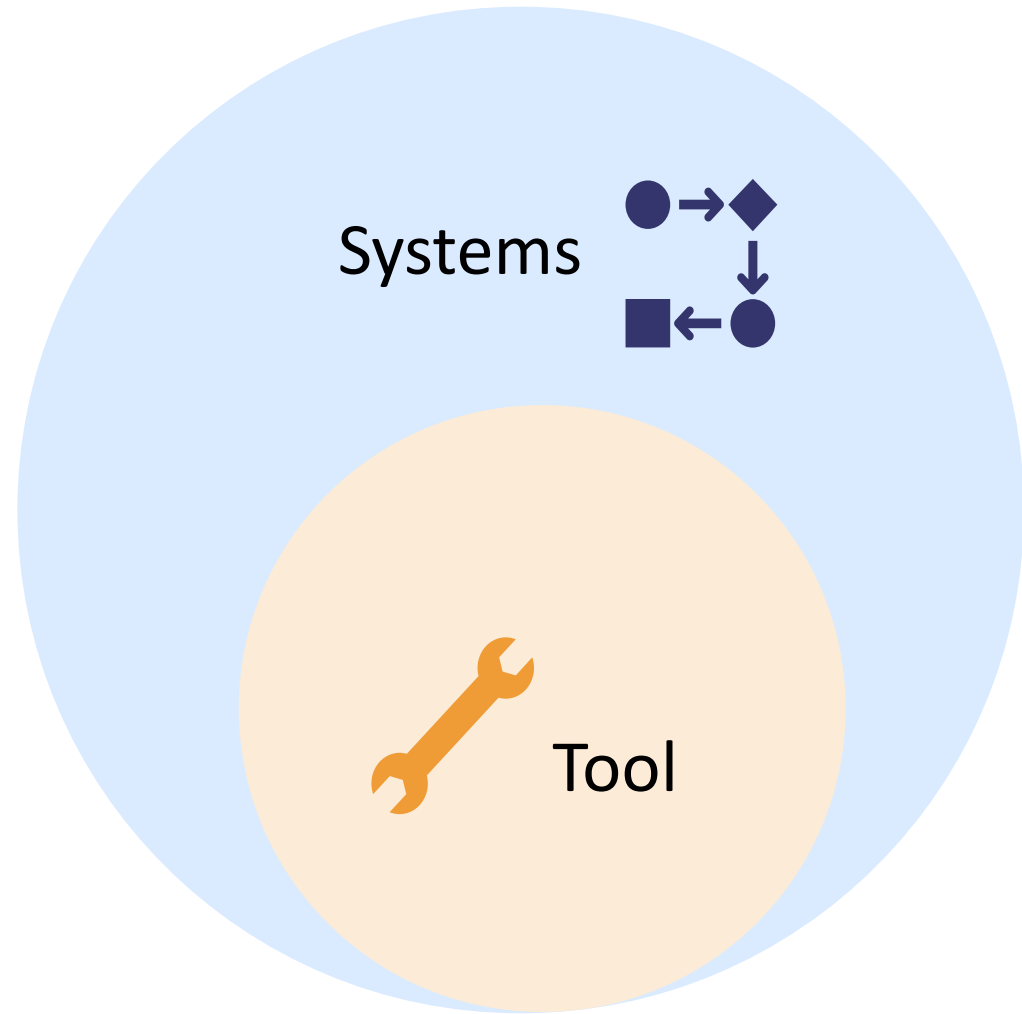
Impacted by
interpersonal and
process factors



Feedback on

↳ Systems Level

↳ Tool Level





Tool Effectiveness

Impacted
by

Clients

Service
providers



● **Rapport** and
trust between
service provider
and client

● Service provider
expertise and
capacity



● Appreciated
**shared lived
experience** with
service provider

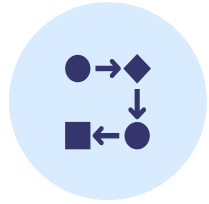
● Challenge
**anticipating
future needs**



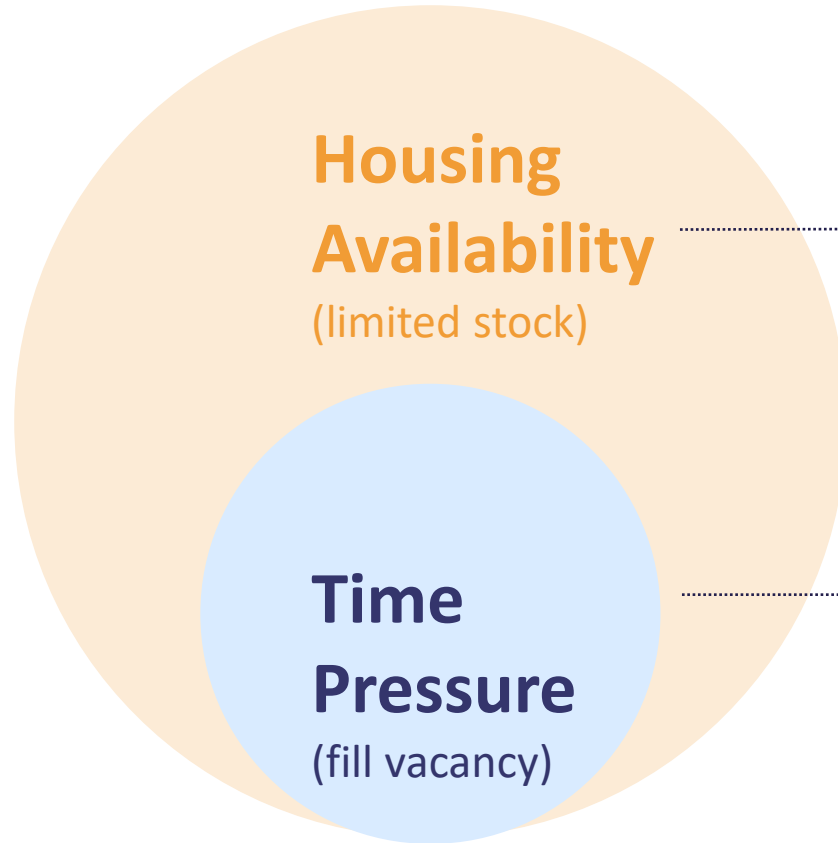
● Challenge
with **length
of form**

● Form asks
the **right
questions**





System Impact



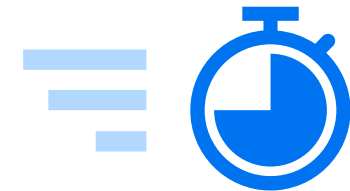
**Housing
Availability**
(limited stock)

Clients accept
unit that is not
the right fit



**Time
Pressure**
(fill vacancy)

Rushed
assessment
process



Consistency Identifying Levels of Support

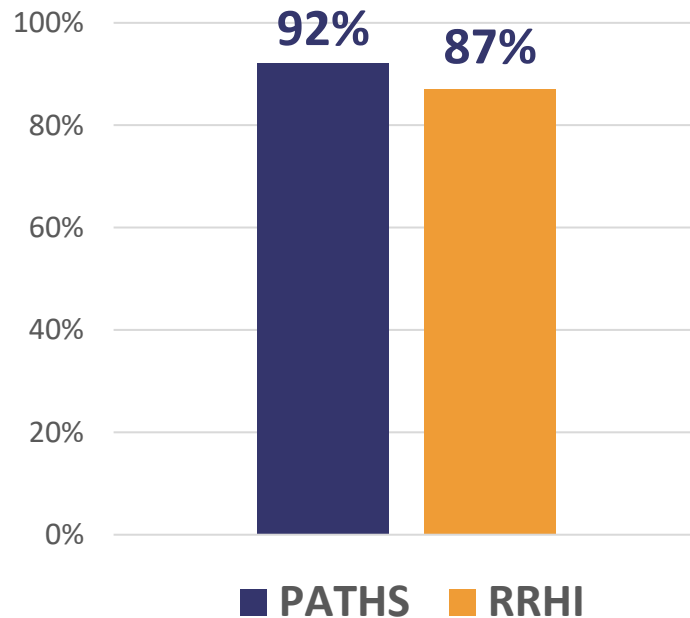
To what extent do **readers of the same STARS Supports Assessment** agree or disagree on their rating of the client's level of support?





Tool Consistency

Quantitative Results



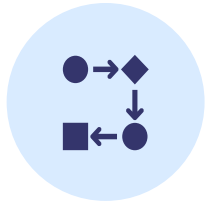
Level of Agreement between
Referring Agencies & TSSS Staff

Consistent interpretations
of level of support between
Referring Agencies and
TSSS staff

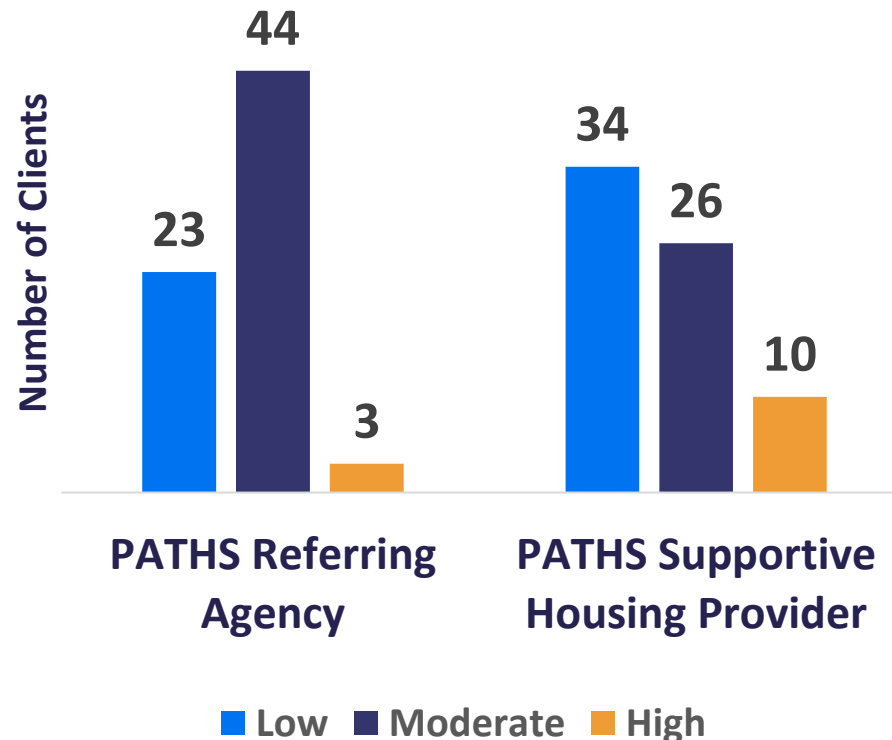
Referring Agencies
perceived **disagreements**
with Coordinated Access
to be **infrequent**

90%
overall
agreement





Tool Consistency

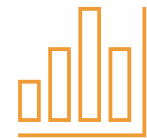


Qualitative Results



PATHS Supportive Housing Providers felt they were consistently **receiving clients with higher needs than they could support**

Quantitative Results



However, quantitative analysis showed Supportive Housing Providers were **more likely to report a lower level of support than a higher one**



Theories on the Discrepancy

What's going on? More research is needed



- In addition to using the STARS Supports Assessment, most supportive housing providers also use **different assessment tools & methods**
- Client **needs changing** in the **length of time and changed circumstances** between STARS Supports Assessment and Housing Outcomes Form (approx. 2 months; in many cases, change from homelessness to housed)
- **Different** staff and different types of **programs** may **interpret** level of support **differently** (e.g. shelters, street outreach vs. supportive housing providers)
- Possible **referral bias towards “medium”** – impact of real-world research design rather than experimental design



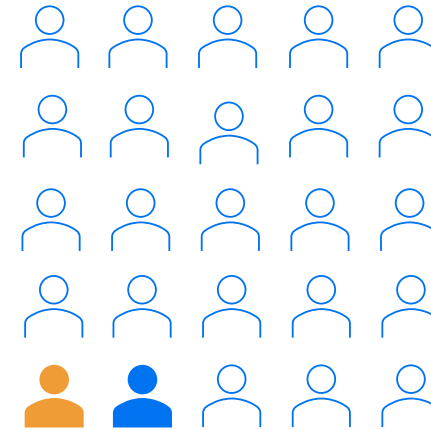
Key Takeaways



Level of Support is
one factor in
matching



Person and their
unique needs are
centered



Findings are
not generalizable





Questions?



Instructions

Go to

www.menti.com

Enter the code

4377 5539



Or use QR code

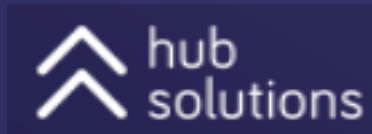
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www.hubsolutions.ca