

RentSafe EquiP Owen Sound Research

This article describes the RentSafe EquiP research initiative in Owen Sound, Ontario. The research explored ways of strengthening collaboration among agencies and sectors to address housing concerns affecting tenants living on low income. RentSafe EquiP (Equity-focused Intersectoral Practice) was implemented by researchers from the Centre for Environmental Health Equity at Queen's University in collaboration with local tenant co-researchers and agency partners, including the Grey Bruce Health Unit, the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force, and M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre. The research team engaged people from a broad array of health and social service agencies, community organizations and housing providers in small group Learning Exchange discussions followed by a four-day Intersectoral Retreat. The research showed that initiating discussions from the perspective of community members who have grounded (lived) expertise of housing-related inequities can help those in professional roles see how their services can be made more responsive to community needs. It also showed that investing in relationship-building among people with different perspectives can improve intersectoral collaboration. Using real-world examples and quotes from local research participants, the paper describes the existing *structures*, *beliefs* and *practices* that can constrain effective action to address the housing crisis.

Included is the link to the RentSafe EquiP project page, which includes the final report ("We are all Neighbours"), the "Housing Issues? We're here to help" video, this paper and other information on the research. Here is the link: <https://rentsafe.ca/owen-sound/>