

HOUSING FOCUSED STREET OUTREACH

SESSION THREE: PERSON CENTERED AND HEALTH AND SAFETY FOCUSED

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What We Do



Policy and Programs

- Carries out the vital work of educating policymakers and the field about key strategies and policies for ending and preventing homelessness.
- Keeps federal policymakers and legislators informed of the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the programs serving them.
- Leads advocacy efforts on a grassroots level.

Capacity Building

- Supports efforts to end homelessness by offering training and technical assistance tailored to communities' unique needs.
- Helps design and implement crisis systems, improve systems' performance, and utilize data to end homelessness, particularly with an equity lens.
- Provides online courses, trainings, and webinars to inform the field of best practices to end homelessness.

Homeless Research Institute

- Analyzes data to identify homelessness trends on national, local, and Continuum of Care levels.
- Publishes research that ensures policymakers, practitioners, the media, and the public have the best information about trends and emerging solutions to the problem.
- Uses an equity lens to identify disparities in homelessness data.

Lived Experience Innovation + Strategic Communications

National Alliance to End Homelessness Statements for Participation

The Alliance works to ensure that diverse voices are included as facilitators, attendees, and guests in our training forums. All voices are welcome.

The organization has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination or abusive behavior. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that all its events are safe and respectful for all participants.

Participants acknowledge that any form of discrimination, violence, or abusive behavior may result in removal from an webinar or forum depending on the situation.

If any discrimination is witnessed or experienced during the training, or if you feel unsafe, please notify any member of the Alliance staff.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness strives to create a diverse, inclusive, accepting, and safe space for everyone.

Today's Agreements



Be aware of intent and impact



Check in and Check out



Listen for understanding



Expect and accept non-resolution



Belief in change



Practice “both/and” thinking



Make space, take space



Safe Terms:

“ELMO” & “Ouch”

Virtual Session Logistics



Mute Button



Comment and Ask
Questions in Chat



Slides will be
provided at the end
of the series



Participation
encouraged



Camera's On



Training Series Overview

Week One

- Effective Homeless Response Systems
- Role of Street Outreach in an effective system
- Introduction to Core Components of Housing Focused Street Outreach

Week Two

- Understand the Importance of Data and How to Use It
- Key Street Outreach Data Element
- Strategic Collaboration and Partnership pt.1

Week Three

- Strategic Collaboration and Partnership Pt.2
- Understand the principles Person Centered Approach
- Promotion of Community Health and Safety pt.1

Today

Week Four

- Promotion of Community Health and Safety pt.2
- **Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First**
- Taking Action

REVIEW

Remember Session Two



What is Housing Focused Street Outreach

Housing-Focused Street Outreach (HFSO) is an engagement strategy that prioritizes connecting people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to lifesaving, person-centered, and culturally responsive services and resources while actively working towards securing stable and permanent housing solutions. This approach is characterized by five distinct core elements:



Data and Impact Analysis to Inform Decision-Making



Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships



Person-Centered Engagement



Promotion of Community Health and Safety



Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First

HFSO and Data

Establish clear data standards for street outreach

Employ efficient processes & technology for data collection

Define key performance indicators of success

Regularly analyze data & put it into action

HFSO Data Guidance

This does not supplant
your community guidance

- Data collection (basic information) begins when street outreach staff meaningfully interact with a new person experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the area.
- Exit people from the street outreach project upon entry into housing or crisis housing i.e. shelter or after a period of inactivity, like 90 days automatic exit.



What to Measure

Outputs

- Services, engagements, referrals, and connections
 - % enrolled in street outreach programming with CE assessment completed
 - % accessing benefits like Medicaid, SNAP, SSDI
 - % with completed documentation like identification, disability and chronicity verification
 - % interacting with emergency shelter or other crisis housing
 - % referrals to outside services like healthcare that are fulfilled

Outcomes

- Shelter/Crisis Placement
- Housing Program Placement
- Permanent Housing placement
- Length of Time Homeless



Strategic Collaboration and Partnership....

Why?



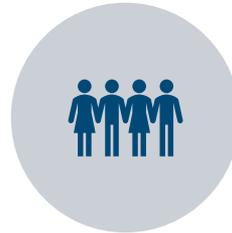
Limited resources and funding



Duplication of services leads to waste of resources and gaps in care



Multiple service provider touch points leads to service fatigue for people living unsheltered



Lack of holistic and culturally response resource and connection for folx experiencing unsheltered homeless

Continuum of Care and Coordinated Entry Systems

01

Integrating Street Outreach in

- governance structures
- committees/work groups
- case conferencing/ By Name Lists
- data and performance management

02

Housing & System Navigation

- **Clear understanding and relationship with:**
 - crisis and permanent housing programs
 - housing navigators and landlord engagement
 - housing problem solving tools and resources

03

HMIS Training and Access

- have initial and ongoing training to support real time access to HMIS
- conduct relevant assessments, input case notes, proactively track referral statuses, and view participant information to enhance service collaboration



Crisis Housing

- Facilitate informed decision-making by ensuring people know what they need to, to make the best choice for themselves
- Have access to real time information about availability, location, eligibility, and any relevant barriers, restrictions or program specifications
- Ongoing conversations and relationships between street outreach programs and shelter programs

Never attempt to force or coerce program or service participation

Outreach Coordination

Technology
can help!

- Share:
 - Resource lists including landlord contact lists
 - Sharing apartment listings and housing program openings across outreach programs in real time
- Cross training between programs with different disciplinary focuses
- Conferencing in real-time about a participant's needs with an outreach worker
- Centralize street outreach group where staff can send out relevant resource updates via a shared platform like a mailing list or messaging app
 - Conduct weekly, bi-weekly, or at minimum monthly case conferencing

Outreach Coordination

- Protocols or formal relationships in place to facilitate hand offs and connections
 - MOUs, multi-lateral consents, or other more formal procedures
- Updated contact information and understanding various street outreach
- **Multidisciplinary Outreach Teams**
 - A team that utilizes different disciplines including physical healthcare, mental/behavioral healthcare, housing, and peers (including people with lived experience of unsheltered homelessness) and cite that diversity of experiences and specialties as a key to their programmatic success

Breakout Rooms Who's Here?

- Your name
- Identities, Pronouns
- Role/Organization
- How are you coming into this space?
- What are outreach collaboration current strengths?
- What the areas of opportunity?
- What strategies can help address the areas of opportunity?
- What tools would help increase collaboration?



Core Elements of HFSSO



Data and Impact Analysis to Inform Decision-Making



Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships Pt. 2



Person-Centered Engagement



Promotion of Community Health and Safety



Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First

Key Community Partners



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Community-Based Health Providers

- Ability to connect participants to high quality, appropriate, and culturally responsive health services and treatment

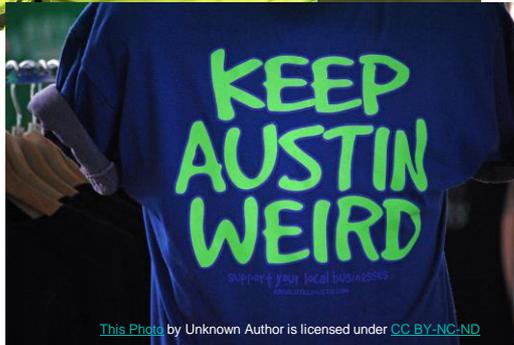
Municipal Departments (Public Works | Public Health | Public Transit)

- Align practices with effective strategies for addressing homelessness
- Support trash collection, portable restroom and shower facilities, and access to potable water

First Responders

- Share information about what services are available and the limitations of services offered
- Establish processes for first responders to connect people to street outreach services
- Partner to establish community-wide messaging to enhance HFSSO efforts and reduce burden on first responders when the crisis is homelessness

Key Community Partners



Law Enforcement

- Establishing practices for law enforcement to give advance notice to street outreach programs when they are placed in enforcement
- Waiving or reducing fees for criminal background checks required by housing programs
- Building stronger understanding of the experience of unsheltered homelessness in a community
- Changing the narrative about homelessness in a community via developing champions within law enforcement

Ensure program participants' information is kept private

Business Community

- Ensure they're aware of street outreach services
- Finding common cause and demonstrating win-win solutions to conflicts
- Identify ways the business can donate, fundraisers, provide testimony and or provide advocacy

Key Community Partners



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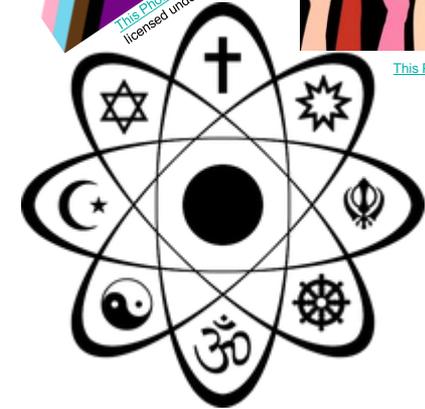
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Culturally Specific Organizations

- Race, culture, language, sexuality, gender identity, age, disability, national origin and other dimensions of their identity

Faith Communities and Faith Based Organizations

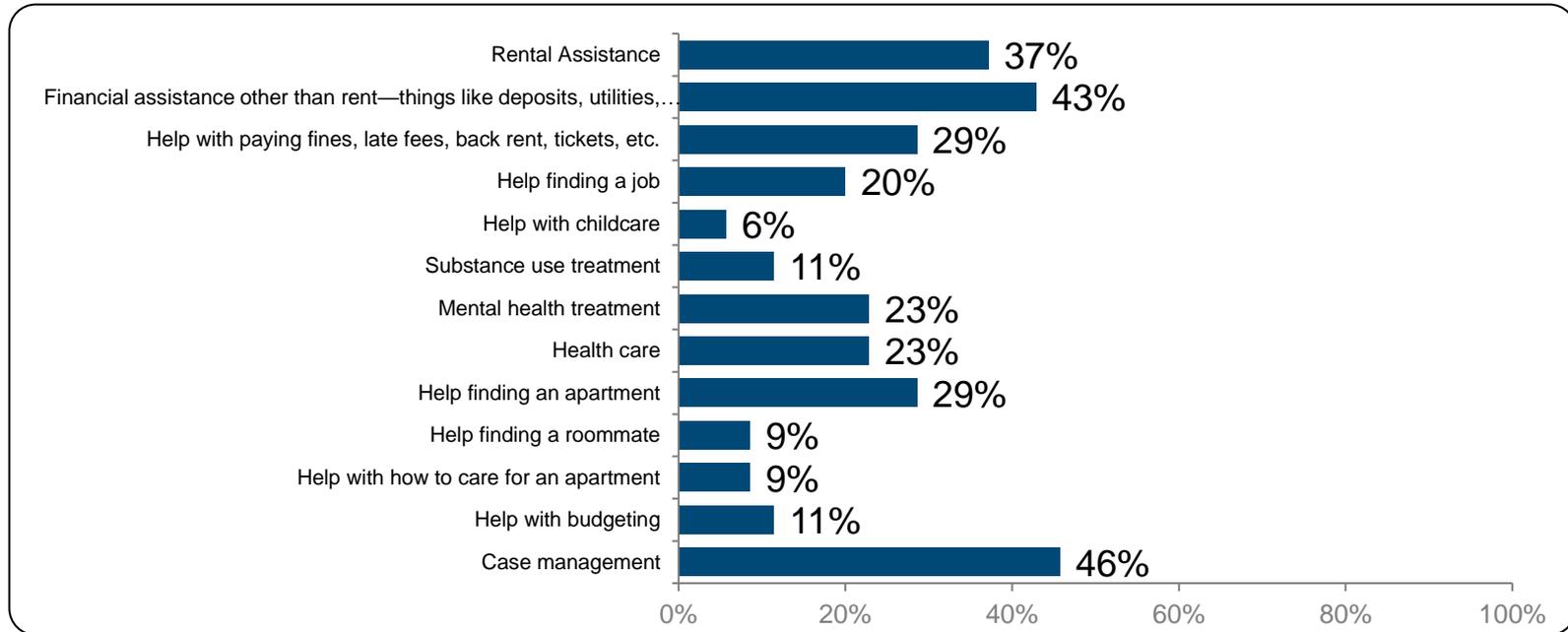
- Religious institutions or interfaith coalitions



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What do you or did you need the most to get permanent housing? Check all that apply



Group Brainstorm

- Who are the key partners you work with the most?
- What do they have/offer that enhances your work?
- What goods/services/etc. do you frequently need but don't currently have a good partner/referral for?



Warm Handoffs

Familiarity eases comfort and builds trust.

- When participants know what to expect, it's easier for them to trust a new provider

Clarity about boundaries and expectations can establish and restore a sense of empowerment.

- Participants may worry about providers sharing their information

Relationships are key!

- A warm handoff is more effective when street outreach staff have a personal connection with the provider

Data Share and Integrate

- Establishing collaboration protocols:
 - Define expectations that street outreach programs input all relevant information into HMIS
 - Set standards to only not use Personally Identifiable Information (HMIS Unique ID)
 - Clearly define each program's role in a CoC in terms of the area and/or population they serve
 - Active case conferencing supported by HMIS leads pulling active CE referrals

Geocoding and other cutting-edge technologies may be employed by some CoCs when their functionality enhances service provision or identification of people in need

The How



Continual And
Strategic
Communication



Resource
Sharing



Data Sharing And
Integration



Engagement
Coordination

To Summarize: Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships

- Foster strong relationships and partnerships throughout a community
- Provide clarity on expectations for CoC-related processes
- Ensure real-time shelter bed availability, prioritization, and by-name lists are visible to outreach staff and a streamlined process for referrals.
- Establish and maintain strong service networks
- Leverage municipality relationships
- Ensure connection to high quality, appropriate, and culturally responsive services
- Share real-time data about program participants' locations, statuses, needs, and services with all HFSSO partners (with proper privacy protections).

Five Minute Stretch Break!



Core Elements of HFSSO



Data and Impact Analysis to Inform Decision-Making



Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships Pt. 2



Person-Centered Engagement



Promotion of Community Health and Safety



Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First

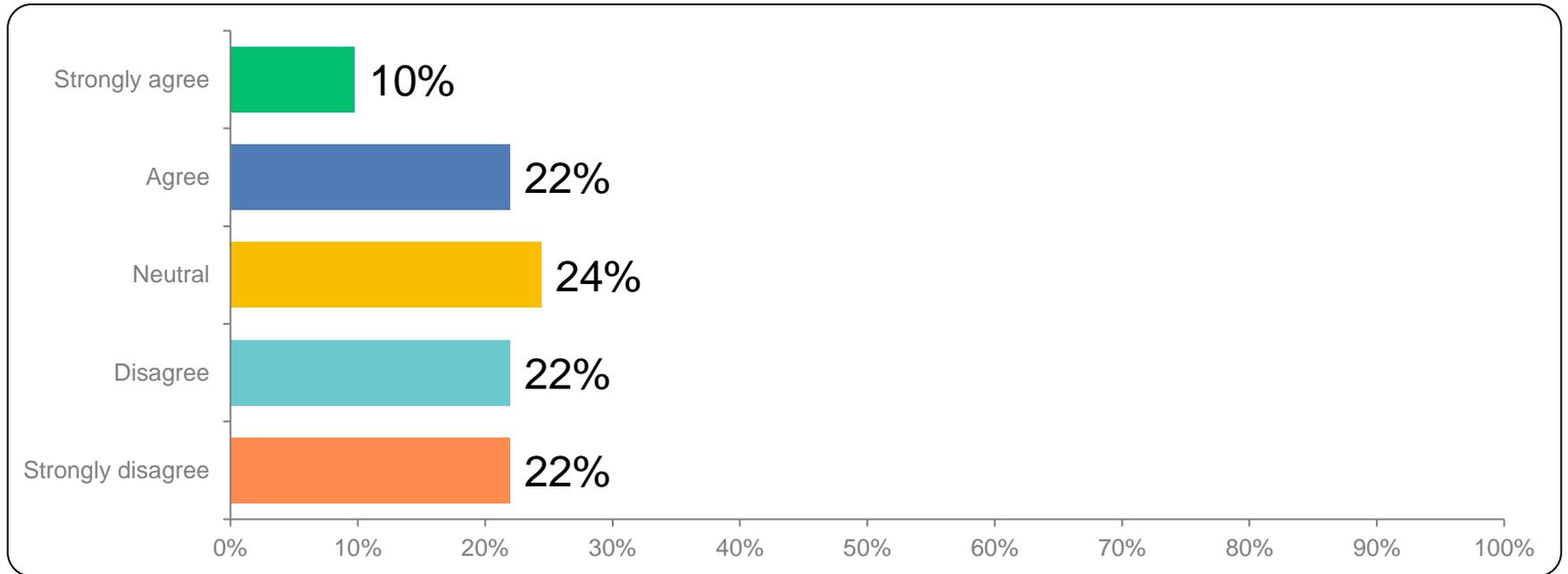
PERSON-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT

Build Relationships, Respect Autonomy, Restore Power

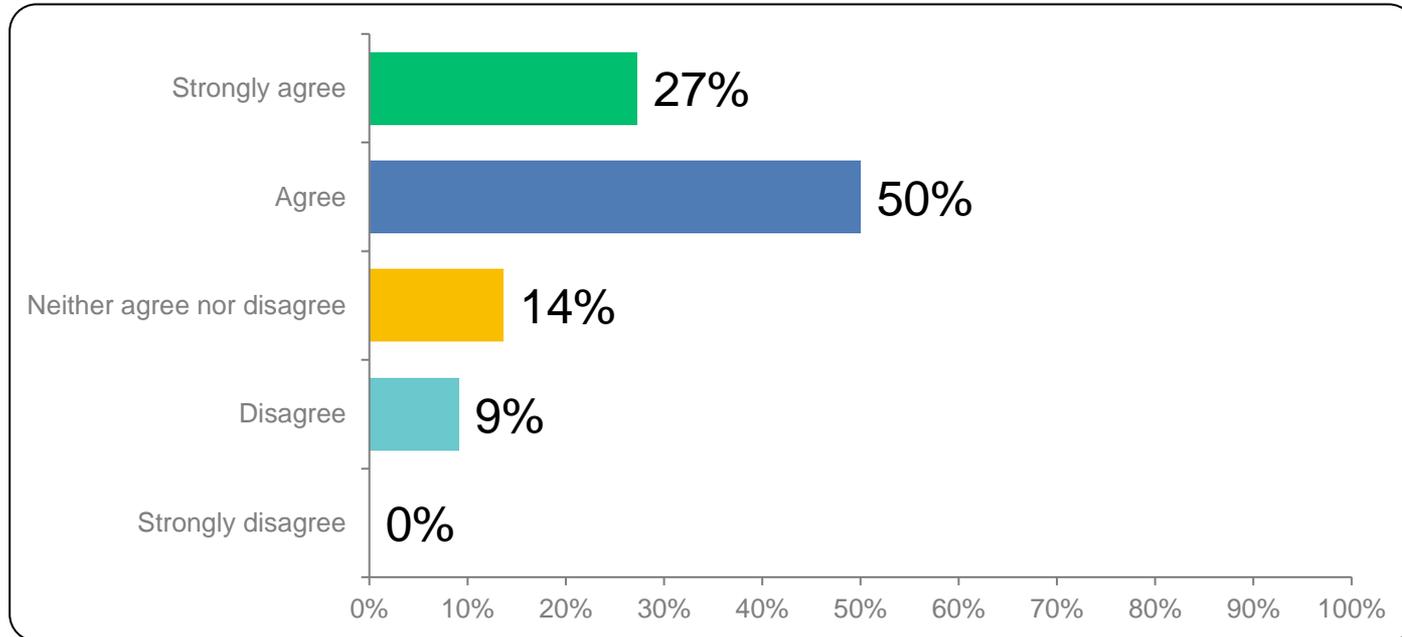


“Meet people where they are, it sounds simple but it’s complex”. – Survey participant

While experiencing homelessness I felt seen and respected by community members in Austin/Travis County.



Our homeless service provider community adopts a person-centered approach to service delivery and ensures client choice is central to that approach.



Discussion

- Who do you trust?
- Why do you trust them?
- How do situations or context change how trust develops?

What does Person-Centered mean?

Actively listen
without
judgement

Prioritize
autonomy in
all decisions

Recognize
and uplift
strengths

Trust lived
expertise

Communicate
clearly

Be consistent,
reliable, and
transparent

Engage
collaboratively

Move at the
speed of trust

Respect Privacy, Practice Consent



Protect people's private information, ensure they control how it's shared

Have clear data storage and sharing policies
Ensure workers understand privacy laws
Advise participants about mandatory reporting requirements



Never force participants to share their information

Offer alternatives like use of aliases, anonymized records, etc.



Always obtain consent prior to sharing info formally or informally

Use plain language to explain privacy policies, releases, and referral info
Respect participants boundaries and concerns

Elements of Person-Centered Engagement in HFSSO

Services and Resources

Adequate Funding

Outreach vs In-reach

Equity & Culturally Responsive Services

Caseloads

Staffing

Trainings

Flexible Coverage

Services and Resources

Housing First

- Means no preconditions for services!

Survival supplies

- As tools for engagement, not an end in themselves

Connections to community-based services and resources

- Bring services to folks where they are
- Bring folks to services via transportation and accompaniment

Promote inclusivity and accessibility

- Stay mobile! Provide services where people are most comfortable

Adequate Funding

Staff retention is key to high quality services
(skills & relationships)

Relationship and trust building over time are
required for successful program outcomes,
program interruptions break trust

Funding for street outreach must be paired
with funding for housing interventions at
scale to see best results

Outreach vs In-Reach

- Most services should be provided in outdoor locations
- Folks most in need of street outreach experience the most barriers to accessing site-based services
 - Mobility, sobriety, safety, broken trust, conflict, rules/restrictions
- Sites like day shelters/drop-in centers/etc. make great partners
 - Often serve many of the same people
 - Important to minimize duplicative service delivery
 - include them in unsheltered case conference



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Equity and Culturally Responsive Services

Apply an equity lens:

Support staff in understanding systemic inequities and continuously deepening their cultural awareness

Regularly evaluate practices and disaggregate outcomes data to guide efforts to reduce disparities and support equitable housing outcomes

Prioritize diversity in staff and partnerships with culturally specific organizations

Train on and support practices of cultural humility

Caseloads

Limit caseloads

- Caseloads must be manageable for housing focused work
- 10-14 people per worker is ideal
- No more than 15 people without risking quality of services

Not everyone will be on a caseload

- An established relationship is a prerequisite for being on a caseload
- Need to balance engaging new folks alongside case work
- Higher service needs may require lower caseload

Clear process and supervisory support

- Is needed for workers to be able to balance their caseload with other necessary tasks
- Consistency, clarity, and support prevent workers from shouldering tough decisions alone

Ongoing Caseload management

- Must consider factors such as:
 - Vulnerability, level of service needs, immediacy of service needs
 - Availability of community resources

Staffing

- Need diversity of skills of staff doing street outreach
- People with lived experience of unsheltered homelessness:

Have expertise to craft strategy aligned with people's needs

Reduce stigma via peer support

Increase willingness to engage and increase trust

Have fluency in navigating dynamics encountered

May reduce implicit bias and improve equitable outcomes

Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

- Engage in inclusive recruitment and hiring practices
 - Target recruitment for both professional skills and lived expertise
- Street outreach is NOT entry level work
 - Requires high level of skill, experience, and empathy
 - Hiring practices and pay should reflect the complexity of the work
- Prioritize hiring people with lived expertise
 - Reduce barriers and bias in hiring processes and decisions
- Staff retention matters for service quality
 - Competitive pay and benefits
 - Professional development and advancement
 - Positive work culture
- Proactively prevent burnout
 - Reasonable schedules and PTO
 - Provide tools and training
 - Supportive supervision and team
- Foster equitable and inclusive workplace

Training



Flexible Coverage

Street Outreach is one way CoCs ensure they reach everyone experiencing homelessness

Stay flexible and nimble to changing needs

Maximize reach and availability geographically and temporally



Ensure geographical coverage



Be responsive to the times people regularly need services



Consider local context, use local data to make decisions

Breakout Discussions

Each group discusses one question then reports back. Choose a note taker. Remember to come off camera!

1. What are ways we can ensure we are respecting people's privacy while also helping them connect with services and housing?
2. What are ways we can ensure that people we serve have access to culturally responsive services?
3. What are things we can do to ensure a diverse staff composition?



To Summarize: Person-Centered Engagement

- Demonstrate respect and empathy
- Center equity and culturally responsive services
- Apply person-centered data collection principles
- Offer a comprehensive array of services
- Maintain caseloads between 10-14 (never more than 15)
- Reflect the population served
- Deliver ongoing training for staff
- Prioritize engagement via mobile outreach versus site-based in-reach
- Ensure right fit and continuity with staff by intentional recruitment, hiring, and retention practices
- Adopt flexible schedules and strategies

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- **Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First**
- Taking Action

12/9/24



Q&A

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Core Elements of HFSO



Data and Impact Analysis to Inform Decision-Making



Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships Pt. 2



Person-Centered Engagement



Promotion of Community Health and Safety



Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY

For experiencing unsheltered homelessness, the
housed community, and dedicated staff



What does safety and health mean to you?

What does it mean to you to be safe?



What does it mean to you to be healthy?

What does it mean?

Safety- the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury, or loss

Health- the condition of being sound in body, mind, or spirit

Source: Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

Housing Focused Street Outreach: Promoting Community Health and Safety



Promoting health and safety is **vital** to HFSO



Must **prioritize** the safety and well-being of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness, broader community, and dedicated staff involved.

Key Areas In Uplifting Health and Safety



Comprehensive Preparation



Purposeful Engagement



Coordination & Communication



Managing Conflict

Comprehensive Preparation

- Before starting outreach efforts, communities and programs must undertake thorough preparations aimed at promoting health, safety
- Requires equipping street outreach providers with key resources, skill and knowledge



Discussion: How we prepare

- What are the resources we ensure staff are equipped with to ensure safety?
- How do we equip staff with the right skills?
- What knowledge is crucial for preparing for outreach?

Resources

- Food and water
- First aid equipment
- Hygiene kits (Toothbrushes, deodorant, clean wipes, feminine product, hand sanitizer, etc.)
- Clothing and blankets
- Bus passes or gas cards
- Trash bags and locations for placed to dump locally
- Access to harm reduction tools including naloxone, safe needle disposals, participation in safe needle exchange programs, distribution of condoms, and more
- Local access to shower and restrooms

Skills

- Assertive Engagement
- Housing First
- Motivational Interviewing
- Harm Reduction
- Trauma Informed Care including understanding Secondary/Vicarious
- Mental Health First Aid
- Crisis De-escalation
- Culturally Responsive Care including Race Equity, LGBTQIA2S+, and recognizing bias's
- Substance Use Disorder Management
- Housing Problem Solving
- Fundamentals of addressing domestic and sexual violence
- Mental health first aid
- Motivational Interviewing
- Overdose reversal
- First Aid/CPR
- Critical time Intervention
- Working with people with lived experience of homelessness.

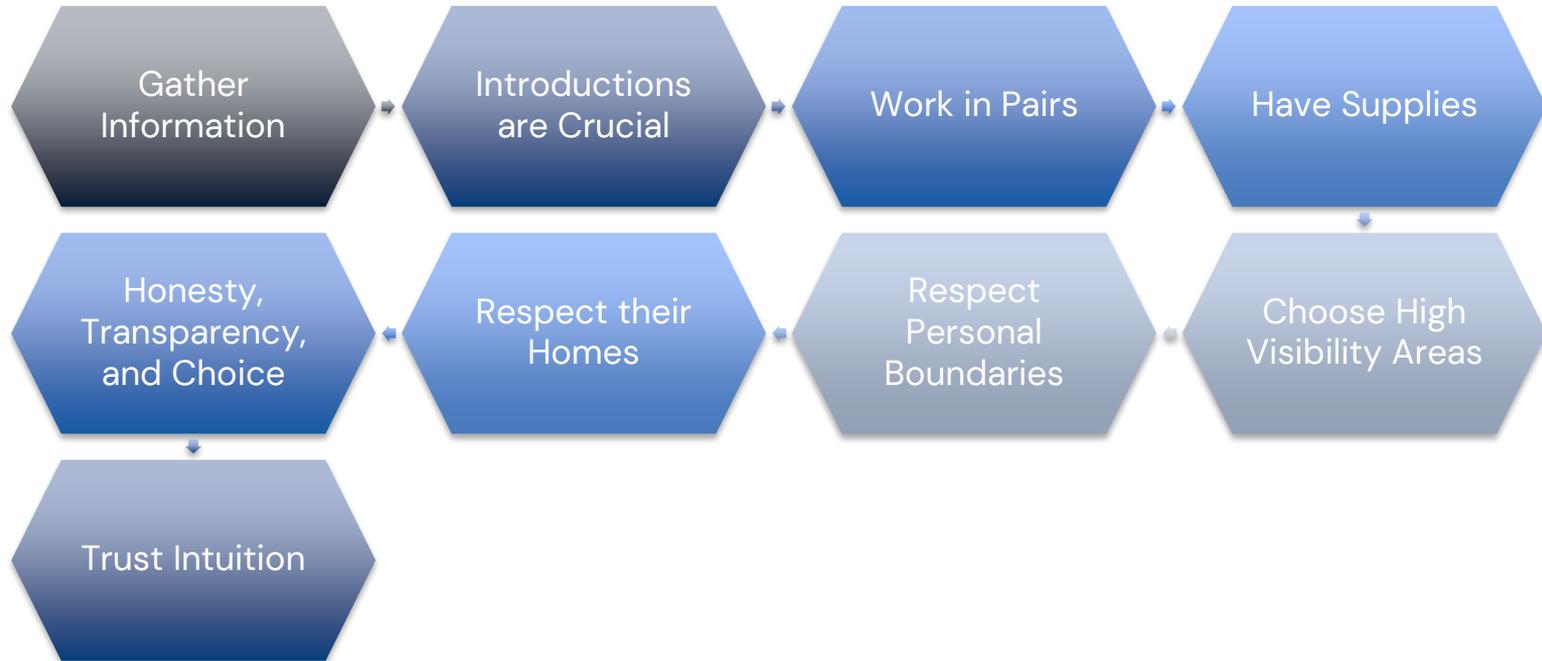
Continued Preparation

- Conducting thorough assessments of the targeted areas (looking for risks with the environment including structural hazards)
- Outreach staff are easily identifiable (name badge or clothing)
- Weather-appropriate clothing(no open-toe shoes and excessive jewelry, and focus on practical and comfortability)

Purposeful Engagement

- Needs deliberate and positive engagement practices
- Use the 9 Key strategies to uphold Purposeful Engagement during Housing-Focused Street Outreach efforts

Nine Keys to Purposeful Engagement



Purposeful Engagement

- How do you Introduce yourself to people you want to engage?
- How do we ensure honesty, transparency, and participant choice in engagement?



Do's and Don'ts of Introductions

Don't

- Overpromise
- Do all the talking
- Be forceful
- Interrupt
- Make assumptions

Do's

- Clearly announce your presence
- Introduce organization and role
- Be respectful and transparent
- Be honest and realistic

Treat the place where someone sleeps as their home

- No matter the location we have to:
 - Ask permission
 - Don't touch items
 - Don't make disparaging comments
 - Watch body language

Check biases

Coordination & Communication



Maintain Clear
Location
Awareness



Consistency in
Ongoing
Engagement



Collaborative
Coordination



Safe and
Supportive Team
Environment



Universal
Communication
and Transparency



Location sharing

- How do we share our location within our organization?
- How do we share with the system or other partners?
- What additional tools would help with either?

Maintain Clear Location Awareness

- Always communicate and share location
 - Use technology, track vehicles, shared and updated calendar



Safe and Supportive Team Environment

- Recognized the signs of vicarious or secondary trauma
- Look out for each other
- Prioritize self-care



Universal Communication and Transparency

- How do we include the overall public (houses or unhoused)?
 - Have a number to call that results in action
 - Have a dashboard that shoes real time unsheltered data
 - Host public conversations and educational briefing



Managing Conflict

- All team members are equipped with training in crisis de-escalation and can maintain composure under pressure
- Follow a safety plan designed to safeguard all
- Recognize signals of escalation
- Remain calm, respectful, and neutral
- Removed oneself if needed
- Follow protocols that address both immediate safety and long-term safety planning

Other tips for health and safety?

- Differentiate between symptoms of MH, SUD and trauma responses Vs. Immediate Crisis (danger to self others)
- Ensure trash pick up is available
- Try and get restrooms/showers on site
- Ensure fresh water is available
- Get people connected to phone or other ways to communicate

Summary

- Prepare for street outreach activities before the first engagement,
- Equip staff with the appropriate skillset
- Ensure staff follow all safety protocols including appropriate attire and visual preassessment of street outreach locations.
- Approach people experiencing unsheltered homelessness by properly announcing and introducing oneself
- Work in pairs, offer supplies, respect personal boundaries
- Prioritize honesty, transparency, and participant choice.
- Consistently share location and schedule with other staff.
- Foster a safe and supportive work environment to prioritize caring for colleagues.
- Create a clear channel of communication for community concerns that get addressed by HFSO.

NEXT STEPS

