

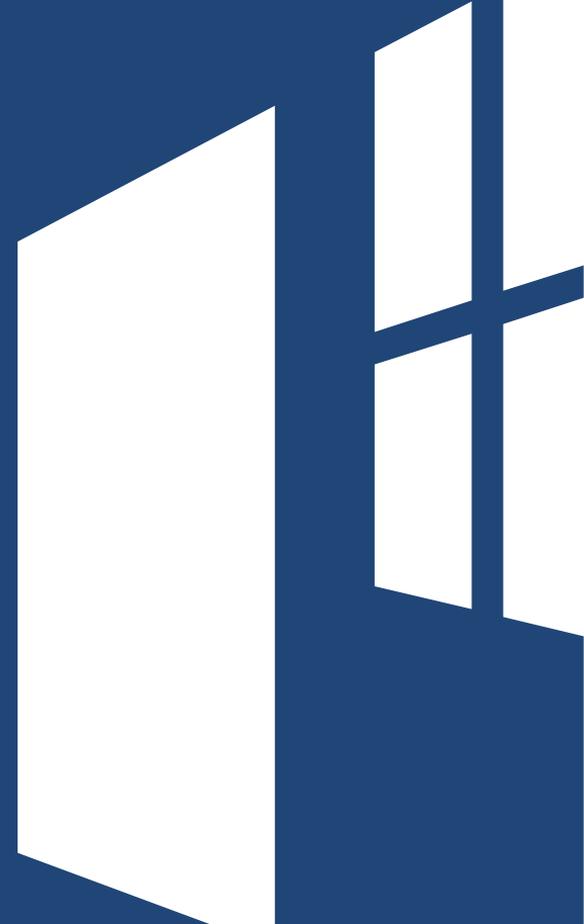
HOUSING FOCUSED STREET OUTREACH

SESSION FOUR: SAFETY FOCUSED AND HOUSING- FOCUSED APPROACH

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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

Week Four

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

Today



Breakout Rooms Who's Here?

- Your name
- Identities, Pronouns
- Role/Organization
- What was a concept that stuck out to you during three-week training?

Aha!



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**

Strategic Collaboration and Partnership...The How



Continual And
Strategic
Communication



Resource
Sharing



Data Sharing And
Integration



Engagement
Coordination

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

Core Elements of HFSO



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

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.

Keys to 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?

Suggested 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
- ✓ Overdose reversal
- ✓ First Aid/CPR
- ✓ Critical time Intervention
- ✓ Working with people with lived experience of homelessness.

Suggested 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

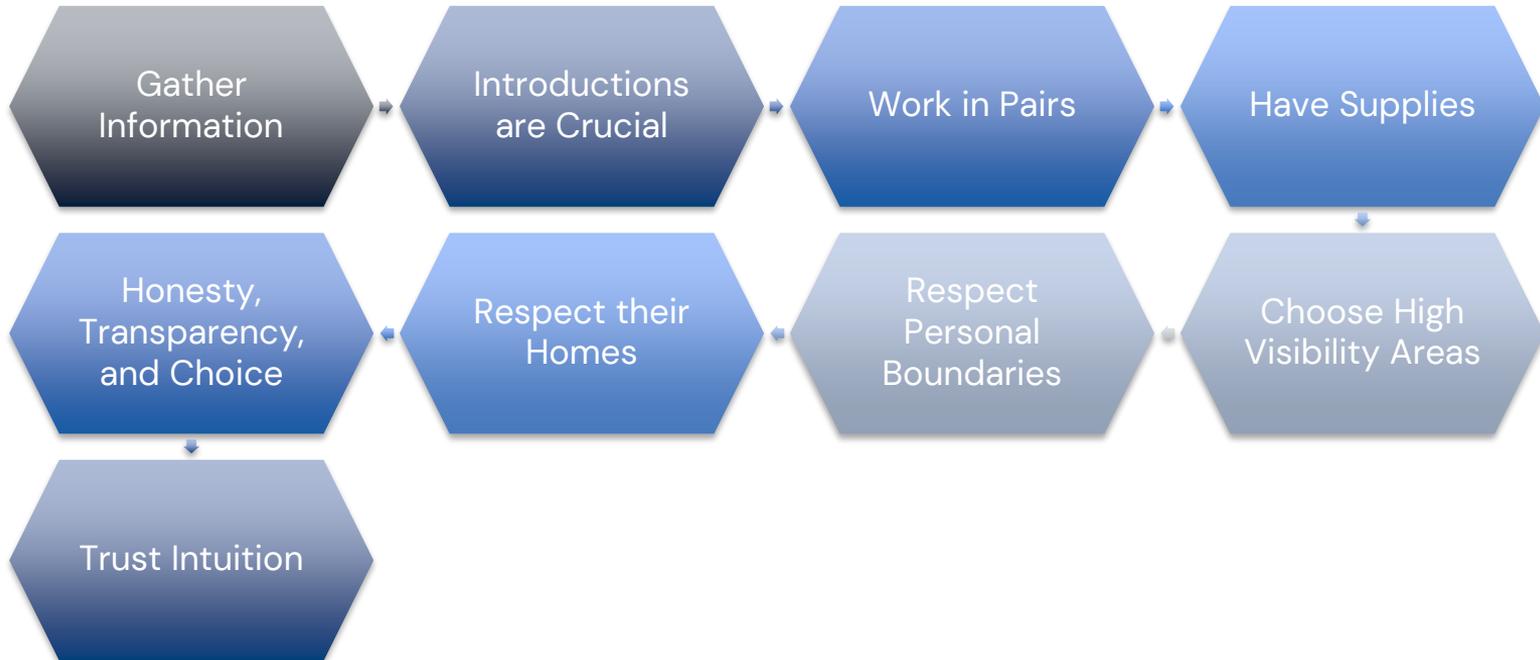
Continued Preparation

- Conducting thorough assessments of the targeted areas
 - Look for risks with the environment including structural hazards
- Outreach staff are easily identifiable
 - Identifying 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 this?

Maintain Clear Location Awareness

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



Safe and Supportive Team Environment

- Recognize 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 shows 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 or others)
- Advocate to ensure:
 - trash pick up is available
 - restrooms/showers on site
 - freshwater availability
- 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.

Five Minute Stretch Break!



Core Elements of HFSO



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

HOUSING-FOCUSED APPROACH ANCHORED IN HOUSING FIRST

Outreach programming structured in alignment with the Housing First philosophy

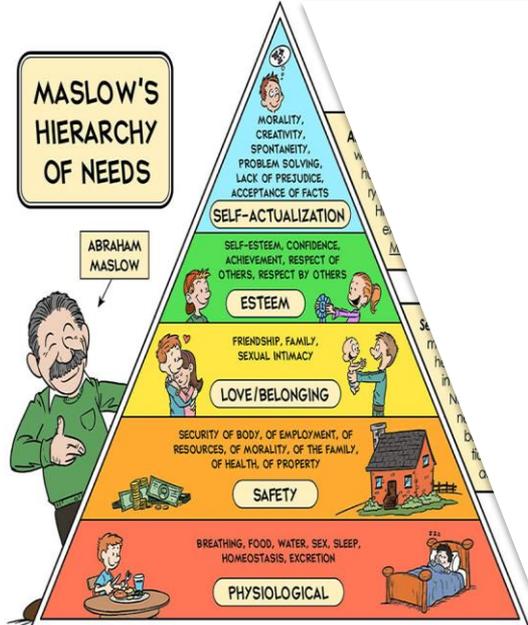


Housing Focused Street Outreach

- The goal of street outreach is to return people to **safe, stable permanent housing**.
- Street outreach does not require individuals to enter emergency shelter or transitional housing as an 'interim step' or prerequisite to accessing stable housing. Emergency shelter can be a powerful tool, but only if it addresses a specific need or barrier.
- Street outreach should adopt a **Housing First approach** and never impose preconditions such as sobriety, income, completion of treatment or project participation.



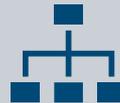
Why Housing First?



Housing First: People experiencing homelessness deserve housing first without preconditions.



Crisis/Stress Biology: The neurohormones related during stress drive people to unconsciously prioritize short term rewards.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Survival and safety needs will drive behavior until these needs are met. Only then can a person focus on other, "higher," needs.

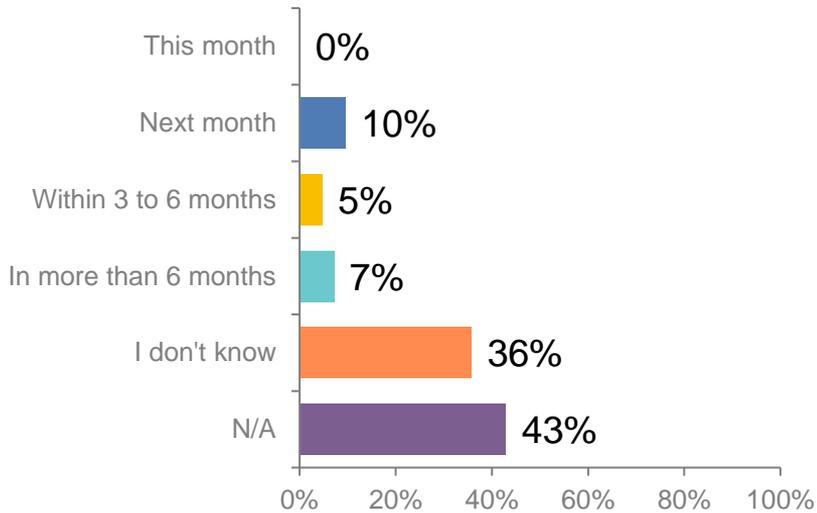
Wait....Does Housing First apply to Street Outreach?

- Yes!!
- Housing first means street outreach actively works to get people housed quickly as possible
 - Without any mandated service participation
 - Working to get documents for housing
 - Housing focused conversation

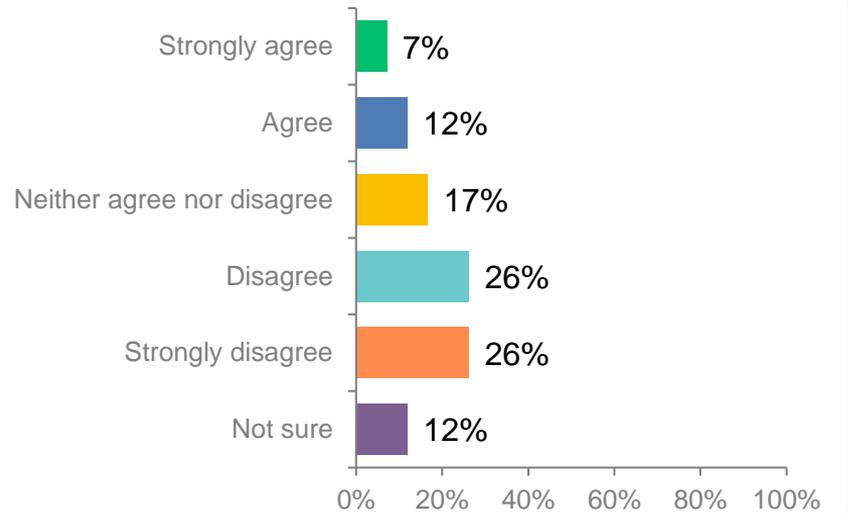


Lived and Living Experience

If you are currently NOT housed, when do you expect to be housed?



When I first became homeless, I was assisted in developing a plan to find permanent housing within the first month of connecting with services.



Why Housing-Focused Street Outreach?

**HOUSED PEOPLE
ARE NOT HOMELESS**

Housing-Focused Approach Anchored in Housing First

- Strong **belief** that safe, stable housing constitutes the best foundation for a person to achieve stability.
- **No preconditions** to entry into programming and into permanent housing, including participation in shelter or street outreach services

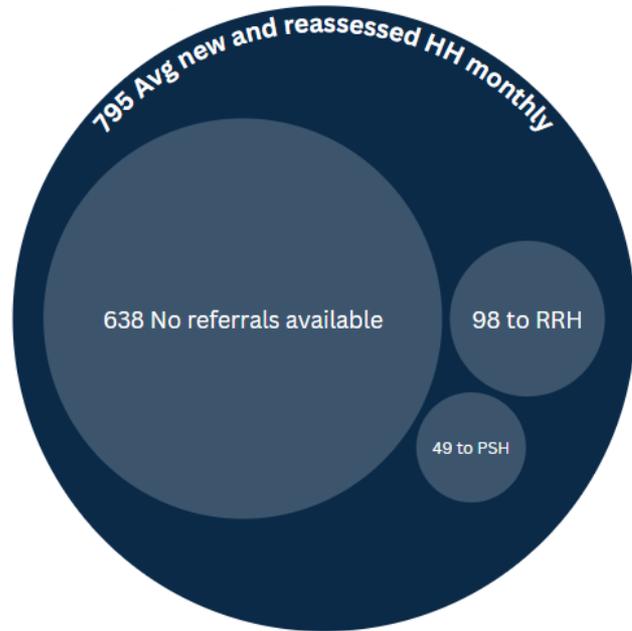




HOLD ON!

Isn't housing people someone
else's job?
Coordinated Entry?
Rapid Re-Housing? Permanent
Supportive Housing?

2024 CES Numbers



Housing Focused Street Outreach Essentials

Embedded in Coordinated Entry Systems

- Access and Assessment
- Prioritization and Referrals

Housing-Focused Problem Solving

Support Document Readiness

Exploring Housing Stabilization Options

Access to Flexible Funds for Securing Housing

In chat: Considerations for Access and Assessment

- How does outreach currently connect with coordinated entry?
- How is this process established and coordinated?
- Where is there opportunity to grow?

HFSO and Coordinated Entry Awareness

Access and Assessment

- Access- ensure coverage is maximizing and engaging all folx in the community
- Assessment-
 - Clearly assign and explore ways to increase coordinated assessments
 - Plan for system reassessments (who does it and when)

Prioritization and Referrals

- Communities should be careful to avoid any potentially disparate impacts of using unsheltered status itself as a prioritization criterion
- Outreach should participate in the **CES prioritization meetings** (case conference)

Who to engage quickly about housing?

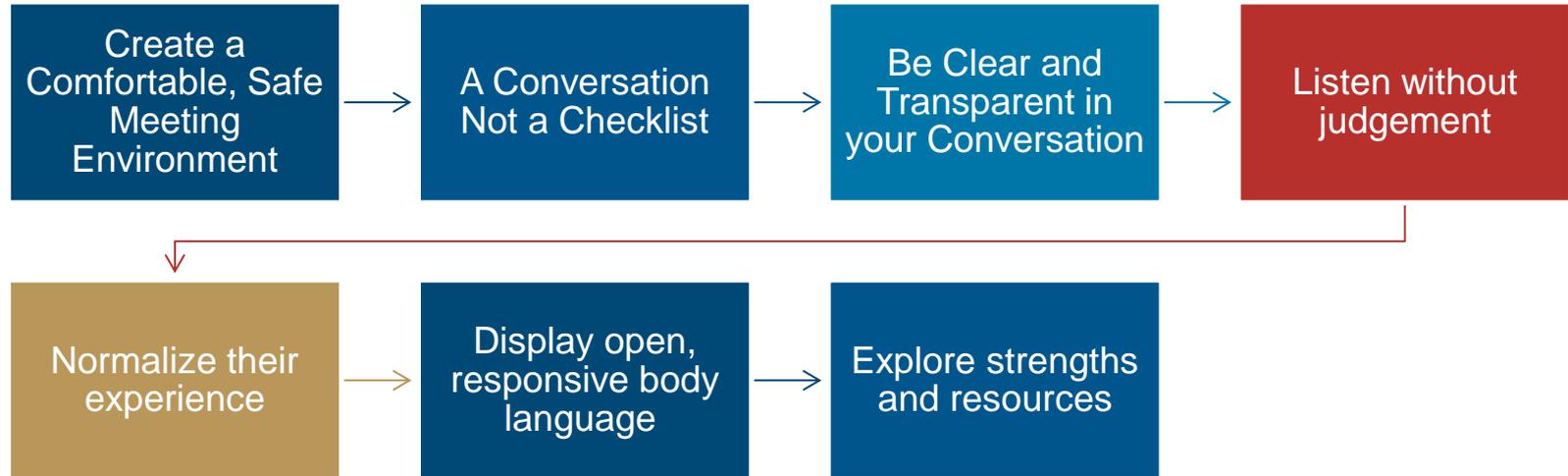
- Everyone
- How to prioritize:
 - Targeted population (who in the most need?)
 - People leaving hospitals (long histories of homelessness)
 - People leaving criminal legal system

Housing-Focused Problem Solving

Incorporate Housing Focused Problem Solving with everyone!

Problem-Solving Conversation

The Basics:



Ramping Up Housing Problem Solving The Housing Reality



Majority of sheltered and unsheltered folks will not get a subsidy

Majority of people with the same economic and health challenges as our clients are NOT homeless

We need to move people beyond shelter into housing quickly to free beds up for people who are newly homeless

Client centered is not just about the client in front of us but also the next person in our community facing homelessness

PSH “must” be used for the people with the highest acuity

People CAN find housing options without vouchers

Securing housing takes commitment and creative thinking

Housing-Focused Supports

Housing Plan (from City Rescue Mission in Lansing, MI)

My Housing Plan: Name: _____ Date: _____

My goal: I will end my homelessness by this date: _____.

Items often necessary to overcome homelessness:

___ Birth Certificate

___ Bridge Card

___ Social Security Card

___ Healthcare

___ State ID/Driver's License

___ Phone

___ Resume

I will end my homelessness by...

Plan A: _____

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

1. _____

4. _____

2. _____

5. _____

3. _____

6. _____

Plan B: _____

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

1. _____

4. _____

2. _____

5. _____

3. _____

6. _____

Support Document Readiness



Remember
Housing First

- No matter the stage
- should assist participants in obtaining any documents that they need to execute their individual housing plan:
 - Immigration related documents:
 - Other forms of ID:
 - Income and benefit related documents:
 - Disability related documents:
 - Domestic violence related documents:



And how to store them!

Housing-Focused Supports

Messaging

- **Everyone needs and deserves housing!**
- **Shelter is not a destination; it is a step to get you house**
 - Waiting for or in shelter for something better is NOT an option
 - We can't wait for a train that isn't coming
- **We are going to re-house you RAPIDLY**
 - Every day is a day to find a housing solution
- **You CAN be housed!**
 - You're better off without us
 - You will have supports in the community



Breakout group: Exploration Housing Stabilization Options Exploration

- What are the potential housing options for the individuals experiencing unsheltered homeless?



Potential Housing Options

Market rate rentals
(house,
duplex/multiplex,
apartment, trailer
home, etc.)

Shared Housing

Income Based
Subsidized Housing
options

Low Income
Housing Tax Credit
Housing

USDA Rural
Development
Housing

Population specific
housing options:

Rapid Re-housing
(RRH)

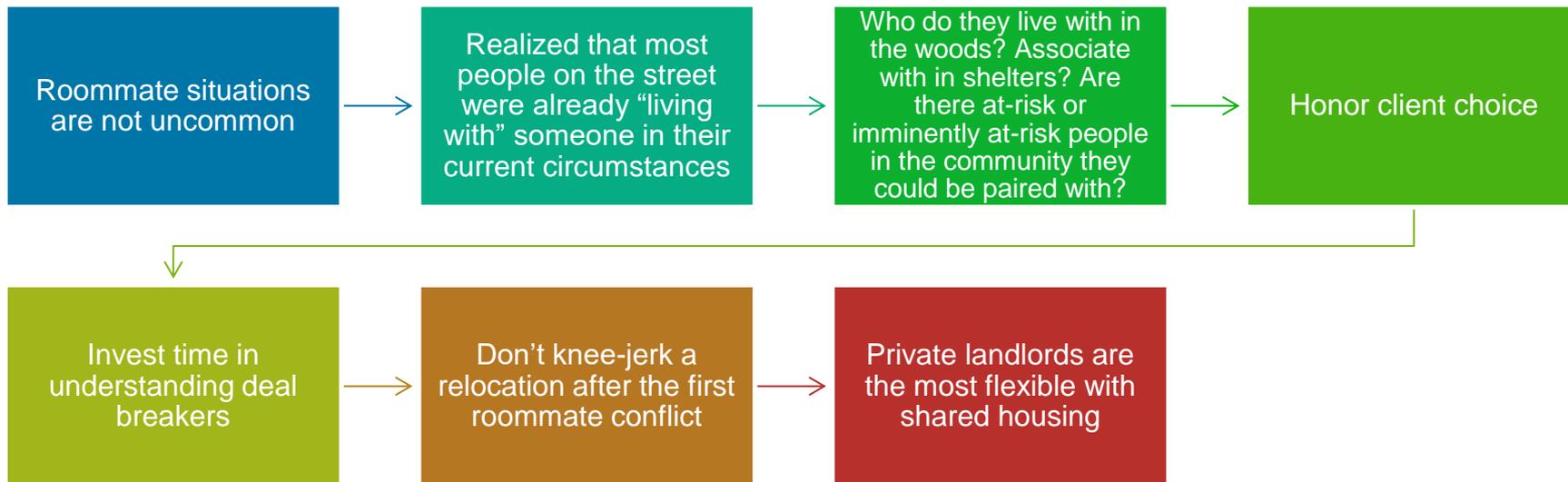
Joint Transitional
Housing/Rapid Re-
housing (TH/RRH)

Other limited term
subsidy and rent
assistance
programs

Permanent
Supportive Housing
(PSH)

Assisted living and
nursing home
facilities

Shared Housing



Wisdom from Meghann Cotter - Micah Ministries - Fredericksburg, VA

Housing-Focused (shift)

Philosophy Shift

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Clients are the captains of their housing plans
- Shelter space is limited and often not desired by clients
- Shelters is not the end goal or the only option



Practice Shift

- Plan for rapid exit **to housing options** at first engagement
- “If you’re not talking about housing, you’re having the wrong conversation” – problem-solving “housing” conversations continue
- All contacts include a focus on connecting to housing quick

Summary

- Programming is tied to the Coordinated Entry System with a clear understanding of who administers assessments and when, and how prioritization works.
- Referral processes into housing programs are clear, efficient, and collaborative.
- Prioritization processes are equitable, incorporating acuity and vulnerability to ensure individuals with the greatest needs are prioritized for available housing opportunities.
- Street outreach staff assist participants in obtaining documents that can expedite placement into crisis housing and permanent housing.
- Street outreach staff understand all available housing options in the community and discuss these options with individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Street outreach programs have access to flexible funding

IN CONCLUSION



HFSSO: In Conclusion

- The Housing-Focused Street Outreach (HFSSO) framework presented by the National Alliance to End Homelessness serves as a comprehensive and strategic approach
- Integrating core elements such as person-centered engagement, a Housing First approach, community health and safety, strategic collaboration, and data-informed decision-making, the HFSSO framework offers a holistic and effective pathway to reducing unsheltered homelessness
- To be successful must foster coordination and collaboration among various street outreach programs and community partners
- The HFSSO strategy is an adaptable model that aims to not only provide immediate relief to those experiencing homelessness but also to establish long-term, sustainable pathways out of homelessness!

**Remember Outreach is
about ending someone's
homelessness**

Moving Forward

- One thing you will try because of this training?
- One feeling you are leaving this training with?

Q&A

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Thank You

