

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING KEY ELEMENTS AND HOUSING FIRST



North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness

securing resources • encouraging public dialogue • advocating for public policy change

919.755.4393 • www.ncceh.org

PSH effectively ends homelessness for our most vulnerable neighbors



Goals for Presentation

- Understand the Housing First model
- Understand the Key Elements of Permanent Supportive Housing
- Learn how PSH programs in NC have redesigned their programs with these in mind

Housing First ends homelessness

- **Housing First** is a national best practice model that quickly and successfully connects individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment compliance, and service and/or income requirements. Programs offer supportive services to maximize health stability to prevent returns to homelessness rather than meeting arbitrary benchmarks prior to permanent housing entry.

Evidence shows that Housing First works!

- In Housing First programs, program participants:
 - ▣ Access permanent housing faster
 - ▣ Are more likely to remain stably housed
 - ▣ Believe they have more autonomy, choice, and control
 - ▣ Access supportive services more readily, leading to housing stability

Evidence shows that Housing First works!

- PSH participants are more likely to attain the following in Housing First programs than in traditional service models
 - ▣ Attend job training programs
 - ▣ Attend school
 - ▣ Discontinue or decrease substance abuse
 - ▣ Have fewer incidents of domestic violence
 - ▣ Have few hospitalizations

Evidence shows that Housing First is also more cost effective

- Housing First programs save communities because PSH clients are less likely to use:
 - Hospitals
 - Jails
 - Detox/substance abuse treatment centers
 - Emergency mental health state-operated hospitals
 - Emergency shelters

Evidence shows that Housing First is also cost effective

- A national study found that PSH participants saved an average of \$31,545 in emergency services over a two-year period.
- Other national studies show that PSH can save approximately \$23,000 per client rather than emergency shelter.

Housing First in reality

- Participant engagement and intake
 - ▣ Need multiple opportunities to engage
 - Build a trusting relationship
 - Ask them what kind of housing they want
 - ▣ Intake might not be easy
 - All the information given may not be true
 - Clients might miss multiple appointments
 - Might need to take participant to gather documents
 - Set expectations but don't oversell it

Housing First in reality

- Case management
 - Help participant to develop a plan of action of how to keep housing
 - Show up consistently, but if client doesn't want to see you, then walk away
 - Just because a participant in PSH doesn't want services now doesn't mean you can't offer them every week
 - Participant gets to choose the services they want
 - Case managers should be meeting with people in their homes

Housing First in reality

- The first 90 days will be the roughest. Staff will likely see:
 - ▣ Relapse and extreme intoxication
 - ▣ Trouble with neighbors
 - ▣ Trouble with landlords
 - ▣ Physical and mental health deterioration
 - ▣ Difficulty with daily tasks

Housing First in reality

- Eviction and termination
 - The majority of participants can succeed in permanent housing, but it might not be in their first unit
 - Work to avoid legal eviction
 - Negotiate with the landlord
 - Ask the client to leave the unit
 - Participants should not necessarily be terminated from the program because of an eviction
 - Programs should have specific policies and procedures about termination of participants

Key Elements of PSH along with Housing First practices can strengthen programs

- Key Elements of PSH published in a toolkit by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration
- The toolkit can be found at:
<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4510>

PSH Key Elements address the essentials of program design

- Leases or rental agreements do not have any provisions that would not be found in leases held by someone who does not have a disability
- Participation in services is voluntary and tenants cannot be evicted for rejecting services
- House rules, if any, are similar to those found in housing for people who do not have disabilities and do not restrict visitors or otherwise interfere with a life in the community

PSH Key Elements address the essentials of program design

- Housing is not time limited, and the lease is renewable at tenants' and owners' option
- Tenants have choices in the support services that they receive. They are asked about their choices and can choose from a range of services. Different tenants receive different types of services based on their needs and preferences
- As need change over time, tenants can receive more intensive or less intensive support services without losing their homes

Take some action . . .

- Evaluate your program . . .
 - Review your program policies and identify where they conflict with Housing First
 - Read and understand SAMHSA's Key Elements of PSH toolkit. Ask questions!

- Begin a conversation with NCCEH or within your own agency about how to make changes to your program

Let us know how we can support your partnerships with the homeless system.

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- NCCEH Webpage: www.ncceh.org
 - ▣ Learn more! Join our mailing list! Become a member!