

The Housing First Approach

Principles and
Implementation

December 4, 2018

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Collaborative Solutions Inc.

Agenda

- Defining Housing First Approach
- Core Principles
- Components of Housing First Approach
- Implementing Housing First Approach in Facility and Tenant Based Settings

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to adopt a housing first approach in their programs.

Participants will understand the core components and standards of the housing first approach.

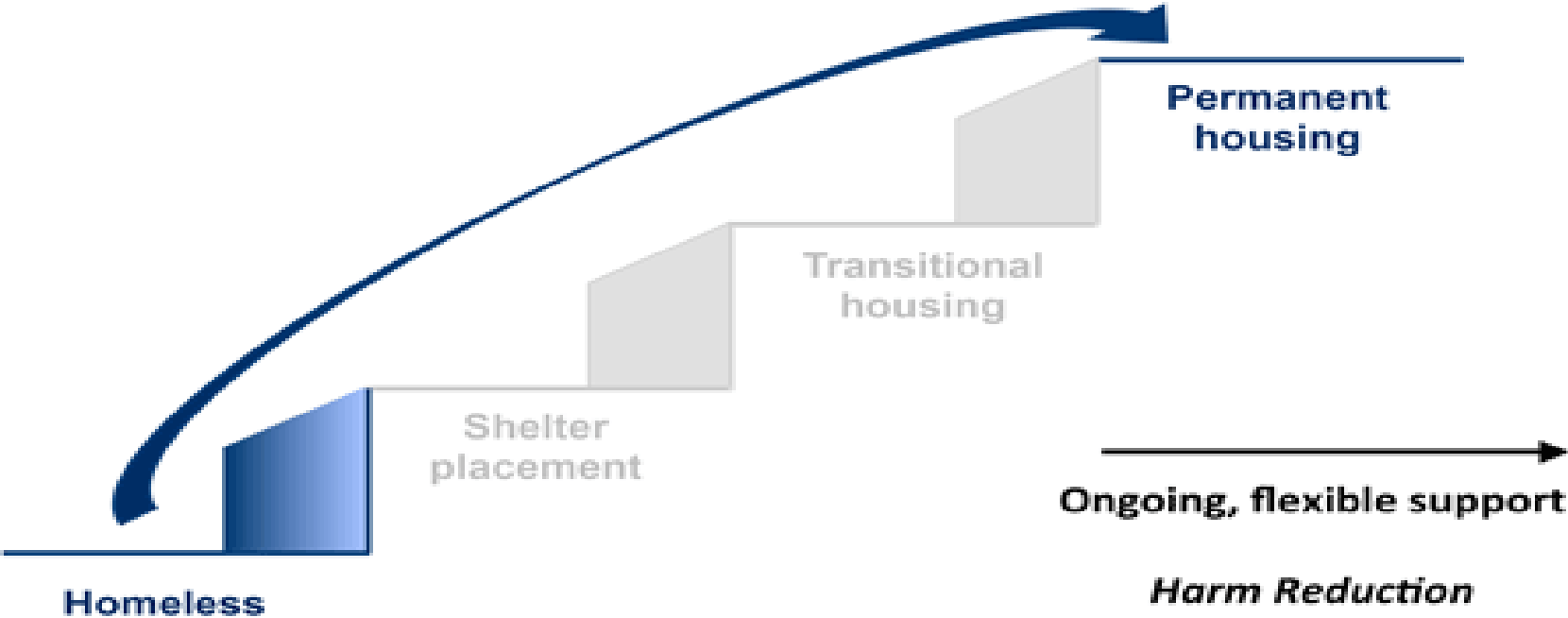
Participants will have identified the steps they will take to implement a housing first approach.

Housing First – A Definition

- An approach and a framework centered on the belief that everyone can achieve stability in permanent housing directly from homelessness and that stable housing is the foundation for pursuing other health and social services goals.



Housing First approach



Core Principles of Housing First

- Housing is a Human Right
- Everyone is “*Housing Ready*”: Access to programs is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
- Programs or projects do everything possible not to reject an individual or family on the basis of poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, minor criminal convictions, or behaviors that are interpreted as indicating a lack of “housing readiness.”

Core Principles of Housing First

- Housing and service goals and plans are highly tenant-driven.
- Supportive services emphasize engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals.
- Participation in services or compliance with service plans are voluntary and not conditions of tenancy but are reviewed with tenants and regularly offered as a resource to tenants.

Core Principles of Housing First

- Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use and addiction are a part of some tenants' lives.
- Substance use in and of itself, without other lease violations, is not considered a reason for eviction.

Small Group Discussion

Does Your Project Use Housing First Principles?

1. Are applicants allowed to enter the program without income?
2. Are applicants allowed to enter the program even if they aren't "clean and sober" or "treatment compliant"?
3. Are applicants allowed to enter the program even if they have criminal justice system involvement?
4. Are service and treatment plans voluntary, such that tenants cannot be evicted for not following through?



Components of Housing First Approach

- Few to no programmatic prerequisites to permanent housing entry
- Low-Barrier Admission Policies
- Rapid and streamlined entry into housing
- Supportive services are voluntary, but can be used to persistently engage tenants to ensure housing stability
- Tenants have full rights, responsibilities and legal protections
- Practices and policies to prevent lease violations and evictions
- Applicable in a variety of housing models

Implementing Housing First Approach in Facility Based Settings

- Choice of Housing
- Robust, Flexible, Voluntary Services
- Access to Housing
- Decent, Safe, Affordable
- Separation of Housing and Services
- Rights of Tenancy
- Integration



Small Group Discussion

- Where are we in moving towards Housing First?
- Do we want to move in this direction?
- What implementation elements are we already doing?
- What elements would we like to implement?





Closing Discussion

- What is your key take away from this session?
- What are your next steps?

The Harm Reduction Philosophy

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Implementation

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Agenda

Harm Reduction – Defined

Harm Reduction Principles

Employing a Harm Reduction
Approach in Housing Settings

Next Steps



Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to adopt a harm reduction approach in their programs.
- Participants will understand the principles of Harm reductions
- Participants will have identified the steps they will take to implement a harm reduction approach in their housing setting.

Harm Reduction: Definition

Harm reduction is a set of practical clinical strategies that reduce negative consequences of drug use or other activities, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence.

Harm Reduction Principles

- People have the right to make decisions about their lives and actions. Harm Reduction is about educating them to make the best decisions for themselves.
- The user takes responsibility for individual choices and behavior.
- The individual sets their own goals in collaboration with the service provider.

Harm Reduction Principles

- There are no punitive sanctions for what someone chooses to put/not put in their body.
- When we create punitive sanctions, people will lie.
- Incremental change is normal.
- Quality of life and well-being measure success.

Group Discussion

What are some examples of Harm Reduction?



As **housing** providers,
where do we focus?

Substance Use **Symptoms** **Behaviors**
Mental Illness

Symptoms, Behaviors, Housing Issues

- Illegal Activity **leads to** Lease Violations
- House Rules Violations **lead to** Complaints and Nuisance Issues
- Poor Money Management **leads to** Rent Non-Payment
- Poor Hygiene or Hoarding **lead to** Failed Inspections
- Property Damage **leads to** Failed Inspections
- Unauthorized Subtenants **lead to** Lease Violations
- HOUSING FIRST IS NOT “ANYTHING GOES”

Small Group Discussion

- What would changing to a harm reduction approach mean for our program?

or

- How can we improve our integration or harm reduction principles?



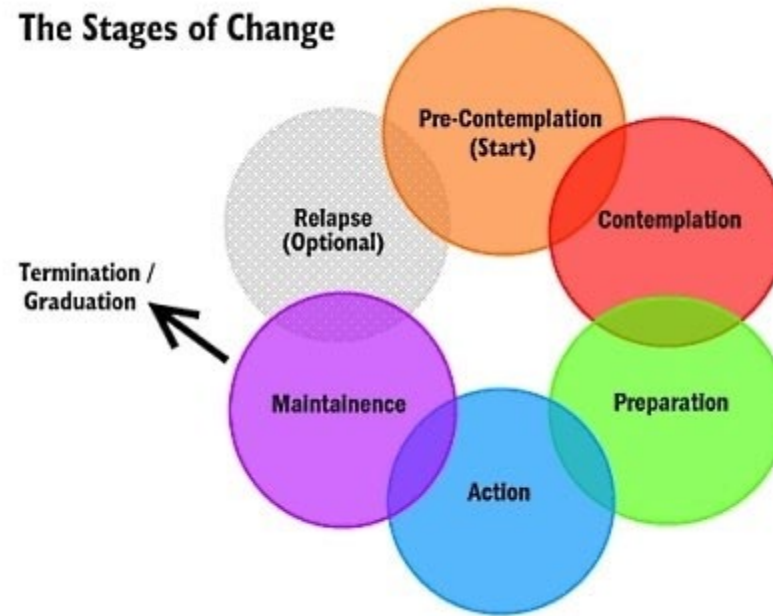
Harm Reduction Approach to Delivering Services in Housing

- Tenant engagement: A commitment to ensuring tenants are actively engaged in influencing housing services and shaping their communities.
- Client-focused services: non-authoritative approach that allows clients to take more of a lead in discussions so that, in the process, they will discover their own solutions.
- Motivational interviewing: A counseling method that helps people resolve ambivalent feelings and insecurities to find the internal motivation they need to change their behavior.

Harm Reduction Approach to Delivering Services in Housing

Stages of Change:

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance
- Relapse
- Termination



Small Group Discussion

- Are we ready to implement a Harm Reduction approach?
- How do we shift to a Harm Reduction approach?
- What elements of our program do we need to revise?
- What training do we need?



Harm Reduction and Housing First

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- Harm Reduction is an important part of the Housing First model—based on principles of self-determination and individual choice
- Examples:
 - Individualized plans for medication adherence
 - Scheduling CM meetings first thing in the morning
 - Budgeting for alcohol/recreation
 - Going to AA/NA meetings while a person is still using
 - Direct vendor checks or rep payee for rent
- These practices should be tailored to the culture and needs of your community

Closing Discussion

- What were your key takeaways?
- What questions do you still have?
- What are your next steps?

Resources

- https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing_First_Checklist_FINAL.pdf
- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Housing-First-Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Brief.pdf>
- www.harmreduction.org
- <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/gttc/presentations/8eStagesofChange.pdf>