

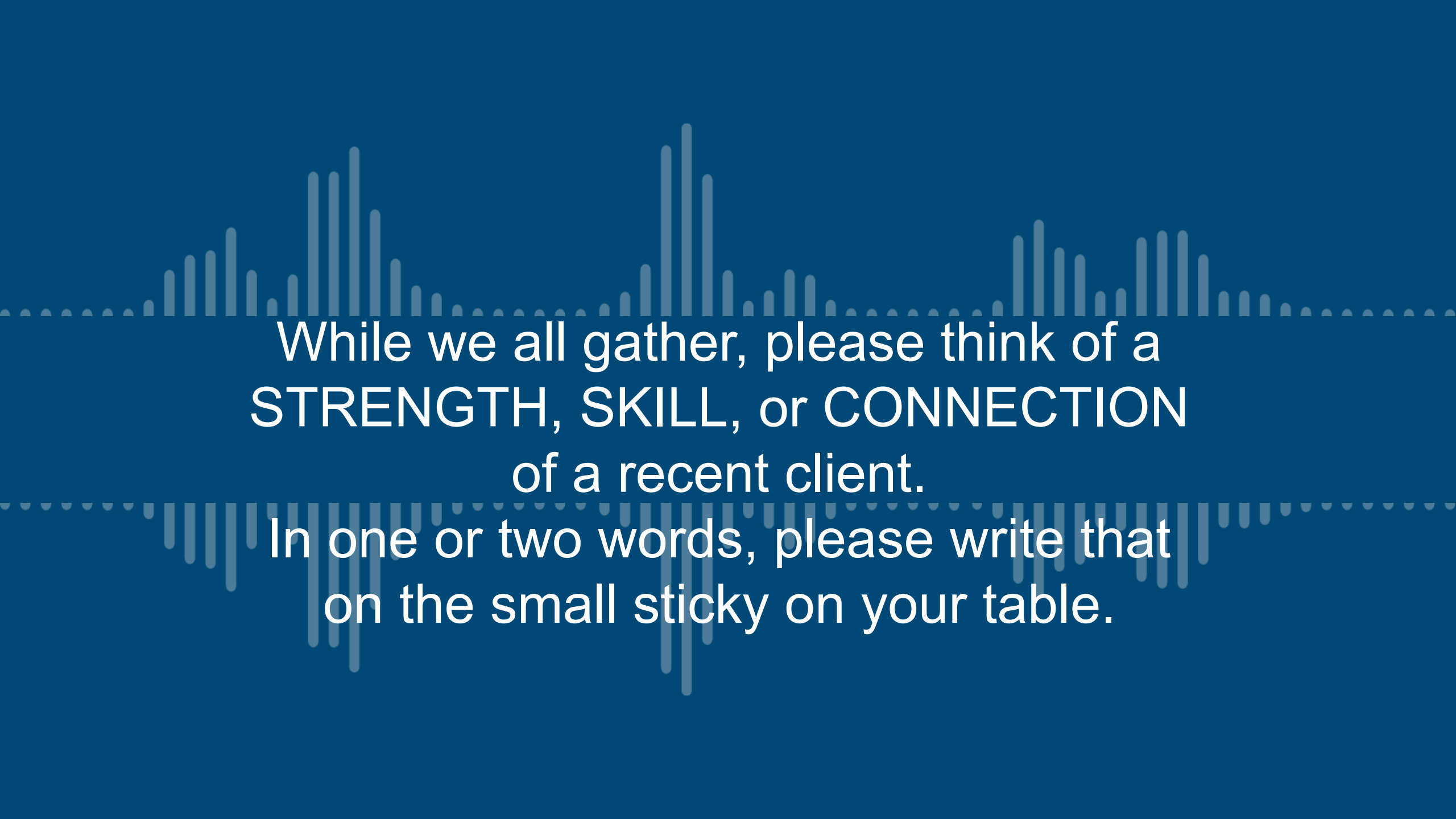


Diversion and Housing Problem Solving (HPS)

Using a client-centered, strength-based approach
to all work with those facing a housing crisis.



Welcome & Introductions



While we all gather, please think of a
STRENGTH, SKILL, or CONNECTION
of a recent client.

In one or two words, please write that
on the small sticky on your table.

Introduction Exercise. Pairing off and Introducing each other: :

1. Meet someone you don't know
2. Learn their name, including pronouns and pronunciation
3. What type of work do they do? How might this training help them in their work?
4. What's their favorite non-work activity?
5. Write **JUST THEIR FAVORITE HOBBY or NON WORK ACTIVITY** in bold print on paper. Post it on the board

Community Agreements....Can we all agree:

Source: Youth Advisory Board of Sacramento CoC

- **One Mic** *one person shares at a time*
- **Step up / Step back** -- *if I've already shared, let others step up*
- **Respect pronouns** – *ask if you're not sure*
- **Throw glitter not shade** -- *be kind, no putdowns*
- **Use person first language** -- *i.e. people experiencing homelessness*
- **Try not to use acronyms** -- *WTH are you saying?*



What is Housing Problem Solving (HPS)?

Housing Problem Solving (HPS) Works to End Especially Newer Cases of Homelessness by:

- Providing an empathetic response – letting them know that they are valued, and that we care
- Communicating that we are here to support and partner with them
- Returning decision-making to the client
- Accessing their strengths, skills and connections, and
- Helping them choose which short and long-term housing option is best for them

Defining the terms

Housing Problem Solving (HPS) is a strength-based, empathetic response to those facing or experiencing homelessness to become housed as quickly as possible

HPS includes:

Prevention – keep people from facing homelessness

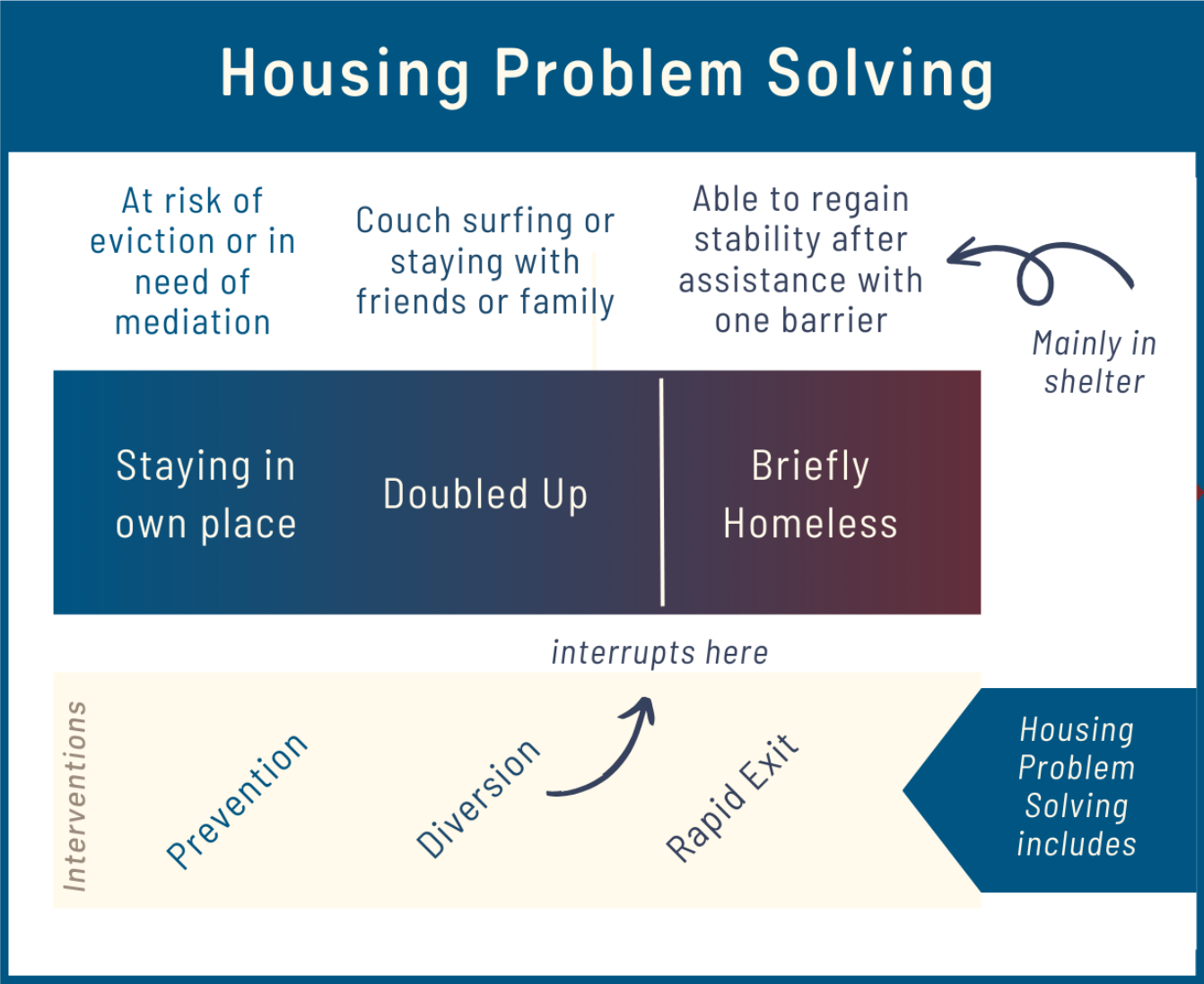
Diversion – interrupt them from facing homelessness

Rapid Exit – quickly ends their experience of homelessness

Spectrum of Living Situations and Potential Interventions: From Being Housed to Experiencing Homelessness



Time Line of HPS



Small Group Discussions in Training

- Tables are arranged in small groups
- One notetaker in each group
- Please allow everyone a chance to speak
 - Some people are more comfortable in small groups, and this may be their chance to share

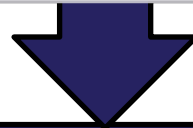
Discussion questions:

1. How would you describe Diversion & Rapid Exit?
2. What are the benefits:
 - a. To the client?
 - b. For the provider or shelter?
 - c. To the broader community?

HPS: Part of An Effective Homeless Response System

GOAL – the “why”

Aims to make homelessness **rare**, brief, and non-recurring



SOLUTION – the “what”

Focuses on **housing** as the primary solution to homelessness



APPROACH – the “how”

Helps people resolve their housing crises at every **engagement** opportunity

An Effective Homeless Response System

Every community must have the capacity to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness
- Prevent, or divert prior to experiencing homelessness
- Provide immediate access to low barrier shelter and service, and
- Connect people experiencing homelessness to housing support and services needed to maintain housing

*United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
(USICH)*

Things to consider....

- Households experiencing a housing crisis are not significantly different in income than other households experiencing poverty, inflation, and sky rocketing housing costs
- Majority experience homelessness due to a financial or other crisis
- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative impact on adults and children

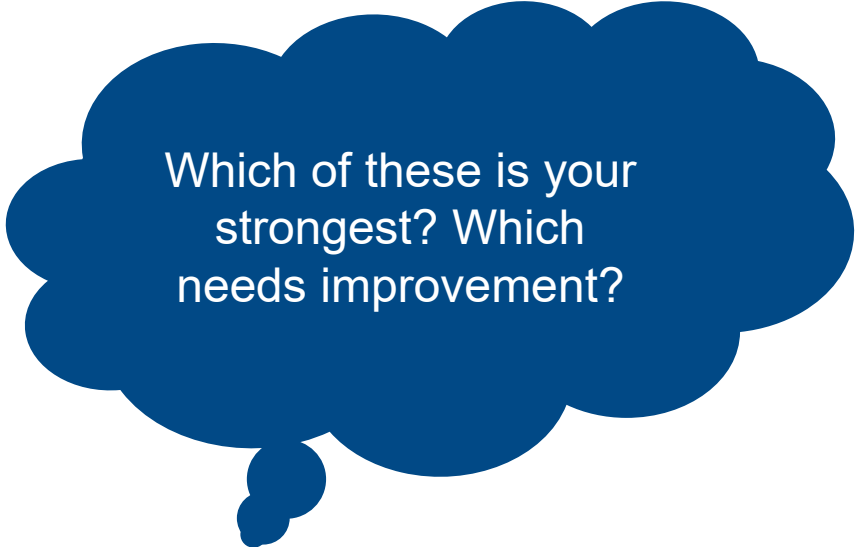
Benefits of HPS

- Reduces new entries into homelessness
- Cuts down on **shelter** wait lists and the community queue
- Reduces demand for limited **shelter** beds
- Improves system performance outcomes by reducing new entries and re-entries into homelessness
- HPS allows communities to use more extensive services for clients with higher needs, who cannot be diverted
- Is trauma-informed and focuses on clients' strengths

HPS – What does it include?

HPS qualities:

- Client-centered
- Staff as partners
- Empathetic
- Trauma Informed
- Does program enrollment match those experiencing homelessness?
- Supports Relationships
- Housing First
- Reflective Practice



Which of these is your strongest? Which needs improvement?

The *Approach* of HPS can be used throughout:

1. Prevention
2. Diversion
3. Rapid Exit
4. RRH
5. Vouchers: VASH/EHV/HCV
6. PSH
7. Moving On



15 Minute Break

Five Steps in HPS

1. Introductions
2. Active & Empathetic Listening
3. Exploring Strengths, Networks, and Skills
4. Short and/or Long Term Housing Options
5. Next Steps and Follow-up

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Housing Problem Solving Demonstration

Insert zoom video here



Lunch Break!



Trauma Informed Care

Trauma

Trauma is defined by the impact that an experience has had on the individual rather than by the event itself.

- From a person with lived experience of a mental health condition

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/psychosocial/principles/Pages/trauma-informed.aspx>

Trauma Informed Care (TIC):

- 1. Trauma-informed services do no harm i.e. they do not re-traumatize*
- 2. Don't blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and*
- 3. They embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery (or housing or other goals) is possible,”*
(Dr. Cathy Kezelman).

Small Group Discussions: Trauma Informed Care (TIC)

1. What behaviors do we often see by those who have experienced trauma?
Any examples?
2. How do you prepare yourself to work with clients who may be having a difficult day?
3. What are effective TI strategies of working with clients who are exhibiting difficult, rude, or insulting behavior towards staff, or another client?

How does trauma affect our work?

Example 1:

- Without trauma or overwhelming conflict, we can generally tell our story in order
- Think of parts of our story on post-its, in order from left to right
- Trauma blows through, distorting and confusing the way in which we recall what happened

How does trauma affect our work?

Example 2:

- Think of our memories of events like a snow globe or Rubik's cube
- Jumbled and out of order
- Lack of clarity

How does trauma affect our work?

Example 3:

- Even when we have worked through some of our trauma issues mentally and psychologically,
- The body holds on to it,
- And in retelling parts of our story that contains previous trauma,
- Our physical reaction can be similar to when the events happened

How to support persons in a Trauma Informed (TI) way?

1. Genuine rapport and empathy can lead to trust
 - *they have my back*
 - *they get me*
 - *I'm not being judged*
2. Persons may now feel more comfortable going into a *brave* (not “safe”) place to share with us *what they choose to share*

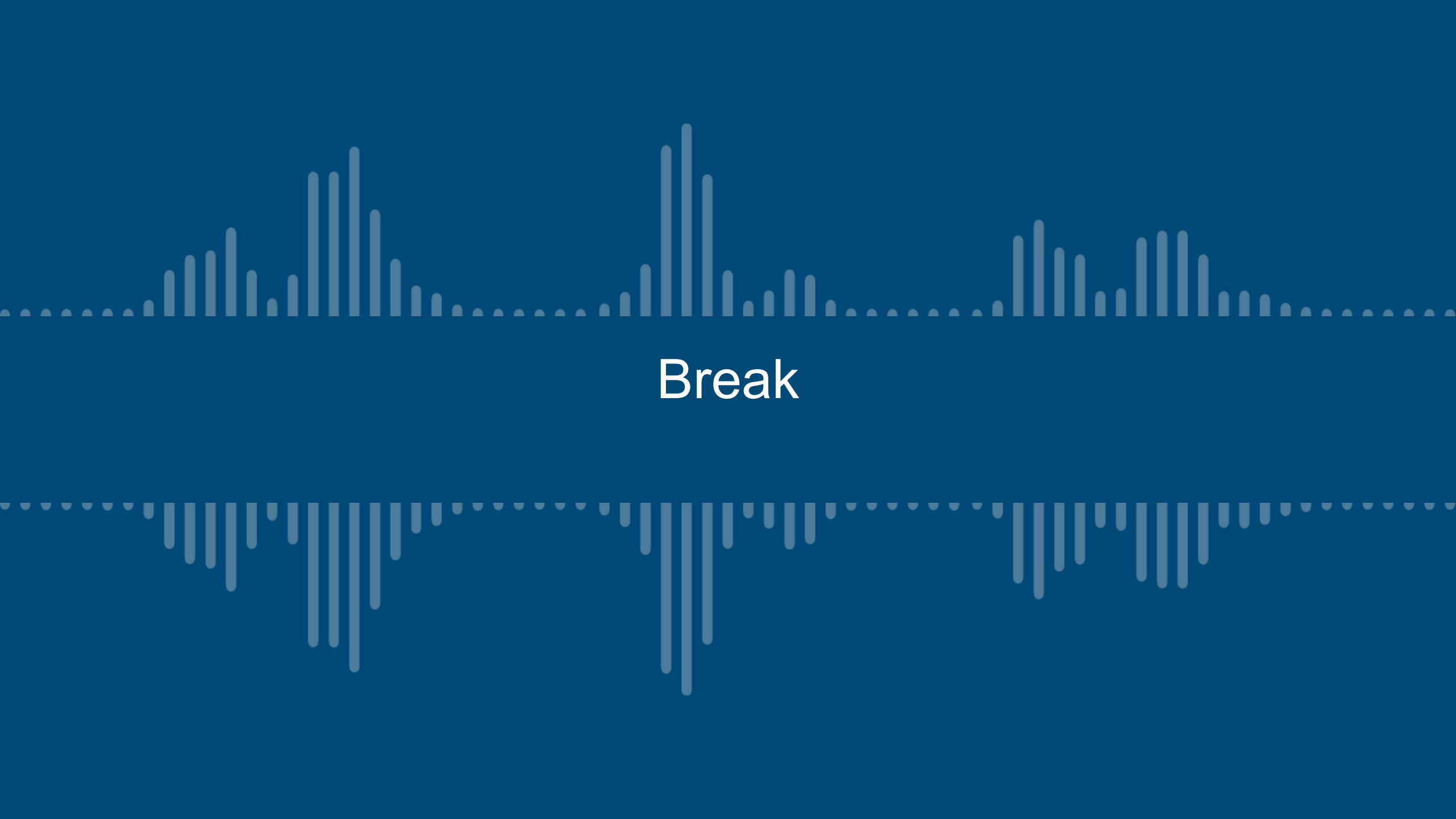
Imagine we are on a journey with our clients

- After rapport and trust building,
- They are now willing to partner with us, share things they think may be helpful in their effort to
 - reconnect to supports
 - explore strengths
 - consider options they may have dismissed before

However, trauma still

- Shakes up the snow globe, scrambles the Rubik's cube, messes up memory,
- and fogs up the window in front of them.
- They are less able to see option clearly – due to trauma

*How do we help them begin to put things in order
help them see forward more clearly?*



Break

Genuine Listening

[Compassionate Listening Video](#)

<https://youtu.be/KZBTYViDPIQ>

Empathy is the intimate comprehension of another person's thoughts and feelings without judgement or expectation.

NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness

Large Group Discussions

Active Listening

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- What does it look like?
- What does it involve?

Active Listening

- Lets the speaker know they are being heard
- Helps clarify the speakers' story (trauma-informed)
- Includes appropriate eye contact & open body language
- Observe the speakers' body language and tone of voice
- Paraphrasing is key – repeating back what we have heard in our own words
- Summarize main points, goals, needs

Body Language – R.O.L.E.

- **Relaxed**
 - Don't put the desk between you and the person
 - Make sure you have a private, quiet space
- **Open**
 - Check your body language
 - No Judging! (“Why?” “I think..” “You should.”)
- **Lean In**
 - Engage them, reinforce skills
- **Eye Contact**
 - Acknowledgment
 - Appropriate eye contact – follow their cues

Large Group Discussion

Empathetic Listening

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- What does it look like?
- What does it involve?

Empathetic Listening

- Builds on Active Listening
- Emotion Naming
- Normalizing
- Validating
- Tone of voice and eye contact is vital – *feeling with*

Active Listening!

If we jump to ideas and solutions, before really hearing them,

- We ignore or deny the effects of trauma and conflict
- Put them in a position to make important decisions when they are not seeing things clearly, and
- Expect them to embrace ideas WE come up with, because we haven't supported them in getting to a position where THEY can generate options

Active Listening Group Exercise – At Your Tables

- Think of time you were especially helpful to a client. Think how you could tell this in one or two sentences
- First person tell someone seated clock-wise next to you this story
- Listener repeat back, then ask if correct. If not, ask for clarification and repeat back
- Listen becomes the speaker and repeat the exercise around the table, ending with the first speaker paraphrasing the last speaker

Support, Trust, Respect

- Believing in another's capacity to think through, evaluate, and begin to solve their own issues is a sign of trust and respect for the other's autonomy
- It doesn't mean someone doesn't need support
- How can we be there for each other, without making it about us, or quickly jumping in with suggestions or solution?

Genuine Client Engagement

Includes Active Listening:

Paraphrasing

Open body language

Appropriate eye contact

And Empathy:

Being non-judgmental

Statements of empathy (*you seem sad*)

Validation

Normalizing (*many other clients have also expressed frustration*)

Paying attention to shifts in clients' body language

How to keep the conversation going?

Visualize keeping the ball in the speaker's court

When there is a pause, just wait a few seconds

If they haven't resumed, paraphrase what was said, and they may resume telling their story

If not, then ask an open-ended question that tosses the ball back to them

What are open-ended questions?

Questions that cannot be answered with yes, no,
or other one word answers

Try thinking of open questions as *topics we are inviting people to discuss*:

Could you please tell me more about your last place – where was it, how long did you live there, and what you liked about it?

We can learn so much when they just share – including how they felt about it

Gives us opportunities to express empathy

Asking open-ended questions (HINT – think Who, What, Where, When)

Come up with open-ended questions based on these:

1. Where did you sleep last night?
2. Are you married?
3. Do you have children?
4. Are you working?
5. Do you have any family support?
6. Do you have any hobbies?



Causes of Homelessness

What Causes Homelessness?

 + x = Homelessness

 + X = Homelessness for
Crisis event Poverty an individual or family.
Systemic Racism
Lack of universal healthcare
Criminal justice inequities
Foster Care Involvement

Differences in *rates* of homelessness

NAEH bases the rate of homelessness out of 10,000 people. The national average is 18.

Ohio	Texas	Nevada	California	New York
7	7	27	44	47

What explains these differences in rates in homelessness?

HOUSING COSTS

- *No other variable explains the differences
- Shortage of available units drives up prices
- Geography plays a role – coasts, mountains, deserts

**Homelessness is a Housing Problem, Colburn and Aldern*



Steps & Outcomes

Five Steps in HPS

1. Introductions
2. Active & Empathetic Listening
3. Exploring Strengths, Networks, and Skills
4. Short and/or Long Term Housing Options
5. Next Steps and Follow-up

Four Housing Options in HPS

- A. Doubled Up, Couch Surfing
- B. Out-of-Town Family Reunification
- C. Return to a Rental, Shared Housing or other Permanent Housing
- D. New Unit / First Month Rent and Deposit



End of Day One



Day 2: HPS Steps, Housing Options, & Practice

Case Reflection – we will use later today

- Think of a current or recent case where there might be a possible HPS / diversion housing opportunity
- On the half sheets of paper jot down a few bullet points, ie:
- Family size
- Recent place they have stayed
- History of own housing
- Income or Income History
- Anything else relevant



1. Introductions

What to include in a housing focused introduction?

- Are there basic needs that if not met get in the way of having a productive conversation?
- Expectations – of staff and clients
- Focus is on housing, but we note other needs, and help clients figure out resources for them

Pair off and practicing your introductions.

Note the positive things the other said to you.



2. Active & Empathetic Listening

A *Conversation*, not an Assessment

- We are seeking to connect, understand and begin to partner with clients
- Later, we may need to record specific types of information (income, family names and birthdates, etc)
- But our focus here is on active and empathetic listening

Active Listening

- Lets the speaker know they are being heard
- Helps clarify the speakers' story (trauma-informed)
- Includes appropriate eye contact & open body language
- Observe the speakers' body language and tone of voice
- Paraphrasing is key – repeating back what we have heard in our own words
- Summarize main points, goals, needs

Empathetic Listening

- Builds on Active Listening
- Emotion Naming
- Normalizing
- Validating
- Tone of voice and eye contact is vital – *feeling with*

Problem Solving Conversation

Do we need to take notes as we listen?

- Conversation, **NOT** a transaction
- Trust your skills – by active listening, paraphrasing, and summarizing you are reinforcing what you heard
- Help the client identify what's important
- Ask permission to jot down important information
- If needed, think of using bullet points as a way to help you paraphrase

Seek to fully understand

- **Their housing history**

- What did their housing look like most recently, as well as over the past several years
- Did they live alone? Roommates? Family?
- What part of town? Did previous housing work for them?

- **Income/Income history**

- Source
- Amount
- Type

Strength-Based Questions

- How long have you been dealing with this?
- What options are you considering?
- What is your goal? How would your life be better if you achieved this?
- Do you know others who have faced a similar situation?
- What helped them? Which of those approaches speak to you?

Getting Clearer Exercise (slide 1 of 3)

Take a few moments to think of a something you are experiencing where you are:

- unclear, or
- not certain of your next steps, or
- just something you're just struggling with
- a decision that you're trying to make

Getting Clearer Exercise (slide 2 of 3)

- In a moment you will pair off with the person you introduced earlier
- You will alternate being speaker and listener – take your time. We will allow 25 minutes for the entire exercise
- As the speaker just share what you are concerned about, or the decision you are trying to make

Getting Clearer (slide 3 of 3)

When you are the **listener**

Help the speaker think through their situation:

- Good, natural body language
- Paraphrase the main points
- Express empathy, make connection
- We are not role-playing – they are not a client
- Ask open-ended and
- Strength-based questions (previous slide)
- Don't give answers – help them discover option and think it through
- **Then switch roles**



3. Exploring Strengths, Networks, & Skills

Looking to Previous Housing and Income

- What has worked before is often a good indicator of what may succeed again
- It's a reminder to spend time exploring with the client how they were able to
 - Find and maintain housing before
 - Find and maintain income previously
 - What are their housing and income networks?
 - What hard and soft skills do they have?

3. Strengths & Supports Exploration

- Consider the persons current and past housing/income history; and
- Whether every option is **safe and appropriate**
- Strengths and resources
- Autonomy; and
- Ability to choose and create solutions

Remember *Housing First* – once they are housed safely they can better explore new skills.

Strength-Based Questions

- Who are your friends, allies? Who do you consider family?
- What were things like for you when things were going better?
- What have you done to be able to avoid shelter in the past few months?
- When have you been a support to others?

Mind Mapping

First together with Tanesha's case, then in groups with a new case we will explore client's strengths, skills and connections.

Steps in Mind Mapping – White board or Flip Chart

1. What triggered their housing crisis?
2. Is addressing this key to resolving their housing situation now? If not, identify what is
3. Support the client in identifying as many skills, strengths and networks as they can
4. Step back and observe with client – given all these options, what do you want to do next?
5. *Ask is there anything we can do to support your plan?*
6. Offer resources (referrals, bus passes, first months rent, etc.)

Strength-based work

- Parents and 2 kids found by outreach team living in their car
- One parent is still working at a help desk / IT support
- Other parent (the client) lost job working at Amazon fulfillment center
- Members of Planet Fitness – use their showers
- Left rented house 3 months ago after their savings ran out

Strength-based Group Exercise

In groups, do the steps in the mind-mapping that we just did together. Choose one person in your group to represent the client (we are only doing this step).

*Explore these from the **client's point of view**,
as if they are in the room with us.*

This is an exercise in **client strengths**,
not our knowledge of community resources.



Break



Shared Housing (SH)

What do we mean by Shared Housing (or Shared Living)?

- Roommates
- Partners, Significant Others, Spouses
- Other Family Members

Ex:

- Two bedroom is shared by three people:
- One bedroom is a couple
- Second bedroom is a friend of the couple

Shared Living – Sacramento County, FMV

- One bedroom for \$1777
- Two bedroom for \$2206
- Three bedroom for \$2992

Per person in a one bedroom vs 2 vs 3 bedroom

1. \$1777
2. \$1103
3. \$997

How many of our clients have ever been able to save for emergencies?

It's expensive to be poor – predatory lending like payday loans or car title loans, @ 400% annual interest

Cost savings of a 2 Bedroom vs a 1 Bedroom: \$674 Savings a Month

$\$674 \times 12 = \8088 a year savings

And of a 3 Bedroom vs 1: \$780 Savings a Month

$\$573 \times 12 = \9360 a year savings

**These do NOT include utilities --
we're just calculating rent price differences**

2024-2025 Fair Market Value (FMV)

City	Studio	1 BDR	2 BDR	3 BDR
OKC	\$716	746	927	1239
Detroit	786	909	1162	1469
Las Vegas	1316	1476	1750	2452
Sacramento	1679	1777	2206	2992
San Diego	2145	2328	2881	3852

Formal Shared Housing (House Mates)

- Formal Shared Housing is a program ran by a housing provider. May include:
 - House mate matching
 - Property owner recruitment and engagement
 - Master leasing by the housing agency
 - Separate leases – we use the term **house mates** for this situation
 - Case managers may stay engaged after placement

Informal Shared Housing (Roommates)

- People can of course also just room with friends, family or significant others
- When there is one lease, we use the term **roommates**
- There will be more options, compared to formalized SH
- Less protection for our client – if one person fails to pay rent, they may both face eviction

How we talk about Shared Housing (SH) Matters

- We are not singling them out for shared living because of their housing crisis. MOST people live with others
- A great time to practice OPEN ENDED questions:
 - Who have you previously lived with that you got a long with? Please tell me more about that....
 - Who in your circle do you think might benefit from being house mates with you?
 - If you could save extra money each month, what would you most want to use it for? What kind of emergency savings would you like?

Client Choice and Shared Housing

- Supporting clients in identifying as many options as possible, and
- Assisting them in weighing and considering their choices is a key aspect of TIC, Trauma Informed Care
- We are helping them take more control over their lives, talk about what is important to them and their families and make choices that help achieve these things
- How might SH assist in this?

What goals do you hear from your clients?

- Continued education, including certifications
- Safer neighborhood
- Better schools for their children
- Being closer to work and school
- An affordable one-bedroom is generally the most difficult to find, but
- Lowering their cost per bedroom opens up new neighborhoods, and allows them money for schools, or saves time by being closer to work

Practicing Normalizing Shared Housing

- **Normalizing** (with emotion naming and validating) are important components of Empathy
- *Many others we work with us up front tell us they want their own place*
- *We've also had lots of folks tell us that the choices for one bedrooms are slim -- and expensive*
- *Many of our clients who tried living with others – friends, family or those through an agency match – allow them to afford to do more things. And they often become friends and enjoy not always being alone.*



Step 4. Housing Options



A. Doubled Up/Couch Surfing

A. Back to a Doubled-Up Household

- Also called couch surfing, these may be the best option for those who do not have others options
- Can be temporary or permanent
- Always keep in mind safety – for host family and our clients
- How can this be a stepping stone for our client? A mid-term place for them to stay as they pursue CNA, CDL or other certificate?
- Often the only choice for those without housing history or work/income

How to make Doubled-Up Situations More Manageable

- Contributing to household supplies, food, etc.
- If you're home all day, help with chores/cooking
- Give the person you're staying with some quiet time when they get home at the end of the day (i.e. go for a walk, go to your room)
- Don't let tiny frustrations build up
- Explain realities of shelter life for your community...
- Explain that entering shelter is not an automatic entry into RRH



B. Out of Town Reunification

B. Out of Town Placement

- Often people become stranded when they come to town with a significant other and the relationship ends
- Or they come to your town expecting better jobs, benefits or cheaper housing
- When they turn to homeless services, they don't have much of a support system here, but do have supports in other communities
- Offering to help them relocate *home* is a quick, inexpensive and often successful diversion

B. A safe, out-of-town placement

What are the steps necessary for this to be successful?

1. What is needed from the HOST family?
2. Why might the CLIENT want this options?
3. What DETAILS & LOGISTICS need to be covered?
4. Look for hosts to say they can stay permanently or “until they are back on their feet” – minimum 30 days
5. Good for clients without strong income or income history and
6. Those who haven’t rented successfully before



C. Return to Rental, Shared Housing, or other Permanent Housing

C. Stopping an evictions; keeping someone where they are

Often seen during *prevention* work, we may still encounter cases where clients do in fact have a safe (temporary or permanent) place they can stay.

They may have left due to:

- Not understanding the eviction process
- Power imbalance in eviction proceedings
- Avoidance of conflict with roommates and family
- Seeing moving out as inevitable, and wants to avoid eviction or other negative consequences of delaying



D. New Unit/ First Months Rent or Deposit

D. First Month's Rent and/or Deposit

Optimally, this is combined with a Shorter-term Housing Option

1. What are the steps needed in your agency for this?
2. Under what circumstances is this the best option?
3. What concerns and issues need to be addressed?

To help people move back with family...

- The Los Angeles model:
- After hearing that someone has successfully lived with family (as they define it) previously
- \$500 a month for up to two months is offered to the host for an individual and \$900 if they have children
- After 12 months, 90% had not reentered HMIS
- Puts cash into struggling households AND houses our client

Step 4: When there are obstacles...

- Listen, empathy – NAMI exercise example
- When the client is getting close, but obstacles keep popping up, consider asking this question,
What would it take for you to be able to (live with your friend, sign a lease, etc)?
- Wording it this way helps the client see a positive outcome, as well as name the real barriers that exist.



5. Follow Up and Next Steps

Step 5: Follow-up and Next Steps

We are partnering with our clients. Clarify:

Things **they** are going to do:

- Do they have any questions, or
- Need anything (bus passes, phone #s, addresses) to do this?

Things **we** are going to do:

- Only promise what you we do – i.e. we can reach out and ask about a resource, we cannot guarantee if it will be available
- Build trust by under-promising and over-delivering

Step 5: Next Steps and Follow-up

- Clarify things the client as well as staff agree to do
- Don't over-promise. Set realistic time goals
- Clarify referrals
- Do they prefer a print out, text or email?
- At the end, summarize the progress made as well as next steps

When options don't seem to make sense....

- How can we help them slow down, and think through their choices?
- See ourselves as sitting next to them, as we look at the options together
- Reality test, don't challenge

Reality testing decisions:

Sample Questions:

- What would this housing option look like to you?
- What do you think the timeline would be?
- Have you done something like this before? What worked and what didn't?
- Any other options you can think of or consider?
- What do you think you'll need to make this happen? What resources?
- What if this doesn't work out as you hope? Do you want to talk about a back-up plan?

Case Reflection

- Get out your case notes on a case you think could be housed quickly through HPS
- Note especially the housing and income history
- Decide which of the 4 housing outcomes best fits the needs of the client
- Post it on that flip chart

**Keep in mind the LA Model and
Shared Housing**



Lunch. Practice

Review: Five Steps in HPS

1. Introductions
2. Active & Empathetic Listening
3. Exploring Strengths, Networks, and Skills
4. Short and/or Long Term Housing Options
5. Next Steps and Follow-up

Reminder:

Think GENERATING OPTIONS
instead of providing answers or solutions

Four Housing Options in HPS

- A. Doubled Up, Couch Surfing
- B. Out-of-Town Family Reunification
- C. Return to a Rental, Shared Housing or other Permanent Housing
- D. New Unit / First Month Rent and Deposit

Remember that Shared Housing and the
LA Model can help

Please scan this image
for a post training
survey. Thank you!

HPS Post Training Survey

