#### How Housing First Can Help Prevent and End Chronic Homelessness



Tracy Flaherty-Willmott Associate Director A band of merry misfits hell-bent on ending chronic homelessness, promoting social justice and living our values.

4 member team led by lain De Jong + 5 bench players

Work takes us from Hawaii to Rhode Island, Minnesota to Texas - as well as Canada, and Australia.

In a typical year we will work with several hundred communities on social change, practice, and policy.

Creators of the SPDAT



Housing Stabilization





## The Truth About Homelessness

#### • It is a VERY rare occurrence.

- In just about every North American community it represents less than 1% of the total population.
- It represents only a small fraction of people experiencing economic poverty.
- It represents a tiny percentage of people with a substance use disorder or mental illness.



## **Homelessness is Misunderstood & It Impacts Practice** 43 Million people living in poverty, I be homeless on any given night. e programs only assist 5 Million on in the Unit nous wiencar niness. Only 42%

counseling.



3% of the population uses other illicit drugs. 88% receive no treatment or counseling.













- Evidence is when there are facts that make an approach or belief true.
   Opinion may or may not be aligned to evidence.
- Cognitive dissonance occurs when opinions over-ride evidence and sees an alternate approach as being true when there is not evidence to support it.
- Common cognitive dissonance examples in ending homelessness:
- · A belief that all types of homelessness can be ended or prevented;
- A belief that local conditions are so unique that proven practices will not apply locally;
- A belief that anything other than housing will end homelessness;
- Moral beliefs about behavior over-ride what study shows.

#### Values & Beliefs

- Our own values and beliefs influence our practice.
- We are wired to have an **emotional response** to information before a logical response.



## Housing do housing & homelessness programs exist?

- Divert people away from the homeless service delivery system
- Provide a rapid response to those that require an intervention through progressive engagement
- Put an end to chronic and episodic homelessness
- Ensure emergency/crisis responses function relative to their original intent (short-term, infrequent)
- Focus on the only know solution to homelessness – housing!



# Why do homeless programs and services exist?

- Substance use can impact housing. But homeless programs are not substance use recovery programs.
- Life skills can impact housing. But homeless programs are not life skills training programs.
- Mental wellness can impact housing. But homeless programs are not psychiatric programs.

# Why do homeless programs and services exist?

- Kids can impact housing. But homeless programs are not parenting programs.
- Physical health can impact housing. But homeless programs are not health programs.
- Lack of employment can impact housing. But homeless programs are not employment programs.
- Budgeting can impact housing. But homeless
  programs are not money management
  programs.



Homeless services exist to **end homelessness.** They don't **heal or fix** people.

#### They house people.





- Substance users need to achieve sobriety to be successful in housing.
- People with mental health issues need to take their meds and be connected to a psychiatrist to be successful in housing.
- People need to be "housing ready".
- · Chronically homeless people choose to be homeless.
- People need to hit "rock bottom" before they are ready to make important life changes.
- Shelters need a lot of programming to prepare people for success in housing.
- · Social control equals a social service.









## Housing First...

- As a *philosophy* it is the belief that homeless individuals should be assisted in accessing housing as quickly as possible with supports delivered in community.
- As an <u>intervention</u> it is the delivery of direct supports through Assertive Community Treatment or Intensive Case Management, intentionally working with those people that have most acute needs first.

#### Rapid Re-Housing...

- Is a support intervention that shares the same philosophy as Housing First.
- As an <u>intervention</u> it is the delivery of direct supports through Case Management, intentionally working with those people that have moderate acuity.

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#### Criteria of a Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing Intervention...

#### People do NOT have to...

☑ ...complete any *mandatory programming* prior to moving into housing

- ☑ …have a *source of income* prior to moving into housing
- ☑ ...be *sober* prior to moving into housing
- ☑ ...graduate from *transitional housing* to be considered for housing
- ...participate in mental health programming

#### Criteria of a Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing Intervention...

#### Supports are delivered...

- ☑ ...based upon *acuity levels* and presenting issues
- ☑...*in the person's home*, not an office
- ☑ ...according to an *INDIVIDUALIZED* service plan
- ☑ ...with no intention to increase stability, not "healing" or "fixing"
- ☑ Participants are *prioritized* for participation based upon acuity
- ☑ Every person supported in housing has a *crisis plan* and a *risk assessment* completed
- The work on other life goals occurs only after housing stability is well established

#### Criteria of a Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing Intervention...

#### If people lose their housing...

- ...they do NOT lose their supports
- ☑ ...re-housing them is an immediate priority
- ☑ ...they are *not punished* for making "mistakes" or losing their housing
- ☑ People exit the program once housing and life stability are achieved

#### Case workers...

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- I...do NOT act like crisis workers
- ☑ …have a caseload no more than 1:20 for Housing First and 1:35 for Rapid Re-Housing



















Making Enhancements to Improve Your Service/Practice HOW HOUSING FIRST CAN PREVENT & END HOMELESSNESS...

## Coordinated Access... in a Nutshell

How to get the right youth, single adult or family to the right intervention, in the right order, in the most objective and efficient manner possible.

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#### Why Should We Do Coordinated Entry?

- It is the missing ingredient to reaching functional zero in many communities.
- It is in the best interest of any person or family experiencing homelessness.
- It is the most efficient and effective way to use your existing resources while concurrently learning what you need to change, fix, stop doing, or add to your system of care.
- If you get CoC or ESG, funding it is required.

#### **Backbone Premises**

- Homeless and housing services are not always easy to figure out, especially if homeless for the first time.
- Most organizations work really hard to be exceptionally good at its work - but that doesn't mean everyone that comes to its door is a good fit.
- "Service shopping" is inefficient and ineffective for people in need and for service organizations.
- Helping a person/family get to the right intervention at the right time to end their homelessness is important.
- If a person/family can end their own homelessness they should be empowered to do so before intensive services are provided.
- Eligibility DOES NOT EQUAL entitlement, nor prioritization.

### Time is Ticking

CoC establishes or updates its coordinated entry process in full compliance with HUD requirements by January 23, 2018

CoC Program interim rule: 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8) HUD Coordinated Entry Notice 17-11: Section I.B

#### Screening Out

- A person or family <u>cannot</u> be screened out of the coordinated entry process for any of the following reasons:
  - too little or no income
  - active or a history of substance use
  - domestic violence history
  - resistance to receiving services
  - type of extent of disability services that may be required
  - history of evictions or poor credit
  - lease violations or no history of being a leaseholder
     criminal history
- do

#### Coordinated Entry is the Only Way to Access Housing

- Access to emergency shelter does <u>not</u> have to be prioritized.
- · Access to housing needs to be prioritized.
- There is <u>NO</u> way to access permanent housing other than through Coordinated Entry.

Does this reflect your current reality?



#### For Diversion to Work...

- Diversion IS a service. NOT the absence of service.
- Diversion should NEVER use assessment too far upstream.
- NO over-rides for diversion attempt.
- NOT assessing for assessment sake...NOT about creating waiting lists.



 Emergency shelters are a vital part of the process of ending homelessness
 Emergency shelters play an important role in a homelessness crisis response system
 The effectiveness of emergency shelter greatly impacts your system's performance















#### Key Components of Emergency Shelters In an Effective Crisis Response System

- ✓ Housing First approach
- ✓ Immediate and easy access
- ✓ Housing-focused services
- ✓ Rapid exits to permanent housing
- ✓ Measure outcomes to improve performance

Social Service Instead of Social Control

#### **RULES**

How can a shelter promote safety without creating unnecessary barriers to services and housing?

## **Reviewing the Rules**

- How does this activity/service get people into or hinder people from getting housing?
- How does this keep people safe?

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- Is this rule about controlling or changing behavior?
- Does this rule hinder people from getting housed quickly?

# Re-tooling the Rules The "Marvin" Rule



Which rules cause people to be kicked out the most?

 Decide which behaviors are a safety issue and which behaviors are a behavior management issue that was handled by asking the client to leave

Restrict "barring" or service restriction rules to: – Matters of violence (including sexual

- violence).
- Excessive damage to property.

Theft

The Solution to Homelessness is Housing

# HOUSING LOCATION AND LANDLORD NAVIGATION

### **How to Secure It**

- Strategically maximize available resources (TRA, TANF, CoC, ESG, etc.) for those that will need it the most
- Take a business approach:

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- Designated housing locator
- Attempting to make landlord more money
- Examine opportunities in under-performing parts of portfolio



# Why are landlord relationships important?

- · Lifeblood of our programs
- They are the ones who have what we need to end homelessness
- Expand choice and help us to enhance community integration
  - More housing opportunities = Less concentration

#### What do Housing Support Programs want from Landlords

- Units!
- Affordable Rents FMRs for PSH, less for RRH
- Reduced screening criteria
- Inspection-ready Pass HQS and/or Habitability Standards
- Partnership communication on tenancy issues and opportunity for support and

intervention

## What do Landlords Want?

• Money

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- No vacancies
- · No hassles/easy lease up
- Rent on time
- Lease compliance
- · Unit in good condition
- Prompt follow up when they have concerns

### Landlords Want Easy Lease Up

- · Simple forms
- Rent reasonableness
- · Answers to questions
- Move in fees

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 Quick turnaround/fast Housing Quality Standards/Habitability Standards

## **Define Your Role**

- A liaison; not a "mini-landlord"
- Will **check-in** on a monthly basis, including rent payment follow-up
- · How to contact, when and why
- Ensure landlord knows what info you can share and what is private
- Will work to mediate issues

#### **Choice, Not Placement**

- Participants actively engaged in articulating preferences and needs.
- Participants presented options to choose from; not placed in a unit.
- Case manager may have to present to the client the possibility of moving from the rural area to the more populated areas.

### **Triple A**

- Options prepared for participant based upon:
  - Affordability
  - Appropriateness
  - Actionable

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#### For Housing to Be Considered

- Must be in habitable condition
- · Standard tenancy agreement
  - Tenancy not linked to program participation
- Housing is "permanent"

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 Participant has *privacy* and *controls* access to unit

#### Range of Traditional Housing Options

- Scattered-site
- Congregate
- Roommate
- Single occupancy
- Homes/rooms
- Traditional apartments
- Shared housing options

#### **Other Housing Location Options**

- · Get creative:
  - Basement apartments
  - In-law suites over garages
- · Watch Craigslist
- Local newspapers
- · Word of mouth
- May have to move your client to a different area with more resources

**Support in the Housing Process** 

· No blind referrals

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- · Participant accompanied to all viewings
- Participant assisted with *lease signing*
- Participant assisted with *move-in* and building orientation

#### **Avoiding Saturation**

• Unless there are on-site 24/7 supports, no building shall have **more than 15%** of all units occupied with active participants (across all agencies providing housing supports) at one time.



- Housing Assistance Payment
  - 1<sup>st</sup> rent payment
  - Ongoing payment
  - Consistent (direct deposit)
  - communication
- Tenant Rent
  - Supportive service
  - Budget
  - Affordable
  - Payee

#### **Landlords Want Lease Compliance**

- Relationship
- Mediation
- Quick response
- Emergency numbers
- · Eviction prevention
- Avoid court

#### Landlords Want their Unit Kept in Good Shape • Dual benefit – HQS Inspection • Decent, safe, sanitary • Repairs

Educate the tenant

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- Keep the landlord informed
- Funds for Damages and Vacancy Loss

The Journey to Stability HOUSING STABILIZATION

## Housing IS Harm Reduction

- · Housing as a right, not a reward
- · Multiple studies have shown once people are housed:
  - Reduced substance use
  - Better health outcomes
  - Improved mental wellness
  - Better employment outcomes
  - Fewer interactions with emergency services

#### Housing First <u>IS</u> Trauma Informed

- In the journey to housing stability, the goal is to return a sense of control and autonomy to the participant.
- Emphasis is on skill building and services are strength based.
- There is a focus on prevention of further trauma – safety planning & homelessness proofing.















## The Housing Support/Case Manager

 A housing-based case manager is an organized and trained professional that acts as a positive change agent in holistically assisting individuals/ families in achieving and maintaining housing, while concurrently promoting awareness and teaching strategies that reduce the likelihood of a return to homelessness in the future.

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### **Service Requirements**

- Professional, trained staff
- NOT Monday to Friday, 9-5
- Face to face interaction with individuals in their homes
- Documented, planned, sequential, and strategic
- Ensures fidelity to practice

## **Service Requirements**

- 15-20 clients per worker in Housing First; 25-35 in Rapid Re-Housing
- Time spent with each client guided by acuity level
- The # of clients seen per day impacted by geography
- Structured case planning
- · Professional boundaries

#### **Things Case Management is NOT**

- A crisis response; nor is it crisis driven.
- Doing things **for** clients. It is doing things **with** them.
- A dependent relationship
- · Without conflict
- Friendship
- A destination. It is a process.
- Perfect

#### The Support Worker/Case Manager

- Promotes hope through a future orientation
- Realizes that the person is a person, NOT a case
- Appreciates that the person they are working with has their own values and own life. This makes them no better nor worse- just different
- Practices without judgement... people are not considered "non-compliant" or "bad"
- · Expresses empathy, not sympathy

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#### The Worker...

- Accepts that reducing harm is a practical and necessary pursuit
- Promotes positive change
- Is assertive and persistent as necessary
- Does NOT sacrifice the important for the urgent



### **Requirements**

- In order to receive the service, an individual/ family MUST:
  - Provide informed consent to participate
  - Agree to case management service for the duration of their time in the program
  - Accept home visits
  - Want to develop a case plan and work on goals that will improve housing stability
  - Provide assurance that they will pay their rent on time and in full

### **The Responsible Tenant Discussion**

- Occurs after being screened in, during the housing search, at move-in and just before the end of the first month in housing.
- · Look for the following details:
  - Payment of rent on time and in full each month
  - Not disturbing others in the building or community
- Following the terms of the lease
- Engaging appropriately with landlord or superintendent
- Taking care of their unit



#### **Good Preparatory Practices**

- Only do move-ins on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays
- Usually only one move-in per daymaximum of 2!
- **Discuss/role play** the move-in before it happens
- Book a time to meet- and then be early
- Pick out furniture in advance

### On the Day of the Move-In

- Do a walk-through. Exude positivity.
- Have your cleaning kit ready and roll up your sleeves WITH your participant
- Arrange for furniture & basic supplies to be delivered
- Provide orientation to building & community
- Review fire safety plan and safe use of appliances
- Make sure lock and keys work; discuss strategies for lost keys
- Encourage meeting neighbours

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#### **Before You Leave...**

- Ask them the 3 things they think may go wrong in the first few days and what they will do if those things happen so that they stay in their place
- · Ensure next visit is scheduled within two days

## It has been proven that...

- Interest diminishes if first engagement is driven by crisis rather than voluntary interest.
- Prompt follow through when there is expressed interest is important.
- Random control trials (Katz et al, 2001) show follow-up visits soon after move-in decreases drop-out and future refusal rates.
- Active rather than passive approaches are necessary if a participant begins to disengage or misses visits

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#### Connecting with Purpose - Objective-Based Approaches

- "Hi [name], it's good to see you today and we have [xx] minutes for our visit. As we talked about on [date of last visit] we agreed that we would talk about:
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.

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• At the end of dealing with those objectives for today we will select some objectives for our next visit."



**Getting Started: Home** 

**Visits** 

## What is Going On?

- The "abnormal" is "normal" ... ups and downs are common
- Range of emotions and actions can be misperceived as not wanting housing with support or trying to "sabotage" housing with support
- Second-guessing the decision to participate in the program is common

#### Your Approach & Attitude

- Professional
- Don't freak out
- Don't judge
- Exude positivity
- Harness structure
- Do what you say you will do when you say you will do it
- Respectfully challenge, while avoiding

"punishment"

• Don't put the cart in front of the horse



Housin	g Stability is the Primary Objective
Relationships	Who is allowed in your apartment and who needs to stay out? Who is most likely going to impact your housing stability and why? Who are their neighbors? What steps do they feel they need to take so that other people are not the reason they lose/get kicked out of their place?
Basic Needs	How can they turn their apartment into a home? Do they need supplies to cook, clean, bathe, stay clothed, etc.? Are they able to achieve food security on a limited budget?
Supports	Do they understand the role of the landlord/superintendent? Do they understand your role and what it entails? Are there any pre-existing supports that they need to maintain contact with at this time?
Safety	Is there anybody in their life that poses a safety risk? What will they do about it? What strategy will they use to protect their keys? Do they want/need to keep their address confidential? Do they understand the fire safety plan? Do they know how to safely operate all appliances?



#### Promoting Home Making – Examples...

- Provide them a **plant**
- Give them three picture frames
- · Get sticky putty to put posters on the wall
- Go grocery shopping and make a stew or chili and freeze individual portions
- · Activities to address boredom...
  - Cards, art supplies, books, TV, laptop, etc.

#### Calendar

- Fridge magnets
- Dry-erase marker

#### **5 Necessary Tasks in the First Month**

- 1. Crisis Plan
- 2. Budget

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- 3. First Case Plan
- 4. Risk Assessment
- 5. Personal Guest Policy

#### **1. Crisis Plan**

Not optional

- Completed within the first four weeks
- · Updated again as necessary
- · Final update is at program exit
- May be included as part of **WRAP** or **DREEM** if appropriate



### 2. Budget

- Reinforcing basic concepts
- · Reflection leads to better information
- Does NOT have to be perfect

 Important to raise awareness and identify risks, harms, opportunity to reduce harm, NOT pass judgement on how people spend or access money

#### **Honest Monthly Budget**

Things that I have to spend money on:	Formal ways I get money:		
Rent	Job		
Utilities	General Welfare		
Food	Disability		
Arrears	Pension		
Repairs	Inheritance		
TOTAL	TOTAL		

Other money that comes in	goes toward:	Informal ways I get money:	
Child Support		Binning/Bottle Collecting	
Debts		Odd Jobs	
Cigarettes		Treasure Hunting	
Coffee		Baby Sitting	
Alcohol		Sex Work	
Other Drugs		Drug Running/ Dealing	
Health Stuff		Day Labour	
Household Supplies		Theft/ Pawning	
Girlfriend/Boyfriend		Friends/Family	
Kids		Selling Prescription	
Other Friends		Gambling	
Cable		Medical Research	
Socializing/Partying/Night Out		Panhandling	
Sex		Selling Crafts	
Bus		Busking/Street Entertainment	
Taxis		Honorariums	
Gambling		Non-Medical Research	
Legal Stuff/Fines		Other	
Other Bills		ouler	
TOTAL		TOTAL	

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### **3. First Case Plan**

- First time to demonstrate SMART goalsetting
- No more than 3 areas of attention

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• All 3 areas related to housing stability

### 4. Risk Assessment

- Should be completed within *two weeks* of being housed
- By identifying risks, the intent is to define the **people**, **processes**, **and/or technology** that can help minimize the risk, not prevent service
- Risk assessments should be updated periodically

#### Brief Risk Assessment

#### In the last year:

	Yes	No	Declined
Have you been charged with a violent offence, including sexual assault or domestic violence?			
Have you attended an anger management class because someone like a judge told you that you must do so?			
Has a court ordered you to take medication or follow through on a treatment order for your mental health?			
Have you thought about, planned, or attempted to end your life?			
Have you overdosed on alcohol or other drugs to the point where you required medical attention?			
Have you had falls, spells, blacked out or had seizures?			
Have you acquired a brain injury?			
Have you been diagnosed with a chronic health condition or been unable to do what you are supposed to for an existing chronic health condition?			
Have you been to the emergency room of the hospital 4 or more times?			
Have you been incarcerated 4 or more nights?			

	Yes	No	Declined
Plan on harming another person or yourself?			
Have an existing chronic health condition that you are not getting health care for?			
Have an existing serious mental health condition that you are not getting care for?			
Avoid getting help when you are sick or injured?			
Engage in higher risk behaviour like sharing needles, having sex with people you don't know, or anything like that?			
Use alcohol or other drugs to the point of complete intoxication two or more times per week?			
Have any warrants for your arrest?			
Have anybody that wants to harm you or seek revenge from you vlo- lently, which may include people that believe you have harmed them or to whom you owe money?			
Have difficulties concentrating or remembering things?			

#### **5. Personal Guest Policy**

- Intent is to help the client define who can visit, when, and who is responsible for the actions of guests
- · Can be turned into a fun project

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 Idea should be introduced during the housing search, discussed during move-in, and completed during the first two home visits





 If people want to smoke drugs in your apartment, how will you make sure that doesn't result in you getting evicted?

#### **Personal Guest Policy**

- Types of questions you may ask to help form the guest policy:
  - If a buddy wants to "borrow" your apartment for a couple of hours to have a date with his girlfriend, is that okay with you?
  - If people get in a fight- including a fight with you- how will you respond to that and not lose your housing?
  - Can people eat your food or use your things?
- What can you do to make sure there are no **noise complaints?**