Housing Problem-Solving Foundations

5/31/2023

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Lead Homeless Services Specialist

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Coordinated Entry 2.0 Training Schedule

Date	Time	Training	Presenters
5/18/2023	10 AM to noon	Introduction to Coordinated Entry 2.0	Gordon Levine Ryan Burger
5/31/2023	10 AM to noon	Housing Problem-Solving Foundations	Gordon Levine Kira Zylstra
6/15/2023	10 AM to noon	Housing Problem-Solving for Survivors of Domestic Violence	Gordon Levine Maria Williams (LCADV)
6/29/2023	10 AM to noon	HMIS in Coordinated Entry 2.0	Greg Barchuk Gwen Beebe Ryan Burger
7/27/2023	10 AM to noon	Implementing Coordinated Entry 2.0 (Region 1)	Gordon Levine Ryan Burger
7/27/2023	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Implementing Coordinated Entry 2.0 (Region 2)	Ryan Burger Gordon Levine
7/28/2023	10 AM to noon	Implementing Coordinated Entry 2.0 (Region 3)	Gordon Levine Ryan Burger
7/28/2023	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Implementing Coordinated Entry 2.0 (Region 4)	Ryan Burger Gordon Levine
8/10/2023	10 AM to noon	Implementing Case Conferencing (Region 1)	Gordon Levine Ben Cattell Noll
8/10/2023	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Implementing Case Conferencing (Region 2)	Ben Cattell Noll Gordon Levine
8/11/2023	10 AM to noon	Implementing Case Conferencing (Region 3)	Gordon Levine Ben Cattell Noll
8/11/2023	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Implementing Case Conferencing (Region 4)	Ben Cattell Noll Gordon Levine
8/24/2023	10 AM to noon	Implementing Housing Problem-Solving (Region 1)	Gordon Levine Ben Cattell Noll
8/24/2023	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Implementing Housing Problem-Solving (Region 2)	Ben Cattell Noll Gordon Levine
8/25/2023	10 AM to noon	Implementing Housing Problem-Solving (Region 3)	Gordon Levine Ben Cattell Noll
8/25/2023	1:30 to 3:30 PM	Implementing Housing Problem-Solving (Region 4)	Ben Cattell Noll Gordon Levine

Housing Problem–Solving Overview

What is Housing Problem-Solving?

Housing Problem-Solving is a person-centered, housing-focused <u>approach</u> to explore creative, safe, and cost-effective solutions to quickly resolve a housing crisis and <u>supports the effective implementation</u> of homelessness prevention, diversion, and rapid exit strategies.

Equity through Housing Problem-Solving (HPS)

The current homelessness system in every community has been dependent upon standardized assessments, screening, eligibility, and resource scarcity requiring prioritizations that are biased, are prone to discrimination, and perpetuate disparate outcomes. HPS, as a philosophy and approach, is not rooted in any of these historically marginalizing practices.

Instead, HPS is a fundamental approach for everyone that is not contingent upon the same standardized assessment used for other housing resources, screening, eligibility, or prioritization, can be implemented within existing programs and Coordinated Entry System (CES) functions, and does not require significant financial resources.

HPS centers on the belief that each individual has a potential pathway to stable housing yet to be discovered or resourced without the limitation of normal restrictions and lengthy policies, through HPS techniques like person-centered case management and mediation.
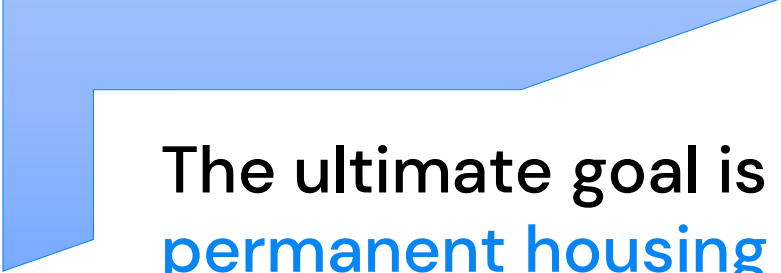
Why Housing Problem-Solving?

- Housing Problem-Solving **reduces the trauma of a deep assessment and prolonged housing instability/homelessness** by relying on client-centered, housing-focused, exploratory conversations that happen with everyone regardless of perceived or real vulnerabilities or barriers

- Housing Problem-Solving **advances equity** by not relying on standardized assessments, screening, eligibility, and prioritizations that are biased, prone to discrimination, and perpetuate disparate outcomes

- Because Housing Problem-Solving is **flexible**; not confined to a particular program type, it has the potential for significant impact and **increases in positive housing outcomes**

- Homeless assistance and housing resources are limited – not everyone will get long term RRH, PSH, or other housing subsidies. Adopting Housing Problem-Solving system-wide **expands housing options** and **preserves more intensive resources for those with no other options**

- **Expanding pathways to housing saves lives.**

What have we learned?

A 2022 study in Washington State analyzed the impact of Diversion services on housing outcomes for families state-wide. Results indicated that Diversion services are a worthwhile and racially equitable option that adds to the spectrum of housing services available to families in the state. More specifically, the study found:

- Among the sample with known exit status, **families who utilized Diversion services had higher odds of exit to permanent housing** compared to families who utilized a collection of other housing services, and

- Families who utilized Diversion were **no more or less likely to return to the system** compared to families who utilized other services

The ultimate goal is safe, stable permanent housing for all individuals; successful homeless response efforts explore all available routes to housing

Housing Problem-Solving (HPS) Strategies

HPS is an approach and a practice that involves strengths–based conversations to empower households and help them to remain in current housing or to identify alternative housing options. Services include the provision of supportive services and limited financial assistance as needed, to assist a household with remaining in current housing or with securing an alternative housing option either to avoid homelessness or to exit homelessness as quickly as possible.

This approach can be applied within different strategies depending on the households housing circumstances at the time of engagement:

Homelessness Prevention

- For people at risk of homelessness who currently have a safe place to stay but are at imminent risk of losing their housing
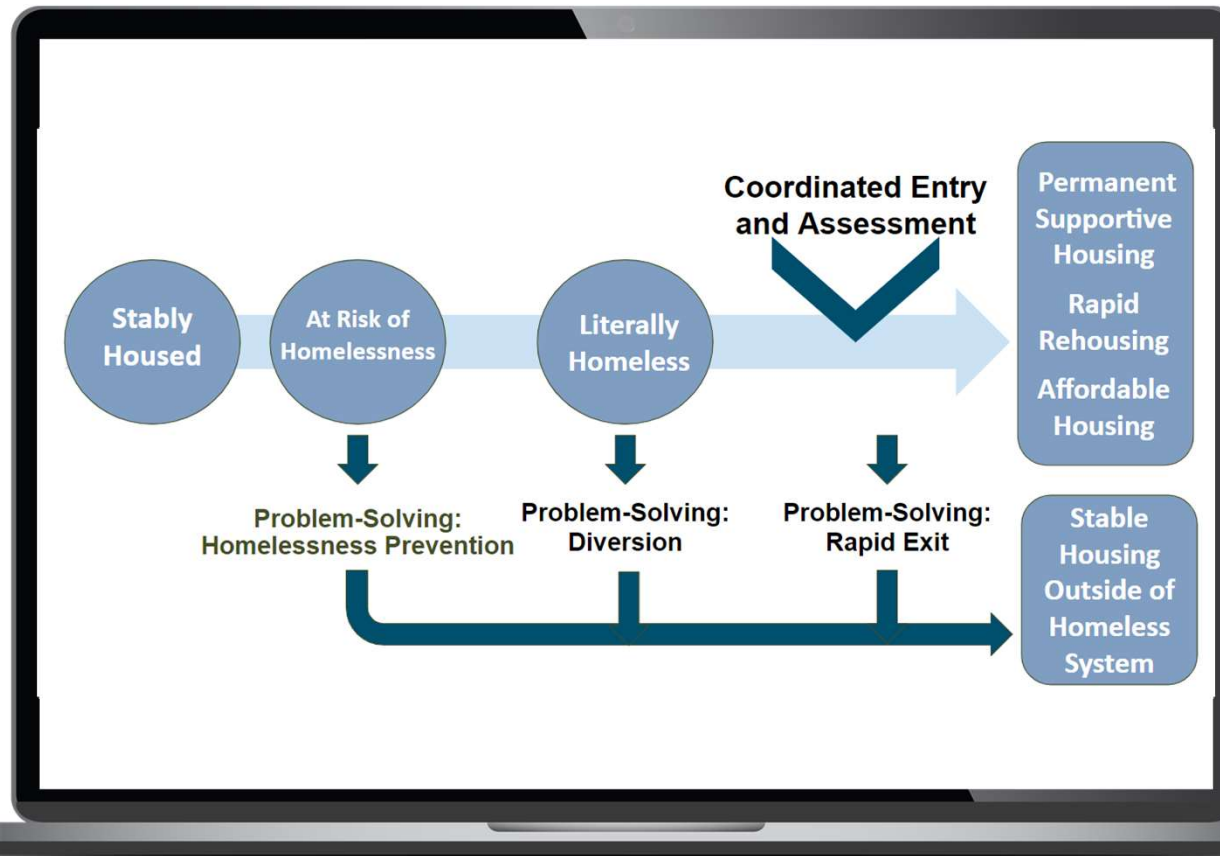
Diversion

- For people without safe housing tonight, at the "front door' of the homeless service system

Rapid Exit

- For people experiencing homelessness, sheltered or unsheltered, after their first system touch

System-Wide Housing Problem-Solving

There are multiple pathways to housing using HPS strategies at multiple points of engagement within the Homeless Response System

Pathways to Housing

- Paths to housing are **diverse** and **non-linear**
- Housing subsidies should not be **limited to coordinated entry**
- Housing problem-solving often requires **multiple attempts**

There are **many routes to housing**, and most of them are not coordinated entry referrals—or even housing subsidies

Be honest with participants: most communities do not have sufficient affordable housing or housing subsidies for every person experiencing homelessness, so the most common route back to housing—and the one most directly under a participant's control—is through **personal resources and support networks**
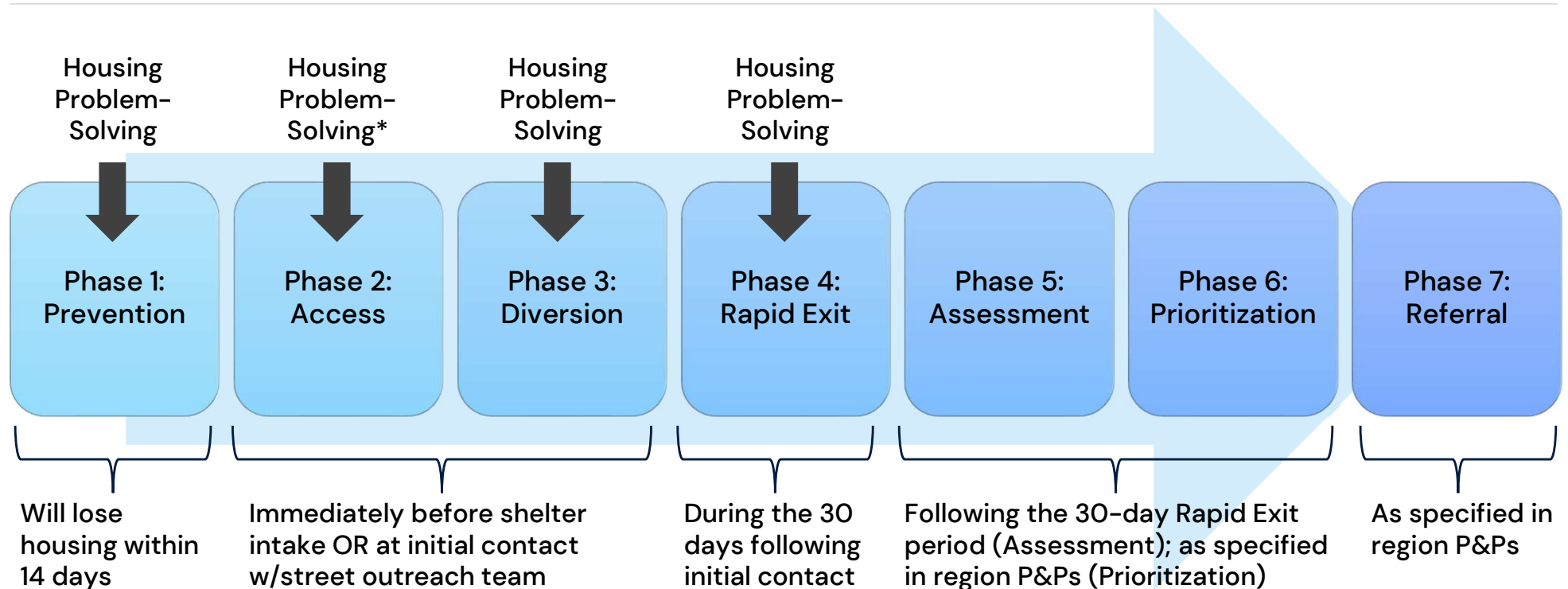
Housing problem-solving can take time to work; even so, it frequently offers **faster returns to housing than a subsidy** and can provide **significant system relief** in communities with very limited affordable housing and low subsidy availability

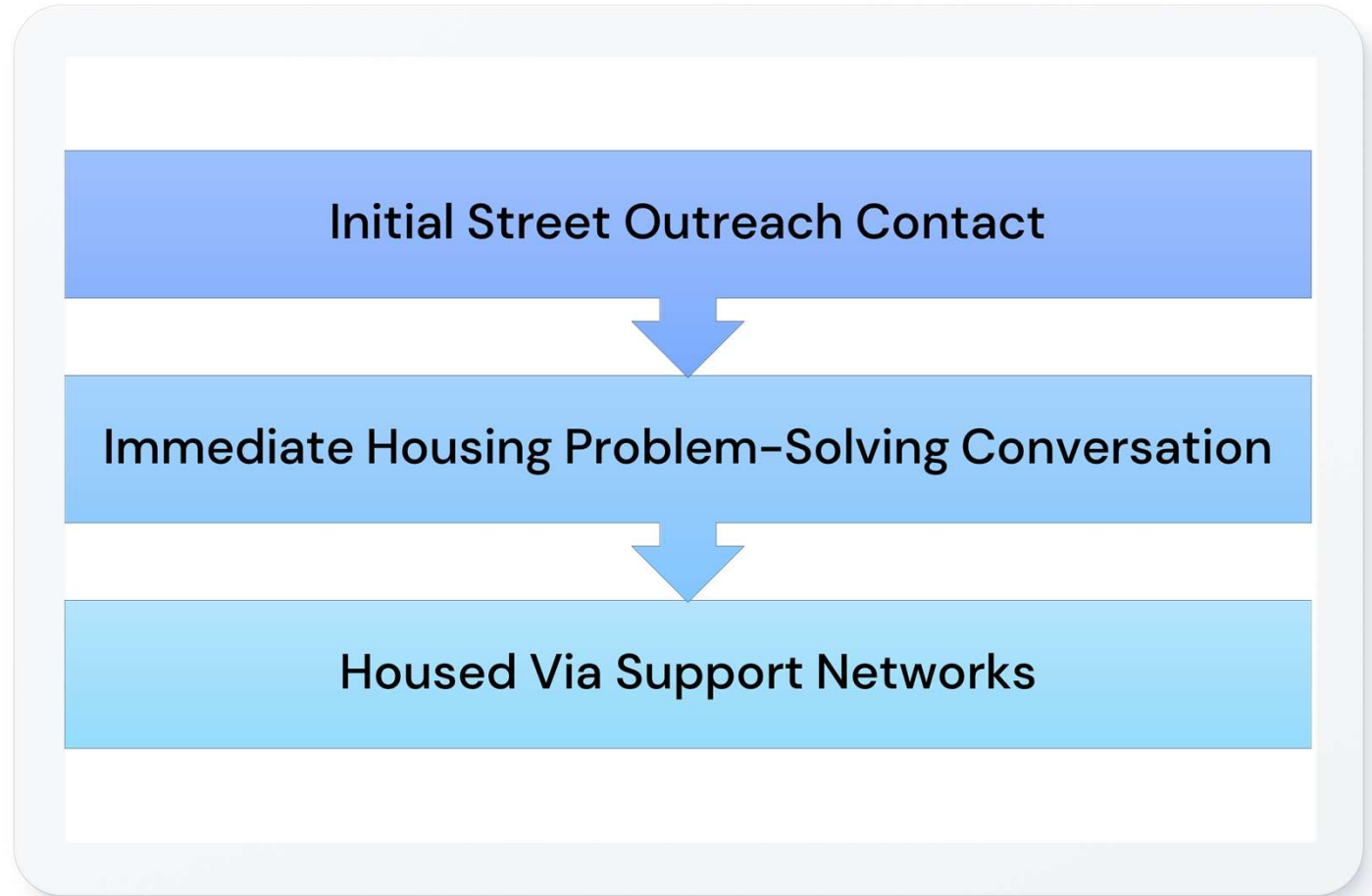# Coordinated Entry and Housing Problem-Solving

Coordinated Entry Flow and Housing Problem Solving

Coordinated entry is a human-centered process that focuses on delivering the lightest touch services required to return a given person to safe, stable, permanent housing. This redesign incorporates housing problem-solving as a primary strategy and delivers all services using a progressive engagement approach to preserve the CoC's highest acuity interventions for those who need them most.

Housing Problem-Solving	Housing Problem-Solving*	Housing Problem-Solving	Housing Problem-Solving			
Phase 1: Prevention	Phase 2: Access	Phase 3: Diversion	Phase 4: Rapid Exit	Phase 5: Assessment	Phase 6: Prioritization	Phase 7: Referral

Will lose housing within 14 days

Immediately before shelter intake OR at initial contact w/street outreach team

During the 30 days following initial contact

Following the 30-day Rapid Exit period (Assessment); as specified in region P&Ps (Prioritization)

As specified in region P&Ps

Pathways to Housing:

Immediate Housing Problem-Solving Conversations

Initial Street Outreach Contact

↓

Immediate Housing Problem-Solving Conversation

↓

Housed Via Support Networks

Pathways to Housing:

Ongoing Housing Problem–Solving Conversations

CES Access Point Contact

↓

Immediate Housing Problem-Solving Conversation

↓

Ongoing Housing Problem-Solving Conversations

↓

Housed Via Support Networks
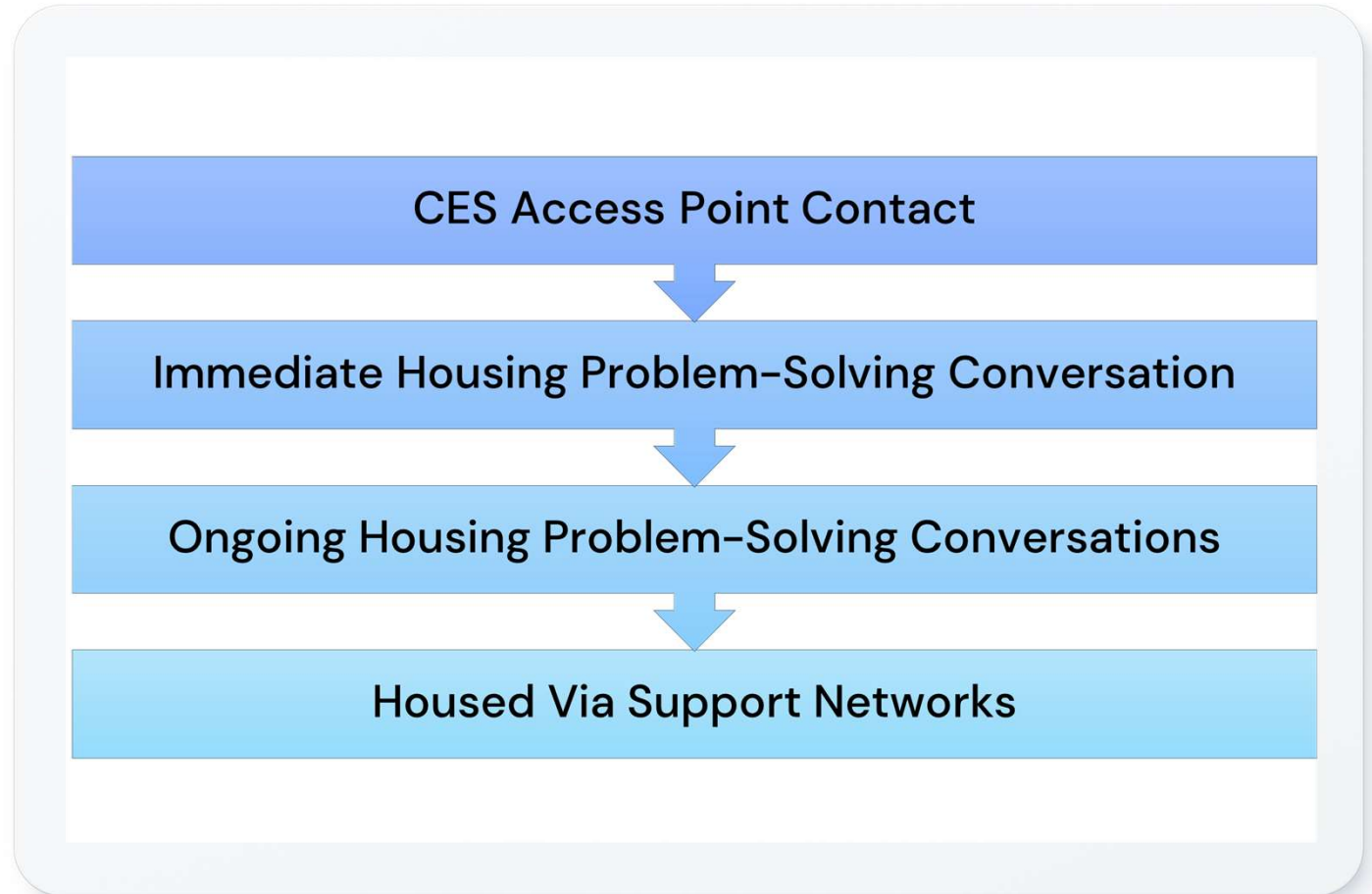
Pathways to Housing:

More complex route to housing through Housing Problem-Solving Conversations

Initial Street Outreach Contact

↓

Immediate Housing Problem-Solving Conversation

↓

Ongoing Housing Problem-Solving Conversations

↓

CES Assessment Conducted

↓

Prioritized for PSH/RRH

↓

Housing Option Emerges from Prior Housing Problem Solving Conversations Before a Referral Becomes Available

↓

Housed Via Support Networks
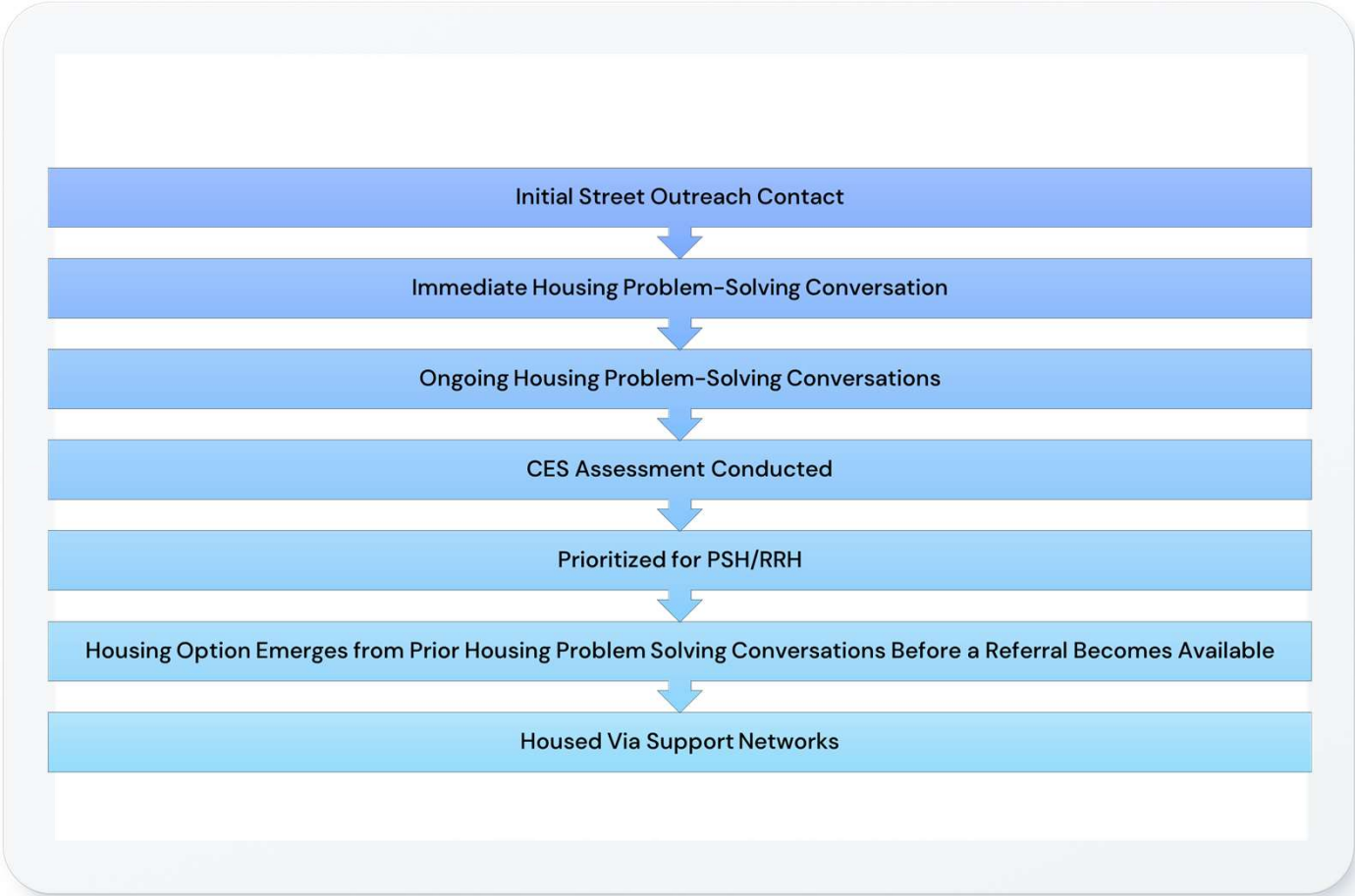
Best Practices for Housing Problem-Solving (HPS) and Coordinated Entry (CES)

HPS should be an approach adopted community-wide, both in formal CES access points and elsewhere

HPS conversations occur at first point of contact, which may be made before a formal access point

HPS conversations should happen before CES assessments are conducted as a first (and ongoing) step in a phased approach

HPS is not a checklist and assessments are not used to determine who is a "right fit" for HPS

HPS conversations happen with everyone, and do not require a referral

The Shift in Perspective

Not about who is "eligible" or a "good fit" for HPS...

- Rather, about what we can learn about the person that will help empower them to resolve the situation with our help.
- All people engaged in HPS – even most vulnerable may have alternatives

Not about completing a checklist or form...

- Rather, about listening deeply to find the possible silver lining that they may not be able to see.
- Phased "assessment" doesn't mean a checklist

Not about how much we can spend...

- Rather, about providing targeted assistance including our case management supports and other services
- Focusing on low-cost options to keep funds for higher need clients

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Not just *Adding* to the Conversation, but *Changing* it!

Without HPS	With HPS
Are you willing to enter shelter or receive a motel voucher?	What can we do to keep you from becoming or remaining homeless?
What programs are you eligible to enter and who has a bed?	What would resolve your current housing crisis?
Before we move on, we need to complete this Assessment	Before we start this assessment, can we talk a bit about your current housing situation to see if we can identify a safe alternative to entering shelter?
We'll need to add you to a waitlist	Let's do everything we can to support you finding a safe and stable place, even if that takes a little time

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Housing Problem-Solving in Practice

Housing Problem–Solving in Practice

Unscripted Video Reflections

When observing the staff person:

❑ What case management techniques did you see used?

❑ What did you notice about the case manager's approach?

When observing the participant:

❑ What did you notice about the individual's response to this approach?

❑ Where did you see her leaning in more to conversation and why do you think that might be?

Combining Core Activities, Key Skill Sets and Best Practices

HPS Activities

Case Management

Crisis Resolution

Family Reunification

Landlord Mediation

Housing Search/Navigation

Conflict Resolution

Transportation

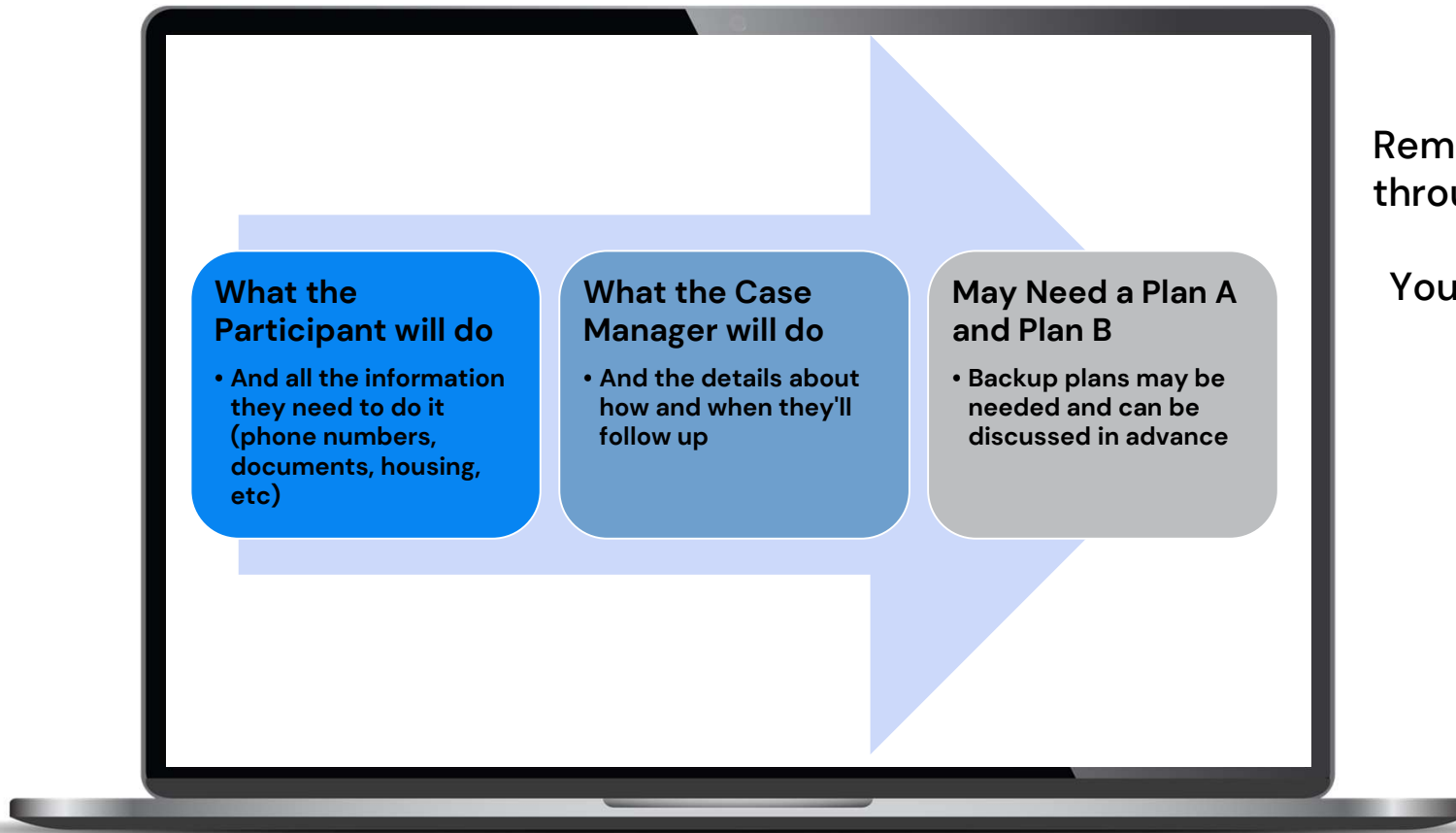Financial Assistance

HPS Skill Sets

Understanding and Recognition of Implicit Bias

Empathy & Deep Active Listening

Conflict Resolution Skills

Asking Open-Ended Questions

Knowledge of Available Resources

Able to Advocate in Support of Safe Alternative Solutions

Thinking "outside the box" for Possible Outcomes

Elicit Rather than Instill Ideas and Solutions

HPS Best Practices

Create a Comfortable, Safe Meeting Environment

Engage in Conversation rather than Complete a Checklist

Be Clear and Transparent in your Conversation

Listen without Judgment

Explore Strengths and Resources

Displace Open, Responsive Body Language

Normalize their Experience

Creating a Plan

What the Participant will do
- And all the information they need to do it (phone numbers, documents, housing, etc)

What the Case Manager will do
- And the details about how and when they'll follow up

May Need a Plan A and Plan B
- Backup plans may be needed and can be discussed in advance
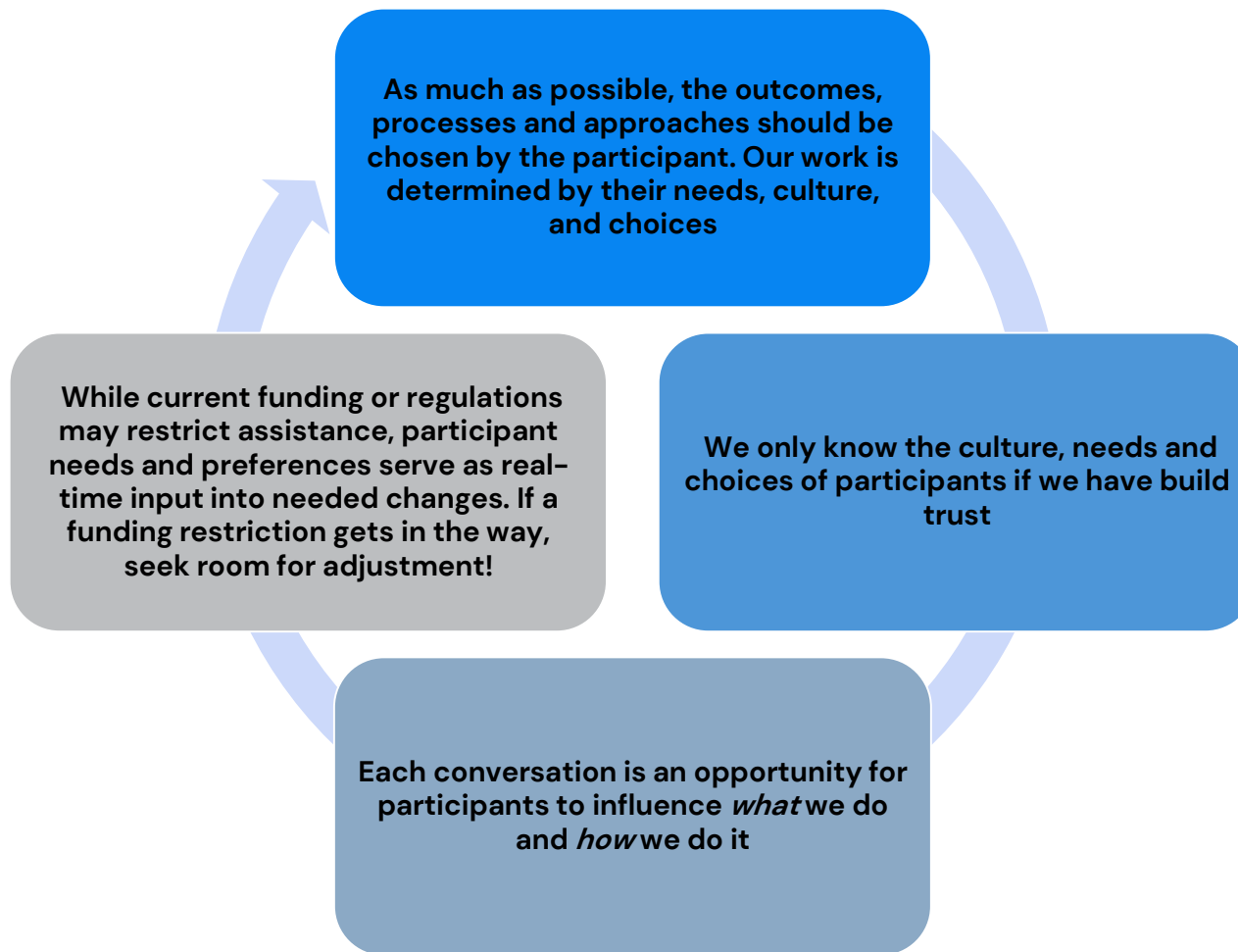
Remembering throughout...

You are not the expert, they are!

Housing Problem–Solving and Person–Centered Care

As much as possible, the outcomes, processes and approaches should be chosen by the participant. Our work is determined by their needs, culture, and choices

We only know the culture, needs and choices of participants if we have build trust

Each conversation is an opportunity for participants to influence *what* we do and *how* we do it

While current funding or regulations may restrict assistance, participant needs and preferences serve as real–time input into needed changes. If a funding restriction gets in the way, seek room for adjustment!

Further Considerations

Project-Level

Has your project already implemented HPS? Where does it live in your process?

What does your project need to successfully implement HPS?

Do you have an HPS champion? Could they also be a trainer?

Which of the foundational HPS questions/techniques are working for you? Which aren't yet working?

What is the easiest next step to implement HPS? The most challenging?

Region-Level

Is there a central HPS provider?

Who are your non-Federally-funded partners who need buy-in?

Are there local financial resources that could support HPS?

Who are your local HPS champions? Who are your skeptics?

What unique services exist locally that could support HPS approaches?

What is the easiest next step to implement HPS? The most challenging?

CoC-Level

Who is already doing HPS? Can they help train other agencies?

Where can HPS live in your system other than the Diversion/Rapid Exit stages of CES 2.0?

Which Federally funded projects could implement HPS to improve their outcomes right now?

What are the largest points of skepticism? What do you need to overcome it?

What is the easiest next step to implement HPS? The most challenging?

Q&A