

# → Housing Problem-Solving for Survivors of Domestic Violence

6/15/2023

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# CONTENT WARNING

Please be aware that, because this presentation focuses on serving survivors of domestic violence, both slides and discussion will touch on domestic violence, which may include topics such as sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and other forms of intimate partner violence and victimization.

This presentation's slides do not contain explicit imagery or language; however, the presenters are aware that content does not need to be explicit to be triggering. **Attendees are encouraged to take breaks, disengage, or request information in a different format as needed.**



# 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



# Agenda

# Agenda: Housing Problem-Solving for Survivors

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- General principles
  - What is domestic violence?
  - What is HPS?
  - General HPS principles
- HPS for survivors of domestic violence
  - Who is serving survivors?
  - Differences in HPS for survivors
  - Resource availability and connection with VSPs
- Person-centered case management
  - Why include this topic with HPS?
  - Defining progressive engagement
  - Non-coercive engagement
- Q&A



## General Principles

## What is Domestic Violence?

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Domestic violence can be characterized by many types of abuse. Any or all of these types of violence/abuse may occur in domestic violence situations.

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Stalking
- Sexual violence
- Financial abuse
- Verbal abuse

Source: White House: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-reauthorization-of-the-violence-against-women-act-vawa/>

# What is Housing Problem-Solving?

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



# Housing Problem-Solving: Working Definitions

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## Prevention

- When at risk of homelessness; for some programs like ESG-HP, requires imminent risk
- One or multiple sessions depending on participant needs and capacities

## Diversion

- At first system touch when experiencing or on the cusp tonight of experiencing literal homelessness
- Can occur at shelter or other sites
- One quick session

## Rapid Exit

- After first system touch
- Can occur at shelter or other sites
- One or multiple sessions depending on participant needs and capacities



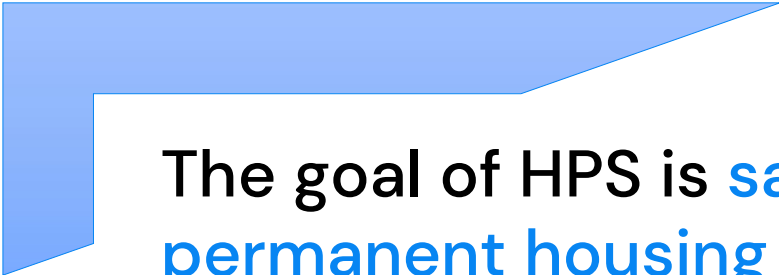
Discussion  
opportunity: who is  
currently doing HPS  
with **most or all** of their  
participants?

What about **some**  
participants?

# Why Housing Problem-Solving?

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- 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.**



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

# Safety Planning

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## Safety planning is:

- **Essential** to HPS for survivors
- A **process**, not a one-time event or checklist
- **Ongoing**—even after a survivor has obtained alternate or permanent housing

## Immediate safety planning

- **Listen** to the survivor; **ask** what they need
- If the abusive partner is also a household member: **do not** have safety related conversations with the abusive partner present
- **Remember** that survivors may use violence in **self-defense** or to **assert control** over their life
- Engage your local VSP either as a **referral** or in **consultation**

## Long-term safety planning

- Once a survivor is housed, safety **remains a priority**
- **Focus areas** include:
  - At home
  - With children
  - On the job
  - In public
  - Financial safety and independence

# Implementing Safety Planning

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## At the Program/Agency Level

- **Develop policies or partnerships** with your local VSPs for emergent needs
- **Connect** the survivor with other **safe housing resources** within or outside your agency
- **Create** a plan to **assist an abusive partner** if they are experiencing homelessness or will experience homelessness due to household bifurcation
- **Don't judge or restrict** the level of contact a survivor and abusive partner might need or want

## At the Individual/Case Management Level

- **Incorporate** safety planning as a **core element** of your HPS approach
- **Tailor** safety planning to the **survivor's needs**, which can change day to day
- If the survivor is interested: **refer** them to your local VSP for safety planning **assistance**



## Housing Problem-Solving for Survivors of Domestic Violence

## Why Talk About Domestic Violence in Housing?

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- Domestic violence is a **leading cause of homelessness** in the United States
- Survivors often **leave housing** to escape domestic violence
- Survivors **may be evicted** due an abusive partner's behavior
- Domestic violence **interferes with access to housing** via bad credit, poor rental histories including evictions, and safety needs limiting affordable housing availability
- Abusive partners can **sabotage a survivor's economic stability**, creating trouble paying for rent, security deposit, and utilities

**Upshot: every housing provider is serving survivors of domestic violence—  
whether they realize it or not**



## Why Talk About Domestic Violence in Housing Problem-Solving?

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- Fewer than half of households on your current coordinated entry prioritization list ever receive subsidized housing
- Those households that do receive subsidized housing wait approximately five months between first system touch and project intake
- The primary limitations—in western PA and across the United States—are a lack of vouchers and a lack of affordable housing
- System-wide housing problem-solving for every participant offers another route to housing that doesn't depend on new resources
- Housing problem-solving doesn't need to work for every participant to measurably increase the number of households who achieve safe, stable permanent housing as a result of engaging your system

# Domestic Violence Housing Strategy for Western PA

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## Housing First

- Prioritizes participant choice
- Eliminates unnecessary barriers to housing

## Survivor-Specific Offerings

- Specialized services for survivors
- Focus on retaining permanent housing as safety

## Housing Problem-Solving

- Strengths-based intervention
- Expands options for survivors
- Conserves resources at the system level; right-sizes resources for each participant

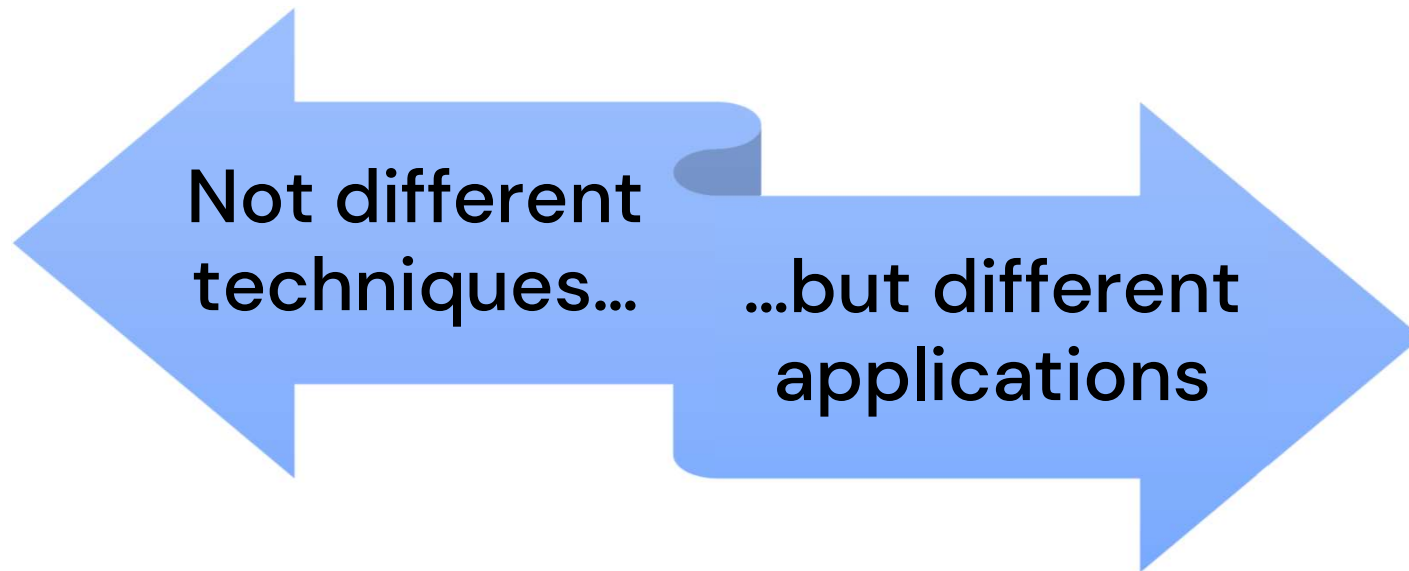
# Typical Housing Problem-Solving Activities

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- General case management
- Landlord negotiation
- Family reunification assistance
- Transportation
- Vocational certifications & licenses
- Food
- Legal services
- Rent & utility arrears
- Security deposit
- One-time rental assistance
- Short-term rental assistance
- Application fees
- Background/credit checks
- Moving expenses
- Storage
- First/last month's rent
- Utilities
- Vital documents
- Mental health counseling and care (direct provision and community connections)
- Healthcare services, including alcohol and substance abuse treatment
- Housing repair costs necessary to ensure a survivor's safety
- Assistance in applying for cash benefits such as SSI/SSDI

## Difference Between HPS for Survivors and Other Populations

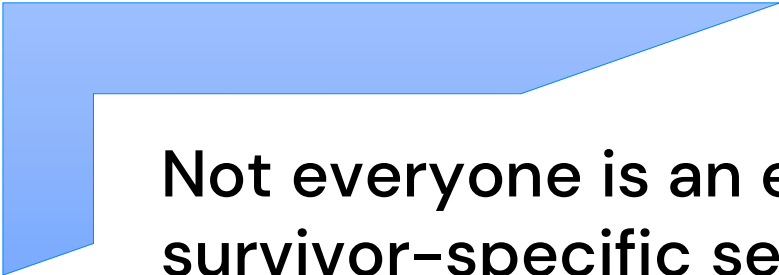
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Discussion  
opportunity: does  
anyone have a  
**success story** about  
HPS with survivors to  
share?

(Remember: **don't  
share any confidential  
information!**)



Not everyone is an expert on survivor-specific services; for **training and direct support**, connect with your local victim services provider (VSP) agency or with PCADV



# Person-Centered Case Management

## Why Person-Centered Case Management and HPS?

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- HPS **must be person-centered** to succeed
- Person-centered case management **exists in partnership** with other service models your CoC has already adopted, including Housing First
- It **incorporates other approaches and techniques** critical to serving survivors such as trauma-informed care
- Beginning from a person-centered perspective is the **key to successful progressive engagement** on both the system and the human levels



# One Approach to Progressive Engagement

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Because the system has too few resources to serve each participant, the system **avoids serving participants** whenever possible. Participants escalate from low-intensity to high-intensity services at a **gradual pace set by the system**. To prevent favoritism, case managers **cannot skip participants** past low-intensity interventions that are not working. The goal of HPS is to **prevent system entry** and **accelerate system exits** rather than to return people to housing.

# A Better Approach to Progressive Engagement

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Because the system has too few resources to serve each participant, the system **shows curiosity about individual needs**. By default, participants gradually escalate from low-intensity to high-intensity services; however, **the pace varies based on the participant**. The system **trusts its case managers** to be good stewards of limited resources. Participants can **skip interventions that aren't working**. The goal of HPS is to **discover** how to return each person to safe, stable permanent housing.

# HPS is Non-Coercive

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HPS must be non-coercive:  
participants can always **opt out now** (and re-engage later) or **opt out forever**



Q&A