

Housing First 102

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Welcome and Introductions

Introducing the Trainers

Introducing Yourself

Laying the Ground Rules

Ground Rules

1. Try to be present.
2. Have an open mind.
3. There are no bad or wrong questions.
4. We're all learning together.
5. You're an expert in your area, please share it!

About the WI Housing First Coalition

- Housing First is now a HUD mandate, and our state has named it as a strategy in our state plan to end homelessness
- But- how do we implement it?
- We created the coalition in 2019 (after 2 years of planning) to provide education, technical assistance, and advocacy to make Housing First possible.
- We promote policies and practices that promote the Housing First paradigm.

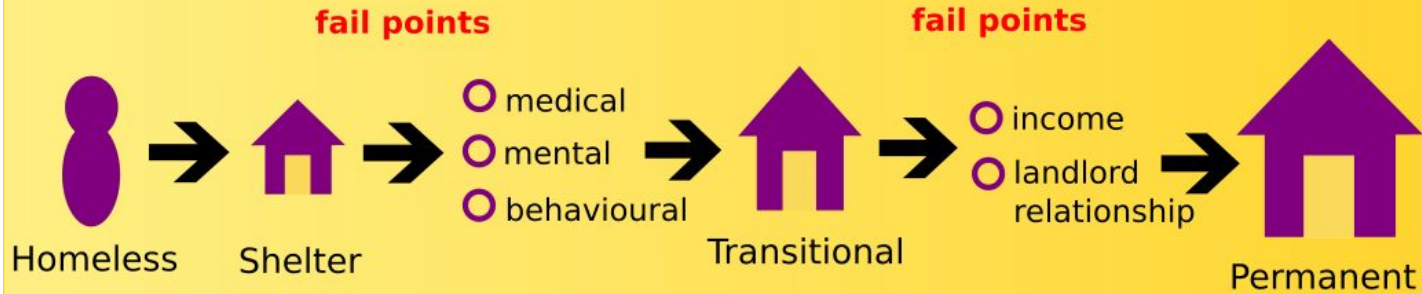


Housing First Principles

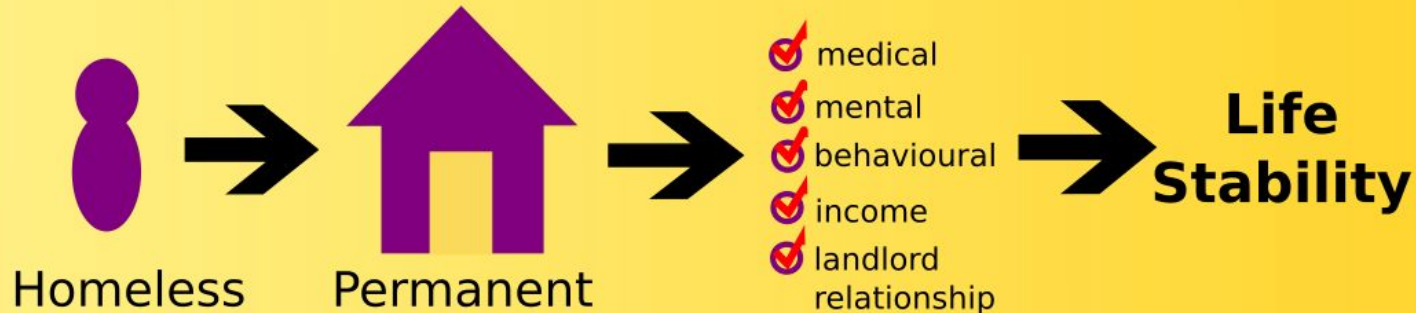
What is Housing Ready vs. Housing First

- Starts with the idea that people are homeless because of personal failings
- Therefore, to end their homelessness, must address those personal failings
- The model has stepped housing options, with each new step being earned
- Discounts big issues like poverty
- Spent a lot of money and time, but regularly spun our wheels
- Doesn't end homelessness!

Housing Readiness



Housing First



Housing First Flips the Script

- Housing is the first step to ending homelessness
- 5 Principles
 - Immediate access to housing
 - Consumer choice and self-determination
 - Recovery orientation
 - Individualized, dignified, client-driven supports
 - Community integration

Access to Housing

- Systemically utilize vouchers- housing regardless of ability to pay
- No barriers to entry
- Partnerships with landlords
 - Make landlords a part of the team!
 - Landlord incentives/recovery
- Variety of housing
 - Tenant-based
 - Master lease
 - Project-based
 - Others- tiny homes

Consumer Choice and Self-Determination

- Need a variety of options- for both housing and services
- Services are optional for them, but mandatory for you to provide
- Client-driven, creative, out-of-the-box thinking

Recovery Orientation: Harm Reduction

- An alternative to abstinence
- Focus is on safety versus stopping the behavior
- Work is in partnership, and sounds like: I'm seeing this is problematic because....what might help with that?
- [Harm Reduction | SAMHSA](#)

Individualized Supports: Motivational Interviewing

- A technique to help a person discover and work through their own ambivalence toward change
- [Understanding Motivational Interviewing | Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers \(MINT\)](#)
- Spirit
- Processes
- Core Skills

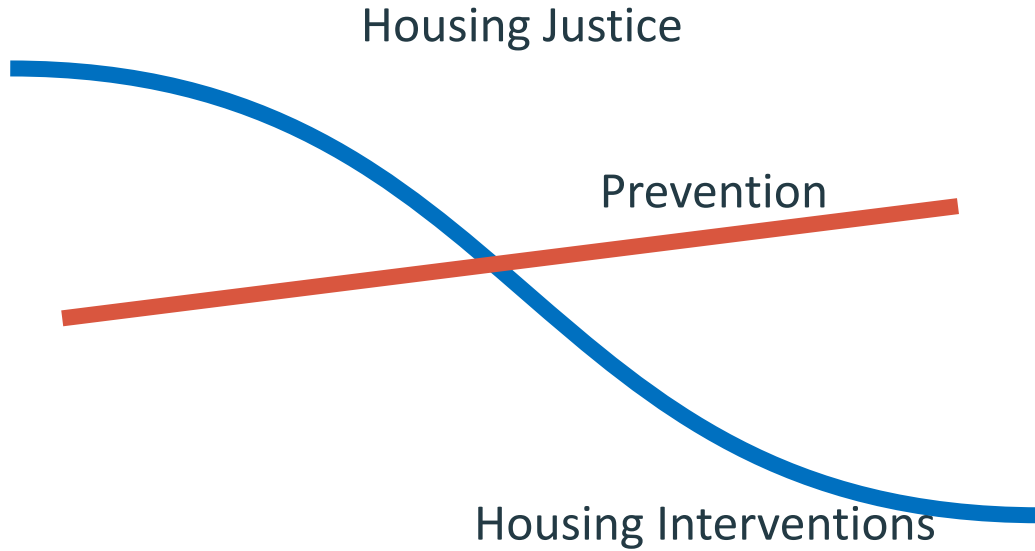
Community Integration

- Physical locations are diverse & integrated
- Services also focus on connection to community
 - CCS may be a great option for giving more options to people in terms of services
 - How are we supporting knowing about neighborhood events?
- How do we create community within programming?
 - Recovery includes engaging in “normal” activities, not just clinical ones
 - Peer Collective has been strengthened doing things together



Focus on Housing Integration

Going Upstream



Paying for Rent- Subsidy

- There is no dedicated “Housing First” subsidy, but Housing First doesn’t happen without support for paying rent
- Some sources of funding must use a Housing First approach
 - ESG funds
 - EHH/HAP funds
 - CoC funds
- Not limited to those sources!
 - Section 8
 - Other HUD programs (Section 42)
 - Healthcare subsidy
 - TANF/W2
 - Local tax levy
 - Other private funds

From a Landlord's Point of View

- Trying to make a successful business
- Challenging prospect
- No/Low income
- Challenges that threaten business
 - Behavioral Health issues
 - Guest issues
 - Consistency in paying
- Wanting to help fellow humans

Engaging Landlords

- Build a relationship
 - YOU are a key component of this relationship, perhaps even a proxy for the tenant
 - Guaranteed income
 - Pot of money for damages
 - Diversify team– better for their business and for tenants to have variety of landlords
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- If you can, have a person dedicated to landlord relationships

Keeping Landlords

- Pay the rent! Perhaps, even when program participants don't.
- Have a pot of funds for damages, this might need to be separate from HUD.
 - United Way or Tax Levy funds could be good sources
- Engage landlords as a part of the team- is there a way to have regular meetings?
- Provide services for program participants :)
 - Housing First requires that we show up for our participants
 - Landlords often see there's a need, but don't know where to turn
- Want to strike a balance between keeping landlords happy and advocating for the client
 - Housing First separates the housing and services, can you split these duties?

Diversifying Housing Stock

- How are you engaging Housing Authorities and Section 8?
- Are there private owners who are working on WHEDA housing?
- In general, look for geographical diversity as well



NOT housing only! Housing
First Services



Three Focus Areas

- Housing
- Services
- Income

- First focus is housing

Service Needs

- Housing First is NOT Housing Only!! How can we put wraparound services in place?
- CSP/CCS referral
- Family Care
- Others within your community?
- With these services in place, does that change their housing destination?

Other Services, and Income

- Income changes a person's ability to access other types of housing
 - Consider referring to DWD, DVR
 - Consider referring to SOAR (CCS is a great resource for this)
- Other services may allow the housing process to be faster
 - Doctor evaluation as a first step to Family Care
 - Child welfare may have housing resources we don't
- Some services may take precedence*
 - * We want to let clients lead, but also realize they're operating in crisis mode, and may be less objective

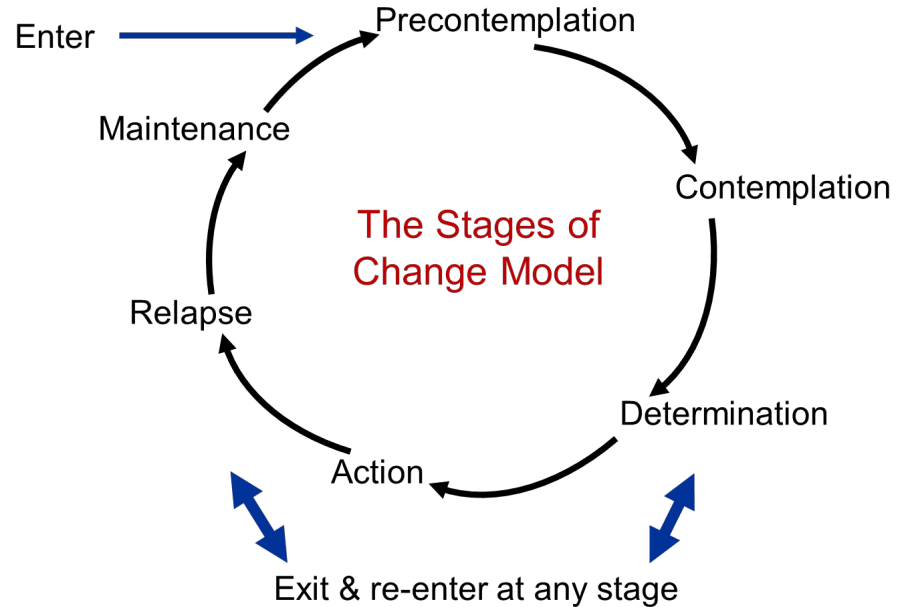
Housing First requires Flexible Case Management

- Be able to be client-focused and for the purposes of supporting housing stability
- Programs for behavioral health case management might be a good fit, but are they ready to be Housing First
- Funding for case management:
 - CoC
 - ESG
 - EHH/HAP
 - Philanthropy
 - Health Systems
- Whoever is doing supportive services, remember that the focus is housing stability. Using these best practices is part of Housing First.

What is Motivational Interviewing?

- Evidence-based approach to behavioral changes
 - Rooted in an understanding of how hard it is to change learned behaviors
- A guiding style of communication that sits between following and directing
 - Following - good listening
 - Directing - giving information and advice
- Designed to empower people to change by drawing out their own meaning, importance and capacity for change
- Based on a respectful and curious way of being with people that facilitates the natural process of change and honors client autonomy
 - Motivational Interviewing does not “get people to change”
- It is NOT a set of techniques to impose on a conversation with a client

Stages of Change Model



Motivational Interviewing in Housing First

- People who are homeless have many learned behaviors that often were developed as a means of survival
 - Whether that is survival on the streets or surviving a lifetime of trauma
- These behaviors are often very challenging for housing clients to change
 - This is particularly true for new clients and clients who were chronically homeless
- Many homeless clients have the goal of “getting housed” and don’t really know where to go or what to work on once this basic need is met
- Clients, even once housed, oftentimes feel disempowered and “stuck”

Understanding Harm Reduction

- Mindset shift of staff
- Recovery is not linear
 - Remember the Stages of Change
- People do not necessarily need to abstain from risky behaviors
- Inclusion and a guarantee of support regardless of sobriety

Harm Reduction and Housing First

Housing First as Harm Reduction

- Housing First removes the factor of homelessness as a health concern
 - Reduced health risks
- Allows individuals greater focus on higher level needs in a safe place to live
 - Clients able to focus more clearly on secondary factors which may have contributed to their homelessness and affects their ability to live independently

Harm Reduction and Housing First (cont.)

Housing First and Harm Reduction go hand in hand

- No prerequisite for treatment
- Treatment is voluntary
- Promotes client autonomy and right to dignity
- Drug use and disruptive behaviors tied to drinking will likely be lease violations and can lead to evictions
- While drug and alcohol use while housed is permitted/expected, the housing program staff should still be identifying ways to reduce drug use in the housing

What to do?

So, what do you do when your client is actively using?

- Addiction as a disease
 - This is a good model to keep in mind when working with people
 - People very rarely can't "just quit"
- Have neutral conversations around drug and alcohol use
 - Take a nonjudgmental position
 - Ask open-ended questions about substance use
- Assess where clients are in the stages of change
 - Are they even ready to stop? What will it take to make them ready?
- Ask clients what types of support they need to decrease substance use

What to do? (cont.)

- Education and factual information provided non-judgmentally
- Creating safety plans
- Utilize Motivational Interviewing
- Brainstorm ways with your client on how to use with fewer risks
 - For example: A client will repeatedly have friends over to drink which disturbs their neighbors. The neighbor informs the landlord who threatens to evict the client if the behavior does not stop
 - For example: A client is using heroin and recently overdosed and was taken to the hospital
 - For example: A client engages in sex work to earn money
- When circumstances like these arise, it is important remind clients that treatment is an option
- Only in the *most extreme* circumstances should program staff force treatment

Key Takeaways

- Not one model for doing Housing First
- The formula is: rent assistance + evidence-based, person-focused services + community

Rent Assistance	Services	Community
CoC, prevention, low-income, housing authorities	Evidence-based, person-centered	Engage landlords, local government and agencies, diversity in housing placement

A “Housing First Community” will not be solely funded by 1 funding source.



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