Shared Housing: A Solution for Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness

July 12, 2016
Today’s Webinar

• Please note that all lines are on mute.

• We will be taking questions at the end of the presentation. Please pose questions at any time in the Questions box.

• The webinar and slides will be posted following the presentation at endhomelessness.org.
The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States.

The Alliance works toward ending homelessness by improving homelessness policy, building on-the-ground capacity, and educating opinion leaders.
Agenda

• Jayme Day, National Alliance to End Homelessness
• Jean-Michel Giraud, Friendship Place
• Cathy Zall, New London Homeless Hospitality Center
• Meghann Cotter, Micah Ministries
• Q&A
What do we know about single adults experiencing homelessness?
Homeless Households: U.S. Point-In-Time Count 2015

- Single Adults, 49%
- People in Families, 36%
- Chronically Homeless Individuals, 15%
Characteristics of Single Adults

- Male
- 30 – 50 years old
- Disproportionately African American
- Estimates of duration and number of episodes of homelessness vary
- Limited access to benefits
- Need more research!
Shared Housing: A Solution for Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness

• What is shared housing?
• How does it work?
• How can it help?
Shared Housing: What is needed?

- Determine how to target the program
- Determine how to match people
- Find housing - Landlord engagement, working with owners
- Find funding
SHARED HOUSING

“CREATING SHARED HOUSEHOLDS FOR SINGLE ADULTS”

JEAN-MICHEL GIRAUD
PRESIDENT/CEO
FRIENDSHIP PLACE

PRESENTED AT THE “SHARED HOUSING FOR SINGLE ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS” WEBINAR
Friendship Place Mission & Vision

- MISSION: To empower people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to attain stable housing and rebuild their lives.
- VISION: A community and a nation where every person has a place to call home.
## Our Programs & Services

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<th>Rapid Rehousing</th>
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<td>Community Education &amp; Advocacy</td>
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<td>Youth and Young Adult Services</td>
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Shared Housing: An Introduction

- More affordable and flexible
- Easier application process, faster lease-ups & move-ins
- More sustainable
- Built-in support from peers: natural resource
- Common experience with homelessness
- Families of choice
- Financially appealing to landlords
- Landlord response is positive, more lenient
- Solves housing issues for a few people at a time
- Should be used more for shelter exits
- Step up to individual living situation
- Possible short-term leases
The Shared Household Is...

- the sharing of living space that single adults freely agree to for economic reasons and social support:
  - people agree to fulfill responsibilities,
  - each housemate may continue to participate or leave,
  - the sharing arrangement is based on leases, which may start and end at different times.
- **Service cycles are also different.**
Whose house is it?

- Clarify expectations and review service modalities with housemates and landlords.
- Avoid the perception from the beginning that you are “running” the house or a “facility.”
- *This is a good time investment. It saves you from being pulled into conflicts later on.*
- **Staff understands Fair Housing Laws, lease agreements and community Landlord-Tenant mediation.**
This Is Not a **Group** Home

- Not a program
- Not licensed
- Needs to blend in as “neighbor.”
- Think of stigmatization, privacy & confidentiality.
- People here do not have to be monitored by neighbors and other community members.
Household Engagement by Staff

- Based on the rehabilitation relationship
- Not a legal relationship
- Ethical and competent
- Progress oriented
- Facilitative and supportive
- Builds on strengths
- Uses a person-centered approach
- Empowering, **not** enabling
- Stays within boundaries
Setting Up the Household

- Members choose housemates (not staff)
- Compatibility factors
- Trauma issues
- Former and current street ties
- Substance use
- Sharing space and food
- Families of choice
- Group and individual support from staff for newcomers

*Staff educates participants on tenant rights, completes a habitability standard inspection and ensures each tenant has a lease.*
More on Household Engagement

- Evenly engage all members of the household
- Everybody has a voice
- Watch for uneven dynamics
- Time element: different service cycles – some household members actively receiving services, others have been discharged
- We do not belong between landlord and tenant – we are not on the lease – but can advise participants.
- Do people feel comfortable reporting issues?
Engaging and Supporting Landlords

- Make sure the agreement between landlord and tenant and each tenant is clear on:
  - Responsibilities
  - Expectations
  - Reporting
  - Schedule
  - Visits
- Make sure all housemates understand roles and responsibilities
- Develop clear communication channels
- Possible impact of long-term planning on the household
- Agreement with landlord and housemates on recruitment of housemates
- **Staff attend community landlord groups and neighborhood liaison meetings, engage congregations, use web resources and streamline processes for landlords when possible.**
Community Perception

- This is a household just like any other (clear messaging on this)
- Neighbors among neighbors
- Not a “facility”
- The organization is not directly responsible for the site or what happens there
- **But** supportive counseling and community relations are used to resolve issues during the service cycle and sometimes afterwards
Post-Discharge Status

- Clear message to landlords and housemates that services will end
- Post-discharge: tenants need to work out internal issues and agree on house rules – shared responsibilities
- Landlords need to interact with household members as responsible parties – not revert to solving through staff intervention whenever possible
Thank You // Questions?

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- friendshipplace.org
- @friendshipplace
- /friendshipplace
- Main: 202.503.2961
Shared Housing
Homeless man’s death spurs community action.

Bank donates $15,000 to New London shelter while others offer support.

Towns asked to contribute $2,000 each to group that runs New London shelter.

Fire marshal rescinds Region’s mayors, selectmen take homeless shelter request for the New London lock horns with New London over ordinance.

Advocates for the homeless fight plan to limit shelters.

City ordinance would restrict season, location, who is helped.

Homeless man found dead near tent city in Waterford.
• Coordinated Access Entry Point
• Emergency Shelter
• Daytime Drop-In Center
• Social respite
• Rapid Rehousing
• Permanent Supportive Housing
• VA Grant Per Diem Bridge Housing
The Challenge?

• Many of our guests have very low income.

• We don’t have the resources for long term rental subsidies.

• Achieving shorter shelter length of stay requires housing options for very low income individuals.
Why agency run shared housing?

• People can arrange their own roommate situation.

• BUT, major barriers:
  – If one roommate leaves, the one remaining is on the hook for the whole rent.
  – Landlord resistance to renting to several people with very low income.
  – Existing “shared housing” (i.e. boarding houses, sober houses etc.) are often of very low quality.

• Agency building ownership (or holding master lease) assures housing quality and transfers vacancy risk to agency.
Basic Features

• Two-Three tenants per apartment.
• Each with own room
• Rent includes everything—utilities, cable, internet
• Allow tenants to pay weekly
• Month to month lease with standard lease provisions
• No security deposit
• Rent to “higher risk” guests
• No special services but access to HHC supports
• No formal “room mate” matching process.
Opportunity Knocks
Shared by Three

- Kitchen
- Living Room
- Bathroom
Private Room

- Own lock
- We supply basic furniture
- We supply for each room:
  - Own TV with cable
  - Internet access
  - Mini-Fridge

Rent/person/month: $400-$500

FMR:
- studio $732
- One bedroom: $861
## Affordable Development

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Square Feet (excluding basement and porch)</strong></td>
<td>4,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of “units”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Price</td>
<td>109,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition Costs</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Renovations</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Initial Cost</strong></td>
<td>149,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial capital cost/square foot</td>
<td>$36.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial capital cost/unit</td>
<td>$21,286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase II renovation funded with housing tax credit program</td>
<td>$310,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent/person/month (including all utilities)</td>
<td>$400-$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(FMR: studio $732 one bedroom $861)</em></td>
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Key Lessons

• Shared housing will not work for everyone—BUT
  – It is far better than long shelter stays.
  – It can serve as a stepping stone for those whose income increases.

• Pay close attention to zoning rules.

• Need to run in a compassionate but business like way.
  – Budget for evictions.
  – Enforce lease terms and pay attention to security.
  – Assure housing is superior to market.
  – Have a process to fill vacancies quickly.

• Supply TV and mini-fridge in every room to reduce friction.
Using Shared Housing to end Homelessness

Meghann Cotter
Background

- In 2005, Fredericksburg, VA had:
  - A 90 day emergency shelter
  - A transitional housing program for women with children
  - A lot of downtown churches taking care of the basic needs of the street homeless

Micah was formed after the biblical call of Micah 6:8 to combine efforts of the faith community in addressing the needs of the street homeless.
Micah started out as a basic needs organization and evolved to understand that all homeless people had the same primary need of housing.

Today, programs include:
- Winter shelter: 37 beds
- Post-hospital shelter: 8 beds
- Day Center
- Step Forward income program
- Housing program (supportive/rapid re-housing)
Primary Dilemma

- 83 chronic homeless single adults in 2010
- Fair number who had income or could get income easily with some support
- Area’s fair market rent for even a one bedroom was more than $1000.
- The most basic minimum wage and disability income wasn’t enough for one person to afford even the cheapest housing units.
Our solution

- Realized that most people on the street were already “living with” someone in their current circumstances.
- Started finding those people and pairing them up.
- Negotiated available units with private landlords who would overlook a lot of barriers and those who were unrelated.
What we have learned

- Honor client choice
- Invest time in understanding deal breakers
- Be flexible
- Be prepared to exchange roommates or re-locate people if it goes badly
- If the landlord will let you, separate leases
- Seek support (in-home care, skill building)
What we have learned

- Sometimes pairing a high barrier person in need and low-barrier caregiver helps.
- Use roommate agreements thoroughly.
- Private landlords are the most flexible with shared housing.
- Don’t knee-jerk a re-location after the first roommate conflict.
- Identify the conflict and seek to mediate or resolve it (i.e. mini fridges, separation in the home, etc.)
Outcomes

- In the last 12 months, Micah alone has housed 81 single adults. All of which are high barrier; many were chronically homeless.
- On average, less than 10% return to homelessness. Only 2 people last year.
- 2016 Point in Time: 16 chronic homeless remain.
Questions?

A recording of this webinar and presentation slides will be available at www.endhomelessness.org
Shared Housing Resources

- Sample rental agreements
- HUD funding options for shared housing (see accompanying resource)
Sign up for our Rapid Re-Housing Newsletter (www.endhomelessness.org)

Upcoming Events/Webinars:

• August 18th at 1 pm (ET): Lessons from Montgomery County, PA