# BEYOND SHELTER: HOUSING STABILITY AND HOPE

A Better Way to Serve Survivors of Domestic Violence NAEH Families & Youth Conference 2/18/2016

### **OUTLINE**

- \* Vision for DV advocacy and services approaches
- \* LifeWire's cultural changes and implementation of approaches
- \* Systems integration in our communities
- \* What can we all do to improve?



- \* Celebrate all that we have accomplished!
- \* Break down compartmentalization and pursue a holistic response to survivors
- \* Renewal and sustainability
- \* Changing societal culture
- \* Collective and proactive work with funders

### Complex Needs of Survivors

### **Understanding of:**

Diverse experiences

Range of needs

Brain development

Role of trauma

Parenting challenges

Impacts on kids

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### Key Findings from DV Housing First Pilot Project

Survivor-driven advocacy contributes to housing retention

Housing stability rebuilds lives, leads to independence

Independence leads to safety

Safety and stability contribute to nurturing environments for children

Housing stability and advocacy improve health & well-being and restore dignity & self-worth

Flexibility supports adaptability of culturally responsive services

Community engagement enhances collaboration and sustainability

### DV Housing First: The Approach

#### Flexible Financial Assistance

Funds are free to be used in whatever way will best help survivors retain housing: Rent and utilities, as well as costs like child care, transportation, and employee uniforms.

#### Survivor-Driven Advocacy

- "What do you need?" instead of "Here's what we offer."
- Meet where it is safe and convenient for survivors.
- Survivors lead the process and choose their own goals.



#### **Housing Stability**

Advocates accompany survivors to housing appointments, act as a liaison with landlords, and negotiate leases.

# current housing, while maintaining safety and stability.

**DVHF** supports

survivors and their

children to rapidly

access new housing,

or retain their

#### **Community Engagement**

Advocates reach out to landlords, law enforcement, housing/homeless providers, and employment programs, encouraging them to support survivors.

### Survivor-Centered, Survivor-Driven Advocacy (Victim Defined)

Focused on the survivor, not the program

Orientation to the "whole person"

Validation and acceptance

Strengths-based

**Action Oriented** 

### Community or Mobile Advocacy

Meeting survivors where they are, literally

Working along side

Preparing survivor for self-advocacy

Speaking on behalf

### Trauma-Informed Approach

Trauma awareness - relationship with provider key

Emphasis on safety/awareness of potential triggers

Rebuild control—choice and power sharing

Strengths-based

### Agency Culture

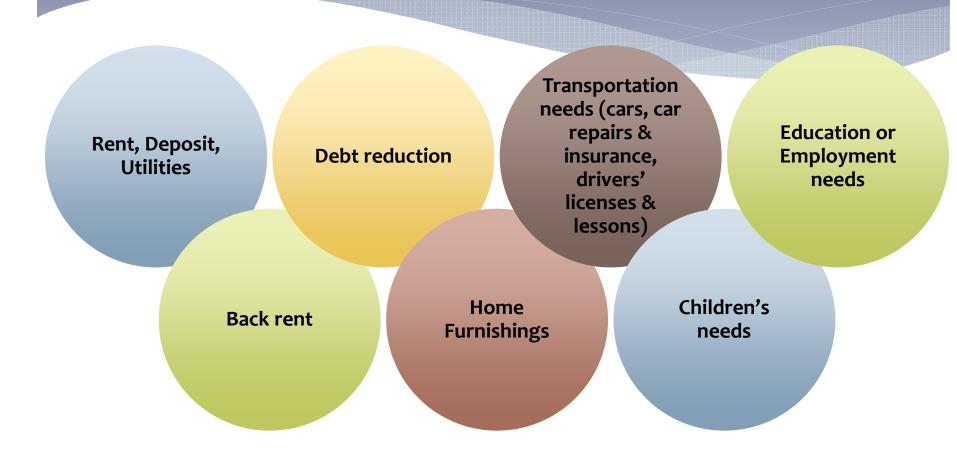


Recognize and address vicarious/secondary trauma at all levels of an organization



Incorporate "wellness" throughout agency culture

### Flexible Financial Assistance



# LIFEWIRE: Cultural Shift

Culture of risk taking, innovative services

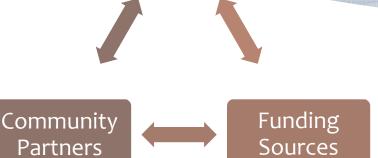
Permission to be innovative given by funder, supported by community

Agreement across agency to provide survivor driven, trauma informed services

Cultural shift is sustainable, and necessary for mission

### Housing Stability Approaches

Housing Approaches



- Housing retention (diversion or homeless prevention—survivor may never leave the home or may leave temporarily if safety is a concern)
- Rapid ReHousing/Flexible Engagement
- Subsidized housing with services available
- Permanent supportive housing

# Community Engagement: It's all about the relationships!

Housing programs, tribal housing authority, realtors, landlords, emergency shelters, hotels

Auto repair shops, gas stations, phone shops, locksmiths

Treatment centers, clinics, daycares, health and human services, youth programs, schools

Job training and work programs

Law enforcement, City councils, Legal services, population-specific resources

Furniture and grocery stores, household appliance stores, community resources, clothing and food banks

### **Restoring Connection**

Community is vital for restoration of social network.

Community is vital for a survivor to heal from trauma and for children to build resiliency.

Community is vital for connection to resources and relationships.

Community is vital for safety.

### LifeWire

Providing assistance to housing providers, survivors are staying in their communities

Funders are taking risks to follow lead of influential foundations



Success of inexpensive, survivor driven, trauma informed programs influences policy



### Innovation for Long-term, Systemic Change

# Improve health and well-being for DV survivors

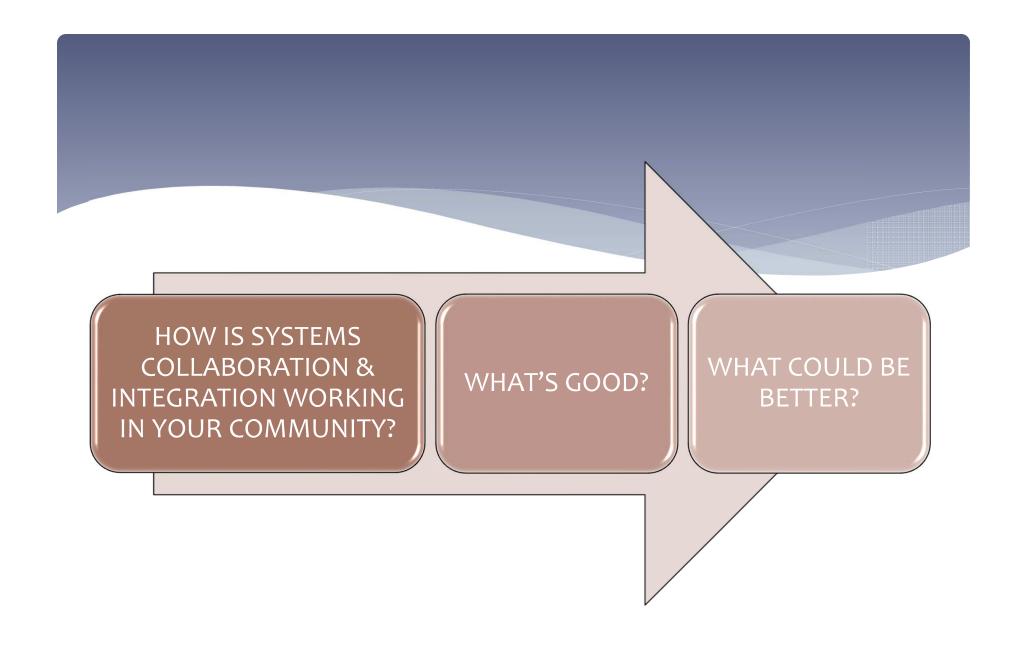
 Robust organizational change to include policies, advocate training, and staffing structures

### Research

 Increase the level of evidence that documents the relationship between domestic violence advocacy, housing stability, and improved health and well-being for survivors and their children

# Regional Transformation of Services

 Partnerships with neighboring DV providers, housing/homeless organizations, housing partners and funders to expand and coordinate services within the region



### Integration Strategies

Awareness and Understanding

Communication and Coordination

Collaboration

# Large/Urban Communities

Struggling with volume of those in need and capacity

### Medium Communities

Great success stories

# Small Communities

Often only one or two agencies

### HMIS & Data Collection

- \* Washington State is an opt in state (needs informed, written consent to enter data into shared data base)
- \* DV agencies enter non-personally identifying information about survivors
- \* Separate but not necessarily comparable data bases for victim services agencies

### Strategies for Success

1 Location

Assessment and Process

3 Staffing

Outcomes





# 1) Location

Are the assessment locations safe and private?

Are there safe and private alternatives?

Is there mobility to meet someone where they are?

Are there emergency accommodations for a survivor in immediate danger?

### 2) Assessment and Process

What about screening for domestic violence?

Does the staff know how to ask the questions to make the safest and most appropriate referral?

How do referrals work back and forth between to systems?

Is there regular communication with the local DV agency(ies)?

# 3) Staffing



### Approach

• Using empowerment, strength-based, survivor-driven approaches to providing services



### Knowledge

- Understanding the dynamics of domestic violence and the barriers survivors face when rebuilding their lives
- Legal protections for survivor



#### Collaboration

- Partnering with DV advocates to ensure the needs of survivors are being met
- Working with other community providers to ensure appropriate referrals

### 4) Outcomes

Are DV providers working with homeless assistance providers to connect survivors to stable housing?



Even when DV providers have a their own coordinated entry system, there needs to be a strategy for how connections across systems will be made.

### Life Wire & King County Process

Coordinated Entry Implemented • DV Workgroup

• Technical Assistance

• DV emergency shelter excluded

System Evaluation

- Waitlist too long
- Family needed to fit program
- DV given temporary waiver

Coordinated Entry for All

- Subcommittees
- Person centered approach
- Willingness to reevaluate and change system

# WHAT WILL YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR CURRENT SYSTEM?



### QUESTIONS?

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