



National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

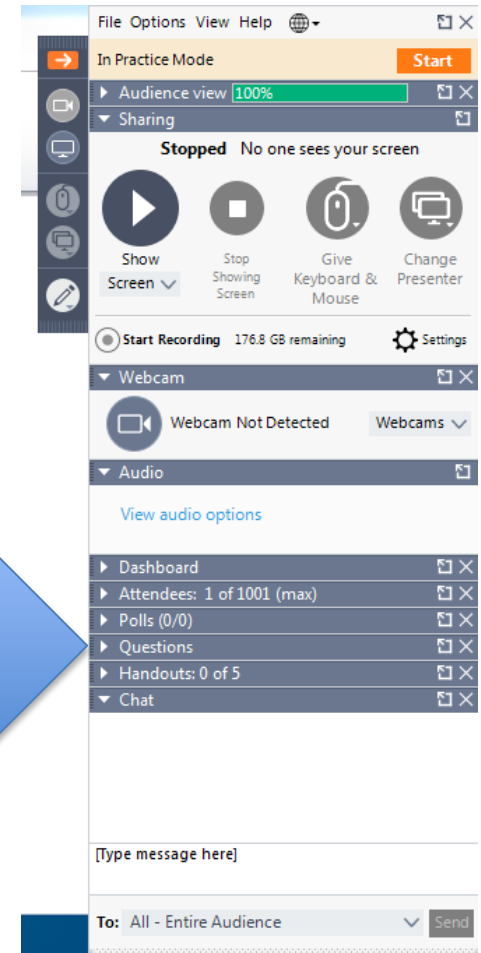
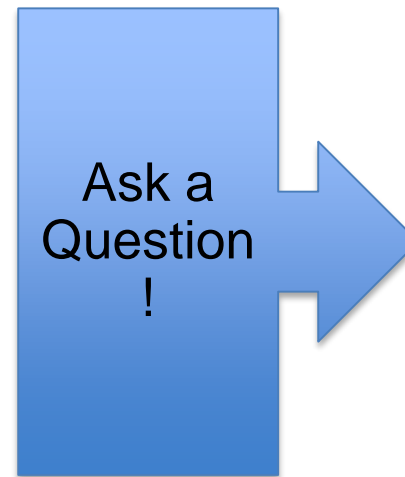
The Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Which Rules are the Right Rules?

Part I: Serving Families and Survivors of Domestic Violence

Today's Webinar

- Please note that all lines are on mute.
- Please pose questions at any time in the Questions box. We will try to get to as many as we can at the end.
- The webinar and slides will be posted following the presentation. Feel free to share with your staff and any other stakeholders.



Today's Speakers

Kristi Schulenberg, Senior TA Specialist
Center for Capacity Building, NAEH

Cynthia Nagendra, Director
Center for Capacity Building, NAEH

Deronda Metz, LCSW, LCAS, Director of Social Services
The Salvation Army of Greater Charlotte

Linda Olsen, MA, MSW, Housing Program Coordinator
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence





Why Are Shelters So Important?

- Emergency shelters and other types of crisis housing (crisis beds, interim housing, motel vouchers) play a **critical role** in your system's response to homelessness
- People in a housing crisis will always need a **safe and decent** place to go that is immediately available



Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Overview

- **Series** of webinars
- **Key elements** to operating an effective shelter
- **Self-assessments** to evaluate your shelter
- **Tools** that your shelter can use to implement programmatic, policy, and operational changes
- **Guidance** from shelters that have made the transition to a more effective shelter model



Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Goals

- **Strengthen** shelter policies and services to improve the housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness across your crisis response system
- **Implement** a system-wide approach to ending homelessness that includes emergency shelters
- **Align** emergency shelters' goals with the community's goals to end homelessness
- **Provide enough** low-barrier, safe, and housing-focused shelter

Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Resources

<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/emergency-shelter/>

Past Webinars in the Series

1. The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System
2. The Keys to Low-Barrier Effective Shelter
3. How to Transition Your Shelter

THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SHELTER



HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Align shelter eligibility criteria, policies, and practices with a Housing First approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without prerequisites, make services voluntary, and assist people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION

Provide diversion services to find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter through problem-solving conversations, identifying community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.



IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS

Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry and staying open 24/7. Eliminate sobriety and income requirements and other policies that make it difficult to enter shelter, stay in shelter, or access housing and income opportunities.



HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES

Focus services in shelter on assisting people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Measure data on percentage of exits to housing, average length of stay in shelter, and returns to homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and improve outcomes.



HOUSING FIRST APPROACH



SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION



IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS



HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES



DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Today's Webinar

- **Which** rules, expectations, and guidelines are the “right” ones in a low-barrier and housing-focused shelter?
- **How** do you continue to prioritize safety of shelter participants and staff in a low-barrier environment?
- **How** can you ensure safety within shelters that serve families with children?
- **How** can you ensure safety within shelters that serve survivors of domestic violence?



Where are you in your Transformational Change?

Old Shelter Model

New Shelter Model

Need for Change

Confusion

Anxiety/Loss

Clarity

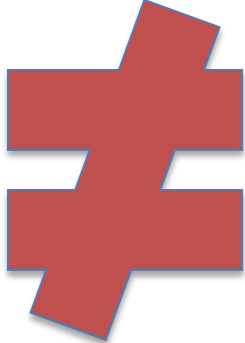
New Vision

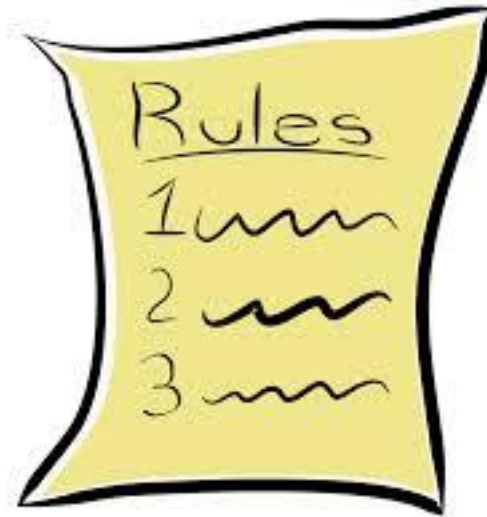
Integration

Restructuring

Why Do People Avoid Shelters?

They are too crowded	37%
Bugs	30%
There are too many rules	28%
They are full	27%
I can't stay with my partner/family	23%
Germs	22%
They don't accept my pet	22%
There is nowhere to store my stuff	19%
They are too far away	18%
I can't stay with my friends	13%

LOW-BARRIER  NO RULES



HOW TO RE-TOOL YOUR RULES



The Role of Rules

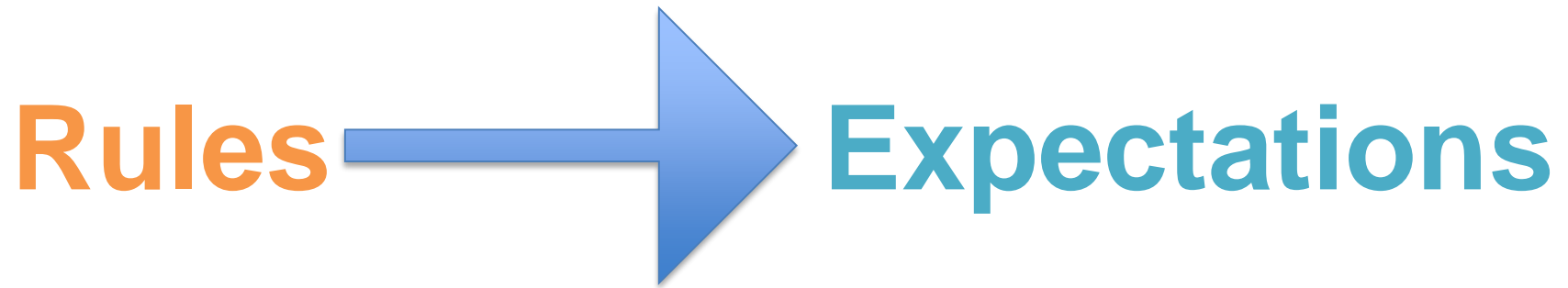
- Why do you have rules?
- Which rules are needed to operate your emergency shelter?
- How can a shelter promote safety without creating unnecessary barriers to services and housing?

“

Sometimes I feel like a child, with everyone watching my every move. It's not a good feeling and it makes me feel like I did something wrong by being homeless.

-Consumer

Retooling the Rules



Retooling the Rules



DO promote safety.

DO NOT try to change or control people or their behaviors.

-Iain De Jong, OrgCode Consulting

Retooling The Rules: Do Promote Safety

- **Focus on respect in behaviour**, not punishment for actions
- **Use a trauma-informed** approach
- **Use restrictions and barring sparingly**, and always connect people to alternative resources as best as possible
- **Know your own values and beliefs**; but, not impose those on others
- **Accept people** without judgment
- **Treat guests'** belongings respectfully
- **Encourage access** to basic needs like hygiene with dignity
- **Reinforce the strengths** of each person
- **Talk about housing** and community integration
- **Be transparent** in how decisions are made *with* guests, not about them
- **Circulate frequently throughout** the shelter and actively engage with guests to encourage housing and promote hope
- **Be sensitive** to the power of your position

-Iain De Jong, OrgCode Consulting

Changing/Controlling Behavior Or Promoting Safety?

Sobriety

Searching Belongings

Criminal History

Weapons

Curfews

Chores

Case Management

Permanent Barring

Retooling the Rules

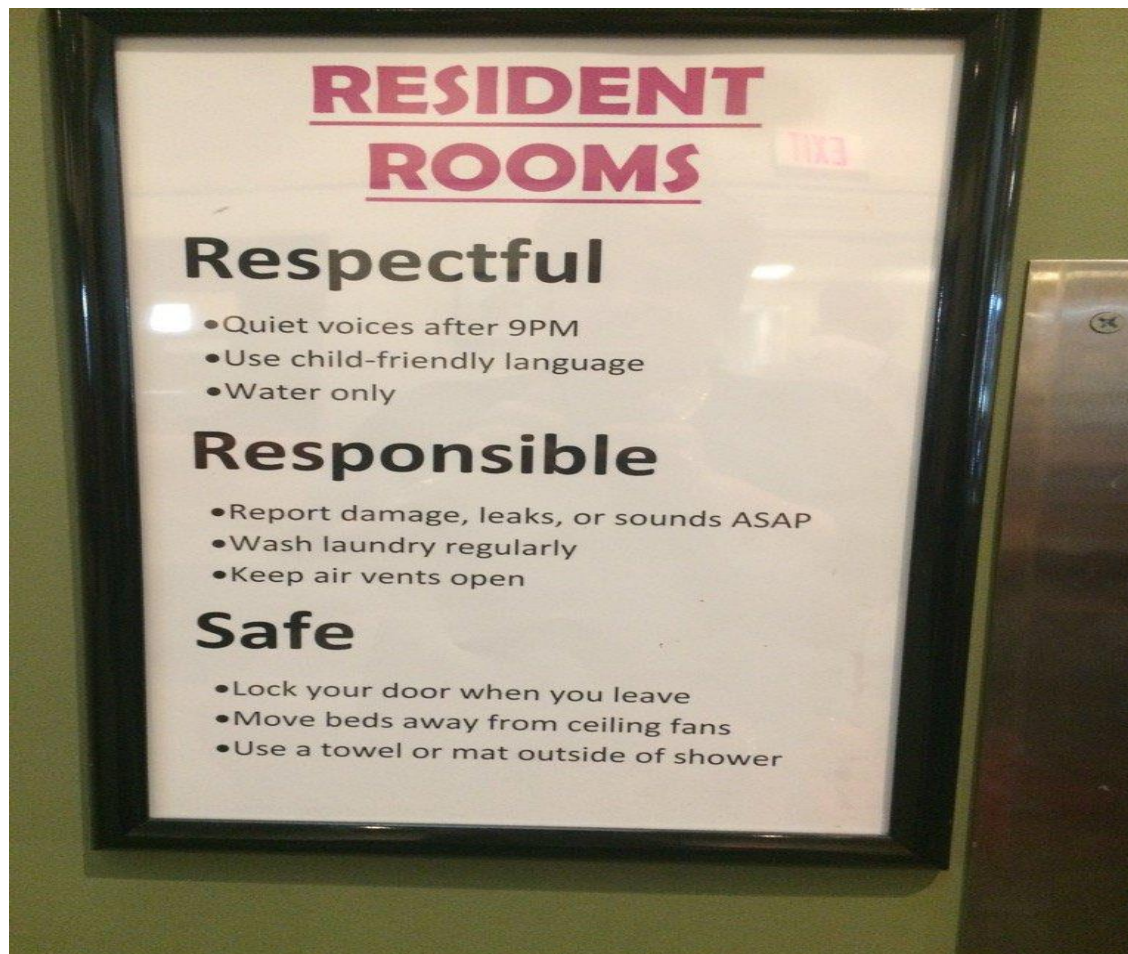
The “Marvin” Rule



Rewriting the Rules



New Rules



Contact Us!

Cynthia Nagendra

The Center for Capacity Building

[Email: thecenter@naeh.org](mailto:thecenter@naeh.org)





WHICH RULES ARE THE RIGHT RULES FOR LOW-BARRIER EMERGENCY SHELTERS?

Charlotte, NC

Deronda Metz, LCSW, LCAS

CENTER OF HOPE



- Access to emergency bed **24/7**
(Coordinated Assessment site)
- Screen **families & individuals**
in, not out
- **Divert** families from shelter
whenever possible
- Ready **access** to services
(SA treatment, childcare, job
training, healthcare)
- Move families into housing
as rapidly as possible using
HF model

TRANSITIONING SHELTER MODEL TO A LOW-BARRIER AND HOUSING-FOCUSED MODEL

- “Buy in” from all staff in particular front line staff
- Expanding program goals to system to goals(ending veteran and chronic homeless
- Implement in phases
- Empathy: “How would I want to be treated? Is this shelter trauma informed?”
- As the leader, exhibit courage to take risk
- Share evidence best practices
- Ask the question, “Are the shelter rules and program criteria helping to end homeless?”

COMMON RESPONSES FROM STAFF

- Challenge staff beliefs and fears
- “Homeless families need structure.”
- “People need to be held accountable”
- “What about the children- Are they safe”

SIGNIFICANT RULE CHANGES

- Curfew
- Chores
- Drinking and using other substances
- Housing first/social work optional

HOUSING: THE NEW INTERVENTION



- Shifting from 6 months in shelter to **30 days or less.**
- Housing assessments provided during the **initial assessment.**
- Changing the mindset from housing readiness to **HOUSING FIRST.**

OLD MODEL

EMPLOYMENT



SAVINGS



HOUSING

EMERGENCY SHELTER

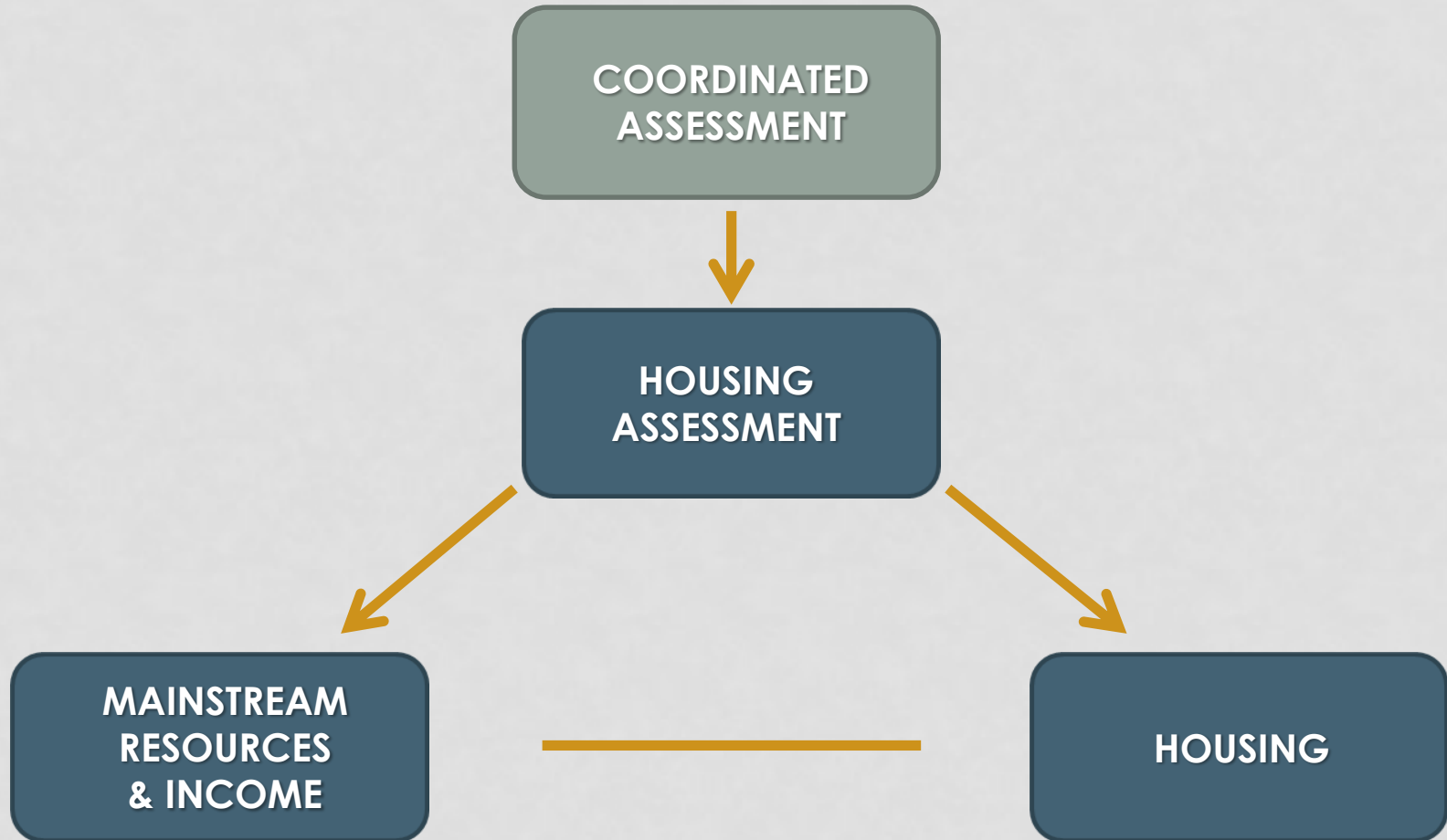
TIER 1: TRANSITIONAL SHELTER

TIER 2: TRANSITIONAL HOUSING & PERMANENT HOUSING

EMPLOYMENT, SAVINGS & HOUSING



NEW MODEL




HOUSING OUTCOMES



- Housing placements increased by more than 100%
- Shelter stays have decreased by 110-day average
- 84% of families placed into housing did not fall back into homelessness

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Decrease rules.** High program criteria further exacerbates the problem of homelessness.
2. More **transparency** & **data** result in trust & increased community support & opportunities for systems change.
3. HF social work/clients that opt out of case management **did not** have a lower success rates
4. Families are more **resilient** than we give them credit
5. Not a one time occurrence- ongoing adjustments



WHICH RULES ARE THE RIGHT RULES IN A LOW- BARRIER DV SHELTER?

Linda Olsen, MA, MSW
Housing Program Director
Washington State Coalition Against
Domestic Violence

Do Our Rules Reflect or Conflict with Values?

Core Values Should Indicate:

- How do you want people staying in the shelter to feel?
- What kind of an atmosphere are you trying to create?
- How do you hope staff will relate to residents and residents feel about staff? What will characterize these relationships?
- What do you want for people while they are with you?
- What do you want them to get out of the program?

Trauma Informed Approach

Safety

- Physical and emotional
- Awareness of potential triggers

Trust

- Relationship with provider is key
- Transparency, clarity, consistency, and healthy boundaries

Choice

- Rebuild control

Trauma Informed Approach, cont.

Collaboration

- Avoid hierarchy
- Share power and act as partners

Empowerment


- Strengths-based
- Build clients' skills, not just doing things FOR them

WSCADV Recommendations

- Rules/policies/guidelines should positively reflect your agency's mission and values.
- Rules/guidelines/program policies should make a distinction between behaviors that facilitate communal living and behaviors that threaten a resident's ability to stay at shelter.
- We should strive to focus on advocacy versus rule enforcement.
- We control the environment, not the residents.

NEW HOPE SHELTER RULES

- Any violence or abusive behavior will not be tolerated
- Our shelter is a weapon-free zone
- No use or possession of drugs and alcohol on shelter premises
- Do not reveal the shelter location, including to family or friends
- No visitors
- Do not reveal the identities of other shelter residents
- No stealing/theft



Building Dignity: Physical Fixes that Can Help Minimize Rules

Buildingdignity.wscadv.org

DV Housing First: The Approach



Overview

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children.

The Domestic Violence Housing First approach focuses on getting survivors of domestic violence into stable housing as quickly as possible and then providing the necessary support as they rebuild their lives.

This approach has been shown to promote long-term stability, safety and well-being for survivors and their children.

Questions?

Linda Olsen, MA, MSW

Housing Program Director

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic
Violence

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Discussion Questions and Your Challenges

Your Challenges

Q1 Share in 100 words or less, your biggest challenge when it comes to providing low-barrier shelter.

Answered: 122 Skipped: 0

Hard Increasing Run Fact Drug and Alcohol
Transportation Space Order Clients Substance
Low-barrier Shelter Staffing Staff
Policy Housing Aren't Challenge
Agency Families Screening Funding Youth
Emergency Shelter Circumstances Bed Length
Criminal

Your Challenges: Substance Use

“ **How** do we help people who are trying to stay sober while allowing people who are using into the same space? We are keeping people sober and we don't want to jeopardize their sobriety so how can we serve people with different needs?

How do we keep children safe when some people are intoxicated? Especially if we serve families in a congregate setting?

Your Challenges: Staffing and Motivation

“ One of our **biggest challenges** is having adequate staff and balancing low-barrier shelter with keeping individuals focused on housing and staying “motivated.”
How do we help people stay accountable?

Your Challenges: Resources



How do we make these changes and serve “higher-barrier” people with no extra resources?

What's Next

Webinar in October, TBD

Which are the right rules for shelters that serve single adults?



Contact Us!

Cynthia Nagendra

The Center for Capacity Building

[Email: thecenter@naeh.org](mailto:thecenter@naeh.org)