
Why Housing First?

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Welcome



- Suzanne Wagner, Principal, Housing Innovations
- Goals for the Session
- Housekeeping
 - The slides are/will be available
 - Let's make this a discussion. Speak up!
- Clear the Deck
 - Think about a lovely place for a moment.
 - Take a deep breath

Agenda

Introductions and Background

What is Housing First?

What makes HF work?

Pitfalls in HF Programs and Practice

Tips for Success



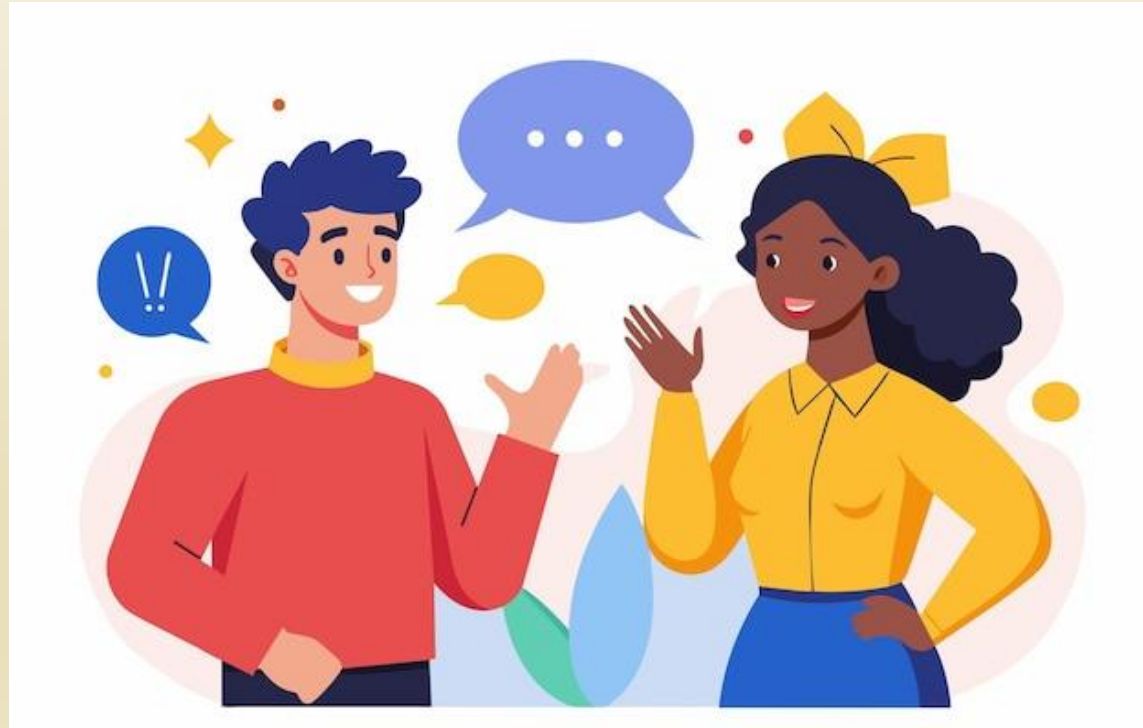
Who is in the Session?



- Shelter Provider
- Street Outreach Provider
- Rapid Rehousing Provider
- Permanent Supportive Housing Provider
- Other Service Provider
- Person with Lived Experience
- Housing Developer
- Property Manager
- Government Staff Person
- Housing Authority
- Advocate
- Funder
- Consultant
- Others?

Introductions

Find someone you do not know. Introduce yourself (name, affiliations, location etc.) and talk for two minutes about why you came to this session.



Background for Session



- Based on beliefs about housing rights and readiness
- Also based in the research, evidence, science
- Solution to homelessness
- Conflicts with models requiring people to “perform” in order to earn housing
- Without HF, many very sick and vulnerable people would remain homeless
- But it is messy
- Targeting: Low barrier approach – Everyone deserves housing
- High expectations: Has the same rights **and** responsibilities as anyone else in housing

Polls

- How many people are using Housing First in their programs?
- How many people are struggling with HF implementation?
- How many people love HF?
- How many people wish HF would go away?



Housing First (HF)

HF is a shift from the *housing ready* approach.

- It follows a basic philosophy—that *everyone* is ready for housing, regardless of the complexity or severity of their needs.
- It is an evidence-based practice (EBP) **model** of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) AND a **system**-wide orientation and **response**.
- All programs serving homeless people can implement HF practices.



Housing First Principles



Quick/immediate access to housing while providing needed services to support stable tenancies



Housing is not contingent on compliance with services. However, HF is housing **AND** services



Services are voluntary for participants, **but not staff** – **assertive engagement**



Services are provide to assist participants to meet lease obligations or shelter rules. Same rules as anyone

Housing First is Not

**Housing Only
or
Anything Goes**

- Housing is the beginning but not the end.



Housing First Practices



Low barrier to access: not rejected for no income, bad credit, substance use etc.



Link to community supports



Behavioral expectations are set by community and lease. Consistent responses



Services address housing stabilization and participants' **self-identified goals** (recovery orientation)



Discussion on Housing First

- Find some peeps to talk with
- Discussion Prompts:
 - Is this definition consistent with your understanding of Housing First?
 - What benefits to the practice you can identify?
 - What are you worried about?
 - What challenges and successes are you experiencing?



Housing First Supports



- Need access to high quality services and treatment resources (brokerage)
- Adequate staffing
- Support for staff to address clinical and system challenges
- Can be supported by and is compatible with evidence-based practices such as Critical Time Intervention (CTI), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Psych Rehab, and other Recovery models

Core Elements of Housing First



Services emphasize engagement

- Engagement is ongoing: focus on comfort, relief and personal needs and goals
- Services and housing plans are based on personal goals (participant-driven) and connect to people's hopes and dreams
- People are assisted with structure, purpose and role as they transition from homeless to housed
- Connect to formal and informal supports
- Identify, support and build motivation to maintain housing (e.g., employment, family connections)
- Build motivation, confidence, hope and sense of competence
- Services are voluntary for participants but NOT FOR STAFF – Assertive Engagement

Core Elements of Housing First - 2



High expectations – expectations are the same as for any other tenant

- Rules in shelter and transitional housing mirror lease expectations and PSH follows standard lease
- Lease is reasonable, enforceable and consistent with other leases in the community
- Rules/lease must be enforced
- Case Management is focused on every person assuming full rights and responsibilities of tenancy – teach skills
- Service staff and property management/landlords must coordinate
- Staff work to change behaviors that interfere with lease/program compliance and housing stability
 - Use of alcohol or drugs in and of itself (without other lease violations) is not considered a reason for eviction/ discharge
 - Focus on meeting behavioral expectations of the lease/rules
- Assist with recovery and role as defined by each person

HF Model in Shelter and Transitional Housing



Low barrier and equal access at intake. Length of stay as brief as possible

Services focus on Housing Planning and Location activities and quick exits

Rules mirror a standard lease (TH uses leases)
“Normal” rules to ensure safety

Service Philosophy and Service Array

- Low Demand Approach (not no demand); high expectations
- Teach tenancy skills and how to comply with a lease
- Incorporates client choice
- Access to income and community-based services

Person-centered, use evidence-based practices.
Discharge/eviction follows due process.
Try to separate rule enforcer/services roles

HF Model in Permanent Housing



Choice/
Affordability of
Housing

Housing is
Integrated into
the Community

Separation of Housing
and Services but
active coordination

Lease Agreement
Drives Services

Service Philosophy and
Service Array

- Low Demand Approach (not no demand)
- Teach tenancy skills and lease compliance
- Access to Treatment Resources and community Services
- Goal-based Recovery practice

Need assertive
Landlord to
enforce lease;
Services assist
tenant to comply
(Good cop, bad
cop)

Pitfalls

- Lease/ rules not enforced or inconsistent enforcement
- Participant behaviors are challenging to staff and other participants
- People are reluctant to engage
- Staff give up
- People don't have enough time to keep up with the high levels of need among participants
- Others?



Tips for Success



Engagement, relationship building and conveying hope is the foundation of HF

- Must have enough staff and time
- Build compassion for participants – it is difficult for people to follow the rules and change their lives and they have almost all been through more than many of us can imagine

Must separate the housing and services functions and have enforcement of rules/lease

- Landlord/service provider dynamic and partnership
- Clear expectations and consistent enforcement of rules lease

Tips for Success - 2

“Environmentalize” housing access/housing success

- Focus on housing goals from day one
- Celebrate and encourage stable tenancy through all activities and services
- Recognition of housing successes - Tenant of the month, incentives when unit passes inspection on first review, celebrations of moving on, others?

The program is organized to teach skills that can be used to sustain tenancy –

- Teach tenancy skills, lease requirements, time frames, etc; help increase and manage \$\$, clear expectations of participants, explain reason for the structure and what can be negotiated or appealed; teach negotiating skills through mentoring and skill building

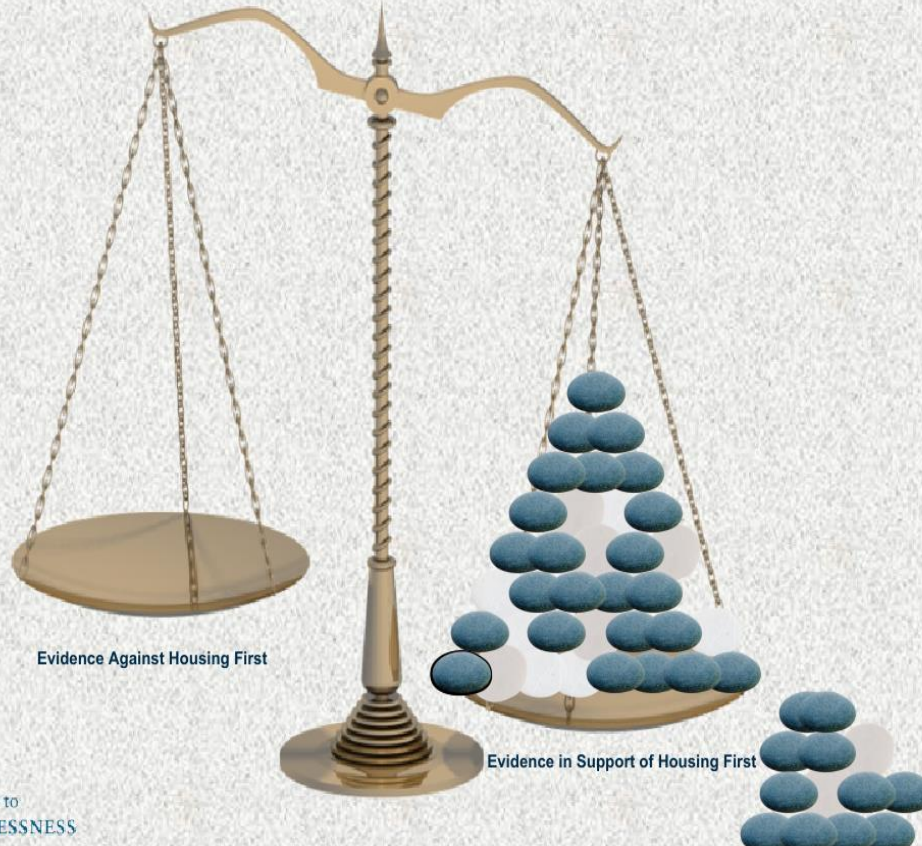
Believe in, care about and love people until they can believe in, care about and love themselves



The Evidence is Clear: Housing First Effectively Ends Homelessness

Hover over pebbles to see study links. Click a pebble to view the study in a separate window.
Click on a category in the legend to highlight all pebbles in the category.
Please note this is not a comprehensive list of all Housing First Studies.

● Domestic Studies



HF Resources

Basic Information on Housing First

- <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/NAEH-Training-on-Becoming-a-Housing-First-Shelter-for-the-State-of-CT>

- <https://cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Connecticut-Emergency-Shelter-Training-Final-For-Participants.pdf>

NAEH Interactive Tool to Access Research on Housing First

- <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/data-visualization-the-evidence-on-housing-first/>

Summary of Research on Housing First

- <https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Housing-First-Research.pdf>

Comprehensive Review of Research on Housing First Outcomes

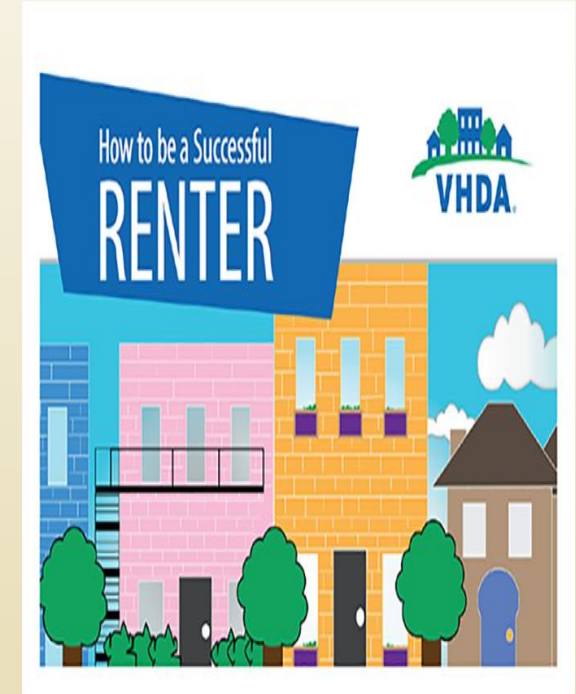
- <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/media/pdf/he-jphmp-evrev-housing-first.pdf>

Motivational Interviewing Website

- <http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/>

Resources for Tenancy Education

- Tenant laws differ by state and locality.
- *HUD Tenants Rights by State:*
 - https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance/tenantrights
- *RentWise Workbook: University of Nebraska (resource to teach tenancy skills)*
 - <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4473&context=extensionhist>



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Final Comments and
Questions

Thank you and good luck!
