

Housing First: Principles & Practices

CT Homeless Programs
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Agenda

CT BOS Housing First Principles & Requirements

Implementing Housing First: Best Practices

- Groundwork
- Motivating for Change
- HF In Practice: Scenarios from the Field
- Using the Structure of the Lease
- Landlord or Prop Mgmt and Social Services Collaboration
- Techniques for Developing the Plan
- Case Studies
- Support for the Practice
- Resources



Housing First Principles and Requirements

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Housing First

System and Practice Approach

Immediate Access to Housing with
Supports Provided in Housing

Same expectations as any other renter
in housing

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Housing First



Quick access to housing while providing needed services



Housing is not contingent on compliance with services



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



Services are wrapped around individual and person is assisted to meet lease obligations

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Housing First is *not*

Housing only
Or
Anything goes.

Landlord is responsible for enforcing the lease.



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CT BOS Housing First Principles - 1



Low Barrier Approach to Entry

- Regardless of:
 - substance use, medication compliance
 - Income, credit, rental history
- Services not mandated
- Treatment completion not required
- May consider serious criminal convictions on case-by-case basis to ensure safety
- Generally, only apply admission criteria required by funders

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CT BOS Housing First Principles – 2



Community Integration & Recovery

- Located in neighborhoods accessible to resources and services
- Looks & feels like other housing
- Help to build relationships, engage in meaningful activities, regain/develop role in family/community
- Recovery-based: tenants gain control, define personal vision/values/preferences/goals

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CT BOS Housing First Principles - 3



Lease
compliance
& housing
retention

- Standard lease agreement
- Services support lease compliance
- No rules except those that are customary, legal, enforceable
- Housing retention contingent only on lease compliance
- TH: must offer due process to resolve issues prior to termination (unless immediate risk)
- PH: required to use legal court eviction process

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CT BOS Housing First Principles - 4

Separation
of Housing
& Services



- Property management & services provided by separate legal entities or distinct staff
- Defined processes to communicate/coordinate to support stable tenancy
- Protect client confidentiality: "Need to Know"

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CT BOS Housing First Principles - 5

Tenant
Choice



- Frequency, timing, location, intensity of services
- Neighborhood, apartment, furniture, decor
- Accept choices without judgment
- Accept and help to reduce risk
- No coercion
- Clinical and legal limits to choice
- Tenant input into program design, activities, policies

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CT BOS Housing First Policy Requirements



PSH/RRH

HF Principles Required
Monitored by CT BOS
Steering Committee



TH

HF Principles Strongly
Encouraged

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Housing First Key Practices



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Housing First Supports

Implemented
with success
for high acuity
clients



- Must have access to high quality services and treatment resources (brokerage)
- Adequate staffing to visit people in their homes
- Support for staff to address clinical and system challenges
- Take a low demand approach with high expectations
- Supported by evidence based practices

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Housing First Best Practices

Assertive engagement using motivational techniques

Comprehensive Assessment and Planning

Person Centered and Recovery Oriented

Based in the Community and in the Home

Links to Community Supports

Available 24/7 often through an on call system

Focused on Housing and Work with Landlords

Contact as Needed – Individualized

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Implementing Housing First

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Groundwork



Targeting: Low barrier approach –
Everyone deserves housing

High expectations: Has the same rights **and** responsibilities as anyone else

- No special rules for homeless people
- Each person is expected to follow a lease
- Case Management is focused on every person assuming full rights and responsibilities of tenancy

Engage: look for comfort and goals

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Education

- Choice is based on knowledge
- Educate each person about housing options
- Engage in an evaluative conversation: what would work best for each person
- Explain provider **and** participant roles and responsibilities
- assess and establish goals for housing access and retention
- Engagement is based on each person
- seeing the benefit of the interaction



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Service Participation Requirements.



“We don’t actually require people to participate in case management, but we tell them that they are required. We don’t actually enforce the rule.”

What’s the downside of this approach?

What other approaches might the team use to engage people in services without requiring it?

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What things can you require?

- Abide by the terms of the lease
 - Pay rent
 - Only allow authorized tenants to sleep in unit
 - Maintain Unit
 - Respect for neighbors tenancy
- Provide accurate information for annual recertification
- Report changes in income or family composition
- Allow and be prepared for required inspection

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Tenant Rights



Right to live in decent, safe, & sanitary housing, free from hazards, i.e.) lead based paint



Right to have repairs in a timely manner



Right to reasonable notice in writing of any non-emergency inspection or entry into unit.



If landlord not maintaining apt., subsidy admin. can re-inspect & withhold payments until apt. meets standards.

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Obligations of Tenancy



Allow others quiet/peaceful enjoyment



No criminal activity in unit, common area or grounds



Keep unit clean



Dispose of garbage & waste correctly



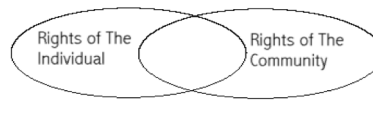
Make required rental payment to landlord on time



Keep utilities current and paid

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Ethical Issues: Individual Vs. Common Interests



Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary.

However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised.

(NASW Code of Ethics)

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Individual vs. Common Interests

- Tenant burns bridges with landlords impacting housing choices for others.
- Tenant disrupts neighbors.
- Tenant repeatedly taps scarce resources without changing behavior.
- Tenant makes a specific threat to harm a particular neighbor.



Whose interests are the worker's primary responsibility?

Is there a win/win solution that protects interests for all?

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Assessment and Planning

- Assessment and Service Planning are essential and not covered today, but will be covered at later training.
- Upcoming Training May 21, time and location tbd: Critical Time Intervention



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Crisis Prevention

Regular re-assessment

Service intensity varies based on acuity

Use team approach to ensure clients are regularly seen

Proactive outreach to landlords and linkages

Clients create individualized crisis plans

Reinforce efforts to plan ahead



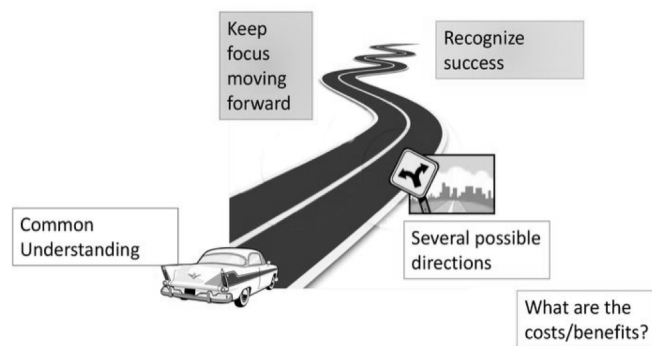
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Motivating for Change

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Motivating Change



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Motivation and Change



- Behavior specific (people have different responses to different issues)
- Also person-specific (each person is motivated to change by unique factors)
- Compliance does not equal change
 - Change that occurs because of external pressure tends to be short lived
 - More that someone “owns” (internalizes) the reasons for change, the more likely change will endure
- Change is always hard. Motivation will get you through it.
- Motivation fluctuates from one time and situation to another; not a fixed trait
- Motivation can be influenced from outside; it does not reside solely within the person

MI and Stages of Change

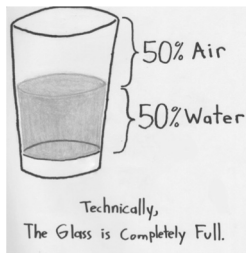


Stage	Relationship to Problem Behavior	Staff Tasks
Pre-Contemplation	No awareness of problem	Ask q's/ raise awareness of obstacles to goals
Contemplation	Aware of problem & considering change	Pros & cons of changing vs. not
Preparation	Making plans for how/when to change	Options: strategies, supports & services
Action	Changing behavior	Support/relapse prevention
Maintenance	Change sustained for 3-6 months	New goals
Relapse	Return to problem behavior	Assess stage and intervene accordingly

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Building Motivation for Change: Principles

How might you help set the tone?



Express empathy through reflective listening.

Develop discrepancy between person's goals or values and current behavior.

Avoid argument and direct confrontation.

Adjust to client resistance rather than opposing it directly.

Support self-efficacy and optimism.

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Case study: Pete

Large Group Discussion



Pete has been living in housing for 18 months. The team is aware that Pete continues to drink despite very serious health consequences. He has end stage liver disease and refuses most medical treatment. His unit is a mess and unsanitary. His landlord has sent him a warning letter. His Doctor is concerned that he will die if he continues to drink. Pete dislikes him and says this is how he wants to live, and he has earned that.

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Open Ended Questions & Reflective Listening



How has the last month been?

What does Pete do in a normal day?

The landlord has sent a letter, can we talk about that?

Why is the landlord concerned about your apartment?

How is the housing working for Pete?

- Do you think that landlord is asking you to change who you are?
- Being able to drink what and when you want is important to you
 - It is something to look forward to
 - It is hard to think about changing something that is such a part of your life

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MI Tool: Eliciting Change Talk

Looking for reasons to change that will matter personally to the tenant.

- Where do you see yourself living next year, who is in your life?
- What would be different if you did change the behavior?
- What would be different if you did not?
- Have you tried something similar in the past, how did that work?



Asking for elaboration and examples

Asking tenants to think critically and evaluatively about their actions and goals.

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Pete's Perspective



Pete tells the team he will give up his housing before he agrees to stop drinking. He likes some of the things in housing but he is ambivalent about it.

He likes drinking but can discuss a couple of downsides of that as well.

Housing might be better in a less closed-in space and he is interested in a small house but doesn't think that is possible.

He doesn't want the team to visit him because they bring bad news and he wants people to stop telling him to stop drinking.

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How might Motivational Interviewing be applied?

Focusing on the behavior interfering with housing gives Pete some experience in dealing with the drinking

Pete has identified a goal of different housing, giving a reason to elevate importance of keeping current unit

His hard work to get housing shows that he can achieve his goals (confidence-building)



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MI Tool: Decisional Balance Sheet

Small Group Exercise

Example: Pete drinking despite health & housing consequences

Continuing on as Before		Making a Change	
What are some of the good things?	What are some of the not so good things?	What are some of the not so good things?	What are some of the good things?
Benefits	Costs	Costs	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps me feel normal • I am living on my own terms • No nagging • Comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord complaints • I feel sick • It's hard to get up and do anything some days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won't have a way to relax • I will be tied to other people's rules (LL and doctor) • Accountable to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more peace of mind • Feel physically better • Be able to stay • Might be able to get a reference from landlord

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Staff Role

Gauging how ready each tenant is to change each behavior

How ready are you to change these behaviors?

- Worker shares information and options not identified by the person

Getting Change Talk Going:

- Is a house something you have wanted for a while?
- How would you move towards that?
- What would your landlord have to see in order to give a recommendation?
- What else could you do with the money you spend on alcohol?
- What physical symptoms could you improve by working with your doctor?

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Pete Update

Pete was able to make some friends who are not big drinkers and enjoy eating which Pete is finding he actually likes.

He is still drinking but has cut down and continues to eat lunch with his buddies. He is working with his case manager on maintaining a more sanitary apartment. He talked to his landlord about getting a reference and has been looking at houses online. It is still a dream.

Pete is addressing the drinking as it relates to his housing, but is not yet convinced he wants to quit. The drinking is expensive though and he will need money for the house.

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Ethical Issues: Coercion

Can we withhold services to motivate behavior change?

- Making transportation services contingent on some action by the participant
- Setting a limit on the number of times you will help apply for back rent
- Refusing to help negotiate a rent payment plan when a tenant did not follow a budget



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Harm Reduction

Consumer identifies goals and path to achieve them

Staff raises awareness of risk and strategies to reduce harm

Abstinence may be a goal, but alternatives that reduce risk are equally valued

Does not prevent intervention in cases of significant danger that is immediate or imminent

Recovery as nonlinear process

Highly accessible: low barriers, info



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Examples Of Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction can be applied to many behaviors that have negative consequences

- Based on public health goals of preventing disease and promoting health

Examples include:

- Schedule benefits appointments in early a.m.
- Sleep medication if responding to voices all night and won't consider anti psychotics
- Changing shifts if not able to wake up early
- Go to AA meeting when still using or relapsed
- Direct vendor checks for rent

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Harm Reduction Based On Open Communication



Discuss issues in terms of benefits and costs/consequences
(Of changing and not changing)



Harm reduction is not applied in imminent risk situations – worker needs to be assertive

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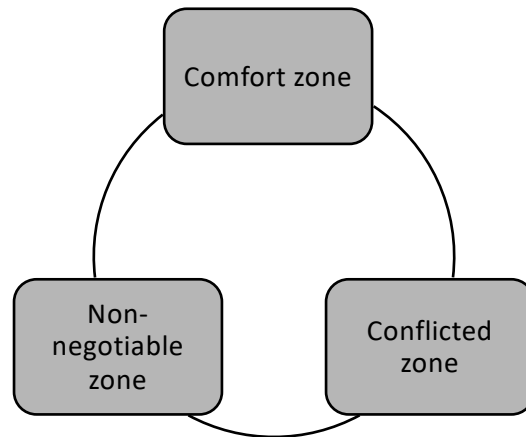


Housing First in Practice – Scenarios from the Field

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION: LIMITS ON CHOICE

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Supporting Choice



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Examples from your practice

- Share a scenario that you are currently dealing with that has you in the conflicted zone.
 - What is staff's role in this scenario?
 - What might happen to move this scenario to the non-negotiable zone?



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Examples from your practice (2)

- Share a scenario that you are currently dealing with that is in the non-negotiable zone.
 - What is staff's role in this scenario?
 - What steps might staff take to continue to keep this client informed and to safeguard the client's interests & rights?
 - What might happen to move this scenario to the comfort zone?



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Housing Perspective



The expectations of a lease or the community do not change and apply to everyone



Conditions of the lease must be made clear and consistently enforced



Lease violation issues will often be a reason to seek services



Workers focus on BEHAVIORS that interfere with functioning as tenant and member of community

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Housing First and Harm Reduction in the Community



Barriers to keeping housing also affect

- Accessing services the person needs and wants (goal based)
- Fully integrating into community
- Achieving life goals



Available and accessible resources

- Sometimes in home
- Available when needed
- Sustainable for the long term
- Flexible to facilitate participation

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Housing First and Harm Reduction in the Community(2)

Criminal Risks are defined

- Using in public will get you arrested: what are the alternatives?

How does behavior relate to life goals?

- Reuniting with family or grown children can be compromised
- The family may be reluctant to engage in presence of mental health symptoms

Employment is key element of recovery for many

- Barriers include difficulty keeping to a schedule, drug test, & behavior associated with psychiatric symptoms

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Harm Reduction Plan Sample

Housing Risk	Options	Factors in favor	Factors against	Non-negotiable
Eviction: landlord smells marijuana coming from apartment; children in building	Stop smoking pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solve problem with landlord Save money Expand possibilities for employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no commitment & frequently relapses Person says marijuana helps PTSD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must address the nuisance behavior
	Find another way to consume marijuana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May address landlord concern Would allow for continued use for PTSD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expense of continuing to consume Legal and employability risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants must pay rent
	Find a substitute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve nuisance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become addicted to Rx meds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could increase risks

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Using the Structure of the Lease

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Using the Lease to Structure the Work



- A primary goal is to be stably housed. To succeed, must manage tenancy obligations.
- Key to achieving goal is active coordination between landlords/property management and support services staff, while maintaining functional separation of the two.
- Separation of functions helps tenants learn by being treated no differently from any other tenant. (Don't want to create alternate reality)
- Problems threatening tenancy may motivate tenants to use services in order to keep their housing.

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Key Roles: Landlord - Services

- Landlord/property manager has a key role in helping people understand their obligations and comply with them. (Assertive approach)
 - Establish the expectations for the tenant
- The social services staff provide and arrange for services needed to maintain housing and also function as advocates for the tenant.
 - Assist the tenant to meet the expectations of tenancy



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Working Together Towards Housing Stability



Additional Training

A more in-depth training on
this topic, entitled:

Supporting Tenancy: Landlord
and Supportive Service
Coordination will take place
on June 11th. Location TBD.

Service Program Goals

Increase Tenants' Housing Stability

- Tenants to assume the full rights and responsibilities of tenancy
- Increase tenants' income and employment
- Build tenants skills in managing lease
- Increase tenants' independent living skills
- Prevent evictions



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Tenants' Goals



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Landlord Goals



- Well maintained and fully occupied building
- No Problems
- Limited turnover
- Full rent collection

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What Are We Trying To Accomplish



- Strike a balance among competing forces (financial demands of the building, security of site's community vs. needs of individual tenants)
- Foster a collaborative relationship between property management and social services
- Coordinate systems to effectively manage property management and social services
- Develop a fully integrated program that is an asset to the community, not a liability

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Managing the Collaboration

- Knowledge of services project goals: Assisting Tenants to Maintain Housing
- Landlords and supportive services understand each other's roles
- Input and feedback from landlords/case managers is valued
- Clear procedures and communication on topics such as: confidentiality, eviction prevention process, lease violations and crisis procedures

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Tension & Conflict is Inherent

- Landlord responsibilities vs. Social Services responsibilities
- Tension & conflict should not be seen as a negative factor or an impediment. Out of the push & pull creative solutions develop.
- The landlords own the building & are responsible to all tenants
- Tensions & conflicts need to have resolutions that lead to better strategies, systems, policies & procedures, quality of services.



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Dealing with Nuisance Behaviors



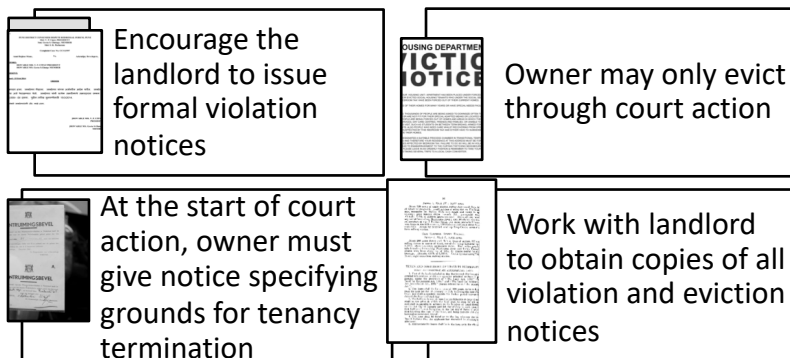
Nuisance behaviors are often minor, chronic lease violations which affect all tenants life in the building

Strategies:

- Assertive Property Management
- Pro-Active Supportive Services
- Good communication and seeing each others perspective
- Consistent use of lease and expectations
 - Setting clear parameters (what is too much noise)
- Using the Community
 - Setting community norms
- Setting up a system for enough is enough

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Lease Violations and Termination



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Working the Partnership



- Landlords/Property Managers & Social Services have different functions but must work together towards primary goal: keeping people housed in a safe, clean supportive environment.
- Different but overlapping functions cause tensions and conflicts; this is normal
- Understanding each department's function helps foster clear roles & goals
- Clear expectations, open communication & collaboration create effective working relationships

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Sharing Information



Confusion and frustration around what information can be shared and what information is confidential

EXAMPLES:

- Public display of intoxicated behavior: Public Information
- Tenant disclosing a mental health diagnosis or medical information: Confidential
- Other CONFIDENTIAL information: Any information that is obtained in the context of professional services is deemed privileged information

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Case Study: Jason



Jason is actively using drugs in his apartment and his partner who staff suspect is dealing has moved in. Neighbors are complaining but afraid to make a formal complaint. Jason's lease will expire next month.

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Moving Toward the Plan

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Building Skills



- Educating on rights and responsibilities
- **Modeling** for each tenant to negotiate with landlord and for services/supports
- Trying it out and debrief
- Establishing regular check-ins to see if it is working
- Review cost and benefits – **critical thinking**
- **Recognizing** strong partners and good skills
- Renegotiate the relationship as necessary

Changing Expectations



Moving from crisis to planning

From immediate to 15 minutes from now



Critical thinking

Use strategies and resources that work best for each tenant



Structure and purpose

Developing structure and purpose to days



Developing new or changed life roles

From homeless person to tenant, family member, student, worker, advocate, artist, volunteer

Questions



What is the goal?

What are the strengths that each Tenant brings?

What information or assistance can we bring?

What are the barriers to the goal?

What are the options to address the barriers and reach the goal?

What are the steps that identify progress?

What is the plan?

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Case Studies

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Josh



Josh is 24 & just moved into housing. He left his home at 12 & entered foster care and then the military. He got out a year ago and has been from friend to friend, shelter or on the street since. He has been working day labor for enough money to get by. He smokes marijuana "to help stay even" & goes to the VA sometimes for the PTSD group.

Josh engaged well when you were working on finding him a place but does not want you to visit now that he has his own place. He wants to get a job & have a normal life, not one filled with social workers. You find out from a friend of his that he recently bought a car. His sister is coming around & may be living there. You send him a text to see when you can meet & he says he will meet you at the shelter. He visits there often. Landlord has reported no lease violations.

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Claire

From the age of 16, Claire has been in a relationship with Stephen who is an older, controlling man, who has periodically been abusive. They had a child together whom she lost custody of when he was 3 and since then their lives became more chaotic and spiraled out of control with substance abuse and homelessness becoming prevalent. Claire was often in shelter, but remained in the relationship with Stephen, who slept outside, refusing shelter. So, the majority of the time, Claire did too.

Claire struggled to engage with services. She lived this way for about 10 years while her relationship with Stephen remained off and on. She stated she wanted a chance to prove herself and it was clear by this point that shelters did not work for her.



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Deb



Deb has been homeless for over a year. She has burned all her bridges. Family was willing to take her in, but her drinking caused lots of fights and arguments. Deb has been kicked out of most shelters, even the ones she liked, for her disruptive behavior. She does tell you that one shelter is willing to take her back, as long as she follows the rules and looks for permanent housing.

She was a nurse's aide 15 years ago but has not been steadily employed since then. She has applied for SSI but is in appeal. When she is not drinking, Deb is helpful to others. She has a plan to stay away from the shelter if she is drinking and tells you that she would like housing. She is tired of living this way.

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Sabrina



Sabrina is a 24-year old woman who has lived on the streets on and off for 4 years. She says she comes from a "broken" home and has basically been on her own since the age of 16. She left home to explore and hitchhiked to a bigger city with her boyfriend 3 years ago for a temporary visit, but ended up staying. With her desire to explore, came trying new things. She tried heroine and is now addicted. She's no longer with her boyfriend. Sometimes she has to steal. Sometimes she holds a sign for money. She doesn't believe in methadone treatment, but it's hard to get clean from something as physically addictive as heroine. Sabrina would like to find work and get the help she needs and have a healthy relationship with her family.

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George



George has done well in housing with a few set backs. Crisis had decreased and services and supports are in place. The landlord values him as a tenant and he helps out around the building. He still goes back to hang out with his buddies from the shelter, but he does not bring them home.

In the last month he seems to be in constant crisis. He has been in the ER twice, got arrested for loitering, and asked the landlord if he could pay half his rent. The other services he is connected to are not really responding to this crisis. George wants you to refer him to the church to pay his back rent. He calls you from the ER and the jail.

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Support for the Practice

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Support

Supervision: At least weekly individual supervision and weekly team meetings with case conferencing

Access to High Quality Clinical Services: For both consultation and direct services

Case Conferencing: Highlight best practices and resources, and identifies themes around barriers

Team Meetings: Informational, monitoring and support function, track where people are in transition and identify common barriers, share information and resources amongst team members, alert team to people in distress or crisis, identify best practices

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Characteristics of Successful Teams*

- Involve leaders
- Set shared aims
- Welcome everyone
- Self-conscious
- Non-linear
- Devolve control
- Manage knowledge with agility
- Reflective and responsive
- Sense- making
- Values asking
- Recognition economy
- Stimulates affection among members

Literature Review conducted by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Boston, MA

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Questions?

Closing

Housing First makes it possible for everyone to stabilize in their communities, eliminating barriers to housing access and providing support needed to maintain housing

Housing First is goal oriented and client driven

Housing First has the same rules as all other rental housing using case management to assist each tenant to meet these expectations

It takes a village and depends on quality supports and assertive landlords

Choice is only real in the context of each person's goals, knowledge, and consistent expectations



Resources

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Additional Reading

Housing First Manual: Tsemberis, Sam J. Housing First: The Pathways Model to End Homelessness for People with Mental Illness and Addiction. Dartmouth PRC-Hazelden. 2010

CT BOS Housing First Principles:

<http://www.ctbos.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CT-BOS-POLICIES-.pdf>

Permanent Supportive Housing Toolkit:

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4510>

Developing the Support in Supportive Housing:

http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Tool_DevelopingSupport_Guide.pdf

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Additional Reading – cont.

Housing First Checklist Interagency Council on Homelessness:

http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing_First_Checklist_FINAL.pdf

Harm Reduction Coalition. Principles of Harm Reduction:

<http://www.harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>

Pauly B, Reist D, Belle-Isle L, Schactman C (2012). Housing and harm reduction: What is the role of harm reduction in addressing homelessness? International Journal of Drug Policy. Volume 4, Issue 4, Pages 284-290.

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Additional Reading - MI

Miller, W.R. and Rollnick S. (2012). Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change. 3rd Edition. New York: Guilford Press.

Motivational Interviewing Website:

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

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