

# Coordinating Property Management and Services in Permanent Supportive Housing:

Connecticut BOS  
June, 2019



## Agenda

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- Supportive Housing Principles
- Tasks and Roles
- Securing Housing
- Landlord Priorities Exercise
- Working Together for Housing Stability
  - Communication
  - Eviction Prevention
- Case Studies
- Wrap up



Affordability

Safety and Comfort

Supportive Services that are Accessible, Flexible, and Target

Residential Stability

Empowerment and Independence

Integrated and Compatible with Community

## Principles of Supportive Housing

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## Using the Lease to Structure the Work:



- One of the goals is for each person to be stably housed and to do so, need to learn how to manage tenancy obligations.
- Key to achieving this goal is the active coordination between landlords/property management and support services staff, while maintaining the functional separation of these two staffs.
- Having separation of functions helps tenants learn by being treated no differently from any other tenant. (Don't want to create alternate reality)
- Problems that threaten tenancy may motivate tenants to use services in order to keep their housing.

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Key Roles:  
Property Management -Services

- Property Management / Landlord has a key role in helping people understand their obligations and comply with them. (Assertive approach)
  - Establish the expectations for the tenant
- The 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

# Property Management Tasks



- Assist tenants to maintain housing
- Safety and security
- Respond to crisis
- Enforce the lease and communicate effectively with tenants and services staff
- Physical Plant Maintenance (trash removal, repairs, room inspections, manage contracts w/ pest control and plumbing)
- Rent Collection (arrears, repayment agreements, settlement conferences and evictions)
- Financial Management (annual budgeting, record keeping, financial reports)
- Compliance with Funding Requirements
- Develop and implement emergency policies and procedures

## Services Tasks

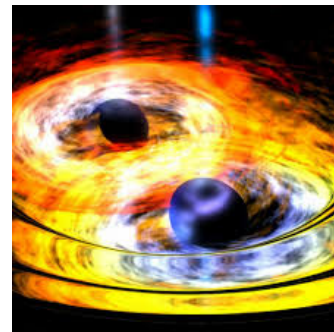
- Assist tenants to maintain housing and meet tenancy obligations
- Assist tenants to build skills of tenancy
  - Financial management and budgeting
  - Apartment maintenance
  - Lease compliance – occupancy, decreasing nuisance behavior
- Assist in preventing evictions
- Communicate effectively with tenants and building management staff
- Crisis prevention and management / Help access emergency assistance as needed
- Help increase income and employment
- Meet individual needs of tenants through case management services
- Facilitate and coordinate groups/meetings, educational forums, and other activities
- Assess and assist tenants to access treatment and supports
- Keep records of services provided and individual service plans



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## Areas of Overlap

- Building safety
- Tenant outreach, selection and orientation
- Rent payment (esp. with arrears)
- Lease violations – occupancy, health and safety, damages, nuisance and criminal activity
- Responding to crisis and emergencies
- Eviction prevention
- Community building
- Crisis response
- Community relations



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# Securing Housing

## Best Practices in Working with Landlords

Provide written program information

Explain role of CM as resource

- Provide contact information
- Means to resolve issue so that tenant can remain in housing

Engage in proactive outreach to landlords

- Call each month after rent should have been paid

Identify resources for landlords, e.g., minor repairs to apartments

- Weatherization opportunities

## Barriers to Securing Housing

Person's ability to negotiate and complete process

Locating acceptable housing

Transportation

Background checks conducted by landlords

- Credit
- Criminal background

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## Landlord Priorities

Financial: Rent, Damage, Maintenance Costs

Community: Neighbors, Look of the building, Police / Fire

Bother: Noise, Neighbor Complaints, Guests

Transaction: Paperwork, Timing of Subsidy Payments, Inspections

Divide up in groups and pick a priority. Define the role of landlord/property manager and services in each category

Report back on role



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## Financial Needs/Requirements

### Upfront cash needs

- Security deposit
  - Rent
  - Utility
  - Moving costs
- Furnishings

### Ongoing cash requirements

- Utility cost above 'utility allowance'
- Tenant rent – minimum rent
- Other living expenses

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Working Together Towards Housing Stability

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## PSH Goals

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### 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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- A safe place to live
- Work
- Enough money to live on
- Friends
- A role
- Community



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## What are we trying to accomplish

Strike	Foster	Coordinate	Develop
Strike a balance among competing forces (financial demands of the building, security of the 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 building 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
- Property Management and Supportive Services understand each other's roles
- Input and feedback from property management staff /case managers is valued
  - This includes all staff including security and maintenance
- Clear procedures and communication on topics such as: confidentiality, eviction prevention process, lease violations and crisis procedures

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## Communication Structure: best practices

Every relationship takes work and good communication

- Meeting Structure
  - Usually Directors, and PM/SS Team Meetings
    - Often PM rotates front desk, maintenance
    - Handout Standing Meeting Agenda
- Structured Meetings about Issues
  - Tenant selection roundtables, clean teams targeting hoarding behavior, addressing community norms
- Ensuring SS is cc'd on all written communication



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## Tension & Conflict is Inherent



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

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## Common Pitfalls

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- Different views about program responsibilities
- Disagreements about tenant selection
- Disagreements about how to handle inappropriate behavior from tenants
- Disagreements about safety and behavioral expectations
- Inconsistent enforcement of rules
- “Letting things slide”
- Issues related to tenant confidentiality
- Disagreements about evictions
- Unclear communication
- Tenant dissatisfaction with the apartment/services



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## Addressing Lease Violations

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- Strategies to address lease violations include:
  - Pro-active Supportive Services
    - A lease in every chart
    - Hands on methods to address chronic violations
    - Teach tenancy skills
    - Clear communication with property management staff and tenants
  - Assertive Property Management:
    - Immediate remedies to address risk to tenants safety
    - Clear process of addressing other lease violations and time frames
    - Clear communication with Tenants and Social Services
    - Commitment to eviction prevention



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## Dealing with Nuisance Behaviors

Nuisance behaviors are often minor lease violations that are chronic and 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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## Case Studies

Divide into groups.

Take 15 minutes and make a plan and define roles of how to handle each situation



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## Eviction Prevention

- Know Tenancy rights
- <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm031.pdf>
- Be familiar with the lease
- Know the eviction process
- Have an agency/landlord plan regarding: financial assistance, lawyers, court
- Locate resources for back rent / utilities
- Develop relationships with tenant lawyers
- Develop time frames for securing assistance
- Provide hand on or develop resources for hands on assistance (hoarding)
- Work with landlord and tenant to develop a plan
- Handout: [Sample Lease Violation Roles Chart](#)

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## Balancing Perspectives

- Individual tenant needs vs. community
- Supporting tenant vs. enabling tenant
- Tenant's needs vs. lease compliance and house rules
- Tenant choice vs. proactive engagement
- Areas of overlapping responsibility can cause the greatest amount of staff conflict
- Conflicts should not be ignored or overlooked. Rather they should be openly acknowledged within the context of these shared responsibilities and then resolved.



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## Characteristics of Successful Teams

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- 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

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## Sharing Information and Confidentiality

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There is often a great deal of 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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## Sharing Information and Confidentiality



- Laws and regulations limit the amount of private information that can be shared. Health-related information is protected by federal, state and local laws.
- Information can only be shared with the person's consent.
- Info about specific diagnoses, treatment and support plans cannot be shared with PM. However, plans to maintain tenancy can be shared.

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## Sharing Information and Confidentiality

- This can cause tension in the relationship between the two staff as Social Service Staff generally have more information.
- However, and again, public behavior is public behavior and there is no limitation on discussing that information.
- Social services workers can share whether they feel they are making progress with people and whether they are able to get the person to engage in services to resolve tenancy problems.



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## Final Comments

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

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## Discussion

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