

## **Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) Questions & Answers**

1. Who has the SPDAT been tested on and who can it be used on?

**Answer:**

- **VI (Vulnerability Index) SPDAT** – is a prescreening to the full SPDAT for a homeless individual.
- **F-VI (Family Vulnerability Index) SPDAT** – is a prescreening to the full Family SPDAT.
- **SPDAT** – is the full SPDAT to be used for a homeless individual.
- **F (Family) -SPDAT** – the family SPDAT examines the entire homeless family unit. The SPDAT has been tested on
- **Youth.** So long as youth are compared to youth it works. When youth are compared to adults, youth are disadvantaged. A youth-specific VI-SPDAT and SPDAT will be released in February 2015.
- A script for using the SPDAT with **Survivors of Domestic Violence (DV)** is being tested but has not been made available for use at this time.

2. What do you do when a client answers “I don’t know” to a question?

**Answer:** Ask probing questions to see if you can help him/her out.

3. Do you need to ask the questions verbatim?

**Answer:** Yes; however, you may ask them in a different format/order based if approved by your agency.

4. What happens if a client’s acuity is high for Permanent Supportive Housing (PHS) and no units are available? What should we do?

**Answer:** You are to assist the client with housing that is available and use Progressive Engagement to work on getting the client to stay housed. Do not say that you do not have any PSH units available and are unable to assist the client.

5. Do legal issues include past or current landlord/tenant issues?

**Answer:** Yes, but because this will not likely result in incarceration, it will be recorded as a one (1).

6. Can you use the SPDAT tool with individuals who are already in PSH?

**Answer:** Yes. This tool may show you that these clients only need light touch case management or something more short-term.

7. Should agencies have an annual training once they begin using the tool?

**Answer:** Yes. MSHDA will be scheduling train-the-trainer sessions once agencies begin using the tool and dates/locations will be sent out.

8. Generally, who is already using SPDAT?

**Answer:** Communities in Canada, Michigan, Rhode Island, North Dakota, Utah, Florida, California, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Minnesota, Washington D.C., Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

9. What happens if the client refuses to answer certain questions?

**Answer:** MSHDA will be provided with a sub-set of questions or alternatives for you to ask that client in the place of the questions they do not feel comfortable answering so that you still get an accurate score.

10. Can SPDAT be used on youth?

**Answer:** See the answer to question one above.

11. Can SPDAT be used on Survivors of Domestic Violence?

**Answer:** See the answer to question one above.

12. What if a person refuses to answer (any) SPDAT questions – do we still serve?

**Answer:** Yes! There are still basic questions that can be utilized to determine 'need' and a case manager can use their observation skills, providing case management and referral and help prepare a housing plan with the individual, but they would not be prioritized for housing. If they kept returning for assistance, the CM would again explain the purpose of the questions. Of course, the case file should include a notation about the refusal.