

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN
COALITION
TO END
HOMELESSNESS

DIVERSION AND RAPID EXIT PROGRAM

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS
GOODWILL NORTHERN MICHIGAN AND
NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

DIVERSION AND RAPID EXIT PROGRAM

Overview

Diversion is a practice being implemented in communities across the country and is used to assist people to resolve their immediate housing crisis by accessing alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living.

Diversion provides an opportunity to assist those who are requesting homeless housing resources (e.g. shelter) in finding possible housing options outside of the traditional homeless system, ensuring that immediate and alternative arrangements are fully explored and supported while reserving shelter beds for those who are the most vulnerable and have no other options.

Targeted Diversion services offer light-touch services with minimal financial assistance to people experiencing homelessness for the first time and whose housing options may likely include less-than-ideal housing situations. Diversion does not necessarily ensure that individuals or families will have housing that meets the standard affordability standard (meaning housing where the household pays only 30 percent of their income toward housing costs), nor is it designed to eliminate poverty or housing mobility. Within the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness, providers refer to diversion services as creative problem solving.

The Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness is committed to the practice of Diversion as shelter capacity and housing stock remain limited. As in every community across the country, the need for homeless services in NW Michigan exceeds the resources available. Now, more than ever we must practice intensive and comprehensive diversion services to ensure every effort is being made at the front end of the homeless response system to address critical capacity issues.

NWCEH is committed to changing the philosophy of the Coordinated Entry System to include comprehensive Diversion strategies across all access points and throughout the course of someone's experience of homelessness.

From	To	Responsible party
What programs are you eligible for and who has a bed available	What would resolve your current housing crisis?	Call Center Staff
Assessment/Eligibility	Structured problem-solving conversation about household situation and resources	Street Outreach / Shelter and Diversion worker
Intake or put on wait list	Support crisis resolution to avoid shelter entry	Diversion Worker

Diversion Services

Diversion case managers will provide a combination of direct services and limited financial assistance to individuals and families for up to 30 days resulting in an alternate safe and stable housing arrangement. This removes the immediate need for additional homeless services including emergency shelter, or rapid-rehousing intervention.

Case managers will identify solutions and alternate housing arrangements to immediately resolve a client's housing crisis such as re-establishing lease terms with recent landlord or identifying a viable doubled-up situation with family or friends. Additionally, case managers will provide ongoing assessment for health and safety risks that may indicate diversion services are not an appropriate intervention. This includes situations when a client indicates they do not feel safe remaining in their current housing situation or that one or more members of their household have a chronic health or behavioral health condition that is being exacerbated by their current housing situation.

For up to 30 days, case managers will provide diversion services to identify a viable housing solution for clients. If within 30 days the household cannot identify a housing solution, or a newly identified safety and/or health risk impacts their ability to remain in their housing, the case manager will consult with partners of the NWCEH to develop an appropriate next step for the client including a referral to rapid re-housing services or placement in an emergency shelter. If entering a motel or a shelter for the first time, clients will be engaged at least once per day.

Diversion Outcomes

Effective Diversion practices can reduce the length of time homelessness, number of households experiencing homelessness and in turn increase the rate of households returning to housing and are not entering an already homelessness system.

DIVERSION OUTCOMES

1. Permanently back with family or friends
2. Return to their own residence
3. Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing
4. Relocating permanently to safe place out of town

Target Population

Individuals or families who present to the homeless response system as literally homeless should all be screened using diversion strategies at the first point of contact to the system. Those experiencing homelessness for the first time are more likely to be successfully diverted than those who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

It is critical for all access points within the Coordinated Entry System are committed and are adherent to the workflows, processes, and procedures surrounding Diversion practices. The Call Center is often the first point of access for individuals and families accessing the homeless response system for the first

time. Build out of an initial level of triage and more comprehensive diversion is key to making this process successful.

1. Families entering a motel
2. First time shelter stayers across the NWCEH region
3. People experiencing street homelessness for the first time
4. People who were successfully exited from Street Outreach or Shelter programs and have returned to homelessness within 6 months

Eligible Program Activities and Financial Expenses

This model is structured to provide light-touch services and limited financial assistance to help clients explore other possible options for securing housing outside of the traditional homeless serving system.

Services include:

- Initial meeting with the household to brainstorm/explore possible non-traditional options
- Mediation and/or dispute resolution with previous landlords, family or friends
- Referrals to mainstream services or other community resources
- Post exit follow-up (up to 30 days)

Eligible financial assistance includes:

- Payment for background and credit checks
- Landlord fees
- Move-in costs (including deposit and first month's rent; cost of moving truck; storage)
- Utility deposits and arrears
- Previous housing debt/rental arrears
- Transportation (including bus tickets for both local transportation and relocation)
- Grocery card
- Interpreter costs
- Fees for assistance securing ID's, birth certificates, social security cards
- Certifications or license fees related to school or employment
- Work or education related assistance
- Other types of financial costs that will help the family obtain housing

Tracking: (data)

- Using the new Coordinated Entry assessment in HMIS
- Build out a diversion provider page in HMIS
- Create a workflow for entry into HMIS Diversion provider page
- Create a service delivery workflow for providers

Definitions

System Level Diversion

- Starts with the FIRST contact with a homelessness system access point
- Could result in no further assistance or follow up with diversion case manager

Shelter Diversion

- Starts with the call center and continues at the shelter

Rapid Exit

- Starts the day after shelter entry with street outreach or shelter staff contacting the client THE NEXT morning following entry.
- Intensive service that is continued for up to 30 days.

YOUTH DIVERSION SCRIPT AND WORKFLOW

First of all, I want you to know that your safety is very important to me. Are you in a safe place right now to answer some questions? Are you in a place where you feel pretty comfortable answering some questions that might be personal?

IF NO PROCEED WITH SAFETY PLANNING WORKFLOW BELOW

- Can I ask where you are?
- Is the unsafe person in the room right now?
- If yes, can you go somewhere safe like a neighbor, friend, or public space?
- If no, do you need to get to somewhere safe right now? (Immediately start problem solving around getting them safe right now)
- Do you need me to contact the police for you?
- Would it be easier to text me? If yes, provide them with the intake cell number

IF YES, PROCEED WITH SCRIPT BELOW

Great, I'm glad you are feeling like you are in a safe place. So now I'm hoping we can talk for a bit so that I can understand your housing situation and work with you to figure out a solution that you feel comfortable with. Sometimes for people that looks like helping you come up with some supports that might be able to help you stay where you are (if it's safe), sometimes it looks like helping you find another place to stay or person to stay with, and for some people that means help you access a shelter if that's what you choose.

Does that sound okay with you?

If yes: Okay great. Now I am going to ask you some questions that take about 10 minutes or so to answer. If at any time you don't understand something or aren't sure why I am asking you something PLEASE stop me and ask a question or tell me you aren't comfortable answering.

YOUTH DIVERSION SCRIPT AND WORKFLOW

STEP 1

Why are you calling today?

Are you calling with anyone helping you like school staff or a case worker? If so, are you comfortable telling me who is working with you today?

STEP 2

Can I ask where you stayed last night?

STEP 3 (IF STAYING WITH SOMEONE)

Was the place you stayed last night a safe place for you? Are you staying with someone who ever threatens you or makes you fearful, makes you do things you don't feel comfortable with? ***add 9 and 10

If unsafe, **STOP** here and proceed to safety planning.

If safe, **proceed to step 4.**

9. Does anybody force or trick you to do things you

STEP 3 (IF ON THE STREETS)

How long have you been staying outside?

What happened to your housing that you are now staying outside?

Have you been in contact with _____, _____ or _____ from the Street Outreach Team?

When is the last time you stayed with someone or had any type of stable housing?

If place is identified, **proceed to step 3A.**

If nothing is identified, **proceed to step 3B (which needs to be changed to step 5)**

10. Do you ever do things that may be considered to be risky, like exchange sex for money, food, drugs, or a place to stay, run drugs for someone, have unprotected sex with someone you don't know, share a needle, or anything like that?

STEP 3A (IF A PLACE IS IDENTIFIED)

Can I ask why you left?

Would it be a safe place for you to return if you were able?

If no: **STOP** here and **proceed to step 3B.**

If yes: What about going back?

What do you think it would take in order to stay there? Is there some help we might be able to provide in order for you to be able to stay?

Some things we can help with are: (see chart)

YOUTH DIVERSION SCRIPT AND WORKFLOW

Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Mediation with landlord•Mediation with family or friends•Mediation, assistance or advocacy with another non-profit
Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•DHHS for rental assistance•Prevention rental assistance•Other non-profit for rental assistance
Temporary Assistance from Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Utility assistance•Gas card•Bus Fare•Food Assistance•Case management support

If any of these items are identified as helpful **STOP here and make referral to Diversion Case Manager.**

STEP 4

What is the relationship between you and the person you are staying with?

How long have you been staying there? Would it be safe for you to stay there again for the next 72 hours (frame what 72 hours looks like...)?

If yes: okay, would it be alright with you if I referred you to a case manager here to help you explore more options that might be longer than 72 hours? If yes, **STOP and refer to the Diversion Case Manager.**

If no, proceed to step 5.

STEP 3B

Is there somewhere else where you/you and your family could stay temporarily? Some people have some family, friends, or co-workers they know who are safe and might let them stay there for a while.

If yes: okay, would it be safe for you to stay there again for the next 72 hours?

If yes: okay, would it be alright with you if I referred you to a case manager here to help you explore more options that might be longer than 72 hours? If yes, **STOP and refer to the Diversion Case Manager.**

If no, is there some help we might be able to provide in order for you to be able to stay somewhere else that you might have been thinking about? (see chart)

YOUTH DIVERSION SCRIPT AND WORKFLOW

Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mediation with landlord• Mediation with family or friends• Mediation, assistance or advocacy with another non-profit
Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DHHS for rental assistance• Prevention rental assistance• Other non-profit for rental assistance
Temporary Assistance from Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utility assistance• Gas card• Bus Fare• Food Assistance• Case management support

If yes after offering services listed above: okay, would it be alright with you if I referred you to a case manager here to help you explore more options that might be longer than 72 hours? If yes, **STOP and refer to the Diversion Case Manager.**

If still no: okay at this point it sounds like we aren't able right now to come up with any more options about people you can stay with. So, here's what we can do: we can help you access a shelter if you would like. In helping you get to shelter we can talk about what that might look like, like where it's located, can we give you a ride, what the intake process is like, and can help you meet up with staff that will be working with you once you enter the shelter.

Or, you can choose to stay where you are right now (if you don't have to be out or aren't going to leave) and you can call me back if you change your mind? Do either of those options sound like something you can commit to right now?



Participant Screening & Acknowledgement of Financial Assistance Eligibility

Program Certification: Diversion Financial Assistance Domestic Violence Survivor Financial Assistance

Date: _____

HMIS#: _____

HOH Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Current Address/Shelter: _____

Client reports to be a Detroit resident but staying with family/friends outside of Detroit and will need shelter in the City of Detroit without this assistance.

Family Size: Adults _____ Children (Under 18) _____ Total: _____

I, _____, acknowledge per my signature on this statement the following:

_____ **All Households:** I am being diverted from homelessness and will be in a safe space described below.

_____ **For Diversion Assistance only:** Diversion financial assistance is limited to \$1500 annually (cannot receive more than \$1500 financial assistance in any twelve month period).

_____ **For Domestic Violence Survivor Program Assistance only:** I certify that I am a survivor of Domestic Violence and currently experiencing homelessness.

Address (street, city, state)	
Name of third party confirming location	
Relationship to household	
Contact information for third party	

Assistance Received	Value of Assistance (Support documentation if applicable. lease)
Gas Purchase	
Bus Tickets	
Cab, Lyft, etc.	
Food Assistance	
Rental Assistance	
Rental Arrears	
Utility Assistance	
Hotel Assistance	
Other (describe)	



Area Median Income (AMI) Chart

Income Limit Per # of household members	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons
30% AMI	16,800	19,200	21,600	24,000	25,950	27,850	29,800	31,680
50% AMI	27,500	32,000	36,000	40,000	43,200	46,400	49,600	52,800

Check box for households reporting for Domestic Violence Survivor Certification; These households are Exempt from Income reporting

Income Calculation Table
Must be completed on behalf of entire household

Annual Income					
Family Member	Wages/Salary	Benefits	Child Support	Other Income	Total
Household Size				Total Annual Household Income	
30% AMI for HH Size				50% AMI for HH Size	
At or below 30% AMI?		YES	NO	At or below 50% AMI?	
				YES	NO

By signing below, I certify that all information within this document, including income information, is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

_____ | _____
Participant's Signature (HOH) Date

_____ | _____ | _____
CAM Staff Name Printed CAM Staff Signature Date



CAM Access Point Diversion Information & Assessment

The practice of diverting people from services is a helpful and necessary part of the coordinated entry system. As an individual or family presents for shelter, considerable effort must be made to ensure that all other possible natural supports have been exhausted prior to undertaking a shelter admission.

The goal for diversion is to assist the consumer in finding a safe and viable alternative to emergency shelter.

The outcomes to Diversion falls under the following 'Needs':

- **Immediate Need: Where can they go tonight?**
- **Short Term Need: Where can they go temporarily?**
- **Long Term Need: Where can they go permanently?**

Diversion is a Continuous process, meaning:

Assisting consumers in resolving their housing crisis at every engagement and opportunity; problem solving conversations may need to happen more than once. Sometimes reflection is needed to consider at what point a different or more intensive strategy will be required.

Exploring Options with Consumers:

Help consumers think of creative solutions and explore every option. This is about being realistic and helping consumers identify what supports they already have. We can do this by walking and talking through the consumer's entire support network to identify what possible immediate term, short term, or long-term options are available. Sometimes this means revisiting options continuously throughout the conversation or even exploring *why* it may not be a viable option.

Other Techniques to use during engagement:

- Send another staff in the room to talk with the consumer – peer/supervisor
- Mind-mapping – on paper
- Strength-based and empowerment concepts should be explored – we are here to assist, not solve the problem for the consumer. The consumer should be leading the engagement. An example of what this looks like includes: allowing the consumer space to reflect, the consumer making calls on their own, the consumer identifying their resources and supports within their network to explore, providing client choice (with being realistic about the outcomes, etc.).
- Assist them in making calls – who can you speak to on their behalf
- Reiterate what emergency shelter is for – immediate need for shelter, not housing
- Track housing history to get an understanding as to why they need shelter

Things to remember:

- This is a 'day-by-day' process: Diversion is still a success even if the consumer does represent – remember 'Immediate'



CAM Access Point Diversion Information & Assessment

- Sometimes ‘Immediate Diversion’ can turn into ‘Short Term’ or ‘Long Term’ on its own—*Consumer is diverted to a family member for the night and indicates they are going to return the next day but they do not represent to the AP.*
- You are the consumer’s advocate
- Listen and validate a consumer’s experience
- Be client-centered; don’t assume what people need – help them articulate their needs
- Use a strength-based approach; help clients identify strengths, successes, and resources they’ve used in the past
- Be consistent and non-judgmental
- Support & Trust that people want to succeed and have done so previously

Creative Problem-Solving Conversation Advice (for Doubled up situations):

How to make “Doubled up” situations more manageable:

- Contributing to the household foods, supplies, etc.
- If you’re home all day, help with cooking, chores, childcare
- Give the person you are staying with some quiet time; consider going to your room, for a walk, library, etc.
- Don’t let frustrations build up.



CAM Access Point Diversion Information & Assessment

DATE: _____

CLIENT NAME: _____

HMIS NUMBER: _____

STAFF PERSON: _____

AP SITE: _____

There are nine steps to an effective diversion practice:

STEPONE: Explanation of the diversion conversation.

“There may not be any shelter space available today or in the near future, due to the limited space and the amount of need; we cannot guarantee availability of shelter space. Anything that you can do to end your own homelessness, you should be considering. Also, I am here to assist you by exploring some other possible options you may have within your support network to identify a safe place to stay tonight.”

STEPTWO:

- Why are you seeking emergency shelter today?

- What are all the other things you tried or thought about trying before you sought shelter today?

STEPTHREE:

- Where did you stay last night? Why did you leave?

- a. If staying with someone else, what is the relationship between them and you?



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- b. How long have you been staying there? _staying here for a year.
Came from Texas, has family here and there.

- c. Would it be safe for you (and your household) to stay there again
for the next 3-7 days?

- d. If unsafe, Why?

If cannot stay there safely, or if were staying in a place unfit for human
habitation, move to Step Six.

- e. **For households presenting as families:** If all persons in your
household are not able to stay there temporarily, can anyone?

- f. Where did you stay prior to the place you stayed last night?
What happened that you left?

STEPFOUR:

- What is the primary/main reason that you had to leave the place where
you stayed last night?

- Are there additional reasons why you can't stay there any longer?

- What can we do to help you remain there?

STEPFIVE:

- Do you think that you/you and your family could stay there again
temporarily if we provide you with some help or referral to find permane



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Do you have any other housing options or connect with other services?

Yes No

- If no, why not? What would it take to be able to stay there temporarily?

STEP SIX:

- If no, is there somewhere elsewhere you/you and your family could stay temporarily if we provide you with some help or referrals to find permanent housing and access other supports? For example what about other family members? Friends? Co-workers?

- What would it take for you to be able to stay there temporarily?

STEP SEVEN:

- What is making it hard for you to find permanent housing for you/you and your family- or connect to other resources that could help you do that?

- a. For example, do you or does anyone in your family have special needs or a medical condition? How does this affect your housing situation?

- b. Do you owe money for rent or utilities?

Yes No

If Yes, how much do you owe?



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c. Are you new to the area?

Yes No

- In terms of housing, have you tried other things like living with family members?

STEP EIGHT:

- What resources do you have right now that could help you and your family find a place to stay temporarily or find permanent housing?

a. For example, are you getting any help from other family members or friends?

b. Do you have income? What are the sources?

c. If you have some financial resources, are you able to use some of those resources to stay somewhere temporarily?

- Hotel/Motel? _____
- With a family member? _____
- With a friend? _____

d. Are you involved with any other services right now?

STEP NINE:

- Besides shelter, what would resolve your current housing crisis?

- Who can you stay with for tonight only?



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- _____
- Who can you stay with temporarily until there is another possible resolution?

- **For households presenting as families:** Is it possible for your family to temporarily separate into other locations so that everyone has a safe place to stay tonight?

- If admitted to shelter there is still an expectation that you will be attempting to secure permanent housing for you and your family:

What is your plan at this point for securing housing if you are admitted to shelter?

Possible Support Network Options:

Family Members

Local: _____

Non-Local: _____

Friends

Local: _____

Non-Local: _____

Church/Perish

Church Leadership: _____

Church Members: _____

Church Funds: _____



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Neighbors: _____

Co-Workers: _____

School

School-aged (minor children): _____

College/Trade School (Student Affairs/Resources): _____

McKinney Vento Homeless Liaison: _____

Other supports to consider:

DHS: _____

American Red Cross: _____

Community Resources: _____

Prevention Resources: _____

CPS – *only if there is a current open case and a worker who can assist in offering additional options (e.g. knowledge of family members, funding for temporary hotel stay, etc.):*

Temporarily Altering Family Composition

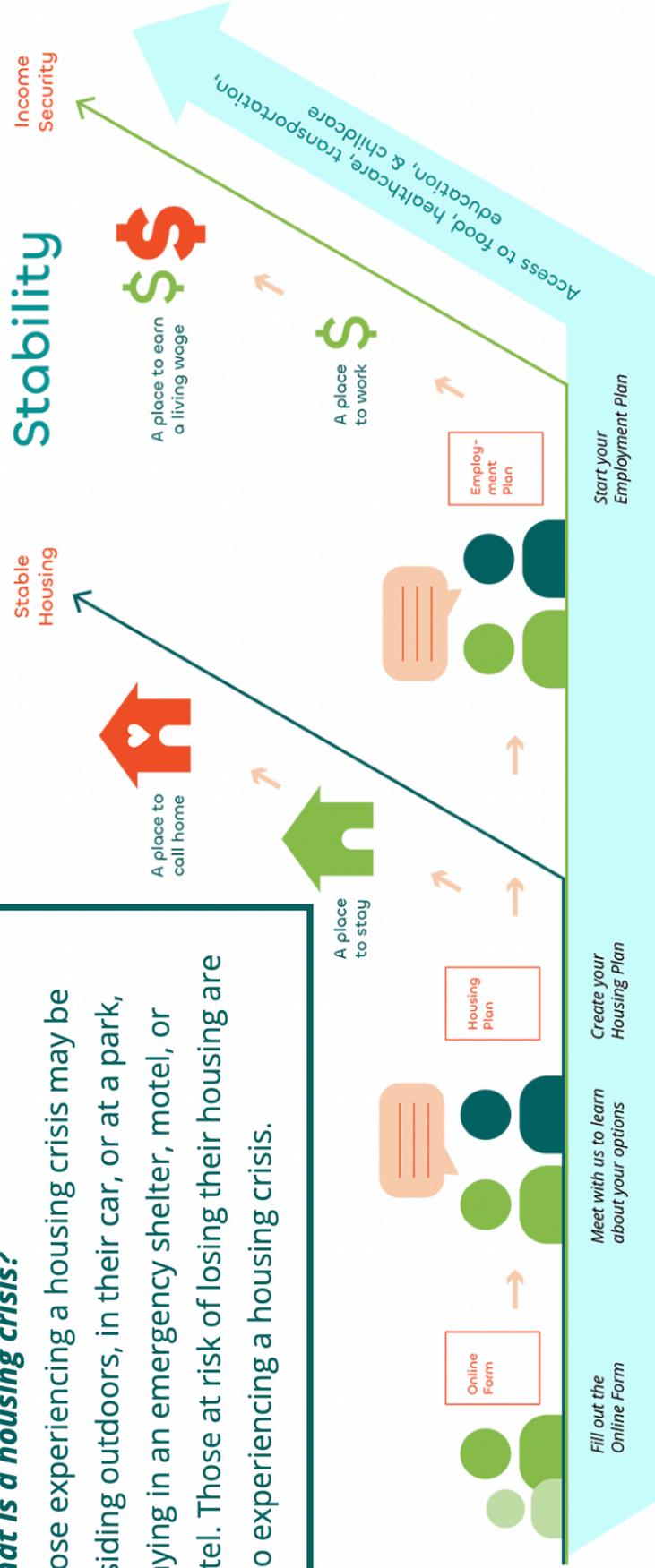
Is there another parent the children can go with?

Are there any family/friends the children are able to go with?

How it works

A clear pathway of support.

What is a housing crisis?
Those experiencing a housing crisis may be residing outdoors, in their car, or at a park, staying in an emergency shelter, motel, or hotel. Those at risk of losing their housing are also experiencing a housing crisis.



Assess Caller Safety

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you safe and able to answer questions right now?• Is someone with you right now who makes you feel unsafe? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you need me to contact police right now?• Would it be easier to text or email me? |
|---|---|

Reason for Seeking Shelter

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What have you already tried?• What have you thought about, but haven't tried yet? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where did you stay last night? How long were you there?• Can you safely return there for a few days? |
|--|---|

Reason They Cannot Stay at Previous Place

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main reason you had to leave?• Are there other reasons you cannot stay? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could you stay temporarily if we help you find a long-term solution?• What would it take for you to be able to stay temporarily? |
|--|---|

Explore Other Options

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have any other friends or relatives that might let you stay temporarily while we work on a permanent solution? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there someone far away that might let you stay with them if we can get you there? |
|---|--|

Explore Housing Barriers

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you been homeless before? What happened?• How have you managed to stay housed in the past? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does successful housing look like for you?• Do other people help you with things like cleaning and paying bills? |
|--|--|

Explore Additional Resource

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What kinds of income do you have?• Do you have friends or family who can help you financially while you move into new housing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you able to work if not currently employed?• Are there other things you could do to earn money? |
|---|--|

Make Housing the Priority

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you are accepted into shelter, you will be expected to make permanent housing your priority. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your plan for finding new housing?• What do you need help with? |
|---|--|



ST. JOHN'S COORDINATED ACCESS

PRE-SCREENER

Consent to collection & disclosure of personal info must be signed before this form is completed.

Please ensure that you're familiar with the CA Pre-Screener Information Sheet before filling out this form. Note that prevention/diversion measures must be exhausted prior to referral into CA.

1. Individual (or head of household) name: _____

2. Please indicate the individual or family's current homelessness status:

- Chronic homelessness** – Continually homeless for a year or more OR 4+ episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, due to complex and persistent barriers related to health, mental health, and substance use
- Episodic homelessness** – Homeless for less than a year AND <4 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, due to complex issues such as addictions or family violence
- Transitional homelessness** – Homeless for the first time OR <2 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, generally due to economic or housing challenges, requiring minimal and one-time assistance
- Imminent risk of homelessness** – Housed, but do not have safe and appropriate housing for at least two months and do not have the resources or support networks necessary to avoid homelessness
- None of the above, please specify:** _____

3. What is the individual or family's current housing situation?

<input type="checkbox"/> Institution – health (including addiction treatment) <input type="checkbox"/> Institution – corrections GO TO QUESTION 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Housed <input type="checkbox"/> Couch surfing (i.e. staying with friends/family/others) <input type="checkbox"/> Group home GO TO QUESTION 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Rough sleeping (i.e. outside, car) GO TO QUESTION 6
--	---	--

4. Do you have a safe and stable housing situation to return to?

Yes **GO TO QUESTION 5**

No **FILL OUT BELOW, THEN GO TO QUESTION 6**

Please indicate, and explain, imminent safety and/or stability concerns:

5. Is your housing situation a safe and stable place to live for at least two months?

Yes **DIVERT**

No **FILL OUT BELOW, THEN GO TO QUESTION 6**

Please indicate, and explain, safety and/or stability concern(s):

6. What has been tried already? Specify at least 3 attempts. Please indicate the outcome.

Attempts:

- Housing search support
- Landlord mediation
- Financial mediation (budgeting, credit counselling)
- Temporary stay with family or friends until housing
- Temporary emergency shelter until housing is found
- Home care supports
- Income resources (Income Support, CPP, OAS etc.)
- Food bank, clothing, furniture support referrals
- Employment support referrals
- Access to community agency support services
- Referrals for mental health, trauma, substance use
- Referrals to address family/relationship breakdown
- Referrals to address behavioral issues

Outcomes:

Other Attempts:

Outcome:

Referral Agency: _____
Referral Contact: _____
Signature: _____

Date: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

*Upon completion, please send the Pre-Screener to ca-ehsj@stjohns.ca

*To inquire about the status of a completed Pre-Screener, please contact:
Justin Mahon, Coordinated Access Support Worker
709-699-1316 or jmahon@stjohns.ca

EHSJ (CA) ONLY

Diverted

Screened in

CT Coordinated Access Network

Initial Assessment

Client Name: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer: _____

Location: _____

This is a worksheet to help guide your conversation. Space is provided to take notes. This is not an official form.

Step 1: Introduce yourself and the purpose of the appointment

“ Hi, my name is _____ and I work for _____ which is a part of the _____ Coordinated Access Network. The purpose of this meeting is to help you and your family find a safe place to stay. Typically shelters in this area are very full and the goal is that we brainstorm alternatives to staying in shelter. The hope is we can find another safe place for you to stay, other than a shelter OR help you return to where you were staying previously.”

Step 2: Active Listening

Allow the person to tell their story about their housing crisis



Step 3: Strengths Exploration

Over the past 6 months, what have you been able to do to avoid seeking emergency shelter?	Identify when you have been a support to others?	What were things like for you when things were going better?	Who are your friends, allies, and family members?
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Step 4: Moving Forward



It's their choice!

Help pick the best option:

Going back to live with friends and family

Returning to their own residence

Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing

Relocating to a safe, permanent place out of town

Shelter Waitlist

Consider?

- Is this option:
 - Safe?
 - Appropriate for the client?
- If not, use reality testing



Reality Testing

- “How would this look?”
- “What is the timeline?”
- “Have you done something like this before?”
- “What other options have you considered?”
- “What resources do you have to carry this out?”
- “In case this does not work out as well as you would like, would you like to explore a back-up plan?”

Step 5: Getting Help

Help the client call family and friends

Make referrals to other resources

If they cannot be diverted, put the family on the shelter waitlist

Step 6: Complete the paperwork

Fill out what you can; you may have already obtained much of the required information by active listening.

- HMIS CAN Release
- CAN Assessment (Preferably directly into HMIS)
- VI-SPDAT - ONLY IF THE CLIENT IS LITERALLY HOMELESS (outdoors, in a car, uninhabitable location)
 - have been staying outside/uninhabitable location and will return to staying outside
 - Check HMIS to see if they have an existing VI – SPDAT. Only do a new one if major life changes have occurred.

Brantford-Brant Homelessness System of Care



GUIDE AND DEFINITIONS

Staff should complete the **Client Profile Form** every time the client is seeking services. Staff should complete the **Diversion Questionnaire** if there is a “break in service”. The examples below identifies what is counted as a break in service, and what is not.

Break in Service	Not a Break in Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The client does not have any service records on HIFIS within the past 7 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The client does have service records on HIFIS within the past 7 days.

Table 1: Definitions for Client Profile Form

Canadian Citizen - Born in Canada	Client was born in Canada
Canadian Citizen - Born Outside of Canada	Client was not born in Canada, citizenship was acquired through the naturalization process
First Nations: Off-reserve	Clients who are not part of a reserve, but who do identify with a First Nations community
First Nations: On-reserve	Clients who are part of a reserve
Former RCMP	Former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Genderqueer	Of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity cannot be categorized as solely male or female.
Geographic Region	The Geographic Region represents where the client identifies that they lived 2 weeks ago. The Regions reflect the community that is the Service Manager for housing services.
Inuit	Refers to Indigenous people from Northern Canada who live in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador
Metis	People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Indigenous people.
Non-Indigenous	Clients who do not identify as Indigenous
Non-status	A person who is not registered as an Indian under the Indian Act
Not a veteran	Client is not a veteran
Permanent Resident/ Immigrant	Landed immigrant or an immigrant who has settled permanently in Canada, but has not acquired Canadian citizenship
Questioning	An individual who is in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination thereof.
Refugee	A person who has arrived in Canada and seeks the protection of Canada. There are three options for refugee status: claimant, convention, or a person in need of protection. Refugee claimants are temporary residents in the humanitarian population category who request refugee protection upon or after arrival Canada. A refugee has received final determination that he or she is a Protected Person and is eligible to apply for permanent residence.
Student Visa	Foreign students pursuing studies at a Canadian educational institution
Transgender	Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.
Undeclared / Prefer not to say	Client declined to describe their status, or their status is unknown
Unknown	Client's Indigenous status is unknown
Veteran – Allies	Clients who fought during a war as an ally. Allied countries fought alongside Canada during the First World War, Second World War or Korean War
Veteran – Canadian Armed Forces	As identified by the client, includes any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who successfully underwent basic training and was honourably discharged.
Veteran – Civilian	Clients who were involved in an armed conflict as a civilian.
Visitor Visa	Visitors visas are issued to people coming to Canada for a limited time and for specific reasons
Work Visa	A temporary resident permit authorizing foreign nationals to enter and work in Canada on a temporary basis. A work permit is usually valid only for a specified job, employer and time period

Brantford-Brant Homelessness System of Care

DIVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE – V2 (COMPLETE IF THERE WAS A “BREAK IN SERVICE”)



OPENING SCRIPT

“Here at the (location name), we take the time to learn about your specific housing situation so that we can best support you. This might mean staying an emergency shelter but, if safe alternatives exist, those might be more appropriate. The conversation does not need to end here, you can always reach out to the Housing Resource Centre for support if you need it. Can we begin?”

Service Provider:		Consent Signed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Date of Diversion:		HIFIS File Number	

DIVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Have you tried or thought about trying any of the following things before you came? Select all that apply.

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment for rent | <input type="checkbox"/> Sought housing supports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying with friend or family | <input type="checkbox"/> Get a new place | <input type="checkbox"/> Family reconnection | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (indicate below) |

Details:

Note: If the individual indicates conflict with family or landlord, consider offering to connect on their behalf.

2) You indicated that your most recent housing was (see HIFIS). Could you return to there for 3-7 more days?

- | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (e.g. unsheltered) | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if I can get there |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if it's only for 3-7 days | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if I reconciled with my partner/friend/family | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if provided with financial assistance |

3) Any reason you can't stay there longer? Select all that apply.

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (e.g. unsheltered) | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid rent | <input type="checkbox"/> Too expensive | <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't like it there | <input type="checkbox"/> Too far away | <input type="checkbox"/> No additional supports | <input type="checkbox"/> Triggering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety concern | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

4) If you can't go back there, is there somewhere else you could stay?

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if I can get there | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if I reconcile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if provided with financial assistance | | | |

5) What are other factors that is making it hard for you to find permanent housing? Select all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough income for housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination | <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction / substance use concerns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited affordable housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal history |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family breakdown / conflict | <input type="checkbox"/> Health / disability concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> No income assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence / Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> No identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (indicate below) | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know / Prefer not to say | |

Details:

Note: Information documented under this question can be tracked under Contributing Factors.

6) What has helped you find and maintain housing in the past? Are there services that you feel would help you? A list of services are indicated below. Select all that apply.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not require services | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction / Substance Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serious / Ongoing Medical Condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal services | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous services | <input type="checkbox"/> Violence against women |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brain injury | <input type="checkbox"/> Young parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability services | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant settlement services | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (indicate below) | | |

Details:

Brantford-Brant Homelessness System of Care

DIVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE – V2 (COMPLETE IF THERE WAS A “BREAK IN SERVICE”)



7) What community did you live in 2 weeks ago?

Brantford-Brant Hamilton Toronto Simcoe Waterloo
 Niagara Other (indicate below) Did not answer

8) (If not Brantford-Brant) Why did you choose to come to Brantford-Brant? Select all that apply.

Not applicable (from here) Family moved here To visit friends / family To access services / supports
 To find housing Employment Grew up here Other (indicate below)
 Did not answer

9) (If admitted into shelter) “So, because we could not identify any alternate safe and appropriate place for you today, you may be able to stay in shelter tonight. You can contact the shelter directly. I will let them know that you went through the prevention and diversion process and that Emergency Shelter is recommended. Emergency shelter is temporary, and as such there would still be an expectation that you will be attempting to secure permanent or temporary housing. What is your plan to find housing?”

No plan exists Some planning Definitive plan

Details:

CASE MANAGER – OFFICE USE ONLY

10) Please select the outcome of diversion assistance.

Diverted with supports Diverted with no supports Not Diverted - Referral to emergency accommodations Declined diversion assistance

Details:

11) (If diverted with supports) What supports were provided?

Transportation First/last months rent Storage costs Moving costs
 Tenant insurance Furniture / appliances Gas Phone card
 Grocery gift card Locksmith Other

12) (For Housing Resource Centre) Were flex funds used? If yes, how much?

No Yes _____

Staff/Volunteer Name:		Date:	
------------------------------	--	--------------	--

Notice with Respect to the Collection of Personal Information: Personal information is collected pursuant to section 2, 4, 8, 9, and 10 of the Municipal Act, 2001 and section 4 of the MMAH Act, and will be used for the purpose of (i) data collection on the use of shelters; (ii) the collation of group and meta data; (iii) assessment of the program generally (including but not limited to the Operator’s Services); and (iv) as otherwise permitted or required by law. For more information about this collection contact the Manager of Housing Stability at 519-759-3330 (ext. 6367), in 220 Colborne Street, Brantford.

- 5. Would it help if I contacted the person you stayed with? What is the best way to contact that person? *Contact person if necessary.***

If diversion eligible, talk through diversion questions further and attempt to divert household. If successfully diverted, the assessment worker should make a note of this in HMIS. If not diversion eligible, continue with assessment process and hand off to intake staff to complete shelter placement.

Making a Little Go a Long Way

Understanding Diversion and Progressive Engagement in Systems to End Homelessness

Katharine Gale Consulting

April 26, 2017

Rialto, CA

Workshop Outline

1. Purpose and elements of a coordinated system response to addressing homelessness
2. An introduction to diversion and housing problem solving
3. An introduction to progressive engagement as a system strategy (within and across interventions)
4. Key steps to operationalize progressive engagement and diversion

A Quick Look at the System Overall

What is a System?

- Many parts
- Doing different things
- Working together
- Toward a common goal



Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan

“Transform homeless services
to **crisis response systems**
that prevent homelessness and
rapidly return people who experience
homelessness to stable housing.”

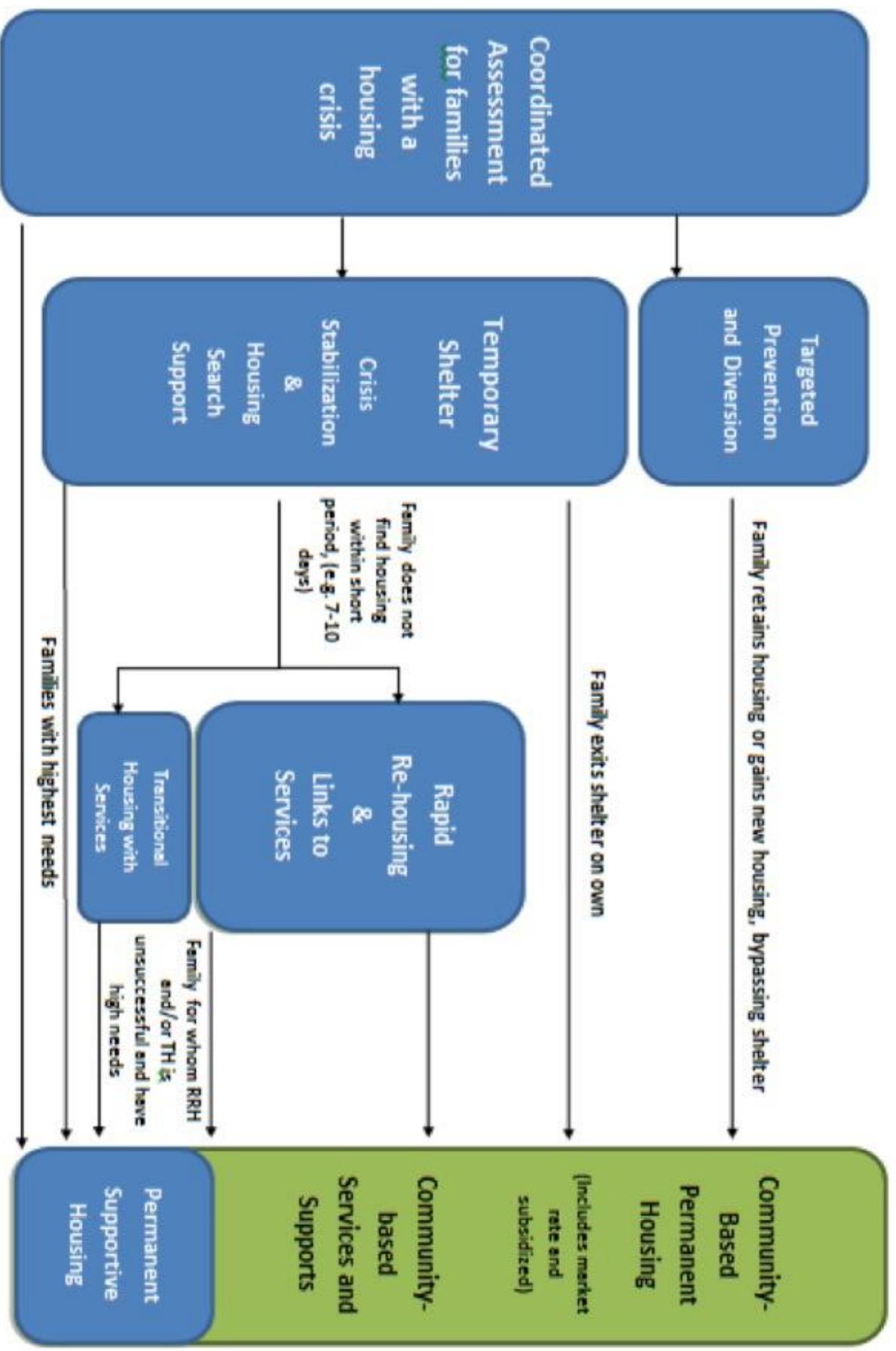


Diagram of Crisis Response System

From Family Connection, US Interagency Council on Homelessness

How to have an Effective System

In a world of limited resources:

- People should not be encouraged to enter the system if they can avoid it
- People leave the system as soon as possible with the least help possible to resolve the crisis
- People should move through it quickly and not get stuck or be waiting for help

In a word, **FLOW!**

A word or two about Coordinated Entry...

Coordinated Entry is **NOT** primarily about

- Assessing everyone and giving them a score
- Getting everyone on a list
- Filling open slots or units as they come open

A word or two about Coordinated Entry...

Coordinated Entry **IS** about

- Quickly filling the openings we have with the people who need them *the most* and who historically we skipped; *and*
- Identifying strategies to serve the larger population that cannot immediately be housed with available resources
- Getting rid of waiting!
- Coordinated Entry is about making sure everyone has an EXIT!

What do Diversion and Progressive Engagement have in common?

- Explicitly recognize we don't have a deep resources for everyone
- Try to resolve the crisis as quickly as possible
- Use client's ingenuity and resources as part of solution
- Flexible approaches that meet people where they are
- Two approaches that are demonstrated to increase flow!

Focus on Diversion

Read “Between Homes” ...



BETWEEN HOMES

DEE ALLEN

About more times
Than I could count
All ten fingers
All ten toes,

I have lived
Between homes.

Existed in that
All too common
Space of homelessness
Indoors.

A friend's apartment,
A friend's company,
Their living room couch
Where I sought rest in the mean-
time.

Their wooden floor
Where my luggage sat,
Their lavatory where I
Cleansed my lean self
From wooly black head to toe
In the shower and
Shaved over their face-bowl,
Their kitchen where I warmed up
Or slapped together vegetarian
Miracles to please my tongue
with.

A temporary arrangement

But time spent upon
A couch I'd visited
Often sure enough beats

The parking lot asphalt
Hard against you back,
The commands of harassing cops
GO! MOVE! KICK ROCKS!
The jail-like atmosphere
Of public shelters,

The shelter curfew
That traps you in at nightfall
And kicks you out at daybreak,
The fear of having your
Luggage stolen in your
Sleep by far needier hands,
The unspoken hate
In another's eyes

Upon seeing you carry
Luggage and sleeping-bag down
This street and that,
The unhousted condition out-
doors
The housed assume
Won't happen to them-----

About more times
Than I could count
All ten fingers
All ten toes,

Thoughts?

BETWEEN HOMES

DEE ALLEN

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Than I could count
All ten fingers
All ten toes,

What is Diversion?

A strategy that addresses and prevents homelessness by helping people seeking assistance to:

- Return immediately to housing,
- Without having to enter temporary shelter or a housing program, and
- Utilizing safe and available permanent and temporary housing options.

What is Homelessness Prevention?

- Assistance aimed to help low-income households resolve a crisis that could otherwise lead to a loss of housing.
- Most common prevention methods include short-term financial assistance, legal assistance, housing case management, or all of these.

Challenges with Prevention

- Every year many people experience a housing crisis
 - far fewer actually become homeless
- Traditional prevention often screens out those closest to homelessness
 - Not considered a “good risk”
 - Living situation (e.g. hotel, doubled up) not assisted
- Traditional prevention has not been shown to significantly reduce homelessness

Prevention: Efficiency and Effectiveness

“It is relatively easy to offer prevention activities, but difficult to develop an effective community-wide strategy. Such a prevention strategy needs to offer *effective* prevention activities and do so *efficiently*.”

(Burt et al. 2007, p.xvii, italics in original)

Effectiveness and Efficiency (cont.)

- “Effective activities must be capable of stopping someone from becoming homeless or ending their homelessness quickly.
- An *efficient system* must target well, delivering its effective activities to people who are very likely to become homeless unless they receive help.”

(Burt et al. 2007, p.xvii, italics in original)



Why Diversion?

- Household is showing that they are in a crisis that is leading to homelessness NOW
- Not enough resources for every homeless household
- As long as it's safe, non-shelter keeps people in charge of driving their solutions
- Not everyone will go to a shelter
- Shelter, no matter how nice, has negative effects on people
- Resiliency and adaptation are powerful

Other names for Diversion

- Housing Counseling
- Housing Problem Solving
- Problem Solving

Reasons to Implement Diversion

... For the client

- Gives people something in the NOW.
- YES answer rather than a “no” or “not now” answer.
- Empowering.
- Helps people stay out of the system.

Reasons to Implement Diversion

... For the system

- Saves shelter and housing programs for those who truly have no other options.
- Allows resolution at much lower cost.
- Adds efficient use of system resources by “right-sizing” the services to the person.
- In some cases, preserves relatively more affordable housing situations.

Who can be diverted?

- HMIS data shows many who enter shelter are not literally homeless – they are often staying with family or friends, sometimes in motels, or may still have their own housing.
- HMIS data also shows many people *leave* system for family and friends
- Even some who are literally homeless can be diverted into an appropriate housing situation without a shelter stay.

Diversion is Problem Solving

- Successful diversion programs explore a household's current housing crisis, provide concrete problem solving advice, and are creative about housing options.
- Explores every available resource to keep the household housed
- Engages in frank conversations about the realities of shelter living and likely options after shelter

A Shift in Approach

FROM	TO
Assessment of need and vulnerability	Structured problem solving conversation about household situation and resources
Intake or put on waitlist	Support crisis resolution to avoid system entry
Are you willing to enter shelter?	What can we do to <i>keep you</i> from entering shelter?
What programs are you eligible to enter and who has a bed?	What would resolve your current housing crisis?

But.. is Diversion ethical?

- Not enough beds for all who present in need
- Without diversion many beds going to those who have shelter now, other people remain unsheltered
- A shelter is not housing, can be traumatizing, (Longer stays in shelter associated with greater problems for children.)
- Misperception that shelter gets you something
- It builds on most “normal” response to crisis and keeps support networks in tact

A true story...

Examples of Diversion Questions

- Why are you seeking shelter (or assistance)?
- Where are you living/staying?
- Can you stay safely where you are? What steps might make it possible to stay?
- Where have you lived before?
- How can you secure this type of housing situation again?
- What will you do if we are unable to assist you? What have you done in the past?

Diversion Truths

- There are not enough resources in the system to assist everyone
- Even if you go to a shelter you may not receive additional assistance
- Here is what it is like in shelter....

REALLY Creative Problem-Solving

- Explore a household's current housing crisis & be creative about housing options
- Determine if it's possible to stay anywhere else that's safe, other than a shelter
- Discuss every available resource to stay housed or move directly to other housing
- Have frank conversations about conditions in shelter and likely options after shelter

And...

What Diversion is not...



1. Case Management
2. Rapid Re-housing
3. Pre-screening or holding spot for other system resources
4. Anti-poverty initiative
5. Knowing the outcomes 100%

Assistance Options

- Coaching and problem-solving
- Conflict resolution and mediation with landlords/friends/family
- Connection to mainstream services
- Housing search assistance and stabilization planning
- *Limited* financial assistance

Making a Diversion Plan...

- How do you feel about carrying out this plan?
- I can help you with that by making some phone calls with you or talking with you to your friends/family/landlord. Do you want to do that now?

Where does it happen?

Diversion can happen at all the places where people go to seek shelter and housing assistance:

- By phone (211 Call Center or coordinated entry call center)
- At physical “front door” of Centralized or Coordinated Intake system
- At shelter door

Limited Financial Assistance...

- Not every case needs financial assistance
- Use for immediate needs
- Flexible is key

Examples of costs:

- the usual: deposit, utilities, rent
- *the less usual: bus tickets, grocery cards, gas cards
- the *really unusual*: flooring, pest extermination

Community Examples

- Montgomery County, PA
- Pierce County, WA (Tacoma)
- New London, CT

Montgomery County, PA

- Diversion takes place primarily over the phone with Housing Resource Center staff (occasionally in person)
- Both families and single adults are eligible
- No eligibility criteria – they attempt diversion with all households seeking shelter
- Diversion is an activity, not a program
- Primarily coaching and problem solving

Montgomery County (Cont.)

- Most people are assisted to preserve their shared housing situation or find another shared situation.
- Financial assistance available but rarely used
- Example: mediation with roommates and family members, advice on how to be a good roommate
- Currently @60% success rate

YWH Diversion Stats

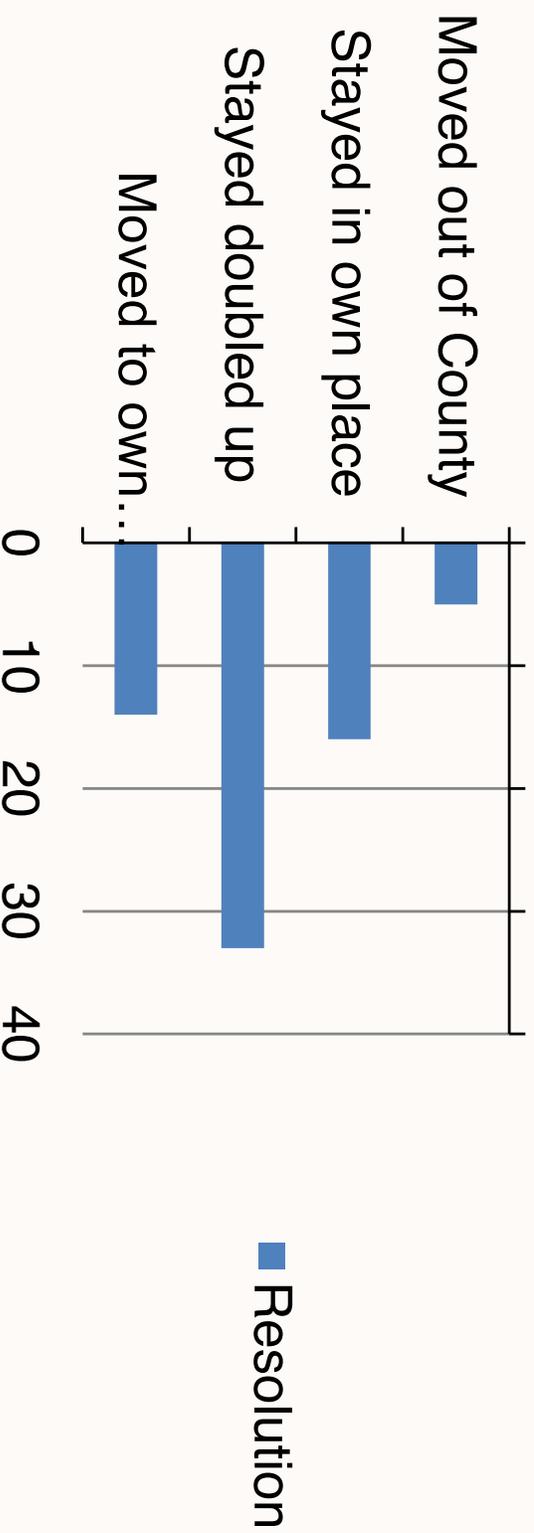
Average diversion client income	\$1,325
Percent of clients with no income	24%
Percent of clients with income over \$700	50%
Percent of clients who moved to own housing	14%
Percent of clients who stayed doubled up	33%
Percent of clients who stayed in own place	16%
Percent of clients who moved out of county	5%
Percent of clients diverted over phone	85%
Percent of diversion cases handled in one hour or less	85%

Source: Your Way Home Clarity HMIS Records 1/1/15 - 5/31/15

YWH Diversion Results

Between January and June 2015, 217 people avoided shelter through Your Way Home's diversion pilot project, a 64% success rate.

Resolution for Single Adults*



*24% had zero income; 26% had monthly income of \$699 or less; 50% had monthly income of \$700 or more.

Source: Your Way Home Clarity HMIS Records 1/1/15-5/31/15

New London, CT

- Initial call to 211
- In person assessment; diversion explored with *every family*
- Case manager explores options, clarifies what shelter is and isn't, helps make a plan with *family*
- Services include mediation, conflict resolution, financial assistance, housing search, relocation

New London, CT

Cost is two-thirds average cost of Shelter and Re-Housing *

- FY 2013 – \$ 1,814
- FY 2014 – \$ 1,763
- FY 2015 – \$ 1,649

* less than half get financial assistance.

New London, CT

- FY 2013 – 50%
 - 332 screenings for shelter: 165 families diverted
- FY 2014 – 49%
 - 366 screenings for shelter: 180 diverted
- FY 2015 – 79%
 - 358 screenings for shelter: 282 diverted
- Family shelters *reduced* their beds from 83 to 53

Pierce County, WA (Tacoma)

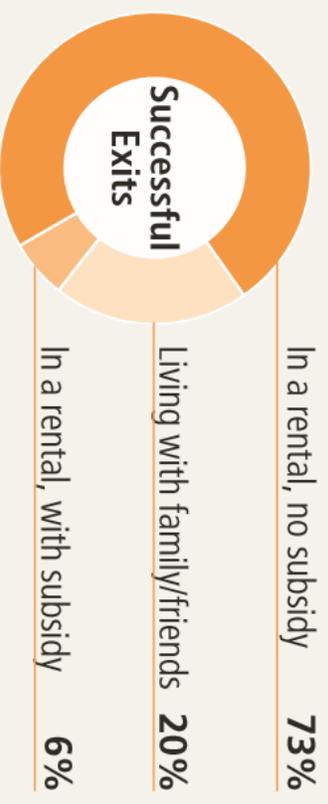
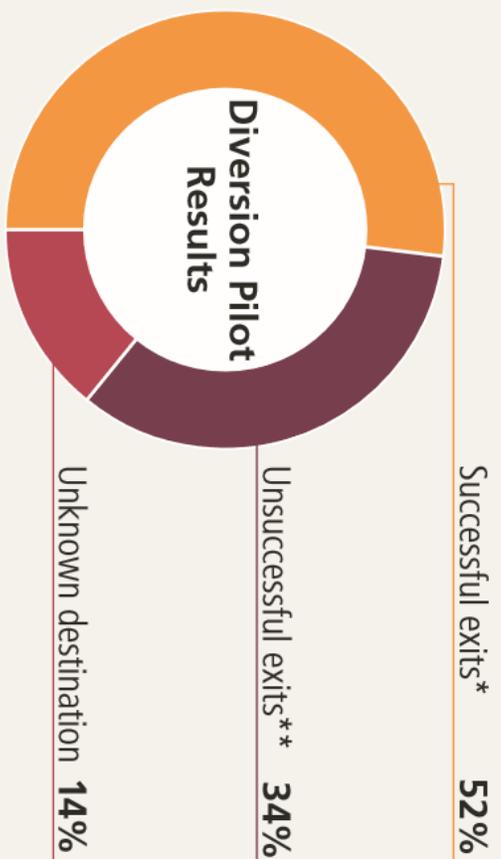
- Piloted with Families; Now, Diversion attempted with everyone
- Staff trained in the skills of Diversion—known in Pierce County as “Diversion specialists”—support through focused problem-solving.
- Diversion specialists deliver expertise, encouragement, and a flexible combination of short-term services and one-time financial assistance, if needed

Pierce County, WA

Results

Homeless to Housed in a Hurry

Of the 939 families (households with children) participating in the Pierce County pilot, **more than half were able to obtain safe housing through Diversion**. Among those families, **most secured a place of their own**.



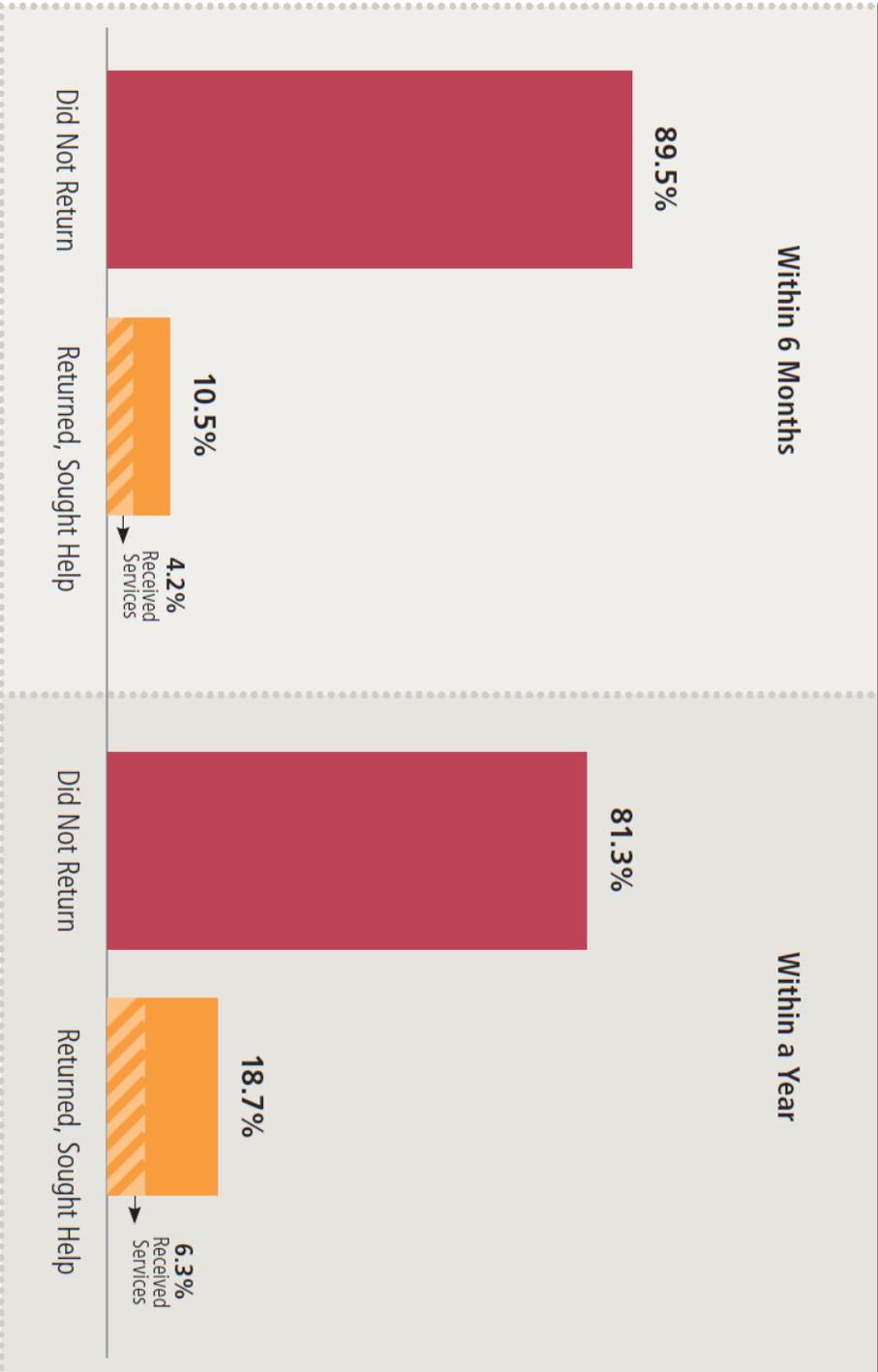
Note: Numbers do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Pierce County, WA

Staying Housed

The vast majority of the families that obtained housing through the Diversion pilot *did not return to homelessness within a year.*

Return rates for families housed through Diversion



Discussion

- What do you like about this approach?
- What concerns you about this approach?
- What would it take to broadly implement diversion here?

Focus on Progressive Engagement

What is Progressive Engagement?

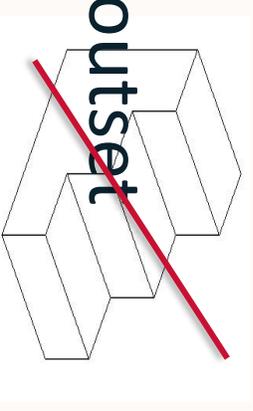
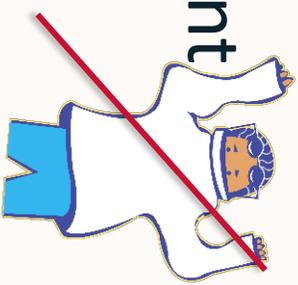
- Approach to helping households end their homeless as rapidly as possible using the least financial and support resources needed to be successful with each household
- Also sometimes referred to as Progressive Assistance

What is Progressive Engagement?

- Initial offer is a “light-touch” or basic package – typically rapid rehousing
- More supports are offered to those households who struggle to stabilize and cannot maintain housing without assistance
- Approach is flexible and individualized
- Design is informed by what we know about patterns of crisis, change over time, and how people with low-incomes live

What Progressive Engagement is Not

- Not a pre-determined program length or amount for everyone (“One Size Fits All”)
- Not a pre-determined step down of assistance (100%/70%/30%/0)
- Not determined time or amounts from outset based on assessment score



“He’s a 10 so he gets 12 months”

Why Progressive Engagement?

- It's Housing First
- Is based in reality of how crises resolve and circumstances evolve – can't predict everything
- It means people in need don't have to wait as long to be assisted
- It lets us serve more people!

Is PE compatible with Coordinated Entry and Assessment?

- Yes, can be used together...
- BUT, requires some resources are available for people after they try rapid rehousing (need a “backstop”)
- Assessment at time of crisis doesn’t predict future well for many – may use some pre-assessment and some “finding out”
- Use your deep resources at the beginning only when evidence of need is strong and sustained

What about assessment?

- Assessment is critical: Need knowledge of client's relevant history, current plans and desires
- Understand housing barriers to assist, not to refuse assistance
- Develop realistic approach to finding landlords and housing situations
- Ability to link clients to supports in the community

But:

- Assessment up front not always the best way to size the financial assistance or length of time services are offered in rapid re-housing

How do you deliver it?

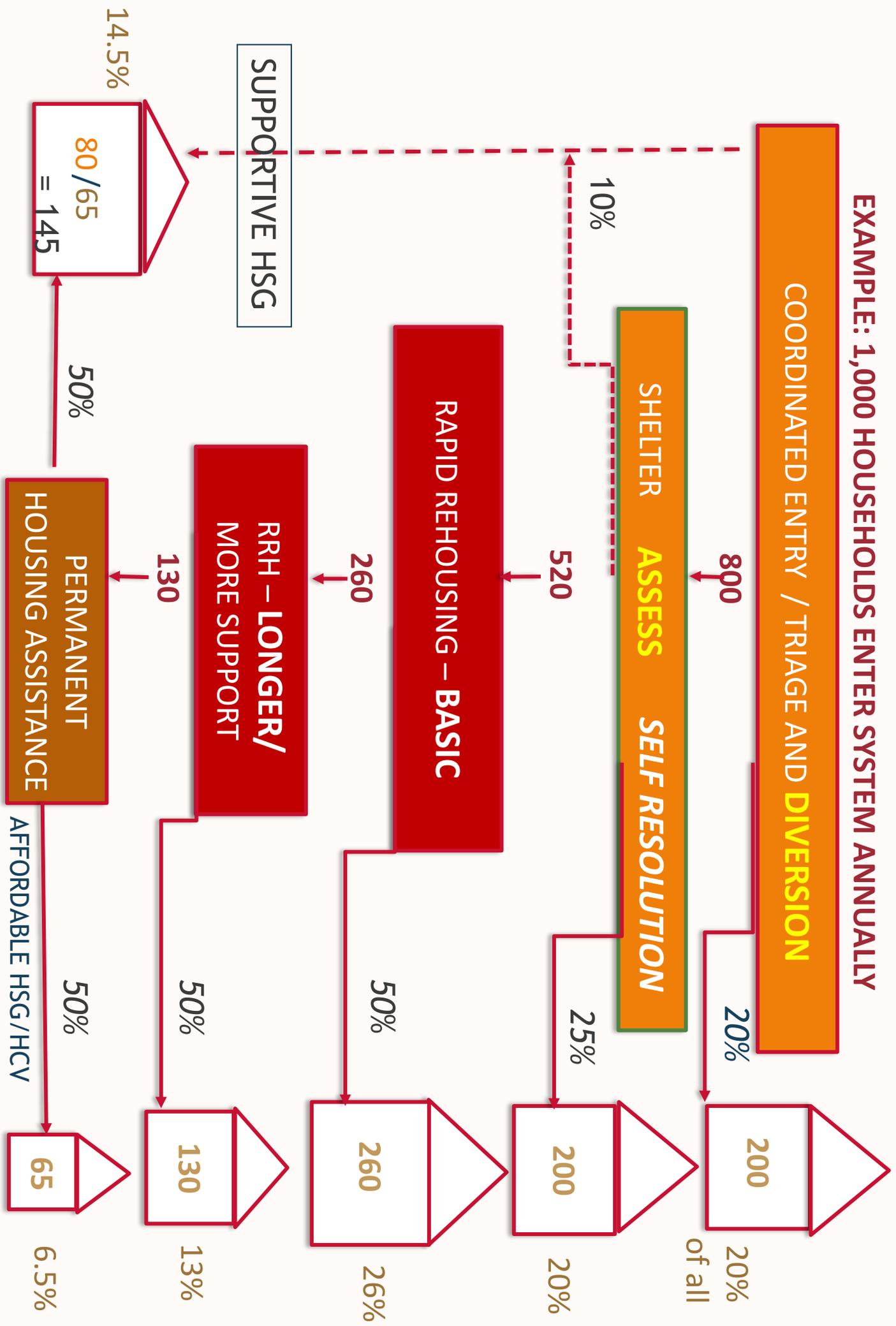
- Clear from the beginning that intended housing support is short but flexible
- Focus on addressing housing entry barriers **first**
- Focus on housing retention barriers that have or are impacting housing retention once housed
- Send message you have confidence in them
- Connect to services they want and need quickly – have to have the connections, especially to employment!

Reassessment

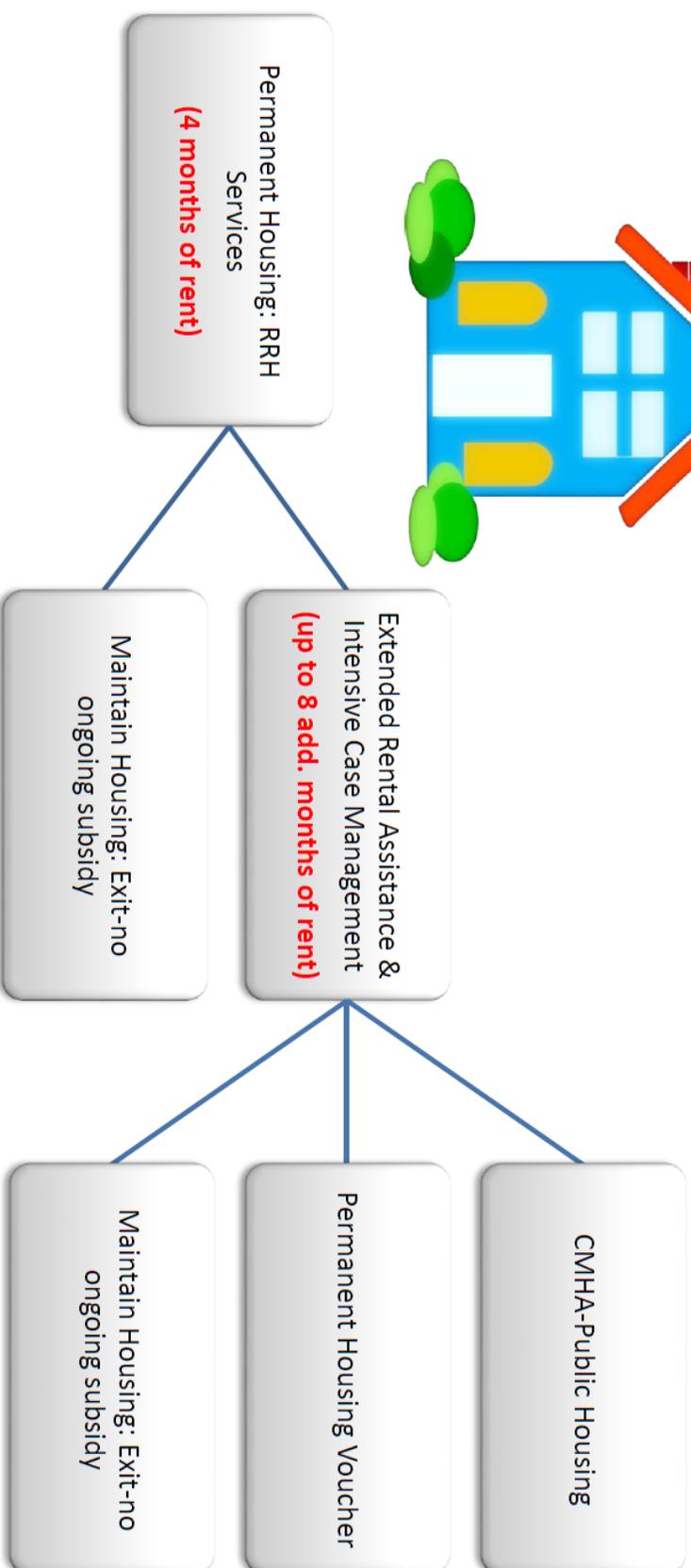
- Use clear *but flexible* criteria for stability assessment –income, lease, connections, choice
- Is there still an active crisis or a new crisis?
- Do other people in similar situations make it?
- Should we stop subsidy but maintain services?
- Should we increase or lower subsidy amount (and why?)
- If really failing and/or higher needs emerging, can we connect to a deeper subsidy or program?

A System Level Picture of Progressive Engagement

EXAMPLE: 1,000 HOUSEHOLDS ENTER SYSTEM ANNUALLY

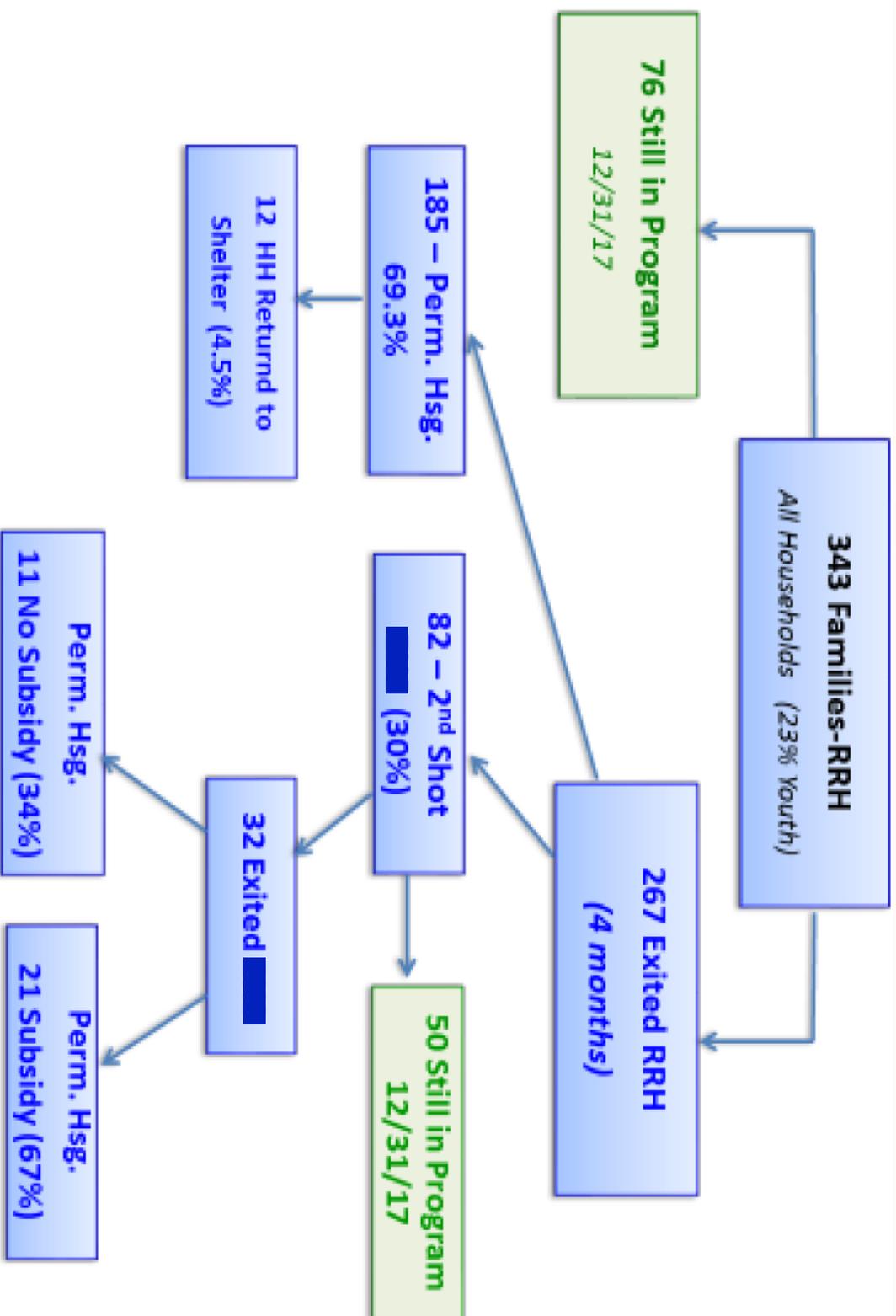


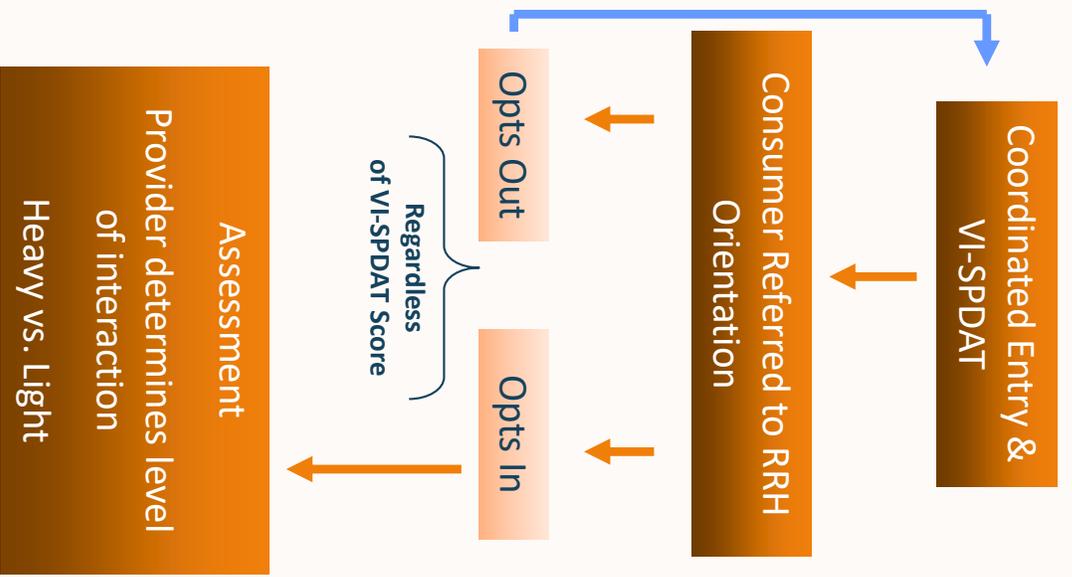
Cleveland's Progressive Engagement Model



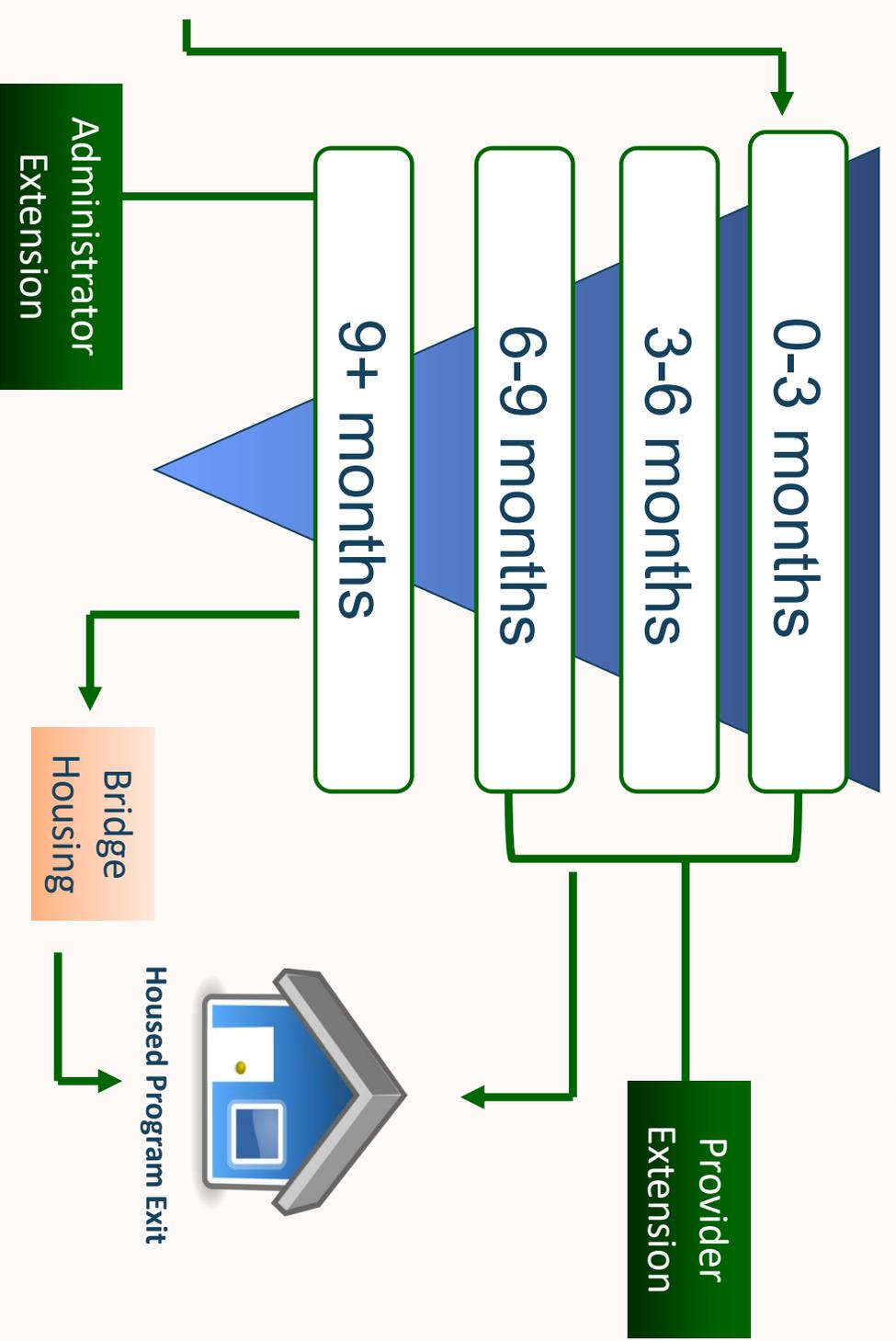
Cleveland

Progressive Engagement in 2017





Rapid Re-Housing Progressive Engagement (Sacramento, CA)



RRH Stats
 Majority < 6 months
 2% > 9 months
 Average: \$6,500 p/h

Literally homeless at program entry. Re-assessed every three months, and if household income is 30% of Area Median Income or higher, the household is exited from the program.

Resource Model from The Road Home, UT

REFERRAL	DEPOSIT ASSISTANCE	SHORT TERM RENTAL ASSISTANCE	TBRA	TRH TRANS HOUSING	COCL LEASING	SHELTER PLUS CARE	PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
200 families 40%	300 families 60%		75 families (typically, a subset of 300 families served) 25 % of assisted; 15% of all				
No Financial Support	ESG, TANF		City TBRA, County TBRA, WVC/TBRA	Sandy Duplex, Sandy Condo, Sandy House, 5100 West, Highwood, Wenco, Riverside	Scattered	County SPC City SPC	Sponsor Based SPC, PBSS, Project Based SPC
Assistance with applications and movement to S8, PH, Mod Rehab, other subsidy through local housing authorities, move out on their own	Includes deposit, prorated rent and first month's rent	Includes deposit, prorated and first month's rent. Ongoing subsidy approved for 3 months.	Rental assistance from County TBRA, WVC TBRA, City TBRA	Traditional Transitional housing managed by The Road Home.	Unit is Master Leased by TRH. Tenant signs Occupancy Agreement	Scattered Site Apartments, Tenant Signs Lease with PM	Frontier Apartments, Permanent Disabled Apartments, Palmer Court. Permanent housing for people with disabilities.
No CM	No CM	Includes light case management geared toward employment and stabilization in housing.	Includes customized supportive services geared toward self-sufficiency in housing.	Tailored supportive services geared toward barrier elimination and obtaining stable housing.	Intensive customized supportive services geared toward self-sufficiency in housing.	Intensive customized supportive services geared toward self-sufficiency in housing.	Intensive customized supportive services geared toward self-sufficiency in housing.

Moving On Initiatives

- Helping people in PSH leave for other permanent housing
- Often connected to Housing Choice Vouchers
- Example:
 - San Francisco has dedicated HCV's from PHA for moving on and private funding for housing search and transition case management
 - In first 6 months moved 60 people out, creating 60 new PSH openings

Discussion

- What do you like about this approach?
- What concerns you about this approach?
- What would it take to broadly implement progressive engagement here?

Operationalizing Diversion and Progressive Engagement

Diversion

- Build in diversion at all access points and at shelters; first thing everyone experiences, only *guaranteed* help system can offer
- Train assessors and/or diversion specialists to hold diversion conversations
- Partner with local entities that can support diversion practice, especially mediation centers and mainstream resources

Diversion

- Identify resources to help with light touch financial assistance when needed, and ensure all access points have them
- Create common standards and measure results!

Progressive Engagement

- Change from hard priority “buckets” in coordinated entry to a more flexible approach - trying out RRH with more people
- Keeping some deeper resources “in your back pocket”
- Create a Moving On Initiative

Progressive Engagement

- Train Rapid Rehousing programs to use a progressive engagement approach within RRH
- Establish methods for moving to deeper assistance
 - who decides and with what info?
- Use your data to tell you about sizing the resources you need - try, evaluate, adjust.

Next Steps

- What is one thing as a system you could do to operationalize Diversion?
- What is one thing as a system you could do to operationalize Progressive Engagement?
- What is one thing YOU will do?

Questions??

For more information

- National Alliance to End Homelessness
www.endhomelessness.org
- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
www.usich.gov
- Focus Strategies www.focusstrategies.net
- Contact us: katharine@focusstrategies.net

The Role of Emergency Shelter in Diversion

To effectively respond to homelessness, communities should be able to help residents maintain or regain housing *without having to enter emergency shelter*. **Diversion** is a strategy that helps people experiencing a housing crisis quickly identify and access safe alternatives to emergency shelter.

Diversion includes services such as: creative problem solving conversations; connecting with community resources and family supports; housing search and placement; and flexible financial assistance to help people resolve their immediate housing crisis.

Homeless response systems and shelters should engage in diversion strategies because it reduces new entries into homelessness, cuts down on shelter wait lists, reduces demand for limited shelter beds, and targets more intensive homelessness interventions to those with higher needs.

When is Diversion Most Effective?

- Diversion strategies should be implemented at the access points to the homeless system.
- Shelters should use diversion strategies when a person is seeking shelter, **but before** intake.
- Diversion should be attempted with everyone seeking shelter to determine whether it is viable, desirable, safe, and appropriate to find alternatives to shelter.
- Individuals and families that do not have a safe alternative to shelter should not be diverted away from shelter. Instead, shelters should use housing-focused, rapid exit services work to continue to try to re-house people after they have entered shelter.

What Are the Fundamentals of Effective Diversion Practice?

- **Community Wide Buy-In.** Community and shelter staff buy-in is critical to the successful implementation of diversion strategies across the system.
- **Problem Solving Conversation.** Diversion begins with a problem solving, strengths-based conversation — not with a pre-application for eligibility or an assessment tool with a list of questions. It focuses on action steps that a person and shelter staff can take to avoid shelter/homelessness system.
- **Creating Connections.** Shelters can't do it all and a household's natural supports and community partners are critical to effective implementation.
- **Continuous Practice.** Problem-solving conversation may need to happen more than once, diversion strategies are not a one-time service. Follow-up is critical.

Shelter Diversion

How to Implement Housing First & Shelter Diversion Strategies from the top down.

What is Housing

Everyone is always ready for housing.

Housing First is the philosophy that the solution to homelessness is housing. All other pieces of the puzzle can

“ I tell my staff, ‘if you’re not talking about housing, you’re having the wrong conversation.’ ”

Deronda Metz, Salvation Army

What is Shelter

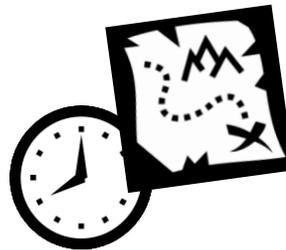
Preventing homelessness at the front door.

Shelter Diversion includes a variety of tools and strategies for helping people facing homelessness identify immediate alternate housing and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial support to help them return to permanent housing.



When does diversion happen?

Diversion can take place any time before (or after) entering a shelter!



Where does diversion happen?

Diversion can happen anywhere in the process & in person or remotely

What is my role in Diversion?

Administration

- ✓ Support Diversion Staff
- ✓ Create Space for Diversion
- ✓ Funding diversion programs

Staff & Caseworkers

- ✓ Be trained in Diversion strategies
- ✓ Practice active listening
- ✓ Empower the client to problem-solve

Funding Diversion

Shelter Diversion saves money and reduces homelessness,

In a case study in New London, 627 of 1,056 of families, almost 60%, who attempted to enter the emergency shelter system between 2013 – 2015 were diverted. Two-thirds required no financial assistance to be diverted. Over 80% of families diverted did not return to shelter during those years.



Diverted from Homelessness

Diversion assistance can include:

- ✓ Simple, over the phone conciliation (no funds required)
- ✓ Mediation and a small amount of food (\$35)
- ✓ Greyhound Bus Ticket (\$30 - \$100)
- ✓ Other assistance, like utility bills (\$200)
- ✓ First month's rent and deposit (\$1000+)

All of these options are significantly less expensive than rapid re-housing (\$5000+), Shelter stay (\$8,067 more than federal housing subsidy), and street homelessness

Staffing & Space

Making your program a place for Diversion

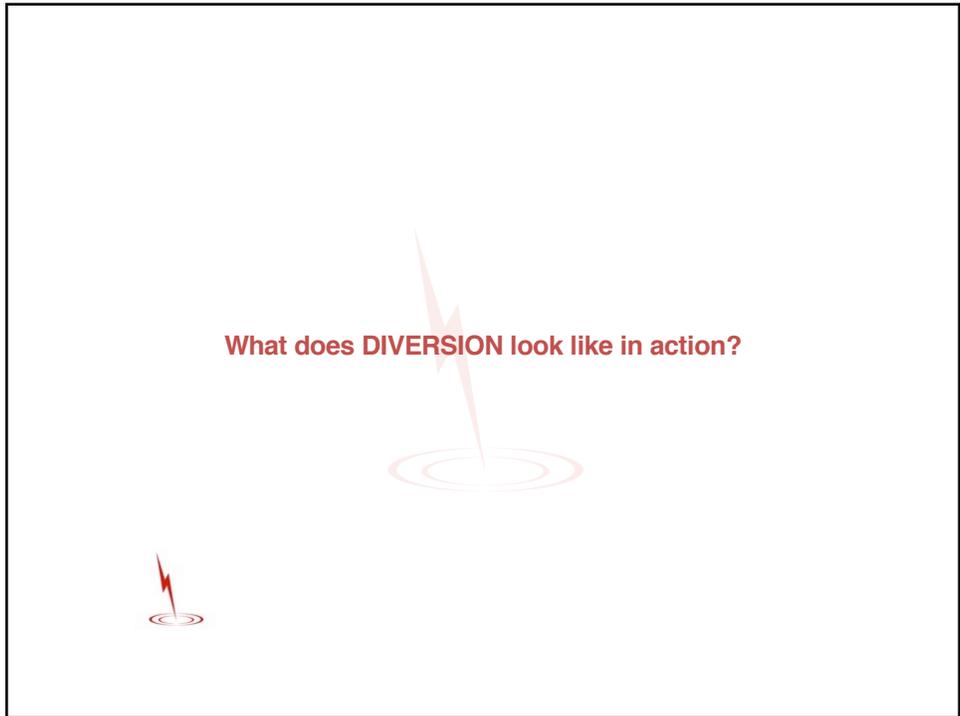
Shelter Diversion needs space to take place where the client can sort through their housing crisis.

- ✓ Provide a private, quiet space for diversion meetings
- ✓ Foster a calm, positive atmosphere
- ✓ Keep a book or toy present for young children
- ✓ Make sure client and staff aren't separated by a desk



Hire staff with skills and training in shelter diversion.

- ✓ Empathetic and compassionate
- ✓ Empowering, not taking control of their clients situation
- ✓ Unassuming, patient, and calm



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Last name: _____

First name: _____

Contact number or email address if possible: _____

Assessor: _____

Date: _____

Are you in a safe place to answer questions?

If no, proceed with safety planning such as:

- *Can I ask where you are?*
- *Is the unsafe person in the room right now?*
- *If yes, can you go somewhere safe like a neighbour, friend or public space?*
- *If no, do you need to get to somewhere safe right now? (Offer taxi to bring to shelter if necessary)*
- *Do you need me to contact police for you?*

If yes, proceed with script below:

I want to better understand your housing situation right now and work with you to figure out a solution that may not require you needing to access the homeless shelter. The ideal situation is that there is somewhere else you can stay that is safe while you figure out your permanent housing needs without coming into shelter. I am going to need to ask you some questions. This process takes about 10 minutes.



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1. *Why are you seeking shelter today?*

- Relationship breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Problems with the landlord (but no threat of eviction)
- At risk of eviction
- Foreclosure on rental property
- Living in a household that has been condemned
- Utilities disconnected or threat of disconnect
- Newcomer to the community
- Other _____

{INVESTIGATE REASON. CONSIDER MEDIATION AND IMMEDIATE PROBLEM SOLVING.}



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2. *What else have you tried before contacting us?*

- Mediation*
- Problem solving with landlord*
- Problem solving with family or friends*
- Problem solving with a non-profit, government agency or faith group*
- Cash advance*
- Repayment plan*
- Splitting up family members to various households*
- Staying with friends or family*
- Staying at motel (self pay)*
- Nothing*
- Other* _____

{UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS WORKED OR NOT WORKED THUS FAR. UNDERSTAND IF ANOTHER ENTITY HAS PROBLEM SOLVING IN ACTION AND STATUS OF ACTION.}



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3. *What else have you thought about trying to be housed or solve your current housing problem?*

- *Mediation*
- *Problem solving with landlord*
- *Problem solving with family or friends*
- *Problem solving with a non-profit, government agency or faith group*
- *Cash advance*
- *Repayment plan*
- *Splitting up family members to various households*
- *Staying with friends or family*
- *Staying at motel (self pay)*
- *Nothing*
- *Other _____*

{ENCOURAGE HOUSEHOLD TO PURSUE SAFE AND APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVES. PROVIDE ACCESS TO PHONE OR COMPUTER AS NECESSARY. BE PREPARED TO INTERVENE AND MEDIATE WITH OTHER ENTITIES. BE PREPARED TO USE FLEXIBLE FUNDING OR GIFT CARDS IN PROBLEM SOLVING.}



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4. *Where did you stay last night?*

- *With a friend/family member or other doubled up situation*
- *In a motel*
 - *Self pay*
 - *Funded by another entity*
- *In your own home (apartment or house)*
- *24 hour restaurant, coffee shop or business*
- *In a place unfit for human habitation*
- *Other _____*

SAMPLE DIVERSION SCRIPT AND PROCESS




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5. Do you think you could continue to stay there for another 3-7 days if you were able to receive some help?
- a. IF YES: Is it safe to stay there?
 - b. IF NO OR DON'T KNOW:
 - i. Is it safe to stay there?
 - ii. What would you need to make this option work for at least 3-7 days?
 - Financial assistance
 - Grocery voucher
 - Gas card
 - Bus tickets
 - Assistance with utilities
 - Conflict resolution
 - Landlord mediation
 - Community referrals
 - Other _____

{IF UNSAFE PROCEED TO QUESTION 6. OTHERWISE PROBE FOR WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO FIX THE CURRENT SITUATION TO BE ABLE TO STAY IN THE CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION.}



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6. Do you have anyone else you could stay with for 3-7 days if you were able to receive some help?
- a. IF YES: Is it safe to stay there?
 - b. IF NO OR DON'T KNOW:
 - i. Is it safe to stay there?
 - ii. What would you need to make this option work for at least 3-7 days?
 - Financial assistance
 - Grocery voucher
 - Gas card
 - Bus tickets
 - Assistance with utilities
 - Conflict resolution
 - Landlord mediation
 - Community referrals
 - Other _____

{PROBE FOR WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO HAVE THEM STAY ELSEWHERE SO LONG AS IT IS SAFE. DO NOT PROCEED TO QUESTION 7 UNLESS ALL OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED.}



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7. Why are you struggling to find stable, safe and appropriate housing?

- o Affordability
- o Don't know where to look
- o Household instability
- o Size of household
- o Poor credit
- o Past evictions
- o Registered sex offender
- o New to the community
- o Other _____

{EXPLAIN REALITIES OF CURRENT HOUSING MARKET AND THE STRATEGIES OTHER LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS ARE USING TO FIND AND SECURE HOUSING. OFFER APARTMENT LISTINGS AND ACCESS TO PHONE IF NECESSARY.}

8. What is your current source(s) and amount of income?

- o Employment \$ _____
- o Inheritance \$ _____
- o Pension \$ _____
- o General welfare \$ _____
- o Disability \$ _____
- o Working under the table \$ _____
- o Other \$ _____

{OUTLINE ANY SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT MAY EXIST FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS TO ACCESS HOUSING, AS NECESSARY. EXPLAIN HOW OTHER HOUSEHOLDS ON LOW-INCOME ARE ABLE TO FIND AND SECURE HOUSING. OFFER APARTMENT LISTINGS OF DWELLINGS WITHIN PRICE RANGE. DO A REALITY CHECK. OFFER ACCESS TO PHONE IF NECESSARY.}



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9. If there is space in shelter and you are accepted into the shelter, there is an expectation that you will work on finding housing immediately and getting out of shelter as rapidly as possible. What is your plan at this point to ensure your shelter stay is short and that you move into housing quickly?

{ENSURE THERE IS A HOUSING PLAN IN PLACE PRIOR TO SHELTER ENTRY. COMMUNICATE ENTRY TO SHELTER STAFF FOR FOLLOW-UP. DO NOT ALLOW SHELTER ENTRY WITHOUT EVEN A RUDIMENTARY HOUSING PLAN.}



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Shared by Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency

Diversion

A Conflict Resolution Approach to Keeping People Housed

CLEVELAND MEDIATION CENTER

www.clevelandmediation.org

Day One

CONFLICT RESOLUTION, HOMELESSNESS, DIVERSION INTRODUCTION



Cleveland Mediation Center

A Program of FrontLine Service

Cleveland Mediation Center (CMC) has been mediating disputes and providing conflict resolution training since 1981.

CMC promotes just and peaceful community in Northeast Ohio by honoring all people, building their capacity to act, and facilitating opportunities for them to engage in conflict constructively.

Introductions

Please meet someone new, learn a bit about them, then introduce them to the group.

- Name, where they work, role
- Favorite activity this season
- Any specific training expectations



Hola! Hello!
Bog! Shalom!
Marhaba!



Kon'nichiwa! Salut!
Hujambo! Hallo!
Ciao! Ahoj!

Organization / Community Goals

Discuss the following

- How do you describe Diversion?
- What are the benefits of Diversion?
- What skills do you think are most important for Diversion staff?

Diversion Is...

- **Empowering** persons facing imminent homelessness to identify safe and appropriate housing options (other than the street/car/shelter), and assisting them in avoiding shelter and returning immediately to housing
- NOT a barrier to shelter
- Focus is on empowering persons in crisis to begin **regaining control** over their situation and lives
- These approaches and techniques may also be very helpful for persons already homeless, i.e. rapid rehousing clients

Applying the Empowerment Theory of Conflict to Crisis

- CMC saw Diversion (Diversion) as a natural fit with conflict resolution
- CMC discovered that the specific traits of empowerment* in people experiencing conflict applies to people experiencing crisis - in this case the crisis of homelessness

Can we apply similar strategies to people
In CRISIS that we do to people in CONFLICT?

Conflict Resolution Approach

- Homelessness is a crisis – as in conflict, persons in crisis are less able to clearly think through problems and advocate for themselves than they are when **not in crisis**
- **First listen and validate** their experience - be non-judgmental
- **Be client-centered** - don't assume what people need, help them articulate their needs

Conflict Resolution Approach

- A **strength-based approach** helps clients identify and mine strengths, successes and resources they've used in the past to help them with this episode of homelessness.
- Support and trust that **people want to succeed**. Help them identify their own strengths and successes in their life that can help them with this crisis.

Impact of Conflict and Crisis

Conflict and crisis impedes the ability to:

- Be hopeful and confident
- Clarify goals
- Effectively advocate for oneself -- take back control of their lives
- Have positive interactions with other people

How do we help clients become calm and clear so they can better engage with family members, employers, landlords, and staff?

Impact of Crisis on Self Worth

Experiencing conflict and crisis makes people shut down, and become defensive/closed off.

Our job is to help people shift gradually to the right - empowered - side.

Empowerment Shifts

Weak	⇒	Powerful
Unsure	⇒	Confident
Hopeless	⇒	Optimistic
Unclear	⇒	Organized
Frustrated	⇒	At Ease

How People in Crisis View Others

In the midst of crisis people tend to be protective, defensive, and not open to others.

As we help them become empowered, they are more able to listen, consider, and negotiate with others.

Recognition Shifts

Closed	⇌	Open
Suspicious	⇌	Trusting
Self Absorbed	⇌	Generous
Ignoring	⇌	Listening
Dismissing	⇌	Negotiating

Reversing the Downward Spiral

Helping people feel empowered about themselves allows them to open up and engage in a more productive way with others (staff, family, landlords, employers, etc).



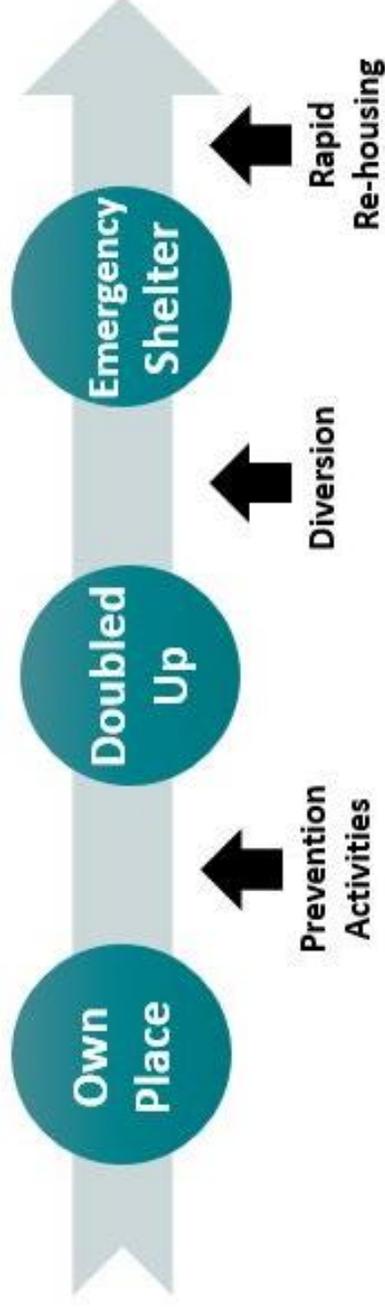
How Can We Help Change The Dynamic?

Diversion Is...

- Empowering persons facing imminent homelessness to identify safe and appropriate housing options (other than the street/car/shelter), and assisting them in avoiding shelter and returning immediately to housing.
- NOT a barrier to shelter.
- Focus is on empowering persons in crisis to begin regaining control over their situation and lives.

We start the empowerment process by _____.

When and Where Diversion Can Happen



- Diversion can happen at the shelter door or elsewhere
- Diversion can happen in person, on the phone, or a combination of both

Think Housing First

- **Persons that are home-LESS need a home, not necessarily anything else**
- **Our experience is that its best to be aggressive in who we house**
- **Demographically, many housed people look the same as those entering shelter – income, education, AOD, family size, so let's return them to housing, where they can chart their own next steps**
- **Our experience is that those we can't divert – or didn't take a chance on – languish in shelter, often experience conflict and stress**

National Alliance to End Homelessness: Principles for Homeless Prevention

- **Principle ONE: Crisis resolution**
- **Principle TWO: Client choice, respect, and empowerment**
- **Principle THREE: Provide the minimum assistance necessary for the shortest time possible**
- **Principle FOUR: Maximize community resources**
- **Principle FIVE: The right resources to the right people at the right time**

Principle One: Crisis Resolution

Homelessness is a crisis for the person experiencing it.

Responses must include:

- **Rapid assessment and triaging**
- **Focus on personal safety as the first priority**
- **De-escalation of the person's emotional reaction**
- **Definite action steps the individual can successfully achieve**
- **Returning the person to control over their own problem-solving**

Principle Two: Client Choice, Respect, and Empowerment

- **Staff must help people in crisis regain a sense of control**
- **Focus on the client's goals, choices, and preferences**
- **Unwavering respect for their strengths, and reinforcement of progress, essential for empowerment**
- **Clients are not protected from the natural consequences of their actions**

Principle Three: Provide the Minimum Assistance Necessary for the Shortest Time Possible

- **Progressive engagement as in RRH**

Other than paying back rent, what are some examples of lesser amounts of assistance that help people become housed?

Principle Four: Maximize Community Resources

- **Lightest touch**
- **Reserve shelter beds for those in need**
- **Connect people to benefits**



Principle Five: The Right Resources to the Right People at the Right Time

- **Do not over-serve**
- **Match the services to the needs identified by the
clients**



What Causes Homelessness?

_____ + x = Homelessness

x = ?

Wealthier areas include many people who face domestic abuse, drug or alcohol addiction and/or mental health issues, but we rarely see people from means in shelter or on the streets.

Does society - or sometimes even providers - only focus on the first part of the equation, essentially placing responsibility and blame on the person facing homelessness?

Thinking About Homelessness

- **Are there any characteristics of homelessness that are unique to your area?**
- **What are the risk factors for persons when they stay in shelter? On the streets?**

Diversion Work

- **Help people determine if it's possible for them to stay anywhere else that's safe, other than a shelter**
- **Financial assistance is used for food, local and Greyhound bus tickets, grocery and gas station gift cards, or utility assistance that can be used to help people stay with friends or family**
- **Possible funds for first months rent and deposit**

Diversion Work

- Most people have been doubled up – staying temporarily with friends or family
 - When these situations become unmanageable, people come to the shelter
- Some may need their own housing, and if they believe they can afford to maintain their own place, they are offered assistance
- Look for:
 - Safe options
 - Long term housing options



Listening

- **Why do it? What might listening accomplish?**
- **What is hard or easy about this?**
- **What is active listening?**
- **What is empathetic listening?**

National Alliance on Mental Illness:
Empathy is the intimate comprehension of another person's thoughts and feelings without adding our own judgment or expectations.

Listening Skill Building

What helps you prepare, get centered to listen?

- **Physical Preparedness:**
 - **R - Relaxed**
 - **O - Open**
 - **L - Leaning toward the speaker**
 - **E - Eye Contact**
 - **S - Squared toward speaker**
- **Note Taking**

Listening Skill Building

Acknowledge by:

- Paraphrasing
- Reflecting
- Open-ended questions
 - This is not to pry information, but to give them a chance to say more if they would like
 - This is not to ask about motives (“Why did you do it this way”) – “Why” questions can make people defensive and can even escalate the conflict

Getting Clearer

- Pair off with another person
 - Each person think for a moment about something that is on your mind – a decision you need to make, a problem, or something you are trying to figure out
 - The purpose is to have someone listen to you, not give you advise, but help you feel clearer, gain insight, help you think through or be more confident about your situation
- Listeners: Do not offer opinions or give advice

Day Two

Diversion STEPS, OUTCOMES, AND PRACTICE

Diversion Steps

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Active and Empathetic Listening**
- 3. Strength Exploration**
- 4. Moving forward**

Step One: Introductions

- **Briefly introduce yourself**
 - **Name, organization, role**
 - **Describe the conversation**

How can we help them return to housing?

Practice Introductions

Phone Calls

- **What is the same?**
 - **Introducing yourself**
 - **Listening**
- **When clients are frustrated, remember you may not be their first call today**
- **Remember, smiles are audible and calm is contagious**

Step Two: Active Listening

- **Body language**
- **Paraphrasing**
- **Empathy**
- **Hear their experience**

Keep this listening step separate from Diversion.

Step Three: Strength Exploration

- Explore past strengths – this step has two purposes:
 - Help identify times when they have been of help or support to others
 - Begin to identify networks and support persons that may be able to help them with income or housing

Our clients may feel dependent – we can help them remember times of interdependence.

Group Exercise

- **Goal: to uncover strengths, successes, and networks for this particular client**
- **Each group will think about strengths, skills, successes, and networks that went into finding and maintaining clients own housing, their job at the restaurant, and their family connections**

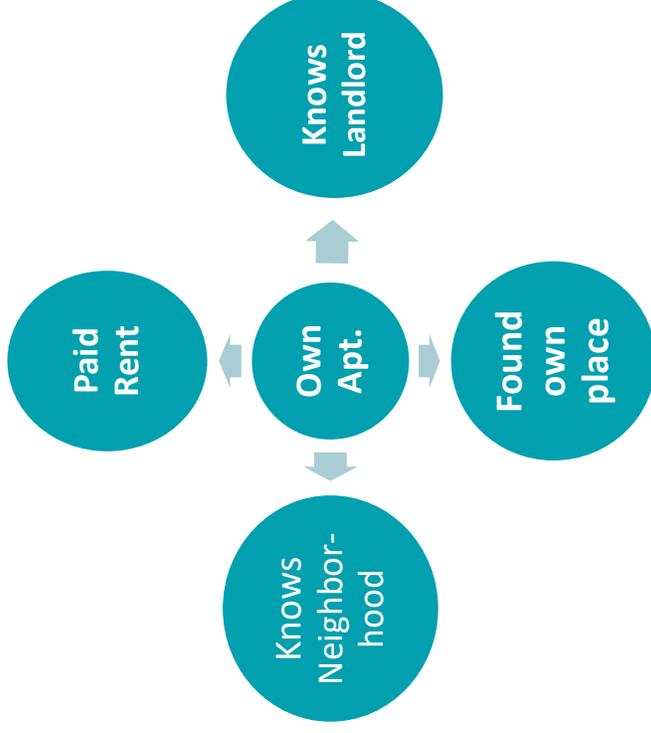
Group Exercise

Imagine this scenario:

- Your client and two children rented a house for two years
- Client moved out before eviction and stayed with Mom for almost a year
- Mom has given the client 3 days to move out – another child and her kids live there
- Client has high school diploma
- Client works part time at fast food restaurant
- Other parent contributes small amount of child support and helps out some with child care

Strengths and Resource Exploration

Using a client's previous apartment as an example of: successes (paid rent), relationships (knows landlord) and networks (knows neighborhood)



Step Four: Moving Forward

After we have listened, then explored past strengths, what housing options do they want to pursue?

1. Going back to live with friends and family.
2. Returning to their own residence.
3. Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing.
4. Relocating to a safe, permanent place out-of-town.

What other needs has the client identified?

Things To Consider

- **Always find out about:**
 - **Housing history**
 - **Income (Current and past)**
- **Are options:**
 - **Safe?**
 - **Appropriate for client?**

What do costs look like?

- **No Cost**
- **Small Amount of Funding**
- **Transit Cost**
- **Smaller Assistance than Rent**
- **Full-Cost Diversion**

Mediation, referrals to other agencies

Grocery gift card, local bus ticket, etc.

Greyhound, train or plan ticket

Utility Bill Assistance, back fees,
partial rent, or deposit

First month's rent and deposit

Diversion Outcomes

1. Permanently back with friends or family
 2. Return to their own residence
 3. Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing
 4. Relocating permanently to safe place out of town
- 

Outcome One: Permanently back with friends or family

When? Under what circumstances?

- **No better option**
- **No housing history**
- **No income history**

How can our client contribute to the household?

How can our client use this time to further education and/or employment opportunities?

Outcome Two: Return to their own residence

When? Under what circumstances?

- **Walk-Aways (have lease but cannot pay current or back rent)**
- **Non-DV relationship issues (significant other is in home)**
- **Previous places they have lived are options (i.e. parents)**

Outcome Three: Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing

When? Under what circumstances?

- **Wish to live on their own and have done so before**
- **Have current or past income**

Outcome Three: Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing

Help clients consider:

- **A walk through before moving in**
- **Discussing how and when rent is paid**
- **How to discuss repairs with landlord**
- **Fallback plans if they have a change in income**

**How can our clients see themselves as consumers in a
business transaction with their landlord?**

Outcome Four: Relocating permanently to safe place out of town

When? Under what circumstances?

- Safe, appropriate host
- Support systems – family, friends, employment, education – are those support systems elsewhere?

How?

- Confirm with host (30 day minimum stay)
- What travel and other logistics do we need to work out?

Why Problem Solve?

- Emergency Shelter should be For Emergencies
- Episodes of Homelessness should be Brief
- Resources should be Prioritized for the Most Vulnerable
 - Shelters aren't homes
 - **Now More than Ever**

Troubleshooting

- What's the reason for them being stuck?
- Can we help them address their concerns?
 - Listen
 - Validate
 - Empathy
- Buyer's Remorse? What happens if they do not get diverted?

Reality Testing Decisions

- The agreements and decisions need to work for the parties (not for us)
- By starting with what has worked previously, we increase the odds of it working again
- If you have a concern – do not ignore it – use that as an opportunity to help our client **think through** their options and decisions

Questions When Reality Testing

- How would this look?
- What is the timeline?
- Have you done something like this before?
- What other options have you considered?
- What resources do you have to carry this out?
- In case this does not work out as well as you would like, would you like to explore a back-up plan?

Diversion Role Plays

Think Housing First

- **Persons that are home-LESS need a home, not necessarily anything else**
- **Our experience is that its best to be aggressive in who we house**
- **Demographically, many housed people look the same as those entering shelter – income, education, AOD, family size, so let's return them to housing, where they can chart their own next steps**
- **Our experience is that those we can't divert – or didn't take a chance on – languish in shelter, often experience conflict and stress**

Closing

- Remember to listen first, understand, validate - be empathetic.
- Leave no stone unturned in helping people think of safe places they can live or stay other than the street or shelter
- Help people think through options – help them clarify their choices and the steps needed to carry out their plan

Closing

- If a client is difficult:
 - Remember that homelessness is a crisis and people are usually not at their best when under this stress
 - Help them realize strengths and resources they have forgotten
 - Visualize sitting next to them, supporting them in how they choose to address the problem

Thank You!

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NAEH Emergency Shelter Agency Self-Assessment

Diversion

- 1. For people requesting shelter, our staff engages them in conversations to find safe, appropriate, permanent housing solutions for them that may be better than entering shelter.**
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - I don't know
- 2. Our staff discusses diversion options with people who are seeking shelter by having creative and problem-solving conversations that help to identify whether they are fleeing an unsafe situation, have better alternative housing options, or need help to stay in the place that they currently have rather than simply asking a checklist of questions.**
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - I don't know
- 3. We have appropriate staffing and job descriptions to provide safe, appropriate, and effective diversion services.**
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - I don't know
- 4. Our staff is trained on how to provide safe and appropriate diversion options that are focused on finding better permanent housing solutions for people instead of entering shelter.**
 - Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

5. Staff continuously works with shelter participants to problem-solve and find permanent housing solutions even after they have entered shelter.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

6. Our shelter's diversion practice ensures that people feel that they are receiving a service that helps them to resolve their housing crises rather than making people feel that staff is restricting entry to shelter with no additional support.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- I don't know

Action Plan for Implementing Diversion Services

Action Step <i>What needs to be done?</i>	Responsible Person <i>Who should take action to complete this step?</i>	Deadline	Necessary Resources <i>What do you need in order to complete this step?</i>	Potential Challenges <i>Are there any potential challenges? How will you overcome them?</i>	Result <i>Was this step successfully completed? Any new steps to take?</i>