

Housing First in Practice

July 20, 2017

Tarrant County Homeless Coalition

The Source for
Housing Solutions



Welcome!



I'm interested in...

- **Why did you come to our session?**
- **What makes you excited about housing first?**
- **Where do you feel challenged?**
- **What questions would you like to discuss today?**

Agenda

Handout

Morning

What is housing first and why housing first?

Getting people housed

Lunch

2 – 15 minute breaks, 1 hour for lunch

Afternoon

Keeping people housed

Taking housing first home

Training Logistics



Restrooms



Cell Phones



Breaks



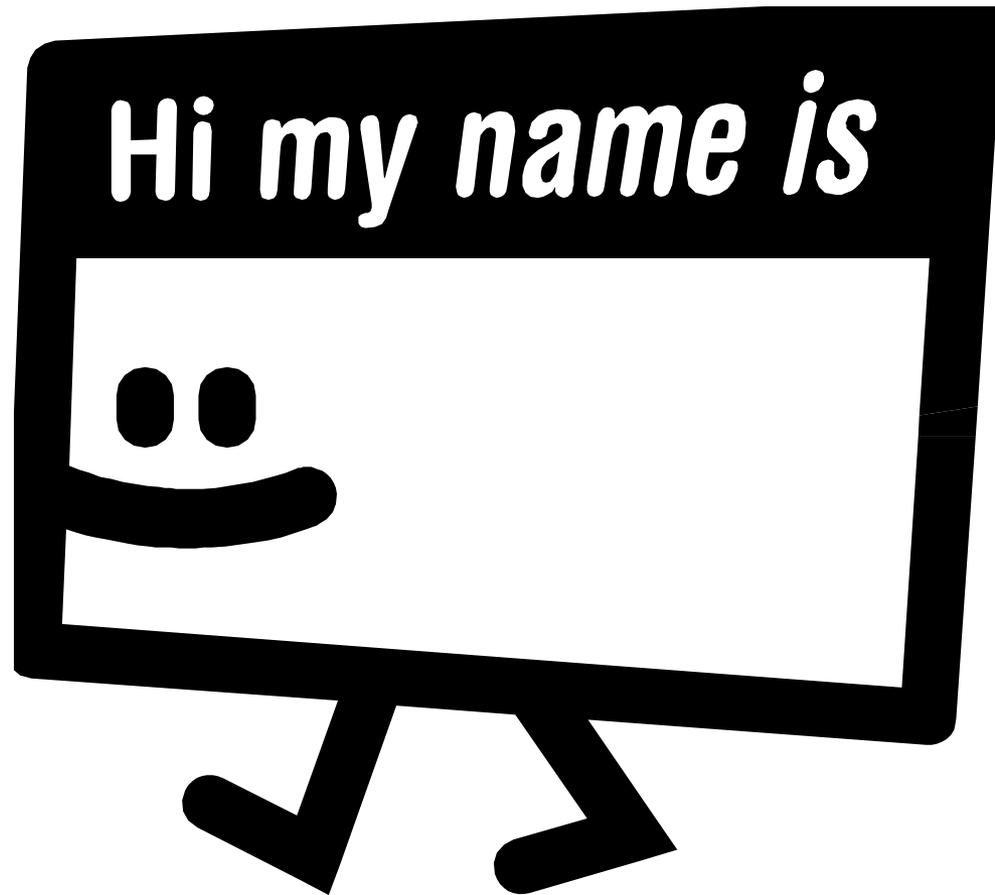
Questions

Getting to Know You

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Introductions



Introducing CSH: What We Focus On

CSH advances housing solutions that:



**Improve lives of
vulnerable
people**



**Maximize public
resources**



**Build strong,
healthy
communities**

Context

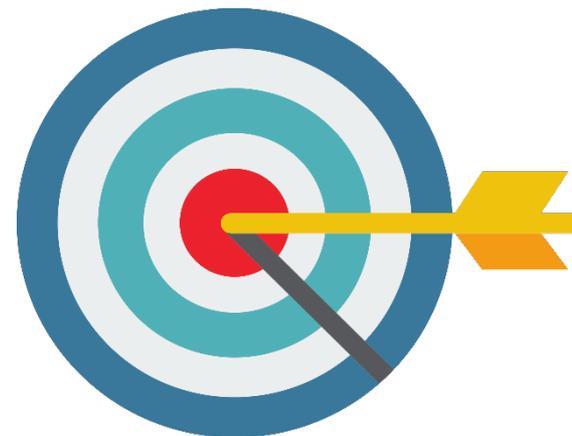
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Context for our Discussion

HEARTH Act

Targeting



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

30

No person or family homeless more than 30 days

What is Housing First and Why Housing First?

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What is a Housing First Strategy?

Two Central Premises

Quick
re-housing

Housing
focused
services



What are the benefits?

Key Principles: Housing First

1 Centered on Consumer choice

2 Quick access to housing

3 Robust support services with assertive engagement

4 Tenancy is not dependent on participation in services

5 Units targeted to most disabled and vulnerable

6 Embrace a harm-reduction approach

7 Provide leases and tenant protections

Questions



Getting People Housed

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Key Principles: Housing First

Centered on
Consumer choice

Quick access to
housing

Units targeted to
most disabled and
vulnerable

Provide leases and
tenant protections

Consumer Choice

**How do you
create
choice?**

**What if there
isn't choice?**

**How much
choice?**



Housing First: A person centered approach that can accommodate individual needs

- My dog comes with me
- Me and Ana go together or we don't go at all
- Is it possible to get an extra room so my kids can visit?
- Don't want to hide my beer under the couch when you come to visit. Do you hide your beer under your couch when you have guests?

Coming back to center



Who is this
housing
for?

Key Principles: Housing First

Centered on Consumer choice

Quick access to housing

Units targeted to most disabled and vulnerable

Provide leases and tenant protections

A photograph of a narrow, winding path through a dense forest. The path is covered in a light layer of snow, contrasting with the dark, bare trees and undergrowth. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a misty or overcast day. The text "Creating a Clear Path" is overlaid in the center in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

Creating a Clear Path

How do you create quick access?

- What do you need to know to house someone?
- Why do you reject applicants?
- How long does your process take?

Making the process accessible at all points

- At application, assessment, service delivery, property management

Do you have:

- Rules
- Procedures
- Policies
- Applications
-that really “Screen out”?

Taking out the Housing Ready “stuff”

Create a straightforward application process

- More hoops, more dropouts
- Ask: What do you really need to know at application? How do people apply?

Examine who can really get in

- Does your program serve the homeless of your community today?
- Are your entrance criteria as open as possible? When was the last time you looked at them?
- Do the staff understand the applicant stress points at application and during the process?
- Does an applicant get enough information to understand how this PSH will help them stay housed?

As barrier-free as possible

Screen in, not out

- Avoid automatically screening out for: poor credit, negative housing history, past drug use or criminal activity.

Break

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Getting in the Circle

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Key Principles: Housing First

Centered on Consumer choice

Quick access to housing

Units targeted to most disabled and vulnerable

Provide leases and tenant protections

Leases in Supportive Housing



All tenants are offered a choice with regard to their housing unit and have a lease identical to those of tenants who are not in SH/RRH

What's in your House?

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Current Admission & Applications

What are you doing today that does fit the housing first model?

What are you doing well?

What might need to change?

What would it take to change?

Lunch

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Keeping People Housed

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Key Principles: Housing First

Centered on Consumer choice

Robust support services with assertive engagement

Tenancy is not dependent on participation in services

Embrace a harm-reduction approach

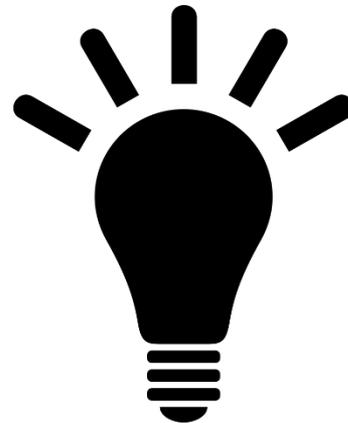
Consumer choice when housed

What might
this look
like?

Examples of
what you
already do?

Some ideas

- **Involve in program design, evaluation**
- **Participate in design of house rules if applicable**
- **Encourage to make own choices**
- **Participate in board, tenant council**
- **Encourage tenants to be active community members**
- **Ask for feedback**



Key Principles: Housing First

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Getting to Know You....



Goals of Engagement

Care for
immediate
needs

Develop a
trusting
relationship

Provide
services
and
resources

Connect to
mainstream
services and
social
networks to
maximize
independence

Helping
people stay
housed



- 1. Understand your own biases to the approach**
- 2. Create the proper environment for staff and consumers**
- 3. Develop appropriate policies**
- 4. Integrate motivational interviewing and engagement service strategies**

Effective Engagement

Create the proper physical environment

Respect, accept and support people

Develop active listening skills

Let the tenant's goals drive the services offered

Help people make informed choices

Be consistent with repeated, predictable patterns of interaction

Engagement should be non-threatening

Engagement is a Process

Where we introduce tenant to services relationship

Explain our role

Find common ground to build on

Engagement is not an event

Does not happen overnight

Varies from tenant to tenant

Key Principles: Housing First

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Tenant-Centered Service Design

What do we know about our prospective tenants and their needs?

What do prospective tenants say that they need?



Why are Services Important?



Services make the difference in helping vulnerable persons obtain and sustain housing.

Services help tenants quickly access housing (first) so that they can use it as a platform for health, recovery, and personal growth.

Services Make the Difference

Flexible,
voluntary

Counseling

Health and
mental health
services

Alcohol and
substance use
services

Independent
living skills

Money
management/
rep payee

Community-
building
activities

Vocational
counseling and
job placement

Housing stability
services

What are voluntary services?

Services are voluntary and consumer-driven.

- Focus on ensuring that tenants can obtain and thrive in stable housing, regardless of barriers they may face.

What are voluntary services?

Participation
in services is
not a
condition of
tenancy

Services are
voluntary for
tenants...not
staff

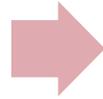
Staff must
work to build
relationships
with tenants

Emphasis
should be on
user-friendly
services
driven by
tenant needs
and
individual
goals

Why Voluntary Services? Achieving Goals



Housing
tenants first
without
preconditions

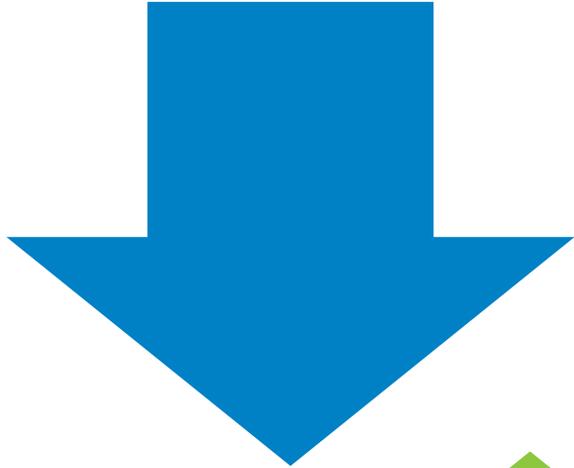


Keeping
them
housed



Forming
effective
service
relationships

Does it work?



Low Demand



High Rate of
Housing
Stability

What do we know about voluntary services?

Even when services are not required as a condition of tenancy, tenants participate at high rates.

Tenants value the services available to them, as well as the autonomy to decide which services to participate in.

“Low demand” model is much more likely to house and retain formerly homeless people, especially those with significant disabilities and long homeless histories.

Key Principles: Housing First

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Embrace a harm-reduction approach

- **What are some examples of harm reduction?**



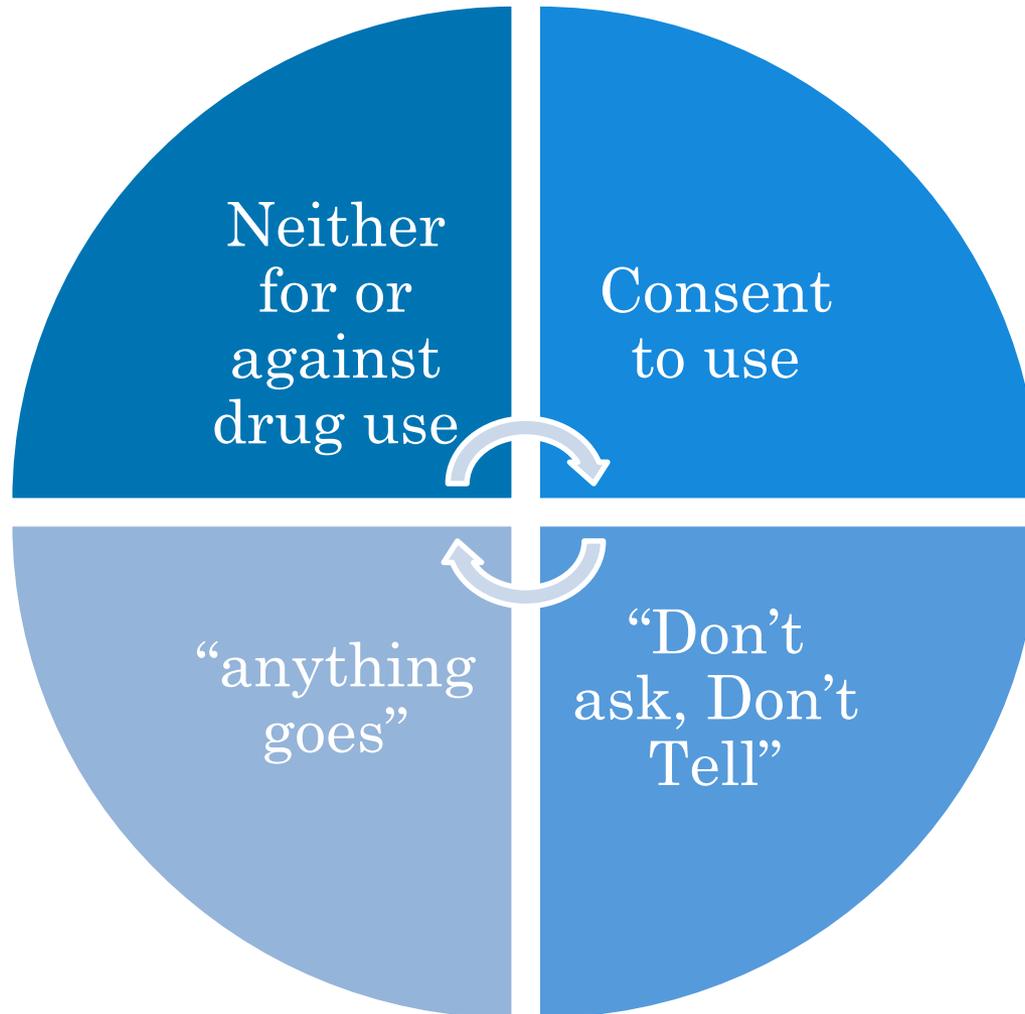
What Harm Reduction Is...

Philosophy that recognizes the resilience of individuals

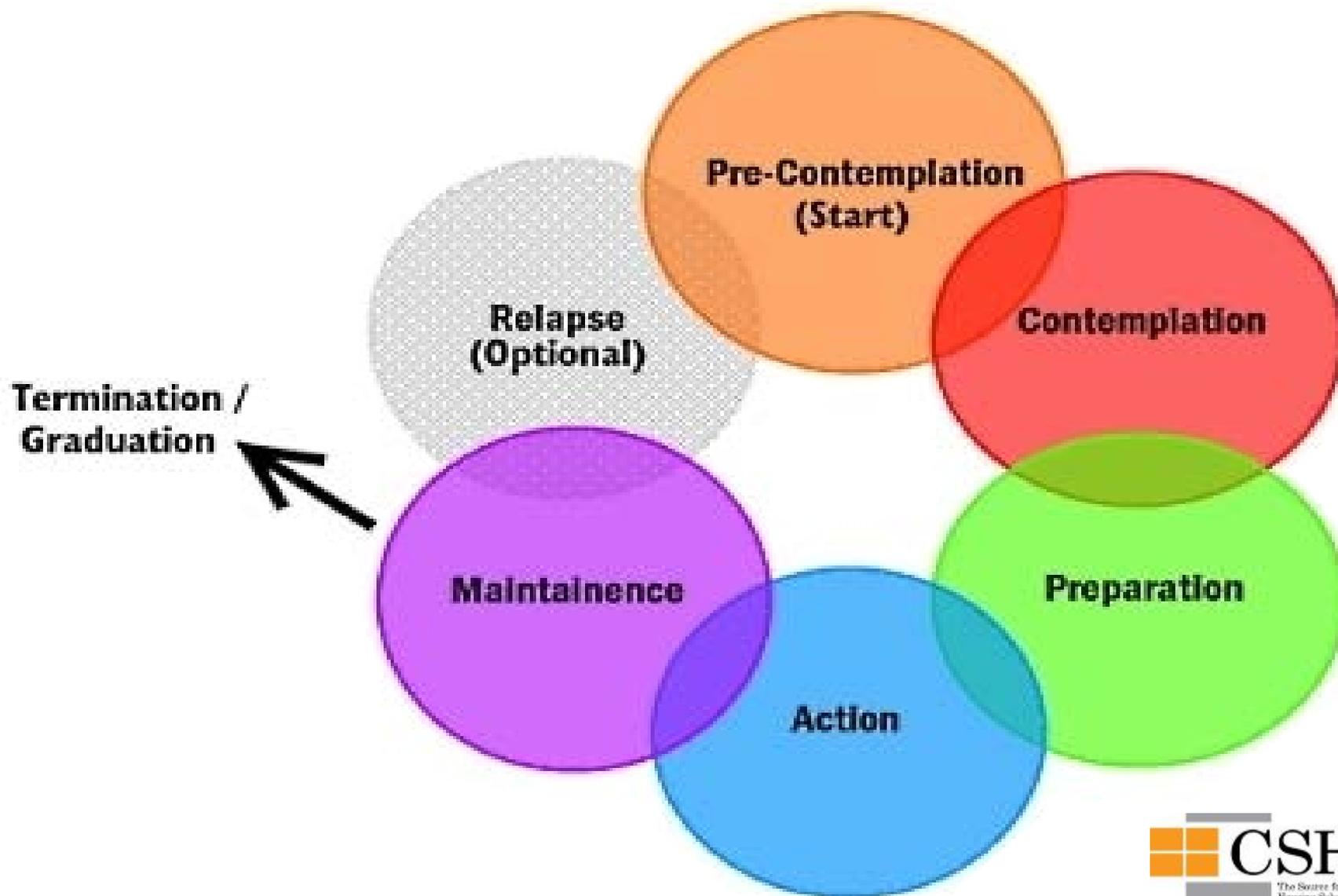
Expands the therapeutic conversation

- Allows providers to intervene with active users who are not yet contemplating abstinence

What Harm Reduction is Not...



Stages of Change



Building Motivation for Change

Build Trust: Be consistent, trustworthy and honest

Get to know the person

Learn to recognize and Identify Emotions/Physical sensations of anxiety

Define the helping relationship

Exercise

*Giddings Supportive Housing: Housing
First in Practice*

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Break

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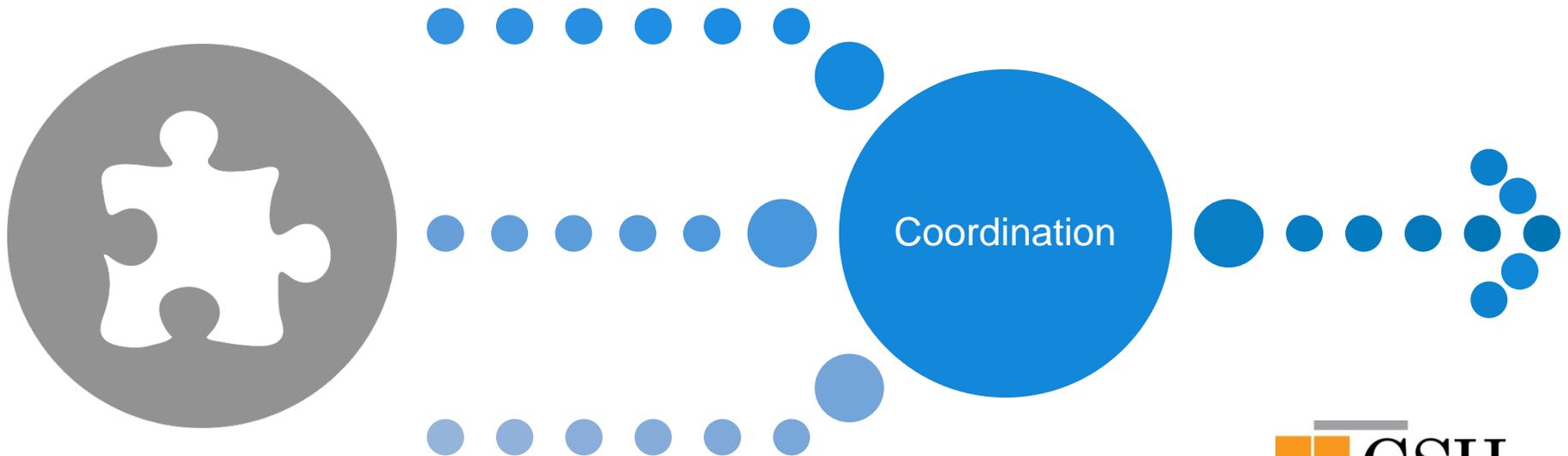


**Coordinating Housing and Services: Keeping
People Housed**

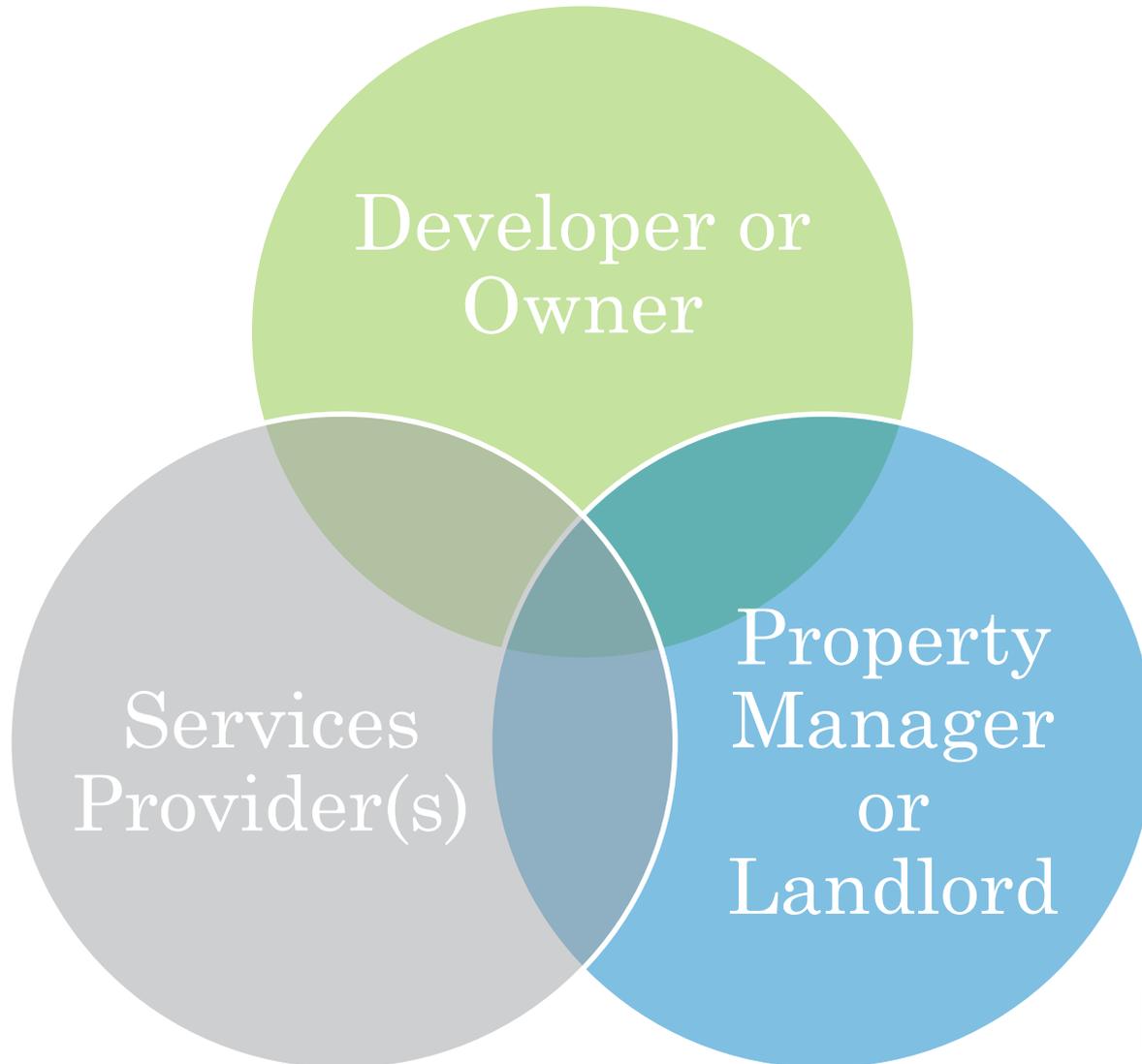
Defining Coordination

“cooperative effort resulting in an effective relationship.”

“the process of organizing people or groups so that they work together properly and well”



Housing Partners



Key Areas of Coordination



- Educating and supporting tenants
- Soliciting and using tenant input
- Keeping tenants stably housed
- Ensuring the ongoing quality of the physical unit
- Tracking outcomes and improving quality

Perception of Roles

**Property
Management,
landlord,
provider**

Show me the
money!

**Common
Goal:
Keeping
Tenants
Housed**

**Supportive
Services**
I just want to
help!

Key Practice:

A key practice in any housing is that supportive services staff — charged with advocating for tenants and linking them to essential services — work in partnership with property management staff or the landlord to meet the needs of tenants

Critical to understand specialized nature of property management or the relationship with the landlord.

Traditional property management practices may come into conflict

- How do you think this might be true?
- What is especially true with the rapid rehousing model?

Property management in for-profit housing (site based or scattered site)

- “bottom-line” proposition
- management provides basic services to tenants as specified in the lease while keeping expenses contained so that the property generates a profit for the owner/landlord

Within our housing:

- “double bottom-line”
- maintaining safe, clean, cost-effective properties/apartments and partnering with supportive services staff to help ensure that at-risk and formerly homeless tenants are able to remain living in the housing successfully.

So, how do you balance the line?



Double Bottom Line

Consistent implementation & enforcement of policies

Compliance with laws, regulations

Compliance with funder requirements

Recognizing goals of services staff

Recognizing goals of the housing program

Effective coordination requires us to

- Create systems for responding to situations
- Define individual and collective roles and responsibilities
- Understand the common goal

Principle 1: Property Management Supports Mission-Driven Housing

All partners, including property management, must have a shared commitment to the success of the community and each of the tenants that resides in the unit.

All partners must have a shared commitment to coordinated communication between social services, property management and tenant organizations.

Principle 2: Establish Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Commitment to clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.

Establishment of ongoing forum(s) for talking about and re-negotiating roles and responsibilities.

Principle 3: Recognize Overlap and Built-In Tension Between Roles

Respect for the different roles of social service provider, property manager, owner; each is necessary and important for a well-managed supportive housing program.

Acknowledgment and productive use of the built-in tension between these roles/functions.

Separate and Distinct Roles

Potential conflicts when property/housing management and service providers have same roles

Development of expertise

Collaborating brings new ideas

Creative solutions arise out of health tensions and conflict

Housing seems more generic and less institutional with distinct roles

Clarity for tenant that services are not a condition of tenancy

Separate Roles, but lots of overlap

Application & Rent-Up Procedures

Orientation of Incoming Tenants

Rent Collection

Dealing with Nuisance and Disruptive Behavior

Procedures in Crises

Tenant Grievance Procedures

Working with Private Landlords

Selling the program and your support to a private landlord

Explaining the goals of supportive housing clearly

Providing support to landlords 24/7

Providing flexible dollars to fix issues quickly

Moving tenants when there isn't another alternative

Ensuring Confidentiality

What information must be kept confidential?

Sharing of non-confidential information

Confidentiality policies

Addressing tenant issues

Effectively Coordinating Roles

Maintaining communication

Maintaining a focus on *housing stability*

Understanding each partner's roles and *motivations*

Achieving a shared understanding of tenants' needs

Building Blocks for Coordination



- **Written Agreements**
- **Frequent, Ongoing Communication**
- **Conflict Resolution Plans**
- **Cross-Training**

Questions



Taking Housing First Home

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Questions to Ask



When it's time to change

**What changes
could you make at
your program
based on what you
heard today?**

Wrap-up and Evaluation

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Golden Nuggets



Wrap-up and Evaluation

What Could Be Improved?

What Went Well Today?