

# Re-Imagining Creative Exit Strategies

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# Re-Imagining Creative Exit Strategies

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# Objectives

- The importance of a housing focused approach
- Re-imagining a “positive exit”
- Identify creative solutions



# Rapid Exit to End Homelessness

## Philosophy

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Clients are the captains of their housing plans
- Shelter/homeless stays are short
- Everyone's job is housing



## Practice

- Plan for rapid exit **to housing** at system entry
- “If you’re not talking about housing, you’re having the wrong conversation” – problem-solving “housing” conversations continue
- Environment reflects a housing focus
- All meetings, policies, procedures, job descriptions, signage, client handbooks, etc. reflect focus on quick exits to housing

# HOLD ON!



Isn't housing  
people someone  
else's job?  
Coordinated Entry?  
Rapid Re-Housing?  
Permanent  
Supportive  
Housing?

# Reality Check!



# Reality Check

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# Creative Exit Strategies

## Paradigm Shift

### REALITY CHECK:

**Few** households will receive RRH or PSH.  
Shelter is **not a waiting place** for interventions.

### SHIFT FROM:

“Our guests cannot exit shelter without interventions.”

### TO:

“Most households can find permanent living situations quickly without intensive interventions.”

# Creative Exit Strategies

## Paradigm Shift

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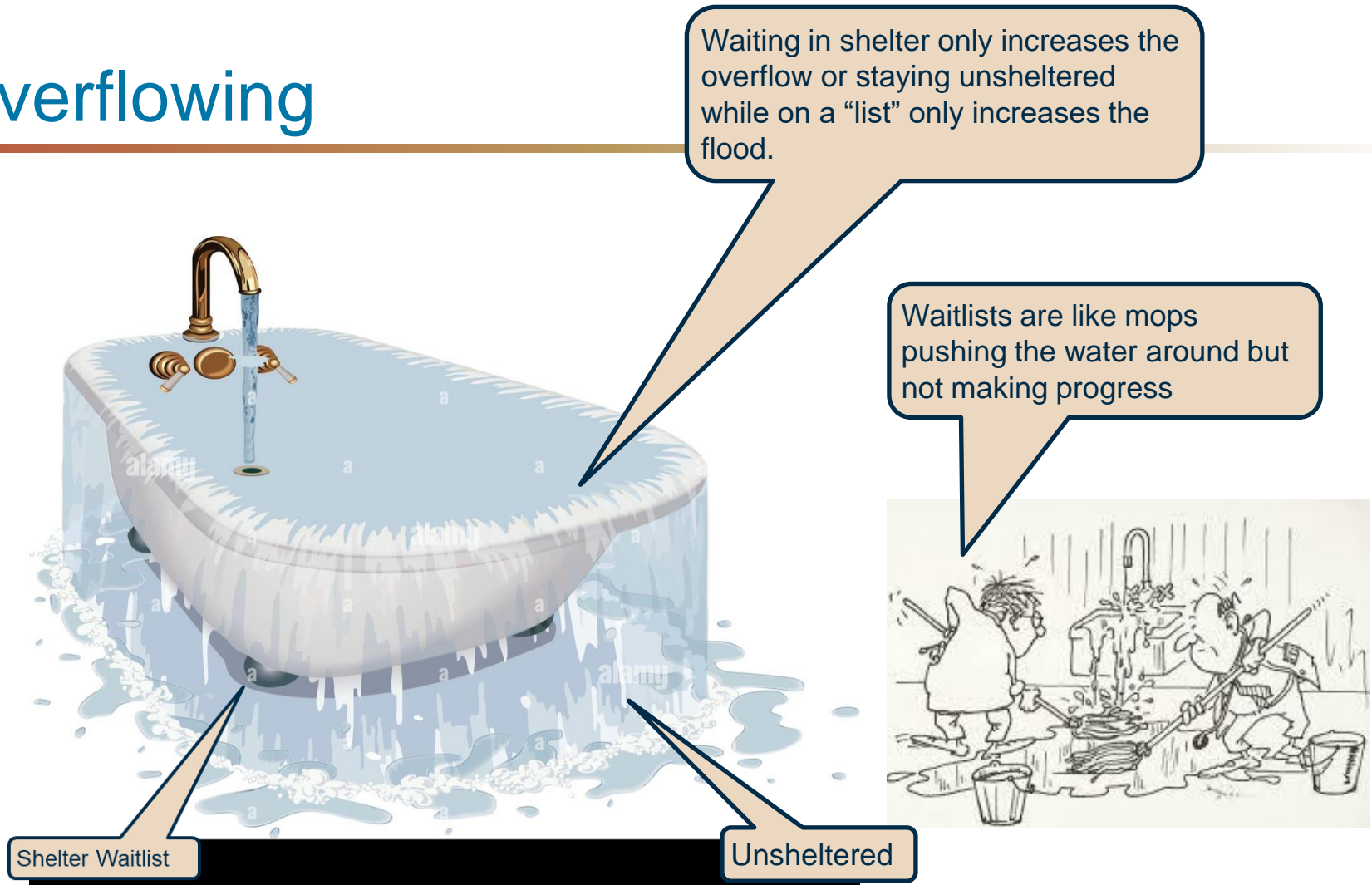
### REALITY CHECK:

**Few** households will receive RRH or PSH.

Shelter is **not a waiting place** for interventions.

- Shelter IS NOT an access point to something special...
- Shelter IS NOT a destination...
- Shelter **IS** a jumping-off point to your own solutions for housing!

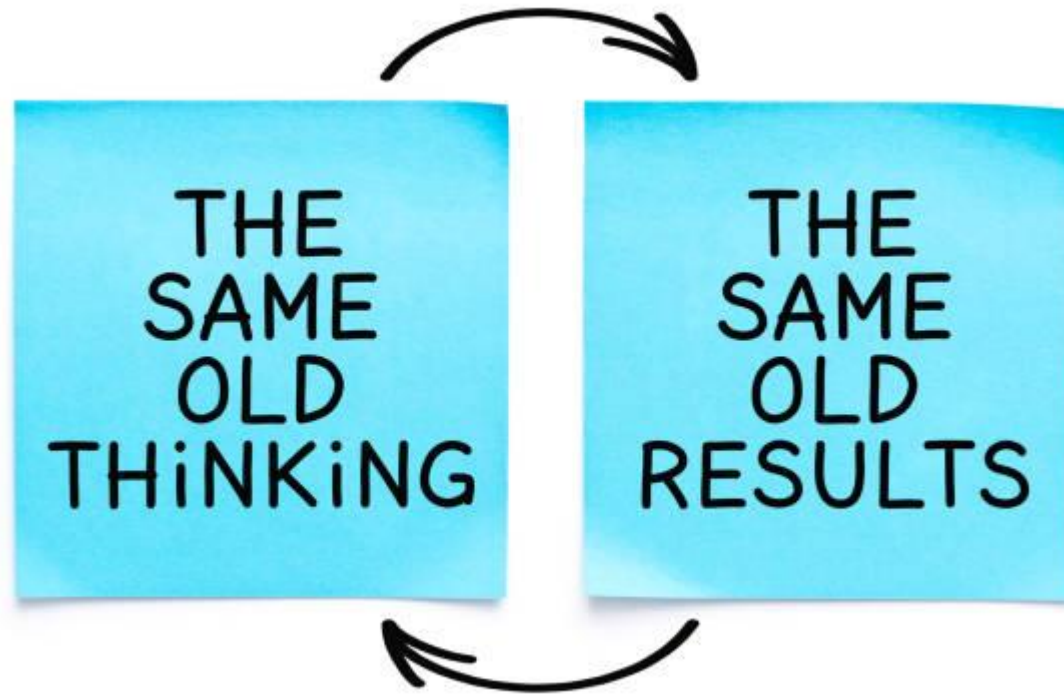
# The Tub is Overflowing



Sooo...How do we fit the cat in the box???



We think outside the box!



# Think outside the box...

Problem Solving...

is a strengths-based approach that utilizes **conversation** and **empowerment** methods to help **resolve** the household's housing **crisis**, and quickly **identify solutions** to rapidly exit- the system by working alongside them in an empowering manner.





# Think outside the box...means we problem solve. We means EVERYONE

Staff **CAN** facilitate **self resolution** through **problem-solving conversations**

1. Identify connections and supports
2. Identify strengths
3. Talk about past relationships and community supports
4. Leverage community and support system partnerships
5. Believe in each person's resilience and problem-solving ability
6. Believe in each person's housing success



# ACTIVITY

## Our Reality Message Brainstorm Activity

Turn to your colleagues to make groups of 3-4 people. What is our current message about housing options to our clients?  
(7 minutes)

Now, brainstorm/create a message that is positive while being reality based.



# Debrief Messaging



- **Shelter is not a destination; it is a step to get you housed**
  - Waiting in shelter for something better is NOT an option
  - We can't wait for a train that isn't coming
- **We are going to re-house you RAPIDLY**
  - Every day is a day to find a housing solution
  - Don't get too comfortable - save that for when you move home
- **You CAN be housed!**
  - You're better off without us
  - You will have supports in the community

# WHERE DO WE START?



# Housing Plan(s)

Start developing the plan at first contact with client with an exit date for a housing solution

Shifting from “What can I do to help you?” to “How can I support you to obtain housing quickly?”

Identify barriers to tenancy that will be worked through in the housing plan

Have “problem-solving” conversations to connect to natural supports and housing options

Focus every in-person meeting on identifying creative solutions for a quick move to permanent housing

Keep conversations housing focused and reality based.



# Housing Plan Example

(from City Rescue Mission in Lansing, MI)

**My Housing Plan:** Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**My goal: I will end my homelessness by this date:** \_\_\_\_\_.

Items often necessary to overcome homelessness:

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Certificate         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Card      | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State ID/Driver's License | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resume                    |                                      |

**I will end my homelessness by...**

**Plan A:** \_\_\_\_\_

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

**Plan B:** \_\_\_\_\_

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

# Housing Plan Example

(from City Rescue Mission in Lansing, MI)

**Plan C:** \_\_\_\_\_

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Housing requires income.  
A living wage in Lansing begins at \$1,500 per month.

**My income plan is to...**

**Plan A:**

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Plan B:**

Steps necessary to complete this plan:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**The biggest obstacles to ending homelessness:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**But I WILL overcome them by:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Self Check....

## Which of these statements resonate with you?

- Many of our folks experiencing homelessness are not ready for housing.
- We can't convince landlords to rent to our clients unless they have a job.
- There are absolutely no affordable housing options any more in our community.
- Clients refuse to accept the options we provide to them...but that's client choice.
- In order to end homelessness, every client needs to have their own apartment using the housing authority guidelines for size of unit (persons per bedroom).
- I feel helpless and exhausted with no housing options for my clients.



# ACTIVITY

## Re-Imagining Positive Exits

7 Minutes

### Brainstorm Activity

Turn to your colleagues to make groups of 3-4 people. Discuss what creative exits means and then...

Now re-imagining what a positive exit looks like that would end someone's homelessness.

Think  
How do I create a balance...





# Re-imagining

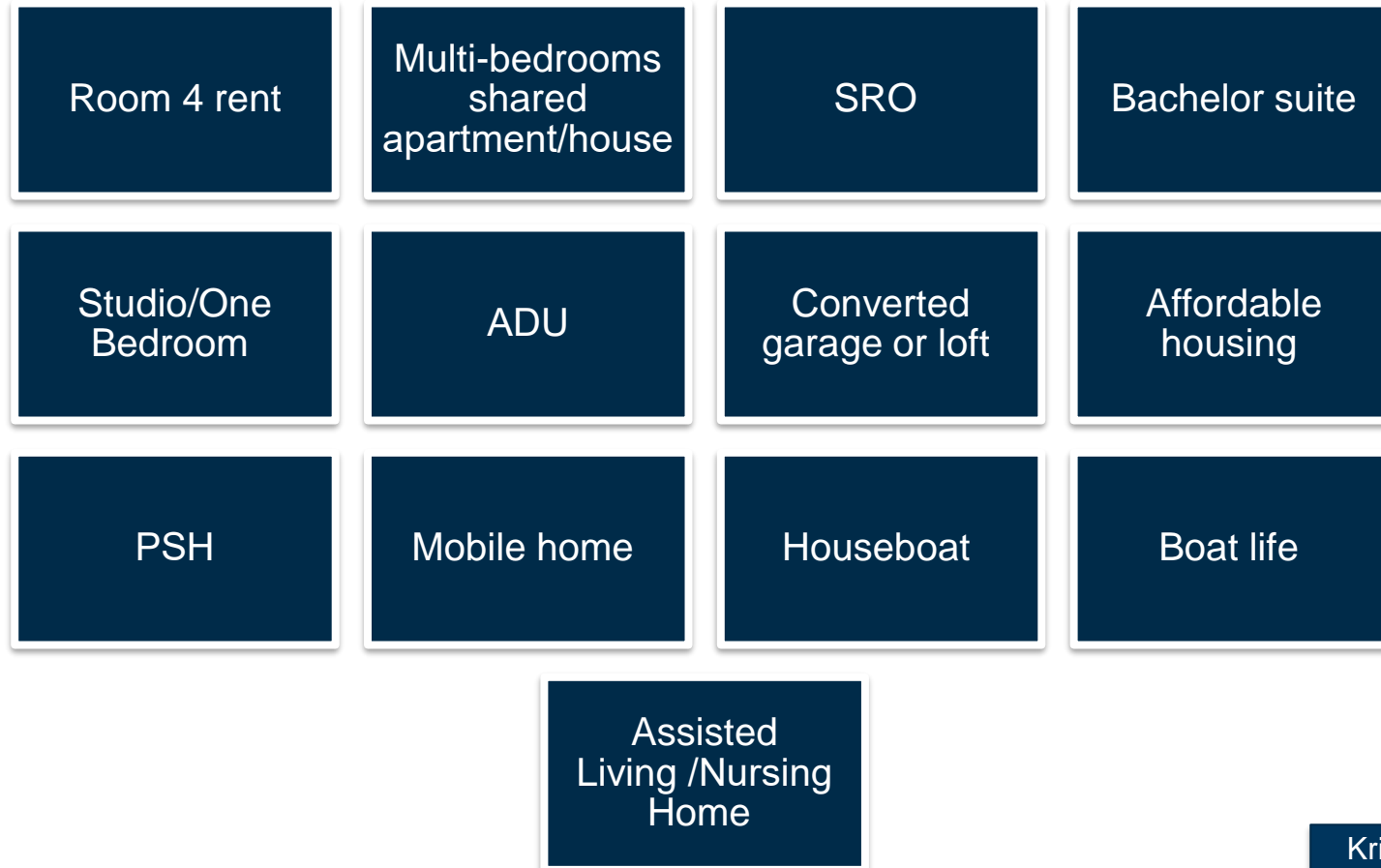
**First...**leave your biases at home every day.

**Then...**think “outside your box” of ideas

1. Connect with churches/congregations to identify people who may have a room to rent
2. Hotel/motel rooms that offer long term rentals.
3. Boarding houses
4. Rooms for rent
5. Creative sleeping arrangements in smaller units
6. Connections with family and or friends
  - Local or out of the region
  - Short term can lead to longer term



# Types of Housing



Kris Freed

# Why Shared Housing



Kris Freed

Rising cost of housing

Lack of adequate housing stock

Not enough affordable housing

Stagnant incomes

More affordable

Access to more neighborhoods

More sustainable

Built in supports

Families of choice

Can house more than one person/family at a time

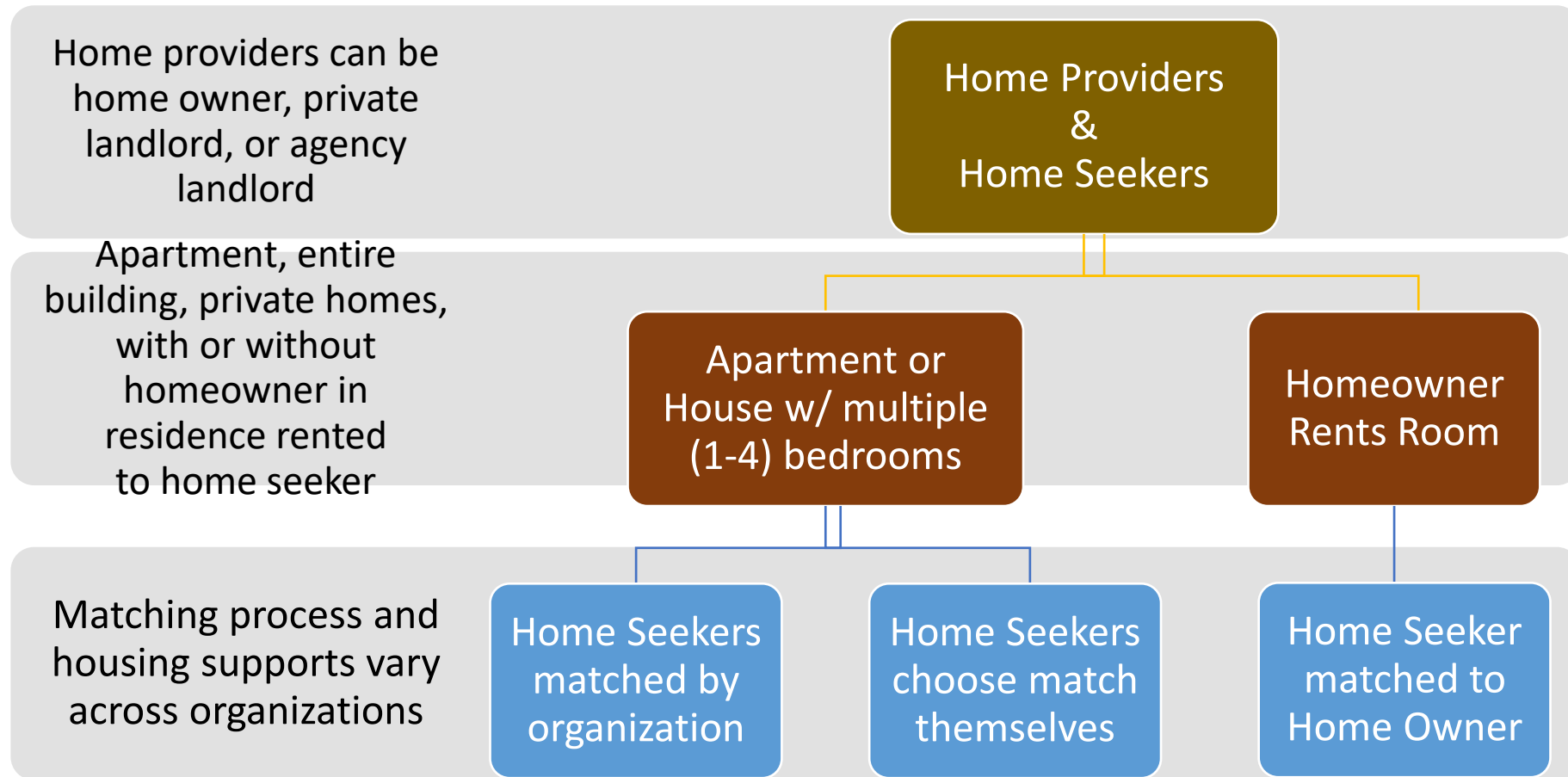
Throughput to the system inking resources \*\*\*\*\*

# Shared Housing

## Wisdom from Meghann Cotter - Micah Ministries - Fredericksburg, VA

- Roommate situations are not uncommon
- Realized that most people on the street were already “living with” someone in their current circumstances
- Who do they live with in the woods? Associate with in shelters? Are there at-risk or imminently at-risk people in the community they could be paired with?
- Honor client choice
- Invest time in understanding deal breakers
- Don’t knee-jerk a relocation after the first roommate conflict
- Private landlords are the most flexible with shared housing

# Shared Housing



# ACTIVITY

## Getting Started

**In your group, brainstorm any creative exit solutions you can think of**

As a group, share one idea (or more) of a specific brainstormed idea that you will take back to use with one of your clients.

# DEBRIEF



# Reminder

## Not business as usual

- Brainstorm exit solutions with colleagues
- Any idea has potential
- Leave biases at the door
- Shelter is NOT home
- Build on client supports and resiliency



ALWAYS speak the truth. False hope is not an option.



# Contact Us

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## Questions?

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