Rapid and Effective Exits: Moving Clients into Housing with Supports

A special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor:

Dalio Education
Hannah Smith, Beth El Center
Ewa Grochowska, St. Vincent De Paul of Bristol
Lisa Joseph, Open Doors

A special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor:
Creative Exit Strategies Introduction
Ewa Grochowska - SVDP Resource Center Manager
What is your why?
Do you feel supported?
How can we support our teams?
Solid Foundation
Continued Support
OUR Community Needs OUR help!
How can we help?
Spark hope. Empower Progress. Inspire change.
Support
Next steps....
Here for you!
Reflect on the Journey
A comprehensive and compassionate approach to:

CREATIVE HOUSING EXITS

HANNAH SMITH

DIRECTOR OF SHELTER SERVICES
BETH-EL CENTER
Homelessness is rare, brief & non-recurring

Building conversations not stigma

Shift power to people with lived experience

Authentic & genuine, not tokenistic

Survive & Thrive

Address Racism, Structural & Gender Inequity

Data-led decision making, evaluation of change

Learn, Adapt & Evolve

Build on what is working

We are stronger together!
It's up to us, we are building this together
"We regard our unhoused neighbors as problems to be solved, rather than as people to be loved."
• Early engagement sets the tone for the entire housing journey.
• By initiating the housing process at intake and building trust and rapport from the first interaction, we lay a strong foundation for successful and sustainable housing outcomes.
• This proactive approach ensures that clients feel supported, understood, and empowered to take the necessary steps towards stable housing.
Structure of Intake:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Document Ready</th>
<th>Housing First</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Dignity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holistic approach - addressing the complex and interconnected challenges individuals may face.</td>
<td>Vital Docs are important for securing housing - applying for these documents requires time and money</td>
<td>Housing plan is created when folks enter shelter and reviewed weekly. Stable housing is a fundamental need.</td>
<td>Importance of community connections in supporting individuals on their journey out of homelessness.</td>
<td>Acknowledges the inherent worth and value of each person, provide a safe and supportive environment that fosters healing.</td>
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Low Barrier Shelter = Faster Housing Outcomes

Maintain Housing and Safety Focus

The ultimate goal of shelter is to assist people out of homelessness and into permanent housing. Therefore, shelter expectations should center on keeping guests, staff, and visitors safe; and around the work to support people in obtaining permanent housing. Housing First shelter expectations should contribute to a low barrier environment and should not impede guests’ ability to access shelter and obtain permanent housing.
Is homelessness a justifiable consequence for violating a shelter’s rules?

Can I defend my decision to the community?

Is it reasonable to expect people with alcohol or drug dependence to abstain simply because they have walked through our doors?

Is it reasonable to expect that a group of strangers living together with diverse backgrounds and values will always get along?

Is it reasonable to expect someone to keep track of all the rules in shelter when the staff sometimes can’t even keep track?

Would I want to stay in this shelter?

Would I want myself as an advocate?
Comprehensive Homeless Services

- Trauma informed responses at every level of the system
- Everyone needs safe and secure housing

- Hygiene Hub
- Mail Services
- Free Wi-Fi
- Medical Services
- No Freeze Program
Safety: Ensuring physical and emotional safety

Choice: Individual has choice and control

Collaboration: Making decisions with the individual and sharing power

Trustworthiness: Task clarity, consistency, and Interpersonal Boundaries

Empowerment: Prioritizing empowerment and skill building

Definitions

Principles in Practice

Common areas are welcoming and privacy is respected

Individuals are provided a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities

Individuals are provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services

Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained

Providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each and every contact at the agency
The Intersection of Supervision, Case Conferencing and House Meetings

These initiatives complement each other by providing different avenues for communication, collaboration, and support.

They form a cohesive framework for promoting a culture of collaboration, communication, and support within our shelter community.
The purpose of housing case conferences is to bring our team together to discuss client concerns, share insights, and collaborate on finding solutions. By pooling our expertise and perspectives, we can better support our clients and address any emerging issues or themes in the shelter. These conferences enable us to take a holistic approach to client care and ensure that each individual receives the support they need on their journey home.

These meetings provide a dedicated space for staff members to receive individualized support, guidance, and feedback from their supervisors. They allow us to address any challenges staff may be facing in their roles and ensure that they feel supported and empowered to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.
House meetings serve as a platform for all guests and shelter staff to come together as a community to further our push towards housing. We'll engage in discussions about housing opportunities, new resources available to our community, guidance on how to be a good tenant, understanding lease agreements, and any other themes that arise. These meetings will also provide a platform for addressing any concerns related to community living.
• How to read a lease
• Budgeting Workshops
• Public Transportation
• Tenant Rights and Responsibilities
• Fair Housing
• Landlord Letters
• Mock Interviews
• Upcoming Housing Opportunities
• Meal Planning
• How and when to clean your apartment

• Home safety and repairs
• How to be a Good Neighbor
• Fire Safety
• Where and when to call for help
• Keeping Track Of Important Documents
• Importance of Saving
• Credit Scores
• Hygiene Habits
• Going to the doctor
• Healthy Relationships
• Communication
Housing Board
Circle of Compassion

1. Recognize the suffering
2. Understand the universality of human suffering
3. Have consideration for the person(s) suffering
4. Tolerate uncomfortable feelings
5. Be motivated to take action
It is crucial that we humanize people in crisis.

Through our collective efforts, we can unravel the systemic issues underpinning homelessness and make strides toward tangible, effective solutions.

Together, we can create a future where everyone has a place to call home.
Celebrating
40 Years!
A model designed to support at all the critical stages in the cycle of homelessness

- Homeless Prevention
- Homeless Service
- Housing Stability
Incorporated in 1984, Open Doors foundation is as a homeless shelter and soup kitchen, two services we still operate today, as well as conducting street outreach services and after school support for the children in our shelter.
In the mid 90s, recognizing that the biggest barrier to ending homelessness was the lack of affordable housing, Open Doors began purchasing and developing affordable and deeply affordable housing. We currently have 55 units with another 5 in the pipeline. In addition, Open Doors operates the Rapid Re-Housing program in Norwalk.
Homeless Prevention:

• For the last ten years, Open Doors has been committed to the idea that the best way to end homelessness is to stop it from happening to begin with. Open Doors operates a food pantry and community closet to reduce monthly expenses, provides access to medical and behavioral health services through an on-site partnership with NCHC, and operates the Financial Opportunity Center, an upward economic mobility hub.
The FOC focuses on improving the financial bottom line for low to moderate-income families and helping people change their financial behavior in ways that encourages a long-term commitment to increasing income, decreasing expenses, building credit and acquiring assets.
Celebrating 40 Years!
3 Core Components:

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<td>Employment Coaching (Placement &amp; Career Improvement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Coaching (Basic Financial Education &amp; Counseling)</td>
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<td>Income Supports (Connecting to available Financial &amp; Community Services)</td>
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FOC clients are employed or will become employed with the help of the FOC, but at program entry their wages and benefits are often insufficient to meet their daily needs.
Employment Coaching:

- Employment Services / Support
- Resume Building
- Hard & Soft Skills
- Virtual Jobs Fairs
- ESL / GED Classes

Helping Clients find or transition to living wage jobs.

Results in: Job Placement & Increased Income
Financial Coaching:

- Budgeting
- Saving
- Goal Planning
- Understanding Credit
- Home Lending
- Financial Wellness
- Basic Banking

- Focuses on solving specific problems or crises, such as high debt or eviction prevention; followed by working on long-term financial interventions

- Results in: Increased Savings / Credit & Increased Credit Scores
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**Goal:** Provide clients with short term financial assistance while looking for employment
Thank you for attending this workshop!

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