

Effective Housing Models for People Who Are Chronically Homeless

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Supportive Housing Overview

Policy Framework & Principles
Based on SAMHSA's EBP
Permanent Supportive Housing
Tool KIT

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Evidence-Based Practices KIT (Knowledge Informing Transformation)

- Started in 1998 with 6 initial KITs
- Focused on encouraging evidence-based practices in mental health
- Supportive Housing KIT developed by a team of consultants through AHP contract
- Widespread adoption of effective practice interventions is at the center of SAMHSA's mission to improve services, improving accountability, capacity, and effectiveness

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Supportive Housing Philosophy

- People with disabilities should have the same rights and opportunities as all citizens to choose, get, and live in integrated housing
- People should have the right to receive, direct, or refuse their own support services

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Permanent Supportive Housing Definition

- "Decent, safe, and affordable community-based housing that provides residents with the rights of tenancy under state/local landlord tenant laws and is linked to voluntary and flexible support and services designed to meet residents' needs and preferences."

Technical Assistance Collaborative, 2003

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Supportive Housing Core Principles



- Housing Choice
- Housing Affordability
- Housing/Services Separation
- Integration
- Rights of Tenancy

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Housing Choice

- Exploration of housing options and preferences with the individual and family
- Assistance and advocacy to gain access to a variety of options
- Choice of roommates
- “House rules”

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Housing Affordability

- Tenants/residents pay a reasonable amount of their income towards rent and utilities
- HUD guidelines = 30% of adjusted income
 - Reality—People on SSI often pay 60 to 80% of their income towards housing that is substandard

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Housing/Services Separation

Participation in specific support services is NOT required in order to get or keep housing

Various approaches to implementation:

- Legal separation between housing management and service delivery
- Functional separation—Distinct housing and service staff roles
- Operational—Service providers are based off-site

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Integration

- Housing is located in regular residential areas
- Tenants/residents participate in community activities and receive community services
- Natural supports are encouraged

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Rights of Tenancy

- Residents have full legal rights in a tenant-landlord relationship
- Tenants are responsible to abide by the normal standards of behavior/conduct outlined in a lease
- Distinct from “program” rules
- Permanent housing—length of stay is determined by the agreement between the landlord and tenant

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Housing Models

- Scattered-site:
 - Individual units dispersed throughout an area
 - Apartments, condos, single-family houses
 - Owned or leased
 - Conforms with local zoning

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Who is Considered Homeless?



- In places not meant for human habitation
- In an emergency shelter
- In transitional housing but came from street or shelter
- From any places above but is spending short time (less than 30 days) in hospital or institution
- Is being evicted within a week and lacks resources or supports to obtain housing
- Is being discharged from an institution within a week and lacks resources or supports to obtain housing, AND THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY RESTRICTING DISCHARGES TO THE STREETS

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Who is Chronically Homeless?

Includes:

- An unaccompanied homeless person,
- Who has a disabling condition, *and*
- Has been continually homeless for a year or more, *or* has had 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years

Does not include:

- Homeless families with children
- Non-disabled individuals

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Building Your Program

- Establish Permanent Supportive Housing as a systemwide approach
 - *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America (2002)*
 - *New Freedom Commission Subcommittee on Housing and Homelessness developed a background paper that stated " Housing is more than a basic need. Living in one's own home also brings new freedoms and responsibilities and marks the transition to adulthood in contemporary American culture. Finding and maintaining a home is a fundamental indicator of success in community life."*

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Developing Skills in PSH Training Frontline Staff

- Establish and understand Core Elements
- Develop a relationship with potential tenants through initial outreach and ongoing engagement
 - Actively engage people
 - Develop a positive helping relationship, and
 - Create an alliance between you and the program participant that will support his or her success

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Training Frontline Staff

- Identify people as outreach targets
- Gain access to people in need of supportive housing
- Be aware of common barriers to engagement
- Build ongoing relationship
 - Communicate effectively
 - Provide tangible assistance
 - Join in positive activities
 - Take the time required for engagement

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Help People Find and Acquire Housing

- Uphold tenants' legal rights
 - The right to live in the community
 - The right to rent or buy housing on the same terms as others do (without any special conditions or agreements)
 - The right to ask for and receive reasonable accommodations for their disability

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Help Tenants Choose Housing

- Encourage practical choices
- Plan collaboratively
- Assess consumer's housing preferences
- Use a conversational style
- Use a questionnaire
- Educate tenants about options

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Help Tenants Find Housing

- Find housing on the open market
- Work with landlords
- Lease agreements
- Learn what is available
- Coach tenants to approach landlords
- Work with Public Housing

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Help Tenants Secure Housing

- Assist with application process
- Help request Reasonable Accommodation
- Assist with Section 8 application
- Assist with the lease
- Help set up utilities
- Help tenant move in

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Provide Supports for Housing Retention

- Provide flexible services
- Visit tenants at home
 - Respect the tenants privacy
 - Ensure a productive and safe visit
 - Play the role of "life coach"

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Provide Supports for Housing Retention—2

- Support Daily activities
 - Provide practical assistance
 - Provide emotional support
 - Teach life skills
 - Identify needs
 - Respect learning styles

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Provide Supports for Housing Retention—3

- Promote Personal Recovery
 - Support everyday freedoms
 - Encourage meaningful activity
 - Promote community integration
 - Support wellness
 - Help expand social support networks
 - Help tenants return to work

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Help People Retain Housing

- Improve interpersonal relationships
- Risk management vs. tenant Choice
- Support advance directives and crisis plans
- Protect tenancy during crisis
- Learn from problems or crisis

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Care for Yourself as a Worker

- Protect yourself
 - Prevent and avoid problems if you can
 - Be aware of tenants personal space
 - Rely on your “gut” feeling
 - Learn how to defuse and de-escalate
 - Work in pairs if appropriate
 - Avoid burnout

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