Integrating Diversion Principles into our Homeless Response System
Today

Understanding Diversion principles and how they can be integrated throughout the homeless response system

• Break
• Activity
• Data and other available flexible funds
Welcome!

- Name
- Organization and role in Diversion
- Share a recent success in helping someone access housing outside of the homeless response system
Defining Diversion

Diversion, sometimes called shelter diversion, assists households in quickly securing temporary or permanent solutions to homelessness outside of the shelter and homeless services system. The main difference between diversion services and other housing-focused interventions centers on the point at which intervention occurs.

*Diversion services targets households that are requesting entry into shelter or housing and have not yet accessed homeless services.*
Diversion Approach

Anyone in the homeless response system can benefit from the approach or principles of diversion.

Is there a solution outside of the homelessness response system?
Targeting Prevention to direct limited resources to people most likely to experience homelessness.

Diversion pairs creative brainstorming with minimal financial assistance so people can avoid entering the homeless system.

Orienting the crisis response system around quick access to permanent housing increases the system's capacity.

It is prudent to target the array of permanent housing solutions so people with the greatest needs have access to the most intensive supports and vice versa.

Diversion approach can be used throughout the homeless response system.
Role of Diversion or Diversion Approach in Homeless Response System

✓ Explores flexible and client driven solutions that can be quickly implemented, making homelessness brief.
✓ Prevents households that have alternative housing options from entering the homeless system, reserving emergency shelter beds and other homeless services for households who have no other options available to them.
✓ Allows for creative and cost-effective solutions to meet households’ needs.
Guiding Principles of Diversion (NAEH)

Crisis resolution

Client choice, respect and empowerment

Provide the minimum assistance necessary for the shortest time possible

Maximize community resources

The right resources to the right people at the right time
How do these principles sit with you?

How do you already implement them?
What does housing first mean to you?
Housing First: What we value...

• The people we work with come first
• We meet people where they are without preconditions or judgement
• Arbitrary structures, rules nor conditions change behavior
• We respect people’s choices even if they don’t align with our own
• People are resilient, healthy and whole
Housing First: What we know...

- Permanent housing is the foundation to stability and everyone can be housed
- Coordinating access to our community’s resources improves equity
- Prioritizing our resources to the most vulnerable is good stewardship of public funds and limited resources
- The people we work with need to communicate how much or how little support they want or need
Housing First: What we do...

• We engage with people who may not otherwise seem interested in services
• We find housing that people can afford and sustain
• We assist people through conversation as opposed to relying on rules or consequences
• We connect people with resources and supports that they believe will help them improve their health and resiliency
Understand your LENS & BIAS
Activity

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pz1BosPBGlo
What imagines came to mind for you? How did the music make you feel?

How did your partner respond to the music?
Did you think or feel anything differently after hearing from your partner?
TAKE A BREAK
Myth Busters

- Pre-determined resilience
- Good Diversion “candidate”
- Criminal background/ good tenant
- Immigration status
- Spending and money
- Clients not prepared

- Special populations/ special solutions
- Setting up for fail
- Diversion success means housing stability is resolved
What’s the difference?

Traditional Intake

Client Centered Empowerment
Diversion Conversations

- Intentional
- Open ended
- Expectations
- Roles & Scope
- Motivational
- Seed planting

“There’s really no such thing as ‘voiceless’. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.”

Arundhati Roy
Active Listening

• Internal Focus
• Attending
• Withhold Judgement
• Impartiality
• Summarize

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg
Open Ended Question

(2 minutes)

Partner 1: Describe a rule or situation at work you’ve been struggling with.
Partner 2: Listen utilizing the active listening techniques.

(1 minute)
Partner 2: Summarize and utilize solution focused questions.
Best Practices

• HOPE & creativity
• Clear expectations of role & scope
• Approach situation with humility – check your self!
• Preparedness
  • Language support
  • Build your resource knowledge
• Act and follow through
• Incorporate client feedback
Activity
Practice

- What do you do first?
- What options could you explore for this household?
- What’s the role of the household?
- What is your role?
TAKE A BREAK
Outcomes Using a Diversion Approach

What does success look like?

A temporary or permanent housing solutions outside of the homeless system (aim for 90 days). This could include:

- Permanent housing on their own.
- Viable, safe, permanent shared housing with family and/or friends.
- Viable, safe shared temporary housing with family and/or friends, with a plan for permanency.

GOAL: Utilize diversion principles and skills often and whenever possible to decrease people’s length of time homeless and to open capacity in other homeless resources.
Data, data, data, DATA!
Examples of Diversion Success
Activity
Funding questions or exceptions: Contact your funder.

Additional training or skill building: Danielle at Danielle.Winslow@allhomekc.org