




# HOUSING FIRST AND HARM REDUCTION

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4-14-2015


# WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST

- ▶ **Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed**
  - ▶ **A Housing First approach rests on the belief that helping people access and sustain permanent, affordable housing should be the central goal of our work with people experiencing homelessness**
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# WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION HOUSING

- ▶ Designed to maximize access to housing and provide the support necessary to minimize the loss of housing for people who abuse legal and illegal substances and engage in other high risk behaviors
  - ▶ Designed for homeless individuals who have not been successful in mainstream housing or have cycled in and out of homelessness due to the consequences of high-risk behaviors
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# IMPLEMENTATION OF HARM REDUCTION/HOUSING FIRST MODEL

- ▶ Educate senior management on the importance of implementing a Harm Reduction/Housing First Model
  - ▶ Hire well trained and progressive thinking staff
  - ▶ Interview and educate property managers and property owners
  - ▶ Build strong relationships with local police departments and emergency services
  - ▶ Utilize homeless outreach organizations to identify individuals in need (PATH, Street Outreach)
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# HOUSING PROGRAMS THAT WE USE TO IMPLEMENT HOUSING FIRST

- ▶ **S+C**
  - ▶ **Georgia Housing Voucher Program**
  - ▶ **Rapid Rehousing**
  - ▶ **Willow Glen**
  - ▶ **Moving To Work Section 8 Vouchers**
  - ▶ **New Horizon Group Homes**
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# CHALLENGES NEW HORIZONS STAFF HAVE FACED SINCE 2011


- ▶ **Stigma against clients that are diagnosed with mental health illness**
  - ▶ **Stigma against clients that suffer from substance abuse**
  - ▶ **80% of tenants had co-occurring disorders**
  - ▶ **Stigma against homelessness in general**
  - ▶ **Stigma against tenants with criminal records (Internal as much as external)**
  - ▶ **Police concerns**
  - ▶ **General public mistrust**
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# NEGATIVE OUTCOMES NEW HORIZONS STAFF HAVE FACED SINCE 2011

- ▶ 5 tenants have been arrested for substance abuse related issues
  - ▶ 5 tenants have been hospitalized due to mental health issues
  - ▶ 1 suicide by hanging
  - ▶ 3 attempted suicides
  - ▶ 1 attempted drug lab was discovered
  - ▶ Nearly \$3,000 worth of rental property damage
  - ▶ Nearly \$5,000 worth of program furniture was either damaged or sold for drugs
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# POSITIVE OUTCOMES SINCE 2011

- ▶ 75% of discharged tenants moved on to other subsidized and non-subsidized permanent housing
  - ▶ 95% entered into services with New Horizons
  - ▶ Housing Stability Rate increased from 75% in 2011 to 100% in 2014
  - ▶ 25 tenants were able to find full or part-time jobs
  - ▶ 14 tenants were able to qualify for SSI
  - ▶ 4 tenants have attended college full-time.
  - ▶ 6 tenants received their GED
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# Questions

