


**Rapid Re-Housing  
Institute**  
*November, 2015*  
**DAY 1 Afternoon**  
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Katharine Gale, *Focus Strategies*



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**Welcome and Introductions**

- Who is in the room?
- Agenda Overview



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**Part One:**  
**Core Concepts of  
Rapid Re-Housing**

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**Basics of Rapid Re-Housing**

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**Rapid Re-Housing is a Housing First & Crisis Response Approach**

- Ends the crisis of homelessness quickly
- Enables people with housing barriers to access decent housing
- Enables people to access financial resources
- If/When people want and need other resources, provide efficient and effective referrals

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**Part Two:  
Core  
Components**  
(and a little  
neuropsychosocial  
context)

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### Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing

- Housing Identification
- Rent & Move-In Assistance (Financial)
- Rapid Re-Housing Case Management & Services

ABI Associates (p. 7)

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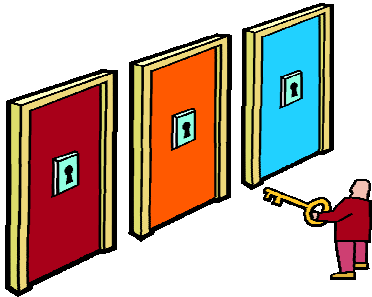
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### Client Choice



ABI Associates (p. 8)

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### First Encounter

**What Do You See?**

**Homeless man, age 52:** showing up late to appointment, complaining, irritable, suspicious of your questions, argumentative, defensive, cynical, liquor on breath

**Homeless woman, age 25:** showing sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, panic, crying, worrying

**Homeless mother of three, age 21:** showing apathy, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, poor personal hygiene

ABI Associates (p. 9)

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## Activity #1

Think about a time in your life when:

- You faced a very difficult situation
- It was a very important situation
- You didn't feel you had much (or any) control
- The problem(s) continued for more than a month

Try to remember how you felt and acted.

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## What do these words have in common?

- Signs and symptoms of possible stress overload (Source: Mayo Clinic)
- Among people experiencing homelessness, these signs and symptoms will generally **self-resolve** – partially or completely, slowly or quickly – **once they are safely housed**

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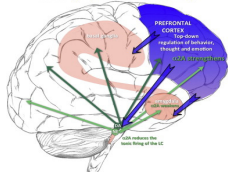
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## This is Your Brain!

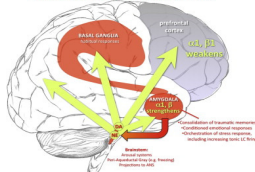
### Your Brain, Feeling Good

**ALERT, SAFE, INTERESTED**  
Moderate levels of catecholamines release strengthen dPFC, weaken amygdala, and reduce tonic IC firing (NE, nDA)



### Your Brain on Stress!

**STRESS**  
High levels of catecholamines release weaken dPFC, strengthen amygdala and striatum, and increase the tonic firing of the IC (NE, nA, DA)



Source: Effects of stress exposure on prefrontal cortex... (Arnstén, Raskin, Taylor, Connor 2014)

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## The Impact of Stress Overload



- Acute, **uncontrollable** stress exposure impairs **executive functions** by overriding signals of the prefrontal cortex.
- **Sustained** stress exposure changes the architecture of the brain, more seriously weakening prefrontal cortex control and reducing **executive functioning**.

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## Executive Function



**Executive function includes neurocognitive processes that enable us to:**

- Solve novel problems
- Modify behavior in response to new information
- Generate strategies for complex actions
- Follow through with plans
- Override behavioral and emotional responses to engage in goal-directed behavior

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## What Helps?



**Helping yourself as well as your program participants:**

- Remove the stressor
- Avoid additional stresses (relax, recuperate)
- Reduce the perceived importance of the situation
- Increase perceived control over the situation
- Prioritize, plan and pace yourself; make lists, take notes
- Improve diet, exercise, sleep, breathing, relaxation, music, do something that makes you happy; be careful of overuse of alcohol, drugs

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**Activity #2: Start Your List of Insights (Notes to Self)**



Considering the philosophies and the reality of people's responses to stress, take 5 minutes to jot down a list of do's and don'ts (...*advice to yourself*) about:

- Things **you can do** to help people identify and/or recover from the stress of homelessness.
- Things **you should avoid doing**, to prevent or minimize additional stress for people who are showing signs and symptoms of stress overload.

Add to the list throughout training; we'll share some of our best ideas at the end.

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**Part Three:**  
Tenant Housing Barriers, Progressive Assistance, & Case Management Services



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**Tenant Screening Barriers**



Definition: **Any criterion** that is important to a landlord in making a decision about prospective tenants.

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## Tenant Screening Barriers



- Know local landlords' criteria for accepting tenants
- **ASAP:** Assess household's Tenant Screening Barriers (TSB) compared to landlord criteria
- Use TSB assessment to match household with appropriate partner landlord—using either normal or increased landlord supports

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## Assessing Tenant Screening Barriers



### What will you assess?

- Past housing experiences
- Current housing goals
- Experience as a leaseholder
- What they liked/didn't like about previous housing and roles
- How person/family became homeless
- Ability to complete paperwork, view apartments, handle interviews

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## Housing Retention Barriers



Patterns in a person's history that have resulted in housing crisis or housing loss—

### May be due to:

- Lack of information (e.g. leases, tenant responsibilities)
- Lack of skill(s) (e.g. care of unit, communication)
- Interpersonal style (e.g. promotes/escalates conflict)
- Poverty
- Bad luck (company closed, illness, etc.)
- Bad friends/relatives

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### Think Step-By-Step (Multiple Plans)



- **Initial emergency and housing search plan:**  
Emergency health and safety needs that must be immediately met; goals/action steps for housing search
- **Housing retention plans:**  
Updated regularly as goals are achieved, need to be scaled back, or circumstances change
- **Exit plan:**  
With follow-up options, continuation toward longer-term goals; plan for future housing emergencies

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### Activity #3 Barriers: The Client Interview



- Three case scenarios with information from a first interview
- Identify the Tenant Screening Barriers in one list along with what other kind of information you would like to get, and
- Identify the Housing Retention Barriers in the other list.

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### Activity #4: Plans to Secure & Retain Housing



- Small Group will develop a list (for one client) of decisions/actions that will likely be part of one or more of his/her Housing Plans :
1. The decisions/actions needed to **OBTAIN** and **RETAIN** permanent housing
  2. Would each item be addressed by the rapid re-housing program or by another community resource?
  3. Indicate the priority for each—*i.e.* how quickly it must be resolved

Use worksheet to organize responses.  
We'll then ask folks to share out with the full group.

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## Progressive Assistance



Lightest touch possible *first*, leaving open potential for more...

– or –

**“you can always add more, but, you can’t take it away”**



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## A Change in Philosophy & Culture



- Take as the goal: ending the housing crisis quickly.
- Idea of doing the least necessary
- Believing people can make it without us, but being there if they cannot
- Getting rewarded by seeing people leave and helping more



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## Rent Subsidy



- Provide **just enough** financial assistance, **just in time**, and for **only as long** as necessary to get/keep housing. This avoids the “cliff effect” and allows you to assist more people in crisis.
- Client always pays a share, but be prepared to pay 100% if client income is zero
- **FLEXIBILITY IS IMPORTANT:** Situations change and people have different and changing levels of executive functioning

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**Use Data to Adjust**

**Unacceptable losses or rates of return?**

- *Resize, assist longer, check-in more, develop new partnerships*

**Almost everybody sticks?**

- *Try giving less support*

**Some succeed and some don't?**

- *What factors can we look at: e.g. family size, income source, histories of homelessness, the staff person or staffing?*

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**Goals**

**Understand how your program is working**

- # of households assisted and key characteristics
- Assistance provided
- Length of program duration and of time to enter housing
- Expenditures: amounts and categories

**Understand program impact**

- Exits to permanent housing
- Increases in income and benefits
- Returns to homelessness

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**Data sources**

- **Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)** Several software providers, but with common data standards. Captures:
  - Characteristics
  - Services provided
  - Length of enrollment
  - Destinations at exit
- **CalWIN, C4, Leader** – CalWORKs status, household characteristics, program participation, employment information
- **Other public systems** (Health Care, Behavioral Health, Probation, etc.) – service utilization, cost
- **Provider databases**

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## Common Challenges



- Data quality – completeness and accuracy
- Barriers to Data sharing
  - Within programs
  - Across programs and funding sources
- Creating/getting reports that provide what's needed
  - Key indicators tracked consistently
  - Ability to query, follow up on findings
  - Tracking change over time
- Lack of culture of using data

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## Tomorrow



*We have a full day ahead of us. We will be:*

- Focusing on **Landlord Engagement and Creating Housing Partnerships;**
- Working in **High Cost/Low Vacancy Housing Markets,**
- ...as well as in **Rural Communities;**
- And, finishing with **The End Game: Housed and Connected**

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