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END HOMELESSNESS

Coordinated Assessment
From Surviving to Thriving Conference
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National Alliance to End Homelessness

Definition of Coordinated Assessment

HUD Interim Rule:

- *Centralized or coordinated assessment system is defined to mean a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool." (Section 578.3)*

What is Coordinated Assessment?

Standardized Processes
• Access, assessment, and referral process for diversion/prevention, shelter, RR, TH, PSH, dedicated housing subsidies and/or other related housing and services.

Comprehensive
• Implemented consistently throughout the entire geographic area of a Continuum of Care (CoC).

Accessible
• Easy to use and well-publicized to the homeless individuals and families who need it.

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WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT COORDINATED ASSESSMENT?

- SENDS HOUSEHOLDS TO INTERVENTION OF BEST FIT FROM THE START
- PROVIDES SYSTEM-WIDE PREVENTION AND DIVERSION OPPORTUNITIES
- IMPROVES SYSTEM EFFICIENCY
- FOSTERS MORE COLLABORATION AMONG PROVIDERS
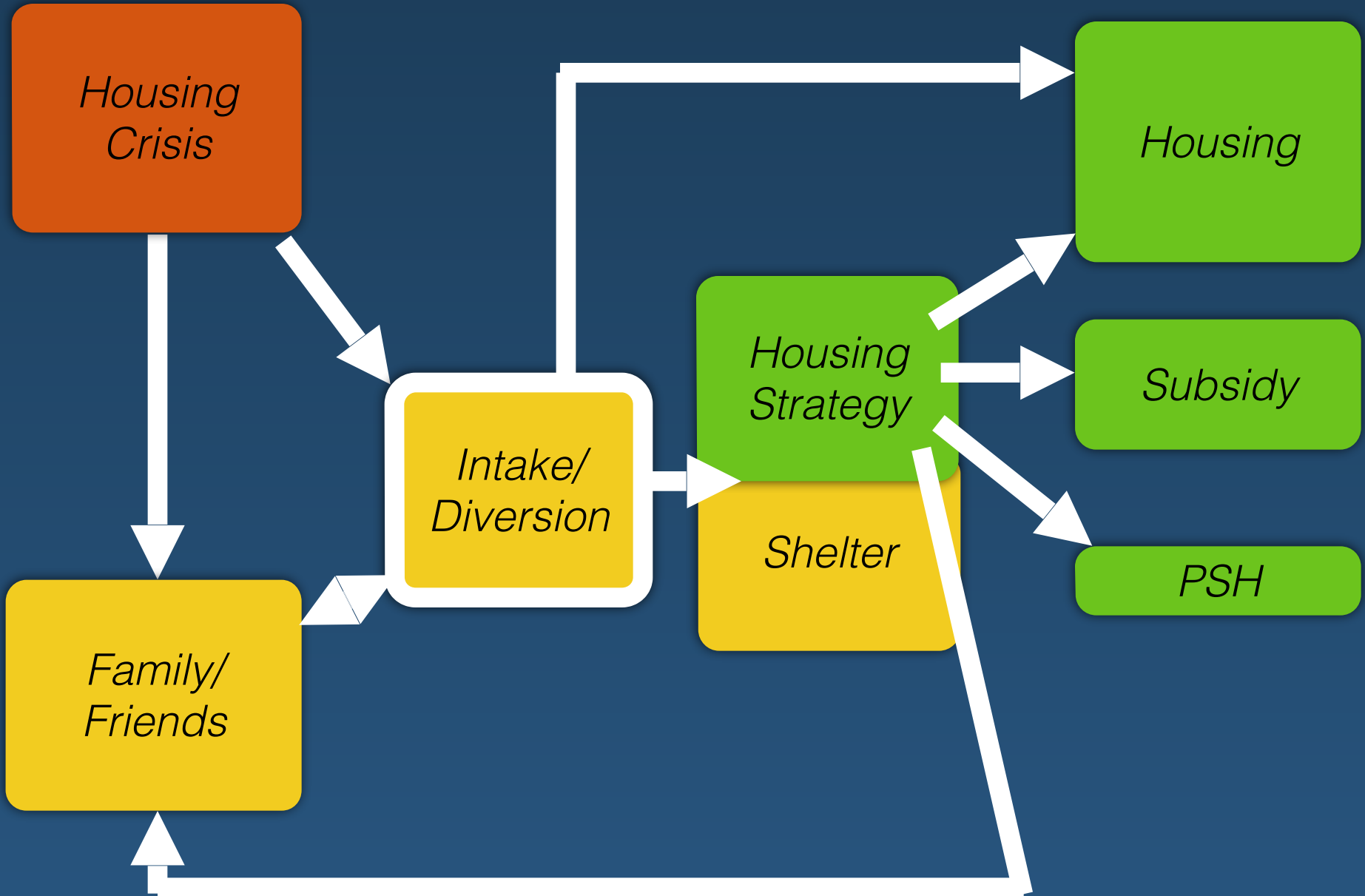- IMPROVES ABILITY TO PERFORM WELL ON HEARTH OUTCOMES
- HEARTH MANDATE

MOST IMPORTANT: IT'S BETTER FOR THOSE WE SERVE

Coordinated Assessment = Entry Point
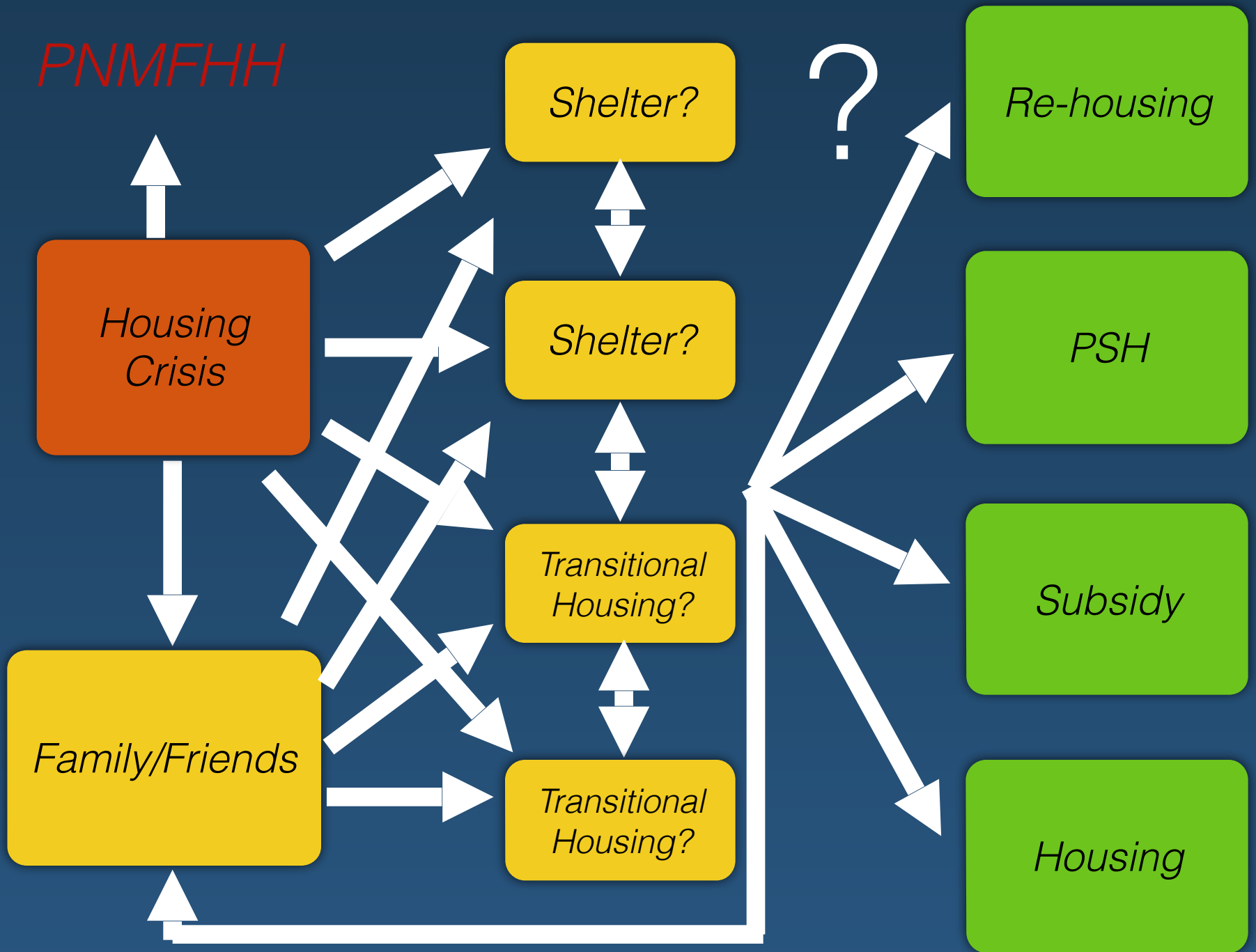
Crisis Resolution

Shelter and Re-housing

People With Housing Crisis Seeking Shelter

Big, Important Questions

What is the end goal of all the work that we do?

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How can we make things easier for the consumer?

How do we create a system that doesn't screen out?

Applies to the whole system including Shelter, Rapid Rehousing, Prevention, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing

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Must Have

Uniform intake process

Written standards for eligibility and prioritization for programs

Access to prevention/diversion

Access/referral to shelter resources

Barrier assessment

Data collection

Key Aspects

Access

Assessment

Data Entry and Sharing

Referral/Assignment

Program Intake*

System Change

CENTRALIZED MODEL

SINGLE INTAKE CENTER/SHELTER
(MAY BE ONE PLACE FOR EACH POPULATION)

- **PLACES:** COLUMBUS, OH; GRAND RAPIDS, MI; HENNEPIN COUNTY/MINNEAPOLIS, MN
- **PROS:** LESS TRAINING TIME NEEDED; MORE LIKELY TO BE CONSISTENT PROCESS; NEED LESS STAFF
- **CONS:** ONE LOCATION MAY NOT BE EQUALLY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL; HIGH VOLUME

DECENTRALIZED MODEL

INTAKE POINT #1 **INTAKE POINT #2** **INTAKE POINT #3**

- **PLACES:** MONTGOMERY COUNTY/DAYTON, OH; MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD; WHATCOM COUNTY, WA
- **PROS:** EASIER TO HANDLE LARGER NUMBERS OF CLIENTS; MORE ACCESSIBILITY; MAY INCREASE PROVIDER COMFORT LEVEL
- **CONS:** LESS CONTROL AND CONSISTENCY; MAY BE MORE COSTLY DUE TO INCREASED SPACE/STAFF DEMANDS

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SHELTER DIVISION

MAINSTREAM RESOURCES

INTAKE CENTER

- **PLACES:** MEMPHIS/SHELBY COUNTY, TN; PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD; ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA
- **PROS:** ACCESSIBILITY; EASY LINKAGES TO OTHER MAINSTREAM RESOURCES; REDUCES IN-PERSON CLIENTS
- **CONS:** UNABLE TO DEAL WITH CRISIS SITUATIONS FACE-TO-FACE; INCREASED CHANCE OF INCONSISTENCY

Caveats to Implementing your Model

- There is no "cut and paste"

- Adjustments will be necessary

- Change takes time (and money, and cooperation)

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Getting Started: Design

- Establish Planning Committee (include representation of all types of providers)

- Discuss Population-Specific Systems

- Sketch Out Structure of New Process vs. Old Process
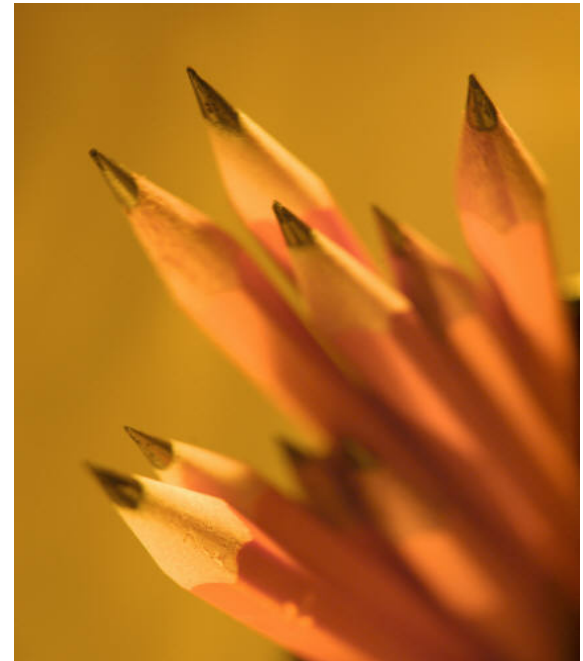
- Include Prevention and Diversion

Getting Started: Resources

- Identify Host Organizations

- Identify Staffing Resources

- Locate Financial Resources

- Examine Data/HMIS Resources

- Work on Buy-in and Education

- Develop Necessary Assessment Tools

- Develop Specific Referral Process

Getting Started: Buy In & Communication

- Change Contracts and Contract Language

- Develop a Communication Plan

- Choose Switch-on Date

- Set Up Consistent Evaluation Process

- Evaluate at Consistent Intervals

Watch Out! Focus on Intake

Communities plan an assessment process that involves all housing programs, but leaves out prevention and diversion resources.

- First task is to divert whenever possible –can someone stay where they are longer or connect with someone else
- Targeted prevention resources at the front door
- Don't forget there are options outside the system
- Think of types of providers as well as populations

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SHELTER DIVERSION QUESTIONS

- WHERE DID YOU SLEEP LAST NIGHT?

- WHAT OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS OR WEEKS?

- (IF STAYING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSING) WHAT ISSUES EXIST WITH YOU REMAINING IN YOUR CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION? CAN THOSE ISSUES BE RESOLVED WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, CASE MANAGEMENT, ETC.?

- (IF COMING FROM THEIR OWN UNIT) IS IT POSSIBLE/SAFE TO STAY IN YOUR CURRENT HOUSING UNIT? WHAT RESOURCES WOULD YOU NEED TO DO THAT (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, CASE MANAGEMENT, MEDIATION, TRANSPORTATION, ETC.)?

Watch Out!   Program Barriers

Communities implement a coordinated assessment process assuming that assigning people to programs will be enough to change outcomes, without taking a look at programs services, requirements, etc.

- Watch for programs with entrance requirements that screen out those needing assistance the most

- Coordinated assessment is about figuring out what your system really needs to meet the needs of your homeless population

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Watch Out! Weak Referrals

Communities don't spend enough time addressing the structure and details of the referral process.

- Assessment tool is important, but without a solid referral process, nearly meaningless

- If providers are still picking from a pot of available people, nothing has changed in your system to make it belter

- Referral process needs to be well understood based on clear criteria

- Not a first come/first serve

Assessment tool is important, but without a solid referral process, nearly meaningless

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Watch Out! Lack of Evaluation

Communities collect data
at the assessment points
but never stop to use it or analyze it.

- Continue to revisit and perfect the system
- Data is no good if you don't use it to make revisions
- Evaluate the intake processes as well as performance of the system as a whole
- Use HEARTH measures as a guide

"coordinated assessment is a powerful tool designed to ensure that homeless persons are matched with the right intervention available in the CoC, as quickly as possible"

Weekly SNAPS Focus

OTHER RESOURCES

COORDINATED ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/4514

PREVENTION AND SHELTER DIVERSION TOOLKIT

http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/4554

USICH "RETOOLING CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEMS" TOOLKIT

http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/toolkits_for_local_action/retooling_crisis_response

Thank you

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www.endhomelessness.org

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