



Reducing Trauma: Creative Approaches to Rapidly Housing People Experiencing Homelessness

Kay Moshier McDivitt

Senior Technical Assistance Specialist
with the Center for Capacity Building,
National Alliance to End Homelessness
(NAEH)

Breann Mcklin-Ndiaye

Lead direct support specialist;
Community Consultant

Housing as a Human Right: An Asset-Based Approach to Housing Justice

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Learning Objectives

The importance of rapidly housing those experiencing homelessness for an effective homeless response system

Recognize the challenges of rapidly re-housing folks in the current market and creative solutions to address those challenges

Understanding the foundation and implementation for an effective rapid re-housing response – a flexible and progressive approach

Identify practical implementation of core components and practices to result in effective outcomes.

Welcome

Who is here?

- Providers
 - Emergency Shelter
 - Transitional Housing
 - Rapid Re-Housing
 - Permanent Supportive Housing
- Continuum of Care Leadership
- Mainstream Provider
 - Health Care
 - Behavioral Health
 - PHA
- Other



Getting Started!

Turn to your neighbor and complete the sentence. I'm here today because...



Let's Talk About an Effective Homeless Response System



Goal of a Homeless Response System that is Effective, Efficient, and Equitable:

What We Do...

House people as quickly as possible and

Divert people from imminent homelessness whenever possible


Everyone's job IS housing quickly



Homeless Response System: Performance

Establish systemic performance measures

- Reduce in-flow into homelessness
- Increase exits to permanent housing
- Decrease average length of homelessness
- Decrease returns to homelessness

An illustration of several colorful houses in shades of purple, green, blue, pink, and yellow, set against a light blue sky and a brown ground. The houses are stylized with simple windows and doors.

Re-Housing quickly is the only way to achieve the benchmarks.

Homeless Response System that is Effective, Efficient, and Equitable Increase System Flow

System Flow:

An efficient and coordinated process that moves people from homelessness to housing as quickly as possible



System-Wide Approach

- Housing is the solution to homelessness
- The goal of an effective crisis response system is to re-house people quickly
- Rapidly re-housing people ends their homelessness quickly

AND...

- CAN work for most people experiencing homelessness when we **believe** it can!!

Rehousing Challenges

A Reality Check



Housing
Affordability



Limited
Capacity



Limited
Resources



We're
Exhausted



Things to Keep in Mind Re-Housing Does Work

—
**NOT EASY.
BUT SIMPLE.**
—

- Households experiencing homelessness are not significantly different than other low-income households
- Majority experience homelessness due to a financial or other crisis
- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative impact on adults and children

Re-Housing Matters Philosophy Shift

- Homelessness is foremost a housing problem
- Everyone is ready for housing *now* if they choose
- Permanent housing is a right to which all are entitled
- People should be returned to or stabilized in permanent housing as quickly as possible and connected to resources necessary to sustain that housing



—
NOT EASY.
BUT SIMPLE.
—

Housing First

A Commitment to Rapidly Re-Housing People

Rapidly Re-Housing is not	Rapidly Re-Housing IS
Just one type of program (not just PSH)	A system-wide philosophical approach to many types of homeless assistance interventions
One-size fits all	A philosophy that values flexibility, individualized supports, client choice, and autonomy
Housing only	Supportive services that people choose for themselves are a critical part of a Housing First approach
Setting people up for failure	The provision of a foundation of stability and health through permanent housing
A way to prioritize one population over another	A way to provide a housing intervention for everyone regardless of the severity of their needs

WHY REHOUSING (RAPIDLY) MATTERS

Let's talk about what it is, not a specific program!



Why Rapidly Re-Housing?



Housing First: People experiencing homelessness deserve housing first without preconditions.

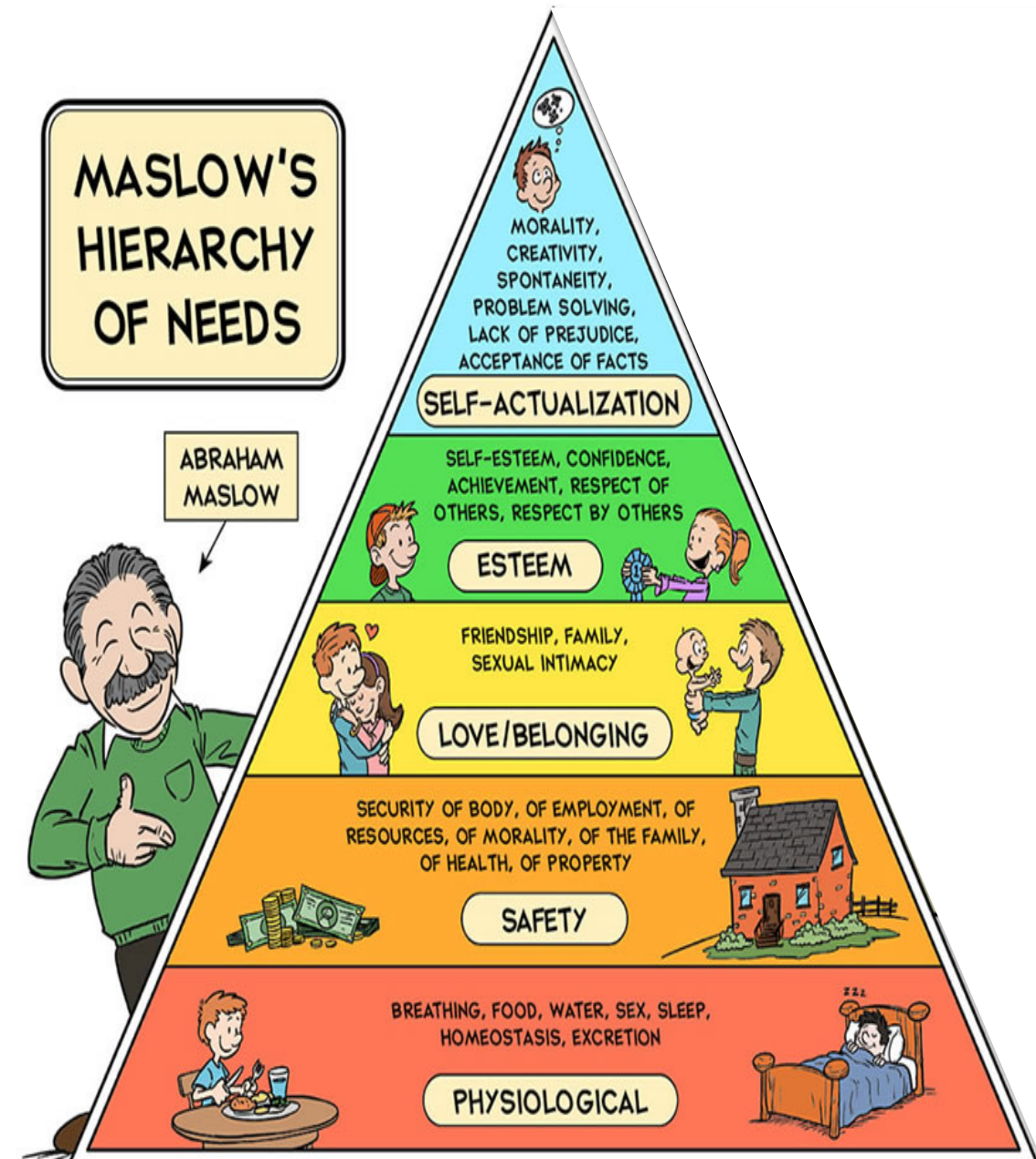


Crisis/Stress Biology: The neurohormones related during stress drive people to unconsciously prioritize short term rewards.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Survival and safety needs will drive behavior until these needs are met. Only then can a person focus on other, "higher," needs.

And reduces the trauma of living unsheltered or in shelters



What Does Rapid Re-housing Mean?

- **Rapid:** (Adj.) Moving, acting, or occurring at great speed
- **Re-Housing:** (Verb) Provide (someone) with new housing
- **Rapid Re-Housing:** An **intervention** designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing



Adobe Stock | #28266205

Reminder: The Goal of “Rapid Re-Housing” Is...

Move households quickly to permanent housing

- Reduce the length of time people experience homeless
- Exit households quickly to permanent housing
- Limit returns to homelessness
- Inclusive, equitable programs that house anyone, especially folks with greater barriers to tenancy

...and to do it as a system!!!



LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR CLIENT SUCCESS

Reframing Rapid Re-Housing



The Foundation for Successful Rapid Re-Housing

- 1. Belief** that clients can be successful regardless of housing barriers
- 2. Positive engagement** at first contact
- 3. Empowering** clients to believe in themselves



Belief: Shift in Mindset

Shift from...

- Many of our referrals have too many barriers to be successful in rapid re-housing
- Housing cost are too expensive for RRH to work
- It is critical that people follow the rules of our program and do what their case manager tells them to be successful
- The most successful RRH programs follow the same program model for all clients

To...

- Rapid Re-Housing works!!
- **People Can Be Successful Regardless of Barriers (Everyone Can be Re-Housing)**
- RRH is a great opportunity to empower people without housing to believe in themselves and their success
- Most people that have the same housing history as our clients never become homeless and find ways to make housing work
- **Creativity and Flexibility** are the key factors in **successful** RRH

Engagement

- First contact sets the stage for success
- Active Listening/ Spend time listening
- Problem Solving
- Communicating
- Find mutual connections and interests
- Compliment-notice the good stuff
- Sell your self – what you have to offer in the relationship
- Not a one-size-fits-all approach



Empowerment

- Focus on the spirit of rapid re-housing than “rule or program guideline” enforcement
- The program’s job is to find you housing, your job is to keep your housing...
- You can do it!



What RRH Does Do and Does Not Do

Rapid Re-Housing **Does**

- Reduce the length of time people experience homelessness
- Minimize the negative impact of homelessness on their lives
- Assist people to access resources that can help with personal goals

Rapid Re-Housing **Does Not**

- Eliminate poverty
- Assure people will have affordable housing (to pay 30% or less of their income to rent)
- Protect people from the impact of life losses or challenging situations
- Eliminate housing mobility

RAPID(LY) REHOUSING

Making it work in a challenging world

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
ends homelessness for
families and individuals.

**RRH
HELPS**



FIND HOUSING

Help people quickly find housing within one month or less.

PAY FOR HOUSING

Help people pay for housing short term; longer-term help an option.

STAY IN HOUSING

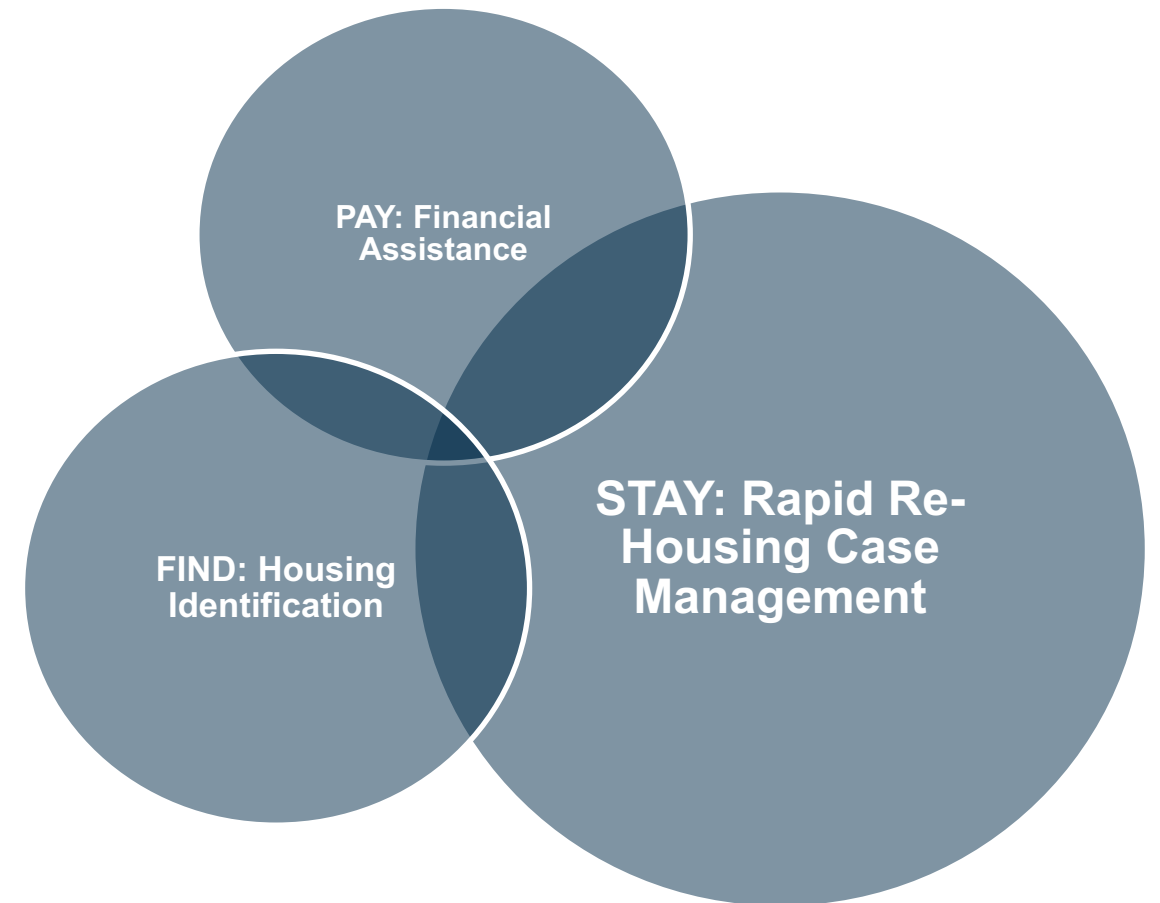
Help access services so people can stay in housing.

The **Core Components** of Rapid Re-Housing help people **find** housing fast, **pay** for housing, and **stay** in housing.

Core Components

Rapidly Re-housing Successfully

- Not linear
- Each piece is critical
- Cannot work in silos
- Case Management is an integral part of every component



Successful Housing Identification

FIND

Philosophy

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Households need assistance to locate housing
- Landlord recruitment is essential to successful rapid re-housing



Practice

- Actively recruit, retain, and build landlord partnerships
- Provide support during housing search
- Identify and mitigate client barriers to entering housing
- Ensure “good fit” between landlord and client
- Assists client to realistically identify the “right” housing option (a reality check)
- Facilitates shared housing

What does NOT work!

- Giving the client a list of vacant units
- Sending the client with literature on the program to explain to landlords
- Explaining too much over phone/email before viewing the unit
- Taking too long to follow-up with financial requests
- Being negative/critical of the prospective tenant, program, or unit
- Accepting “no” too quickly
- Providing no guidance to clients on personal presentation at apartment viewing

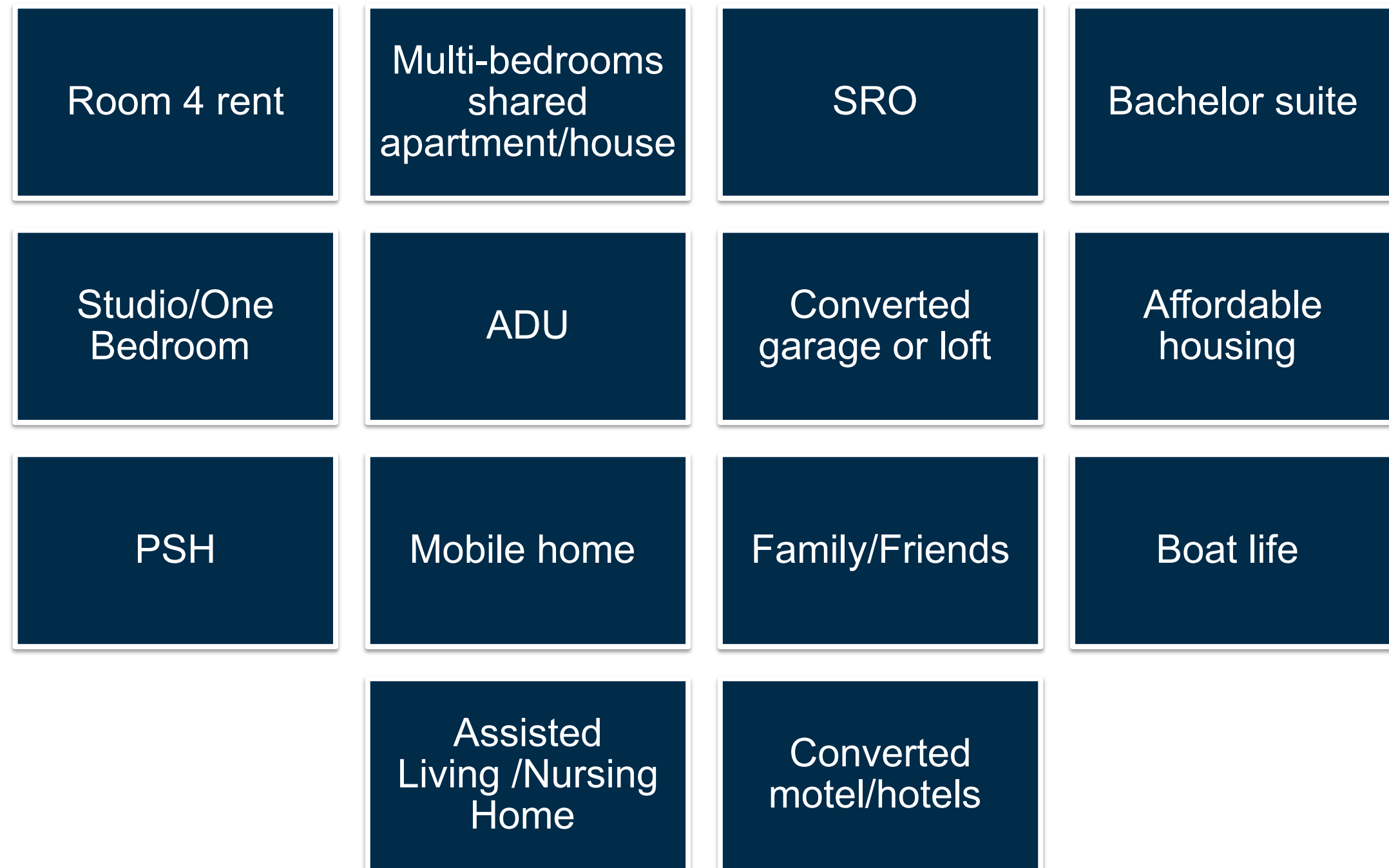
Housing Identification Brainstorm

Creative Solutions

- Shared Housing, Co-Housing and Roommates
- Room Rentals
 - Community Members with extra space
- Cultural Considerations
 - What is “housing”
- Client-led Options
 - Relocating
 - Connecting with Family and Friends
- Re-configuring or Co-locating for Family/Friends option
 - Furniture/Space Arrangements
 - Larger unit to house with family/friends

Housing is NOT a one size fits all

Creative Solutions from LA



Why Shared Housing



Rising cost of housing

Lack of adequate housing stock

Not enough affordable housing

Stagnant incomes

More affordable

Access to more neighborhoods

More sustainable

Built in supports

Families of choice

Can house more than one person/family at a time

Throughput to the system inking resources *****

Successfully Using Financial Assistance

Pay:

- The rent and move-in assistance needs to enable quick resolution of the housing crisis.
- Programs should start out by **assuming that households, even those with zero income or other barriers, will succeed with minimal subsidy and support** which can be extended if necessary.
- Programs should be attentive to the ability of a household to maintain housing once subsidy ends but **should not be entirely constrained by attempts to reach a rent burden of only 30** percent of a participant's income.
 - Instead, they should recognize that once housed, the participants will be in a much better position to increase their incomes and address their other needs.

Pay: Financial Assistance

Practice

- Individualized assistance helps house more people
- Clients are resilient and can figure it out (messaging matters)
- Financial assistance is to pay for housing, not alleviate poverty
- **NOT a one-size-fits-all**



Philosophy

- Individualized assessment to determine the “right” individual financial assistance (only what’s necessary)
- Encourages client contribution from the start
- Focuses on the \$\$ amount that household needs to pay for rent
- Identifies all potential resources of \$\$ to pay towards rent
- Client assumes maintaining housing – identifies and pursues what is needed

Progressive Engagement

A progressive engagement approach maximizes the number of households you can help.

- Progressive engagement refers to a strategy of providing a small amount of assistance to everyone entering the homelessness system. (not a package)
- For most, a small amount of assistance is enough to stabilize, but for those who need more, more assistance is provided.
- This flexible approach maximizes resources by only providing the most assistance to the households who truly need it.
- This approach is supported by research that shows household characteristics such as income, employment, and substance use cannot predict what level of assistance a household will need.

Structuring Financial Assistance: Progressive Engagement in Practice

- FLEXIBILITY IS IMPORTANT:
 - Do NOT automatically plan for a year of financial assistance
 - As soon as a household has income to assume paying rent, close the case
 - Leave open the possibility that a household may return for more assistance, rather than continuing support for the “full year”
 - Be aware of you own bias in creating flexible plans

Financial Assistance is NOT a reward for following “program rules!”

Successfully Case Management Principles: STAY

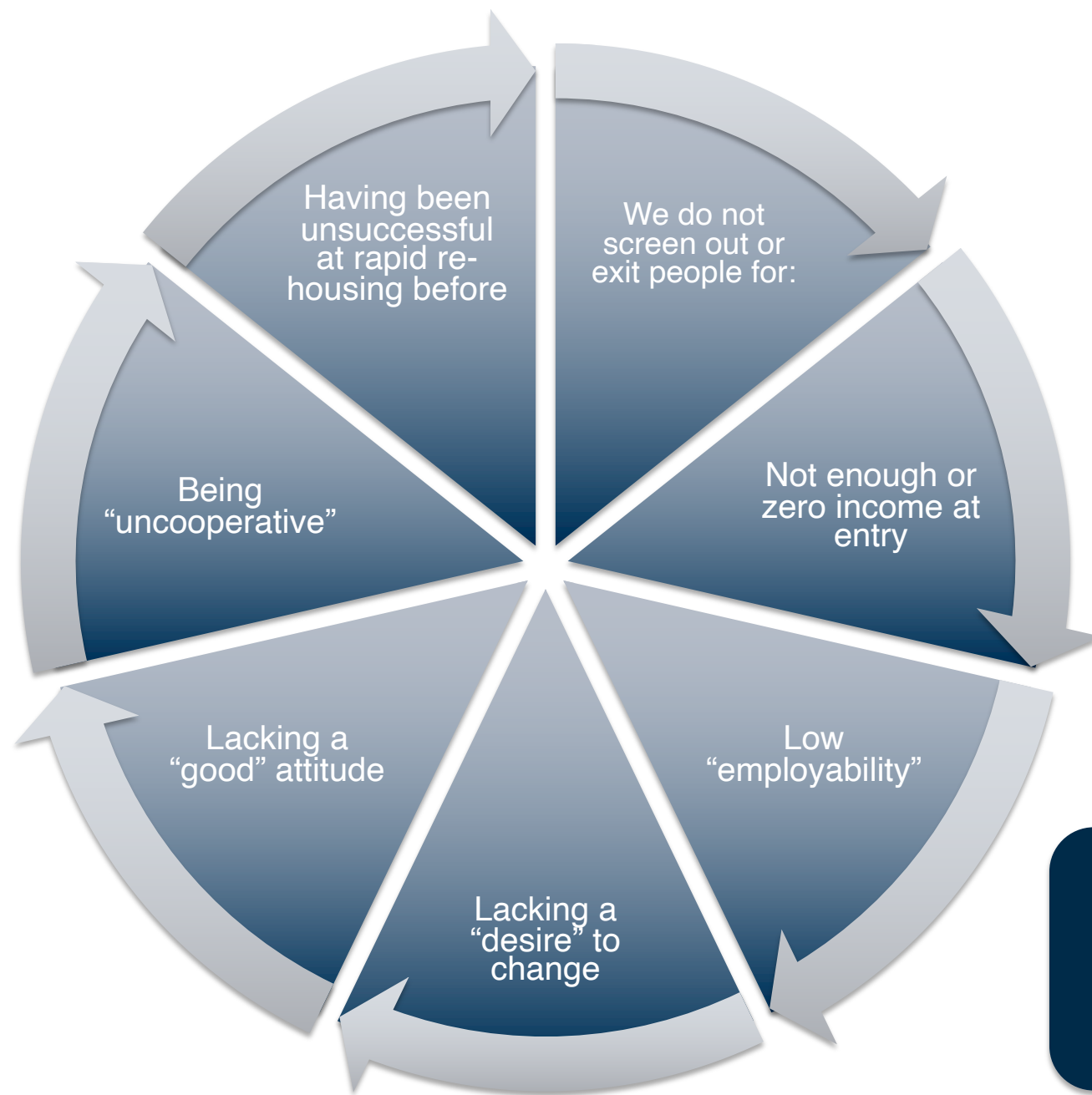
Successful Case Management is:



RRH Case Management in Practice



Remember: We must believe!



- To be successful, staff providing RRH **MUST believe that everyone is housing ready now!**

**Check our
own biases**

WHY GETTING HOUSED RAPIDLY MATTERS TO ME!

Breann's Housing Journey





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Questions?

Thank you for attending the panel!

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