



Center for
Social Innovation

Housing First Principles in Rural Communities

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What is Housing First?



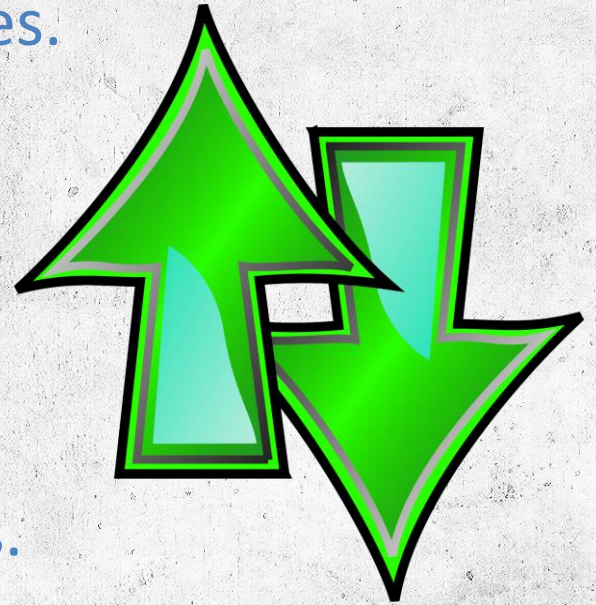
National Alliance to End Homelessness Definition

A homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.



Why Housing First?

- Yields higher housing retention rates.
- Lower returns to homelessness
- Significant reductions in the use of crisis service and institutions.

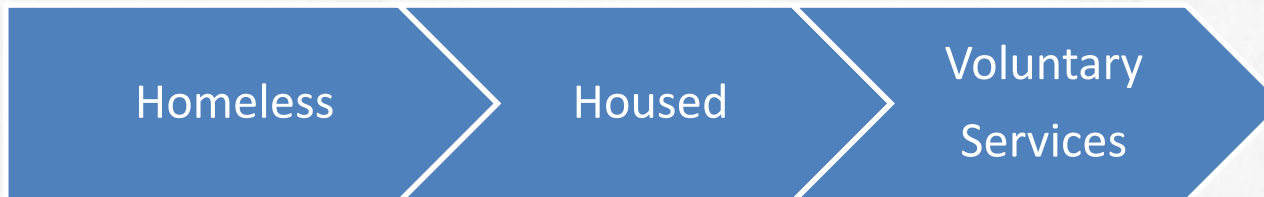


Housing First vs. Linear Model

Linear Model



Housing First Model



Rural Housing First Studies: Pathways Vermont Findings

- Scatter-site Housing First can be implemented within a rural setting but may require adapting teams to use a hybrid ACT–ICM model and to incorporate technology to improve efficiency and mobility.
- Telehealth can be incorporated into the Housing First model, supporting team accessibility and increased consumer contact. Consumers are very receptive to in-home computers.
- Housing retention was 85%, suggesting that housing outcomes for rural Housing First are consistent with previous research.

Stefancic A, Henwood BF, Melton H, Shin SM, Lawrence-Gomez R, Tsemberis S. Implementing housing first in rural areas: pathways Vermont. *Am J Public Health*. 2013;103 Suppl 2(Suppl 2):S206-9.

Challenges of Rural Housing First

- Transportation – driving from community to community
- Snellville GA, “where everybody’s somebody” – and no one has any privacy
- One or two people do everything – and we only help these people
- Lack of resources – no shelters etc
- Lack of services – no comprehensive system of care
- There aren’t any homeless people so no need for your program
- A lack of choice / competition means that housing the hardest is REALLY hard!

5 Key Principles of Housing First

1. Immediate Access to Housing with no housing readiness requirements
2. Consumer Choice and Self Determination
3. Recovery Orientation
4. Individualized and Client Driven services
5. Social and Community Integration

Gaetz, Scott and Gulliver: Housing First in Canada

http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/HousingFirstInCanada_0.pdf

Core Principles in Housing First

1. Immediate Access to Housing with no Housing Readiness Requirements

Exercise - Low Barrier Admission Policy

Brainstorm Exercise

What requirements must a person meet in order to stay at your project?

What requirements are folks required to engage in to remain at your project?





Can your project work with and agree to house people with –

- No income
- Poor credit history
- Criminal records
- History of damaging properties
- Coming straight from the streets
- Long histories of homelessness
- No desire to be sober at this time in their lives

Can you run your project as a low barrier project?



Each time you say no to a question on the previous slides, it makes it harder to implement a housing first program

Who struggles and is challenged in your project and why?

Core Principles in Housing First

2. Consumer Choice and Self Determination



Who gets to choose for your client?

Consumer Choice

- Staff offer, discuss and make available a menu of choices, in terms of housing location, style and type of housing
- Client chooses the services they wish to access
- Staff do not pressurize clients into choices



“So, It’s just a free for all?”

“They can do whatever they like?”

“I have other tenants in the building, I can’t just take anyone.”

“I will have no control.”

Core Principles in Housing First

3. Recovery Orientation

Recovery...

Housing First practice is not simply focused on meeting basic client needs, but on supporting recovery.

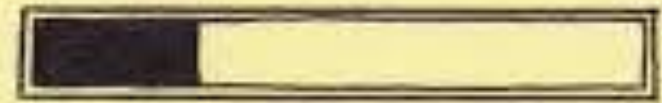
A recovery orientation focuses on individual well-being.

It ensures that clients have access to a range of supports that enable them to nurture and maintain social, recreational, educational, occupational and vocational activities.

Gaetz, Scott and Gulliver: Housing First in Canada

Recovery & Harm Reduction

As part of the recovery approach, housing first uses a harm reduction model in its work on a day to day basis

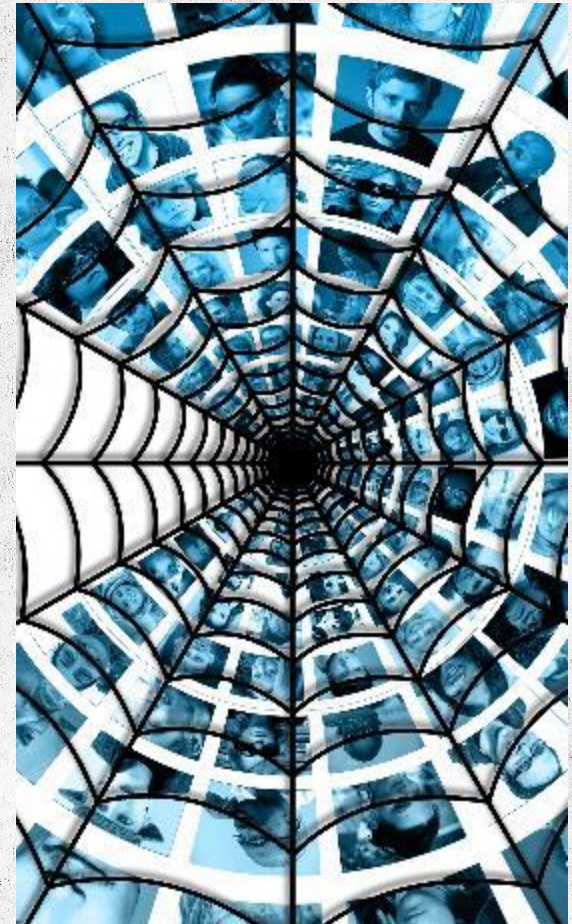


Recovering.....
Please Wait

What is Harm Reduction?

“... a set of practical strategies that reduce negative consequences of drug use, incorporating a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence. Harm reduction strategies meet [people] ‘where they're at,’ addressing conditions of use along with the use itself.”

Harm Reduction Coalition (harmreduction.org)



Harm Reduction - Strategies

It's a pragmatic, multidisciplinary, non-judgmental approach that meets people where they are at right now. Outcomes include:

- imparting skills in self-care (and care for others)
- lowering personal risk
- encouraging access to treatment
- supporting reintegration
- limiting the spread of disease
- improving environments
- cutting down on public expenses, saving lives.

Harm Reduction Principles

- Offers a menu of services and resources that increase safety and support incremental progress of the client
- Case management is compassionate and pragmatic
- A recognition that drug/alcohol use is complex
- Acknowledges that some ways of using alcohol or drugs are safer than others



Housing First IS Harm Reduction

Stable permanent housing is the starting point for contemplation and action in addressing substance use, and its impact on resident's lives, well being and abilities.

Or, as most people put it,

“I want to keep my apartment”



Core Principles in Housing First

4. Individualized and Client Driven services

Individualized Support Services

What services does everyone need?

What services do some individuals need?

What factors need to be considered in providing services?



Housing and Service Requirements

Under a Housing First model all supportive services should be:

- Available on a voluntary basis
- Customized to an individuals needs/ goals
- NOT a condition of tenancy or program participation.





Core Principles in Housing First

5. Social and Community Integration

Separating Services Offered From Housing Provided

Where possible, case managers should focus on service provision only. Enforcing housing management will damage relationships between the client and case manager.



Barring from Project

Case manager will have 2 primary functions:

Work with the participant to ensure that all possible proactive strategies to keep the property are examined

Advocate for the participant to senior staff or property manager

Consider proactive, written policy that reflects what the agency is prepared to do around issues such as damages, non payment of rent, neighbor issues, etc.

Housing First models of Support Services

Tenant/ Client...

- Stops paying rent
- Misses 3 consecutive appointments.
- Uses substances more frequently.
- Gets their utilities turned off.
- Beats up the neighbor.

Your HF approach would be...

Social and Community Integration

Working with your client to ensure that they have meaningful occupation within the community ensures a greater level of independence.

- Building a network of community resources – physicians, dentists, other resources
- Work / Volunteering
- Social Activities / Hobbies
- Community Day Centers
- Culturally sensitive resources
- Use peer support and peer resources

Recommendations from Housing First in Rural Canada

- Developing a common understanding of Housing First as an approach and program type.
- Exploring innovative Housing First adaptations for rural communities.
- System planning approaches to rural homelessness.
- Supporting rural communities of practice.

Housing First in Rural Canada: Rural Homelessness & Housing First Feasibility Across 22 Canadian Communities

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Q & A



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