Best Practices for Implementing Effective Rapid Re-housing

Katharine Gale, Katharine Gale Consulting and Focus Strategies

San Bernardino County
August 2017
About Katharine Gale

• Bay-area based consultant with independent practice and associate of *Focus Strategies*
• Has developed, coordinated and evaluated rapid rehousing programs across the country
• Former Policy Director for families with the US Interagency Council on Homelessness
• Managed homeless programs for Alameda County, California
• kgaleconsulting@sbcglobal.net
Today’s Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review Agenda and What Want From Day
3. Engaging Landlords and Presenting the Program
   --- Break ---
4. Working Together: Roles and Responsibilities through the Program Stages
   --- Lunch --
5. Supporting Participants in Housing
6. Trouble Shooting and Closing a Case
7. Wrap up
Before we begin…

- What did you take away from yesterday?

- What do you hope to get from today?
Core Components Refresher
Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing

- Housing Identification
- Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)
- Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services
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.
**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.

**FIND FAST HOUSING IDENTIFICATION**

- **Build** relationships with landlords to have access to as many housing units as possible.
- **Find** and secure housing as quickly as possible after a person or family becomes homeless.
- **Limit** the time a family or individual spends homeless. Move people into housing within **30 days or less**.

[Logo: National Alliance to End Homelessness]
**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.

---

**HELP PAY RENT AND MOVE-IN ASSISTANCE**

Pay for security deposits, move-in expenses...

...and/or rent and utilities.

Length of assistance varies, but often 4 to 6 months.
**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.

**HELP STAY**
RAPID RE-HOUSING CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

Connect families and individuals to services and supports in the community.

Help resolve issues that may threaten housing stability, including conflicts with landlords.

- Child Care
- Employment
- Income Supports/Benefits
- Health Care
- Education
Engaging Landlords
What do Landlords Want?

- Program can offer a lot of things landlords want, like….
- Have to see them as a client too – someone needs to “case manage” the landlord
- Understand their perspective and be clear what you have to offer; don’t overpromise
- Use same framework as with clients: Outreach, Assess, Support, Retain
What does your program offer them?

- Rent $$
- Ready tenants, fast lease-up
- Home-based case management
- Problem solving; emergency contacts
- Security deposits/risk reduction
- Public Recognition/other gratitude
- What else?
Activity : Landlord Exercise

• What is most important to each landlord?
• What factors might make this landlord want to partner with your program? (recruitment)
• What factors would you consider in making the First Match with a new landlord partner?
• What can you do to keep this landlord partner?
Landlord Challenges

- What challenges are you facing with landlords now?
Working Together: Roles and Responsibilities throughout the Program Phases
What are the different roles at each stage?

- Housing Specialist
- Case Manager
- Client
- Landlord
When do you need to communicate...

- In Person?
- In Writing (formal)?
- By phone or email?
Shared Housing
Getting Prepared

1. Landlord and Leasing Issues
   - Identify landlords amenable to shared housing
   - One lease or several leases
   - What happens if one party bails, etc.

2. Roommates and Matching
   - Preparation with each party
   - Clarify responsibilities in advance
   - What is the “right” match

3. RRH case management and shared housing
   - preparing for role case manager as mediator
   - Staff training on mediation
## What do I want in a housemate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Look for or Avoid</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone I like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone who will not have many visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone who smokes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone who is clean and sober</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone with pets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A “night” person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lunch

Reconvene at: ___ ___ : ___ ___
Supporting Participants in Housing
Role of the Case Manager

- Support the individual or family to fulfill their goals for housing stability
- Work with the rest of the team to meet services needs
- Adjust goals and approaches as needed
- Be able to respond in crisis
- Believe that they can do it
- Hand off and let go
Housing Stability Case Management

- Plan for connecting households to services and other needs once housed
- Develop realistic housing stability plans, with income front and center
- Work with the household to set goals and make choices
- Help people to have crisis plans for what they will do if they are in crisis again
- Employ progressive engagement approach to how program is structured and services are delivered
Voluntary Services

- Client decides when visits occur, not how often
- Reschedule, reschedule, reschedule
- Identify and support household strengths
- Client identifies goals for how they will keep their housing
Home Visits

• Be a visitor, not an inspector
• During home visits, be aware of potential tenancy issues, but not as a “gotcha” mission.
• **Red flags** are an opportunity for teachable moments such as noise levels, basic housekeeping, unauthorized tenants, making or responding to a complaint—the “soft skills” of renting.
• If a landlord “suddenly” evicts your program participant, you haven’t been paying attention.
Services

- Faith Community
- Mentoring
- Parenting Support
- Volunteering
- Tenant Education
- Legal Aid
- Financial Literacy
- Income Supports/Benefits
- Education
- Employment
- Child Care
- Health Care

Don’t forget about natural supports.
What happens when the plan’s not working?

- We all experience change, unexpected events and setbacks
- Clients may have a lot of these, but are still often very resilient
- Client choice is always important – choices are bounded for all of us
Activity #7: Troubleshooting

CASE SCENARIOS and GROUP BRAINSTORM

• For each case, we’ll brainstorm all the possible reasons you can think of for the current impasse

• What might you do next to get things back on track?
Case Closure
What is Progressive Engagement?

• Approach to helping households end their homeless as rapidly as possible, with *the least* financial and support resources *needed to be successful*

• More supports are offered to those households who struggle to stabilize and cannot maintain housing without assistance
What is Progressive Engagement?

• Initial offer is a “light-touch”
• Approach is flexible and individualized
• Focused on addressing barriers to gaining and retaining housing
• Design is informed by what we know about patterns of crisis, change over time, and how families get by
What Progressive Engagement is NOT

• Not one size fits all
• Not pre-planned periodic step down
• Not determined time or amounts from outset based on assessment scores
• Not a specific or structured “program” of services
Why Progressive Engagement?

- It’s Housing First
- Assessment at time of crisis doesn’t always predict future well
- More responsive to individual situations
- It reduces false or unhelpful expectations
- Is based in reality of how crises resolve and how people live
- It typically lets us help more people
What about assessment?

Assessment is critical: Need knowledge of
• Client’s relevant history, current plans and desires
• Understand housing barriers to assist, not to refuse assistance
• Develop realistic approach to finding landlords and housing situations
• Ability to link clients to supports in the community

But:
• Assessment up front not always the best way to size the financial assistance or length of time services are offered in rapid re-housing
Big question: How much is enough?

- Rapid rehousing programs of varying length and depth have had similar success rates
- Longer stays look good, especially for income changes, but shorter stays look good too, especially on exits to permanent housing
- Shorter program lengths let us help more households with the same amount of resources
How do you structure it

*Graphic from National Alliance to End Homelessness*
Rapid Re-Housing Progressive Engagement (Sacramento, CA)

- Literally homeless at program entry. Re-assessed every three months, and if household income is 30% of Area Median Income or higher, the household is exited from the program.

RRH Stats
- Majority <6 months
- 2% > 9 months
- Average: $6,500 phh

Coordinated Entry & VI-SPDAT

Consumer Referred to RRH Orientation

Regardless of VI-SPDAT Score

Assessment
Provider determines level of interaction
Heavy vs. Light

Opts Out
Opts In

0-3 months
3-6 months
6-9 months
9+ months

Administrator Extension

Provider Extension

Bridge Housing

Housed Program Exit
How do you structure it??

Use different resources in tandem, based on their requirements and strengths, for different levels or phases of assistance

**Example:**

Use one resource with regular reassessments and adjustments

**Example: ESG alone, SSVF, local Child Welfare dollars**
How do you deliver it?

- Clear from the beginning that intended housing support is short but flexible
- Focus on addressing housing entry barriers first
- Focus on housing retention barriers that have or are impacting housing retention once housed
- Send message you have confidence in them
- Connect to services they want and need quickly – have to have the connections, especially to employment!
Reassessment

- Use clear *but flexible* criteria for stability assessment – income, lease, connections, choice
- Is there still an *active* crisis or a new crisis?
- Do other people in similar situations make it?
- Should we stop subsidy but maintain services?
- Should we increase or lower subsidy amount (and why?)
- If really failing and/or higher needs emerging can we connect to a deeper subsidy or program?
## When is it Time to Complete Services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indicators for closure</th>
<th>Indicators for continuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
<td>• Income from all sources is sufficient to pay rent</td>
<td>• Cannot pay rent for next month or two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can share housing within limits of current income</td>
<td>• No income sources available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEASE</strong></td>
<td>• In compliance, landlord satisfied</td>
<td>• Currently in violation of lease or subject or serious complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Landlord willing to accept loss of programmatic support</td>
<td>• Landlord accepted client only if longer-term support provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LINKAGES</strong></td>
<td>• Other resources will provide needed assistance</td>
<td>• No other resources are willing/able to assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHOICE</strong></td>
<td>• Program participant wants to complete services</td>
<td>• Program participant wants (and needs) additional assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity #8: Case Closure Decisions

- Three Case Scenarios
- Each table will work on all three cases:
  Should the case manager close the case or continue assistance?
  If you decide to continue, what needs to happen to be able to close?
- Large group votes and discussion
Wrap Up