

WORKING WITH PROBLEM SOLVING STATUS CLIENTS

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Goals of This Breakout Session

- Understand the terms “housing referral status” and “problem solving status”
- Share the current and future state of problem solving
- Discuss challenges in working with people in problem solving status
- Identify possible solutions
- Share success stories and practices that work
- Collect feedback from the group

Overview of Coordinated Entry



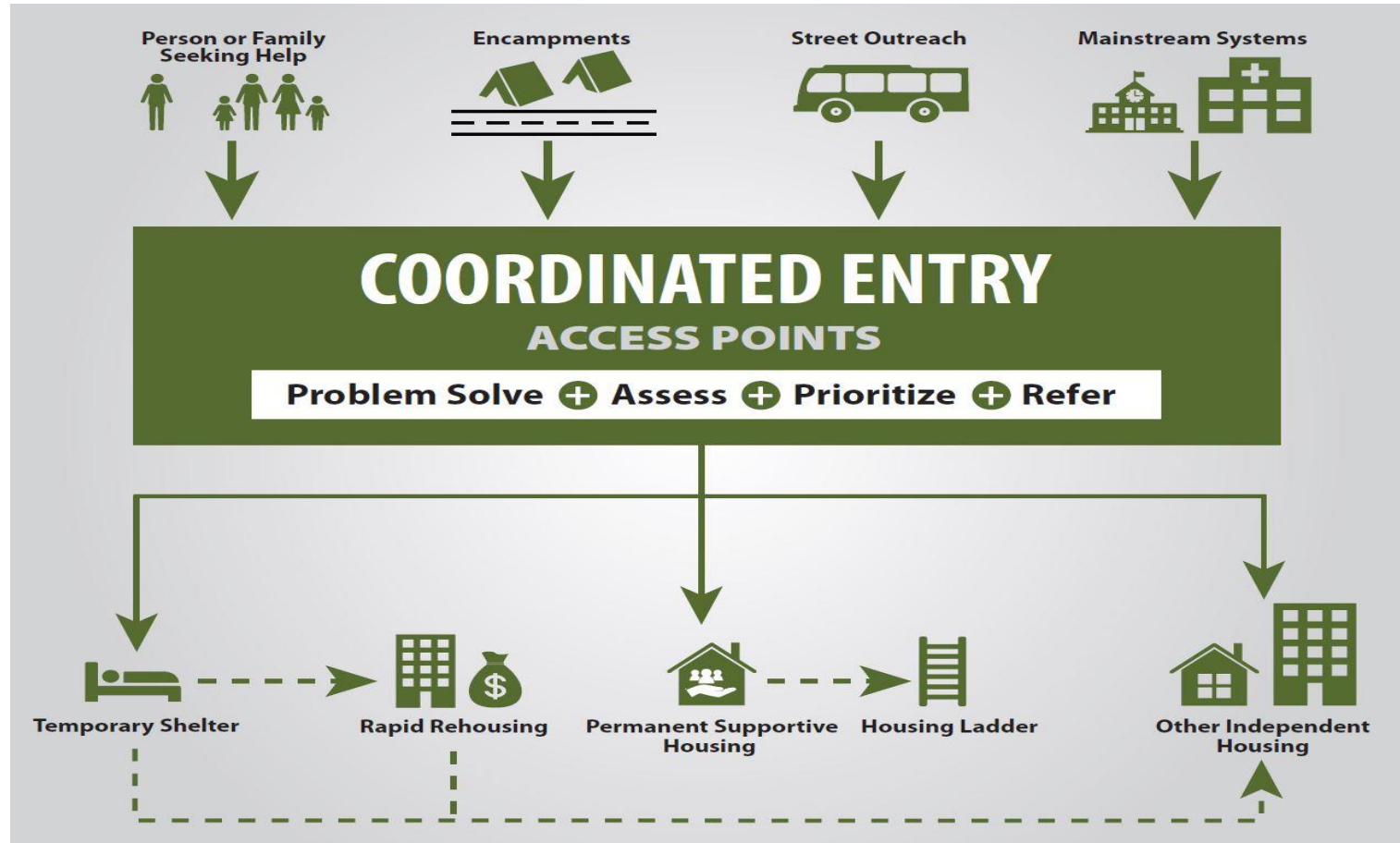
- HSH Five Year Strategic Framework outlines vision to make homelessness ***a rare, brief and one-time event***
- Coordinated Entry is a core component of San Francisco's Homelessness Response System (HRS)
- Coordinated Entry organizes the HRS, through a common assessment and prioritization method
- Coordinated Entry directs clients to the most appropriate resource *available*, based on their status determined by the Primary Assessment.

Prioritization in Coordinated Entry



- Primary Assessment uses three types of factors to determine priority:
 1. Chronicity of homelessness (length of time, number of episodes)
 2. Vulnerability
 3. Barriers to securing housing
- Households with greater chronicity, vulnerability and barriers are prioritized higher
- The highest group is prioritized for a referral to housing available in the HRS – permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing (& in some cases transitional)
- This group is considered to be in “Housing Referral Status.”
- All others are in “Problem Solving Status.”
- ***Everyone has an opportunity for solutions***

Coordinated Entry





Meaning of Problem Solving Status

- *Housing Referral Status* is very limited, based on the number of housing placements available
- Many people will not receive Housing Referral Status even though they could benefit from a housing placement.
- *Problem Solving Status* means that the household will be referred to (or back to) Problem Solving and have access to a Problem Solver ***on a continuous basis.***



Overview of Problem Solving

- Problem Solving helps people identify possible pathways to resolve their housing crisis without a housing resource from the HRS
- Conversation should be strengths-based, trauma informed and grounded in cultural humility
- Explore all safe alternative options available and help participant think of strategies to secure these options
- People in Problem Solving Status have access to Problem Solving as a continuous resource; *if they don't have a solution right away they can keep coming back/get more support*

Finding Solutions Through Problem Solving

Examples of resolutions:

- Household can stay with a family member or friend and does not require any additional resources
- Household identifies a solution that can be supported with a resource, such as:
 - Assistance from a community-based program (e.g. Seasons of Sharing move-in assistance, child care, legal services, etc.)
 - Relocation through Homeward Bound to return to former community
 - Family reunification supported by mediation or conflict resolution services
 - Limited financial assistance to help preserve a temporary situation, like support to a host household for food or utilities



Challenges Working With People in Problem Solving Status

Working with people in this status can be challenging:

- While they have been assessed *relatively lower*, they still may have significant challenges to securing a housing solution
- It can be difficult to prepare staff to help clients understand what they are being offered and why
- People hear the message as “you are not a priority.” (Changed language about status to focus on solutions and help with clear messaging.)
- People may have to leave SF and their connections here to secure a housing solution
- Communication from HSH to Access Points has not been consistent
- Access Points need training to do Problem Solving effectively



Current State of Problem Solving

- Coordinated Entry Access Points are trained in Problem Solving and have some flexible financial resources
- HOT team are trained in Problem Solving and can conduct conversations anywhere and link to flexible financial assistance
- Both can refer to Homeward Bound and other resources



Future State of Problem Solving

- Providers throughout the system will be trained in Problem Solving techniques beginning in 2020
- Trainings will be offered bi-monthly
- Access to flex resources and other supports will be part of training
- ONE System will be configured to support and track Problem Solving



What you can do *now*

- Understand Problem Solving goals and practice
- Check in the ONE System:
- Hold problem solving conversations
- Encourage participants to keep considering options
- Refer to HOT or Access Point if participant finds a solution that will need some flexible financial assistance/support
- If participant is not in ONE, be sure to send to an Access Point!

Looking in ONE

Housing Referral Status:
In ONE System with an alert -
Support housing placement

Problem Solving Status:
In ONE with a recent Assessment,
but not Housing Referral Status

**Unclear on status, or not in
ONE System:**
Connect to the Access Point

Tips for Problem Solving Practitioners

- Keep the focus on finding solutions that empower the household
- Know that each success will be different for each household
- Keep the conversation
 - Strengths based
 - Trauma informed
 - Cultural humility
 - Age appropriate
- Keep the lines of communication open
- Provide feedback on what is working and what is not

Success Story

SVdP is a national organization that has several Societies across the country. Recently a client who presented as female had been ostracized, bullied and suffered abuse from her local community. She was given a one way plane ticket to San Francisco as a means to save her life. This particular morning she showed up at our Community Office door with one bag of clothes, no money, no food and not knowing anyone in the city. We worked with her to identify her needs which included a safe place free from abuse back with her family. Knowing that she would be on the street without our help, we were able to find her temporary shelter while we worked with Homeward Bound to identify and vet a family member in Rhode Island. She came back every day until it was time to go the bus station. Staff drove her and stayed with her until she boarded the bus.

What's Your Experience?

What's Your Feedback?

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