

Why is Rapid Re-Housing So Successful?

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Getting Started

- Welcome to the Housing First Partners Conference Families Track!
- Does “Housing First” work for families?
- Why a families track?
- Opening questions for the audience about Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing:
 - What are the similarities?
 - What are the differences?



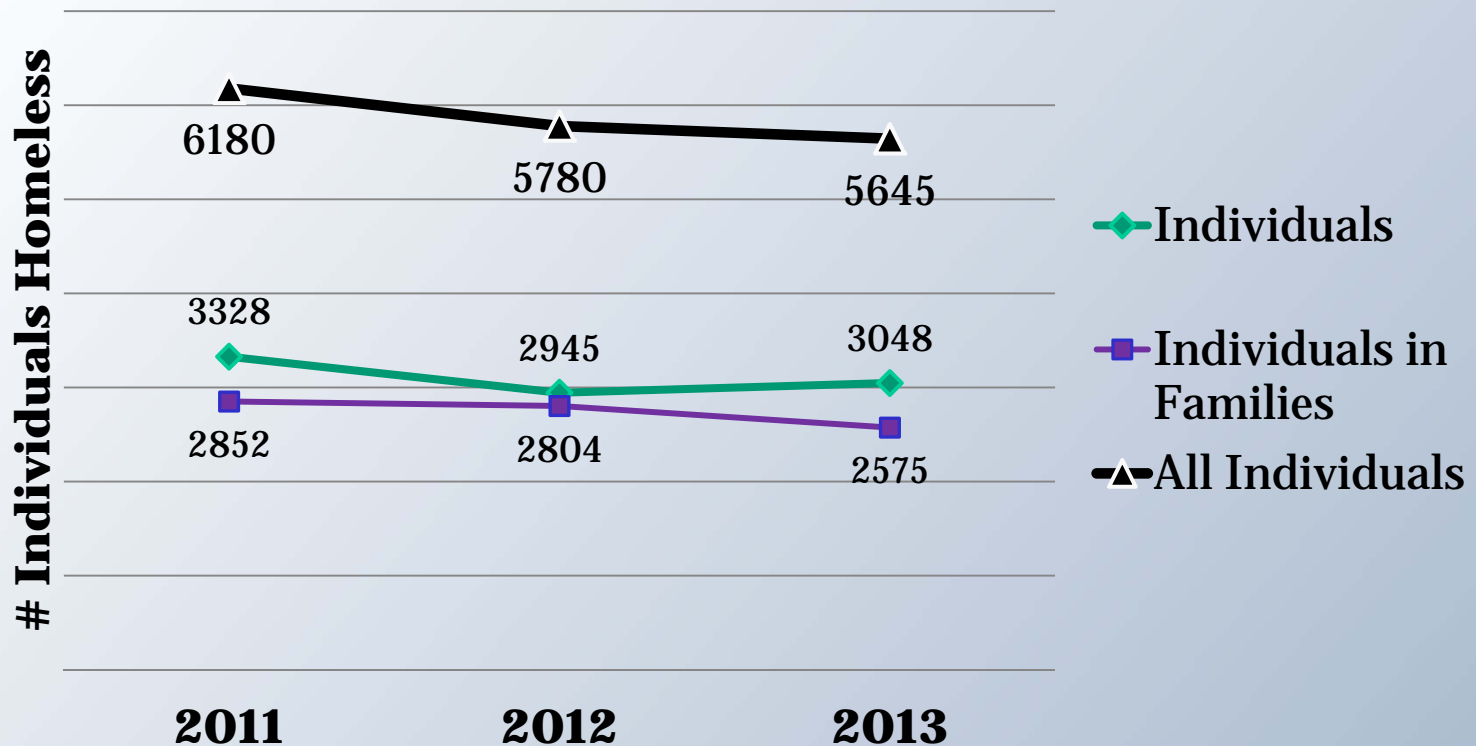
Objectives

- 1) RRH - The Philadelphia Story
- 2) RRH results from around the nation
- 3) Local RRH research directions



Research Question: Did HPRP help decrease homelessness in Philadelphia?

Homelessness in Philadelphia 2011 - 2013



Specific Research Questions for Philadelphia Rapid Re-Housing Study

- Does Rapid Re-Housing improve housing stability for formerly homeless households by decreasing the risk of a return to homelessness?
- Does RRH help to improve household income?



Research Aims for Rapid Re-Housing

Can we answer the counterfactual?

RESEARCH AIM for RRH Policy:

- Research for RRH policy goal is to estimate whether RRH is the specific element responsible for decreasing homelessness. Counterfactual:

What would have happened to RRH households if there was no RRH?

WHY RESEARCH DESIGN IS NECESSARY:

- When households who participate in RRH are different from households who do not, need to control for differences using research design. Differences in RRH and non-RRH households show up as confounders: i.e. RRH enrollment strategies differences by case manager, by program; length of RRH assistance; Housing market variability

Gold Standard = Random Control Trial = assess causal effect of RRH

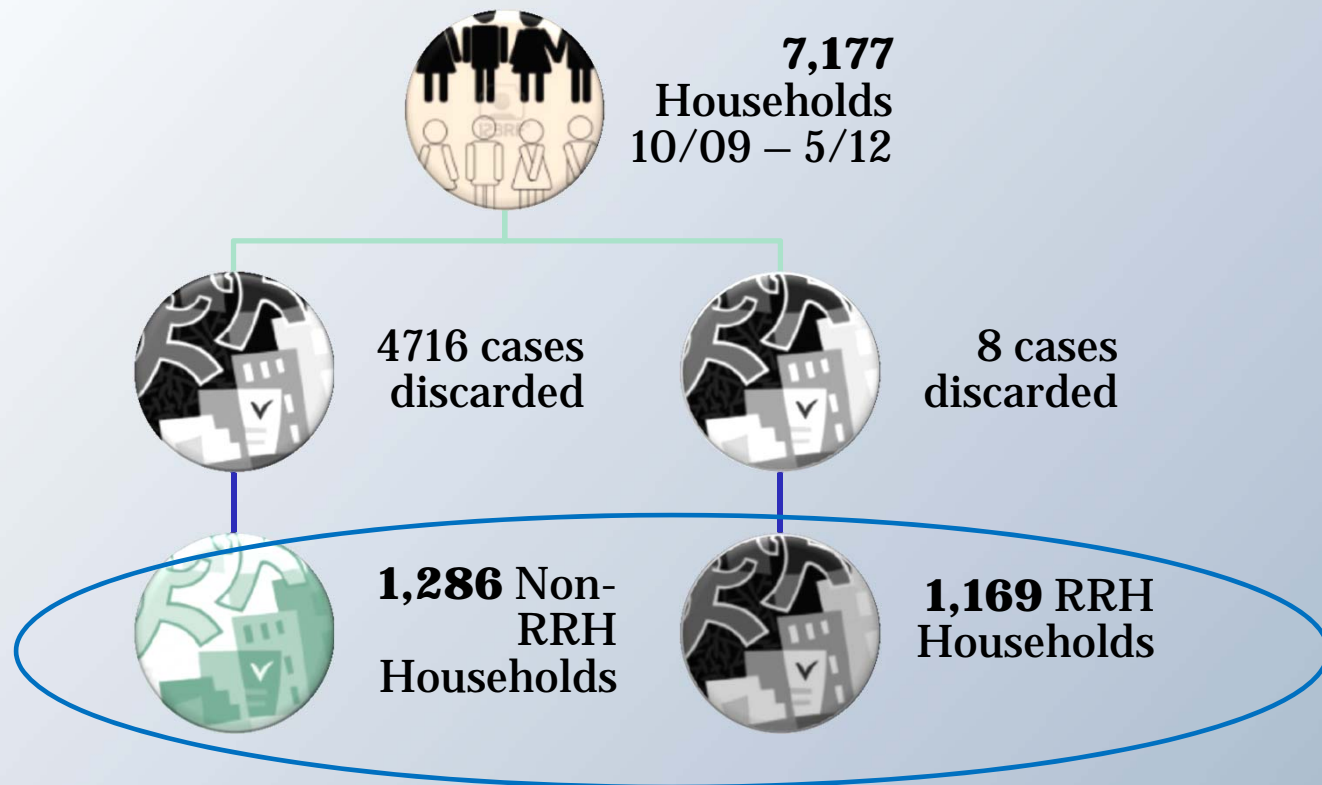
RESEARCH DESIGN WITHOUT RCT

- With no RCT, matching methods can be used to create comparison groups that look alike, controlling for confounding differences. Propensity score matching now widely applied, probability of participation estimated using observable variables.,



Dataset: All Households that entered Philadelphia shelters 10/2009-5/2012

Propensity Score Match



PSM Result—households in each group similar, standard means balanced

RRH Treatment.....1169 households
 Non-RRH Control.....1286 households

Each variable included in PSM represents HMIS data indicator correlated with risk of homelessness. (Disabling condition excluded based on high correlation with SSI-SSDI)

Standard means comparison, t-tests performed on PSM matched groups, strong PSM model, households similar

Variables		N	Mean
Monthly income @ sheltr entry	1.00	1169	730.50
	.00	1286	718.78
MarriedBinary	1.00	1169	.0607
	.00	1286	.0539
GenderBinary	1.00	1169	.5774
	.00	1286	.5958
HSGradBinary	1.00	1169	.5346
	.00	1286	.5672
Family Size	1.00	1169	2.25
	.00	1286	2.27
HHAge18_25	1.00	1169	.2198
	.00	1286	.2434
HHAge26_59	1.00	1169	.7305
	.00	1286	.7113
HHAge60plus	1.00	1169	.0488
	.00	1286	.0445
SSI_SSDI	1.00	1169	.2541
	.00	1286	.2447
# times in shelter (>30 days)	1.00	1169	2.13
	.00	1286	1.85

PSM Analysis: Return to Homelessness Results

Comparison Group	# Households	% Returned to Homelessness
Rapid Re-Housing Group	1,169 households	13.6%
Non- RRH Group	1,286 households	39.4%
Total	2,455 cases	

Odds ratio: The odds of returning to homelessness were 42% higher for households that did not receive RRH compared to households that did receive RRH



Additional Analysis to Validate PSM Finding - Instrumental Variable Estimation

- Propensity Score Match controlled for **observable** characteristics of study households. PSM unable to control for non-observable data that can bias results.
- Data results bias concern for **unobserved** characteristics, factors that are not in dataset, yet may confound comparison results
 - Motivation, an unseen characteristic, might be higher for RRH households, not an HMIS variable
 - Selection bias, i.e. household employability as interpreted by case managers, not reportable in HMIS



Instrumental Variable Choice = Zip Code of Referring Shelters

- The idea behind IV approach is that factors (instruments) outside of PSM model may affect participation in RRH.
- Zip code IV of shelter site location projected to be partially correlated with treatment, but unrelated to other RRH uptake factors and unrelated to risk of a return to homelessness.
- RRH in Philadelphia a new program under HPRP, over 70 different referral sites. Variation likely to exist in uptake.
- Uptake variation across shelter sites likely due to:
 - varying numbers of people eligible for RRH referral,
 - level of preparation time shelter staff spent preparing households for RRH entry,
 - distance from shelter site to RRH intake,
 - shelter variation in adopting RRH model



Philadelphia RRH Program Entry Process – variation in uptake across enrollments

Step One: Household is referred from Philadelphia Shelter System for RRH (over 75 different referral points in dataset)

Step Two: Referral sent to Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing for approval (via HMIS)

Step Three: OSH sends accepted referrals to one of five RRH offices, four out of five offices located in downtown Philadelphia

Step Four: Household is given intake appointment and must go to their assigned site for RRH intake, four located downtown

Step Five: Household receives RRH assistance



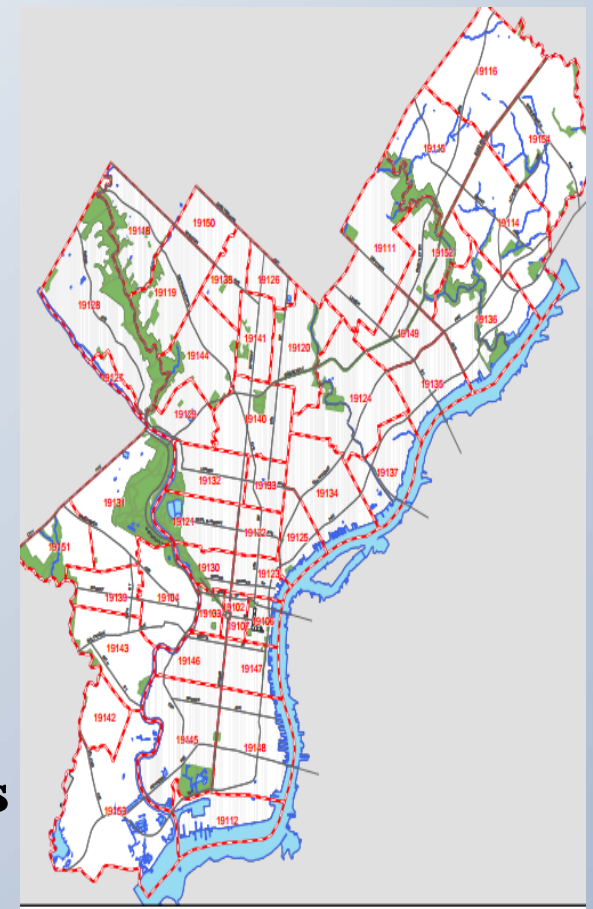
Results of Instrumental Variable Analysis

- First stage results, if F-statistic >10 , then second stage results of treatment impact can be measured with inclusion of valid IV from stage one and covariates related to risk of a return to homelessness. Second State results estimated the effect of RRH on the risk of a return to homelessness

IV ANALYSIS (2SLS) RESULTS

- For households that received RRH, 32% higher likelihood of not returning to homelessness compared to non-RRH households

**IV analysis results support PSM results
-- RRH reduces the risk of return to homelessness**



RRH Households in PSM - Risk factors for Return to Homelessness

- **Logistic regression Results – RRH Households Return to Homelessness**

	Estimate	z value	Pr(> z)
MonthsRRH	0.004446	0.246	0.8060
HHGenderM	-0.057826	-0.219	0.8266
HHGender	-11.236950	-0.022	0.9824
HHGender	0.487946	0.325	0.7454
Married	-1.243825	-2.148	0.0317 * PROTECTIVE
HS Complete	0.231277	1.178	0.2388
SSI_SSDI	0.206173	0.964	0.3348
HHAge18_25	13.077275	0.015	0.9882
HHAge26_59	12.719711	0.014	0.9885
HHAge60plus	12.015166	0.014	0.9891
#timesinshelter	0.631729	11.132	<2e-16***RISK FACTOR
FamilySize	-0.025399	-0.319	0.7499



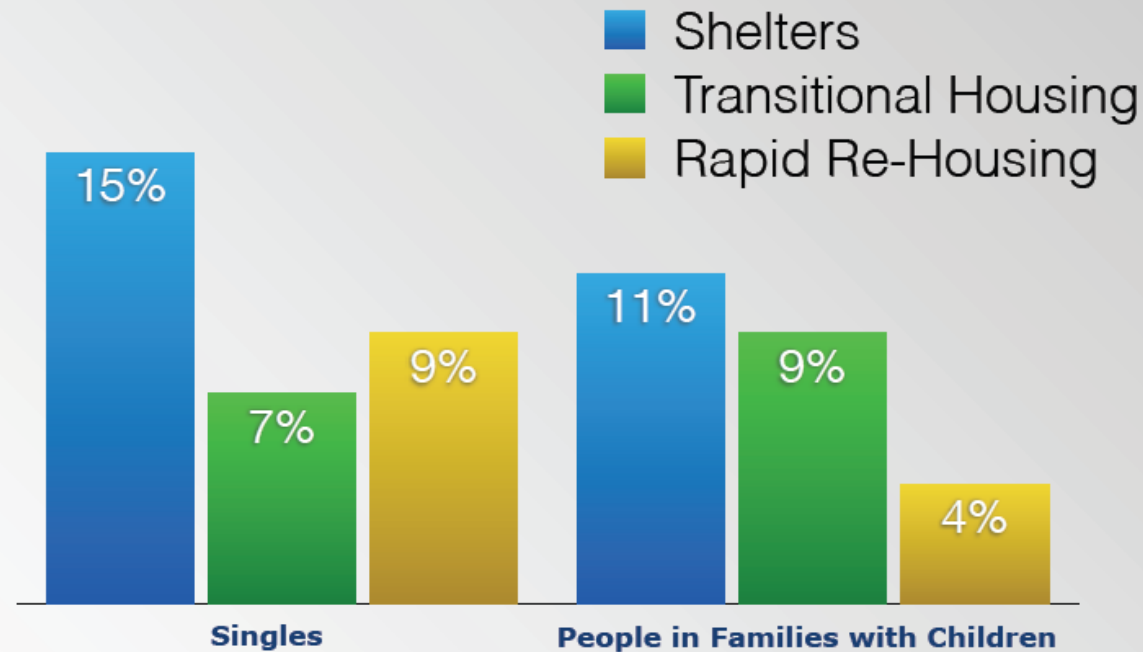
RRH Results across the Country

Region/ Program	# of RRH HH's Served	Return to Homeless Rate	Average RRH Assist	Additional Description of RRH program
Utah – The Road Home	1,007	13%	4 months	TANF \$ 4 mos, progressive engagement
D. C. Community of Hope	117	7%	10 months	Use OrgCode's Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool
Mercer County, NJ TANF RRH Pilots	231	5% (of all who complete program)	5 months	Mercer County Average shelter decline = 20% Motel decline = 66%
Connecticut	1,600	11%	Unknown	Data for all three years of RRH -
Idaho – CATCH programs	Unknown from report	15%	6 months	Partners with local congregations, United Way, businesses, government



NAEH Evaluation of 14 CoC RRH programs, Average cost = \$4,000/family

Rate of Return to Homelessness Within 12 Months of Exit for 7 Communities



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Source: Data from 14 Continuums in seven states that prepared Evaluators for National Alliance to End Homelessness Performance Improvement Clinics in 2011-2012 compiled by Focus Strategies

Georgia Study of Reoccurrence Rates –

Rigorous method to control for differences, found factors most correlated with a return to homelessness

Research question: *Which client, program, geographical characteristics exert greatest influence on the likelihood that someone returns to homelessness?*

Results: 9000 enrollments, 28% return to homelessness. Return Risk Factors:

1. Was not in a Rapid Re-Housing program
2. Had a history of homelessness
3. Went to a “temporary” destination
4. Was Non-Hispanic / Non-Latino
5. Was Non-White
6. Had a disabling condition at program exit
7. Program was in a non-rural county
8. Was male
9. Was unaccompanied
10. Was not with a teenage male

Key Finding: Exits from Shelter **4.7** times; Tran. Housing **4.0** times more likely to return to homelessness than exits from Rapid Re-Housing

Source: Jason Rodriguez, GA Dept of Community Affairs



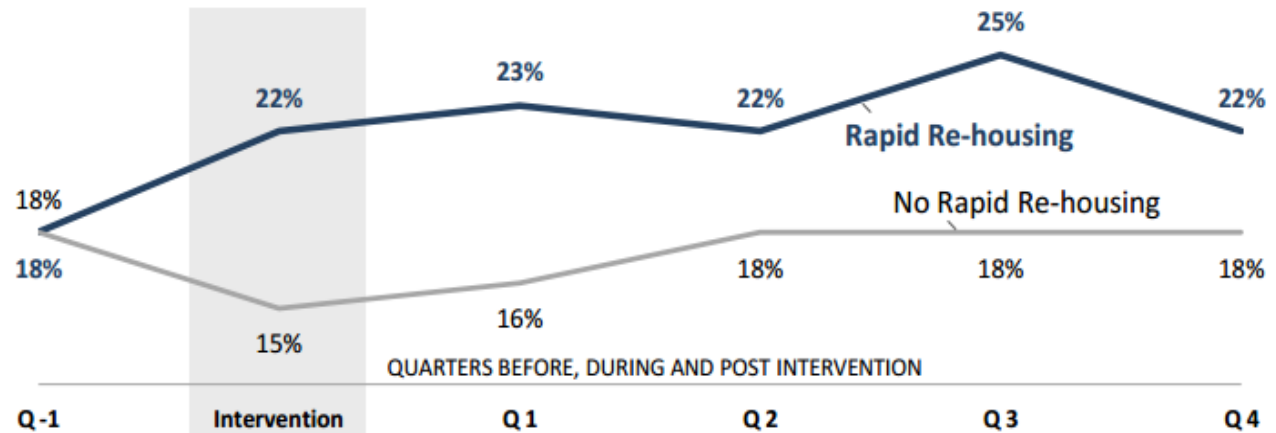
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Washington State Evaluation – Robust matching model RRH and employment

Washington State 2010 Evaluation - Rapid Re-Housing Impacts on Employment*

Employment rates of homeless DSHS clients are higher both during and after Rapid Re-Housing Assistance

Statistically adjusted to account for employment history and other characteristics.



*RRH clients were 1.25 times more likely to be employed, and, on average, earned \$422 more annually than their counterparts who did not receive RRH.



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RRH appears to effectively decrease risk of a return to homelessness. Why?

- Maybe....RRH housing case management services access landlord partnerships or find new viable housing opportunities not previously on the radar for very poor households with housing barriers
- Maybe....time-limited housing stabilization assistance provides a self-determination boost, motivating efforts to do “whatever it takes” to stay out of homelessness
- Maybe... RRH works on the same fundamental principle as Housing First - -**CLIENT CHOICE**. By putting housing first in the service equation, clients can access what it takes to be fully human: autonomy, competence, and connectedness



Multiple factors in every region impact RRH outcomes

Variable influencing factors in every RRH region:

- Housing market – % affordable rents
- Network of Landlord partnerships
- Capacity to leverage TANF / HOME/ other Rental Assistance Funds
- ESG funding levels
- Belief in RRH approach
- Coordinated Assessment Tools
- Mass movement out of state or HMIS region

Growing need for additional RRH research evidence
AND additional investment in affordable housing.
RRH does not end poverty.



Local HMIS RRH Evaluation – Five Steps

1. Define Rapid Re-Housing Success in own community
2. Use HMIS data indicators
 - Return to Homelessness by cohort/group
 - Length of stay/time homeless
 - Reduction in shelter households over time
 - Average Shelter costs per day
 - Average RRH assistance costs per day
3. Establish comparison group using matching method
4. Analyze Data – Courageously accept data shortcomings
5. Add results to emerging RRH evidence



Thank you!

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Rapid Re-housing: *Why does it work so well?*

Housing First Partners Conference 2014

- Katharine Gale
- March 12, 014



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What does "work so well" mean?

- Families that have no housing get housed, and do not return to homelessness in a defined time period
- Not 100%...
- But better than everything else we do, except permanent subsidies (i.e. shelter, transitional, services only, some PSH)



WAIT... Apples and Oranges??

- **Concern: Rapid re-housing not serving the same kind of households...**
 - Not clearly the case - needs to be looked at
 - Some places “creamed” with rapid rehousing - limited to those employed or with “low” barriers
 - But, places that didn’t also have had high success rates (ex. Sacramento, Salt Lake)
 - Some places “cream” with transitional housing and PSH
 - Local data can help study this question



But there's no housing...

- Have you heard, or said: "No family in our community with minimum wage income [or SSI, or TANF...] can afford to rent a two-bedroom apartment."
- What's the matter with this statement?



How can it work??

> 95% of people in poverty are housed at a point in time – *how do they do it?*

- Fair Market Rents - Generally set at the 40th Percentile (some at 50th)
- Very low income families typically rent-burdened. Most pay > 30% and many pay > 50% of income for housing but remain housed.
- Our families typically have incomes at 10-15% of median - not going to live in median cost housing



How can we expect it to last?

- For most families, homelessness is the result of a crisis
- Factors that lead to the crisis can be resolved - parent gets a job, people get better
- Time is on their side
- Lots of changes we attribute to programs are really the result of time and getting back in the housing door.
- It's Housing First in action!



Rapid re-housing's potential is great

- Based on typical costs, we can successfully rehouse five times as many people with rapid rehousing as with transitional housing, with equal or better outcomes



What's essential to rapid re-housing?

- Flexible resources (money and staff)
- Relationships with landlords
- Links to other services in the community
- Skill managing a flexible program
- Partnership with clients to make realistic plan



Design questions: how much is enough?

- 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 housing stability
- Shorter stays let us help more households with the same amount of resources



What about assessment?

- Assessment is critical: need knowledge of the client's relevant history, their current plans and desires
- Understand housing barriers to be able to assist, not to refuse assistance
- Develop a realistic approach to finding landlords and housing situations
- Ability to link clients to supports in the community

But:

- Assessment up front may not be a good way to size the financial assistance or length of time services are offered

Example: Let's all go on a job hunt...

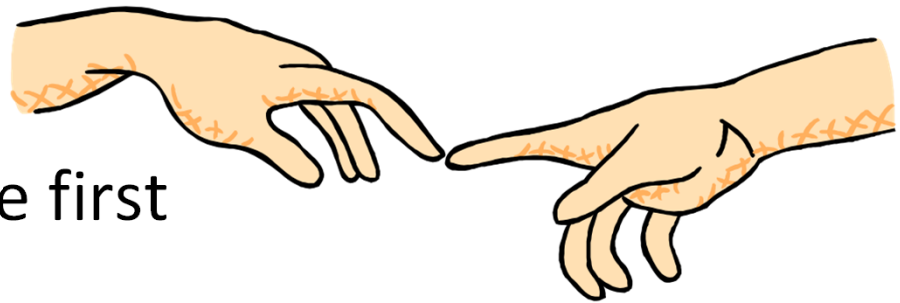


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Progressive Engagement

- A different kind of design:



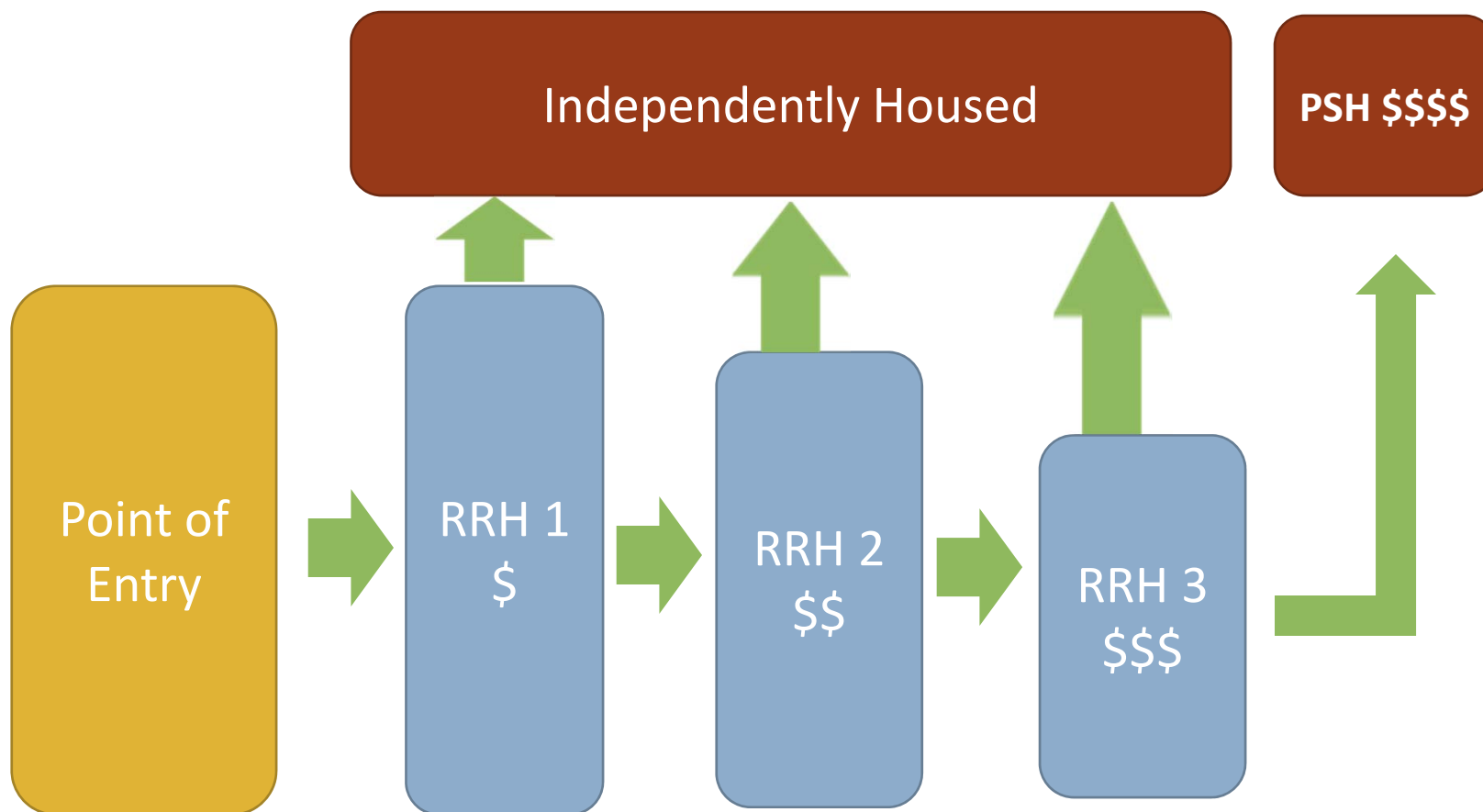
- Lightest touch possible first

or

- “You can always add more, but you can’t take it away”



Progressive Engagement approach



*[Graphic from National Alliance to End Homelessness]

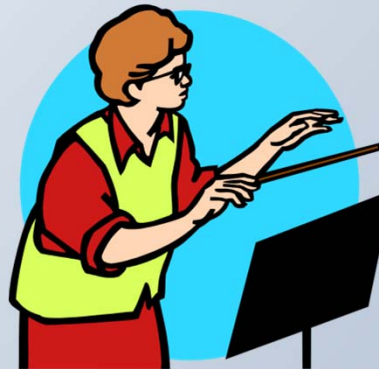
A change in philosophy and culture

- Take as the goal ending the housing crisis
- Idea of doing the least necessary
- Believing people can make it without us
- Getting rewarded by seeing people leave, and helping more
- *The pace is fast*



Leading the culture shift

- Learn about successful approaches
- Hear from clients
- Offer staff support and training
- But also be open to staff changes
- Use agency data to assess and adjust



Using data to adjust

- Unacceptable losses or rates of return? *Maybe resize, assist longer, check in more, new partnerships*
- Everybody sticks? *Maybe try less*
- Some succeed and some don't? *What factors can we look at: e.g. family size, income source, histories of homelessness, staffing?*



For more information

- National Alliance to End Homelessness
www.endhomelessness.org
- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness www.usich.gov
- Focus Strategies www.focusstrategies.net
- Contact us: katharine@focusstrategies.net

