

# HomeRoom Network Community of Practice

Housing First: A Practice-Based Approach to Using a  
Housing First Framework

*Session 12*

12/12/2023

# Welcome!

Please say hello in the chat box and share

- Your name & pronouns
- Name of your District
- Your role
- Something you're looking forward to



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# Zoom Logistics



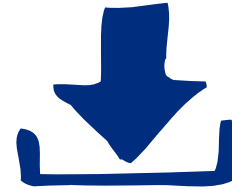
**All participants  
can unmute**



**You can share  
your camera**



**Questions can be  
asked  
throughout the  
training**



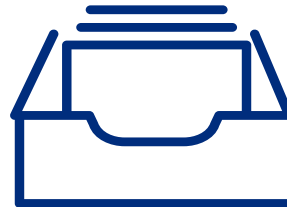
**The powerPoint  
will be sent out  
after each  
training**



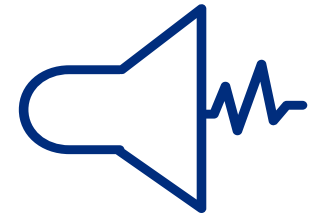
**Breakout rooms**



**Polls/  
quizzes**



**Handouts/  
Materials**



**Audio/video  
issues**

# Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Overview of Housing First
- Common Challenges
- Principles to Practice
- Breakout Sessions
- Closing



# COHHIO Course to HOME Team



**Amanda Wilson she/her**  
**Youth Housing**  
**Initiative Director**



**Ami Diallo she/her**  
**Youth Housing**  
**Initiative Specialist**



**Evelyn Garon she/her**  
**Youth Housing**  
**Initiative Specialist**

# Guest Presenter

Aubre Jones  
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in  
Ohio  
Director of Training and Technical  
Assistance


# Training Agreements



- Ask questions, share experiences, and participate in collaborative activities.
- Having your camera on when possible facilitates discussion and social interaction if you can look at a person while speaking to them, even if it's through a screen.



# What is Housing First?

A red house icon with a keyhole and a large key, symbolizing housing and access. The house is red with a white keyhole and a large key is shown next to it. The background is a light wood grain.

**Housing First is a consumer-driven approach that provides immediate access to permanent housing, in addition to flexible, community-based services for people who have experienced homelessness.**



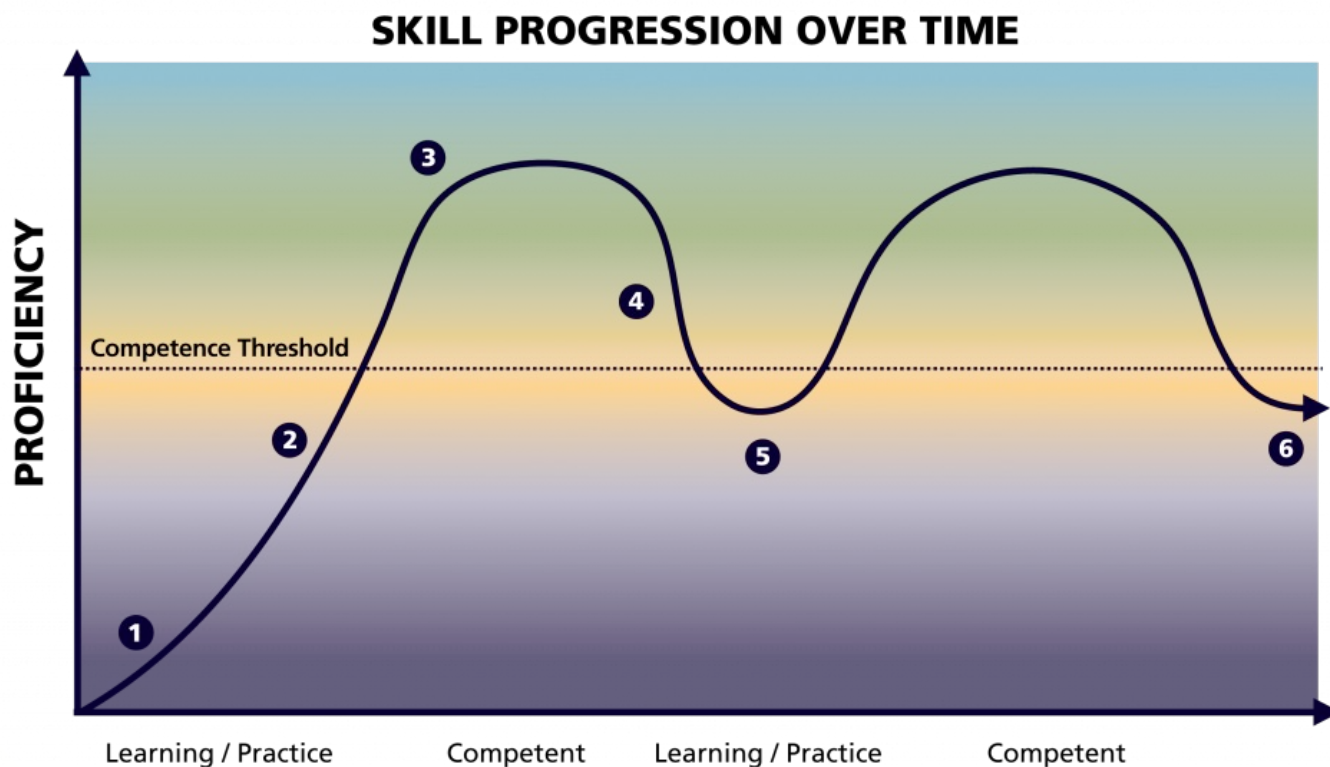
# Housing First was birthed around 1992



# Housing First becomes amplified nationally as a way to address *chronic* *homelessness*

- The George W. Bush administration's adoption of Housing First helped spur a 30 percent reduction in chronic homelessness from 2005 to 2007.
- The Obama administration continued this support for Housing First when it released its Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness in 2010.
- HUD and other agencies have made adopting Housing First practices a priority for their staff and grantees

Housing First emerged as an alternative to the linear approach in which people experiencing homelessness were required to first participate in and graduate from short-term residential and treatment programs before obtaining permanent housing.



# Movement toward Evidence-Based services

- Housing First programs also create savings through reduced use of public systems, such as emergency departments, jails, and detox facilities. These savings can partially or totally offset the costs of Housing First programs.
- The quality and volume of studies demonstrating the success of Housing First has prompted the US Department of Health and Human Services to include it in its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

**The United  
States  
Interagency  
Council on  
Homelessness  
(USICH) defines  
Housing First as**

*“a proven method of ending all types of homelessness and is the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness. Housing First offers individuals and families experiencing homelessness immediate access to permanent affordable or supportive housing. “*

Without clinical prerequisites like completion of a course of treatment or evidence of sobriety and with a low-threshold for entry, Housing First yields higher housing retention rates, lower returns to homelessness, and significant reductions in the use of crisis service and institutions.



# Housing First Principles

1. Homelessness is first and foremost a housing crisis and can be addressed through the provision of safe and affordable housing.
2. All people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their housing history and duration of homelessness, can achieve housing stability in permanent housing. Some may need very little support for a brief period of time, while others may need more intensive and long-term supports.
3. Everyone is “housing ready.” Sobriety, compliance in treatment, or even criminal histories are not necessary to succeed in housing. Rather, homelessness programs and housing providers must be “consumer ready.”
4. Many people experience improvements in quality of life, in the areas of health, mental health, substance use, and employment, as a result of achieving housing.
5. People experiencing homelessness have the right to self-determination and should be treated with dignity and respect.
6. The exact configuration of housing and services depends upon the needs and preferences of the population.



# Principles to Practice



## Breakout groups

How do you think housing first principles impact your students?



# Our Take-aways

- Few to no programmatic prerequisites
- Low barrier admission policies
- Supportive services are voluntary, but can and should be used to *persistently engage* tenants to ensure housing stability
- Tenants have full rights, responsibilities, and legal protections
- Practices and policies to prevent lease violations and evictions



# Common Challenges in Implementation



# Common Challenges

- Time
- Historical exclusion-marginalization
- Cognitive impairment
- Intoxication
- Disruptions
- Attention span
- Demands of other systems that require change rather than motivating
- Personal biases
- Understanding role: supporting autonomy and being a change partner at the same time
- Empathy & cultural competency
- Uncomfortable, awkward silences
- Immediate needs trump goals
- Ambiguity and ambivalence
- Don't change talk
- Moving from change talk to commitment to change
- Fidelity to technique
- Absent or reduced engagement that can come with depression and anxiety
- Change is viewed as a linear event rather than an iterative process
- ***What did we miss?***

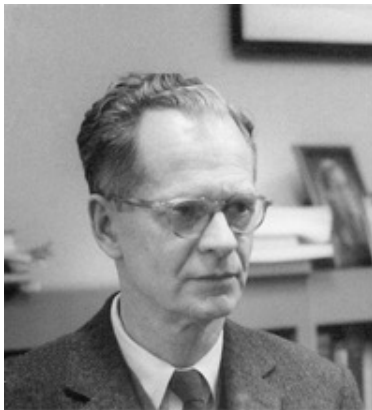
*If you're homeless, your life should be hard before it gets easy.*

- Critics may say ...“Housing First enables **those people** to continue their negative behaviors when we should be using our energy — and tax dollars — to help those who can prove they're ready for recovery”.
- These assumptions incorrectly assume that the only way for people to get well is to face the ‘natural consequences’ of their behavior.

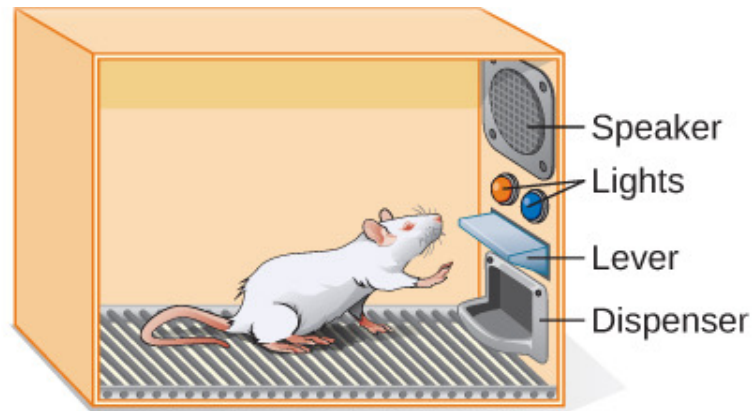


# Behavior Modification in Social Service Delivery

B. F. Skinner demonstrated that behavior could be shaped through reinforcement and/or punishment. Skinner noted that a reinforcer is a consequence that increases the likelihood of behavior to recur, while punishment is a consequence that decreases the chance



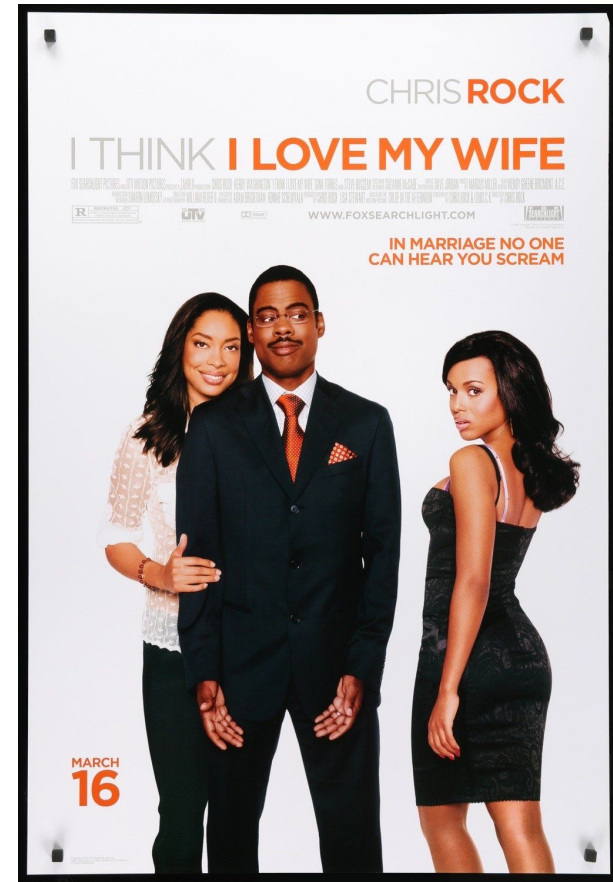
(a)



(b)

# Considerations in Implementation challenges...

Enter the 80/20 principle, otherwise known as the Pareto principle. This principle, in essence, states that 80% of an outcome comes from 20% of its causes. It explains how small actions, a small group of people, events or elements are responsible for a disproportionately large percentage of a result.



Some clients  
cycle through  
multiple failed  
placements as  
they adjust to a  
housed life



# Breakout Group

Knowing that families may cycle in and out of homelessness before they become stably-housed, what resources might be most needed to support these students?



# Housing First does not mean “*housing forever,*” or “*no matter what.*”

It means that a person is afforded an opportunity for housing with choice and without preconditions that are based on their disability. That person is offered an appropriate level of support to help them thrive in their unit and the community. If they break the law or the lease, they can be subject to eviction just like any other person who breaks the law or their lease. Actions have consequences.

# Housing First is not *“Housing only”*

For people with severe physical, behavioral, or substance use challenges—challenges that could force them back into homelessness if not addressed—we should be offering wraparound services on a Housing First basis.



# Balancing Client Autonomy with Housing Stabilization



# Providing Voluntary, Supportive Wrap-around Services

- The provider is obligated to bring robust support services to the housing.
- These services are predicated on assertive engagement, not coercion.

In traditional service models, clients with high needs have to go to where the provider is — like to a shelter, or in-house program.

Maybe they show up, maybe they don't.

With **assertive engagement**, providers meet people where *they* are — say, in a tent encampment — engage with them there, offer help, and then don't take no for an answer. But they do it in a kind and empathetic way.

# Core Concepts of Assertive Engagement

- Racial Equity Lens
- Anti-Oppressive Practice
- Empathy
- Strength-Based Approach
- Unconditional Positive Regard



*“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives.”*

*—Audre Lorde*

♥ one love

# What does Assertive Engagement look like?

- Motivational approaches to build trust.
- In-person visits with clients
- Phone calls
- Letters
- Emails
- Contacting natural supports (e.g., friends, family, landlords, employers)
- Crisis intervention
- Payeeship

# For how long?








# The practice of harm reduction does not mean “anything goes.”

- Affirms drugs users themselves as the primary agents of reducing the harms of their drug use, and seeks to empower users to share information and support each other in strategies which meet their actual conditions of use.
- Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination and other social inequalities affect both people’s vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related harm.
- Calls for the non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people who use drugs and the communities in which they live in order to assist them in reducing attendant harm.
- Establishes quality of individual and community life and well-being—not necessarily cessation of all drug use—as the criteria for successful interventions and policies.



# The Evidence is Clear: Housing First Effectively Ends Homelessness

Hover over pebbles to see study links. Click a pebble to view the study in a separate window.  
 Click on a category in the legend to highlight all pebbles in the category.  
 Please note this is not a comprehensive list of all Housing First Studies.

-  Domestic Studies
-  International Studies
-  Literature Reviews



Evidence Against Housing First

Evidence in Support of Housing First



# Tough Housing Market

- Many communities have vacancy rates below 2%





Housing First is about radical acceptance and unconditional love.

**Aubre T. Jones *LISW-S***  
**Director of Training and Equitable  
Practices**  
**[aubrejones@cohhio.org](mailto:aubrejones@cohhio.org)**



# Feedback

We invite you to provide feedback about today's session here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWEUqcoBUjqTmJHLTvSZgK4KaZk3VuLQAcjyX9g2jXkobsAg/viewform>



A graphic of a spotlight with a grey body and a black lens. A bright yellow beam of light emanates from the lens, pointing towards the bottom right of the slide.

# Spotlight Your District/ESC

We invite you to share about your district to be considered for spotlight.

Districts can be spotlighted in community of practice and/or the COHHIO Course to HOME newsletter.

If you're interested in spotlighting your district, let us know here:  
<https://forms.gle/JPL8548ighpR1kps7>

# Contact Information



COHHIO Course to HOME  
[homelesseducation@cohhio.org](mailto:homelesseducation@cohhio.org)





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