

# *Recovery-Based Housing and Support Services for Adults with Serious Mental Illness*

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# *New Beginnings, Bluegrass*

*Our Mission: Helping improve lives of adults with serious mental illness through quality housing and recovery-based support services.*



- ❖ Founded in 1997
- ❖ Currently provide support services to 106 individuals and own 30 housing units in Fayette County
- ❖ Continuum of housing services
- ❖ Primary sources of funding: CHFS, LFUCG, HUD, Lexington Housing Authority
- ❖ Services based on the Permanent Supportive Housing model with a Housing First approach



# *What is Permanent Supportive Housing?*

- **Permanent:** Not time limited. People may live in their homes as long as they meet the basic obligations of tenancy, such as paying rent on time;
- **Supportive:** People have access to voluntary and flexible support services that they need and want to retain housing; and
- **Housing:** Just like other members of the community, people with SMI need a decent, safe, and affordable place to call home, with the same rights and responsibilities.





# *Key Principles of PSH*

- ❖ Choice of housing
- ❖ Separation of housing and services
- ❖ Decent, safe, and affordable housing
- ❖ Integration
- ❖ Access to housing
- ❖ Flexible, voluntary services



# *Choice of Housing*

- ❖ Maximize client choice, in clients' housing options – and the services they receive.
- ❖ If consumers are “placed” in a setting that does not meet their needs and preferences, they are not likely to succeed.
- ❖ Basic choices include:
  - Who else lives there?
  - What kind of housing is it?
  - Where is the housing?



# *Separation of Housing and Services*

- ❖ PSH is most successful when a functional separation exists between housing matters (rent collection, physical maintenance of the property) and services and supports (case management, for example).
- ❖ Continued tenancy is not subject to any special rules or participation in any particular services.





# *Decent, Safe, and Affordable Housing*

- ❖ Housing is similar to what is available to others at similar income levels in the community.
- ❖ Tenants pay a reasonable amount of their income toward rent and utilities.
- ❖ HUD affordability guidelines are 30% of adjusted income for housing expenses. The reality is that people on SSI often pay 60% to 80% of their income toward their housing.



# *Affordable Housing?*

HUD defines households as “cost burdened” when they must spend more than 30% of their income on housing and “severely cost burdened” when it exceeds 50%.

- Lexington Fair Market Rent for a 1-bedroom unit = \$728.
- 2021 monthly SSI benefit = \$794
- Cost burden of **92%**

People with SMI experience higher rates of housing insecurity and homelessness than the general population. SAMHSA estimates that 6.2% of Kentucky’s adults have an SMI, but they constituted 20% of the individuals experiencing homelessness in Lexington’s 2020 PIT Count.





# *Integration*

- ❖ Tenants live independently in apartments or single-family homes in residential neighborhoods where the majority of housing units are not reserved for people with disabilities.
- ❖ Access to public transportation, grocery stores, parks, and other neighborhood amenities common to all other residents.
- ❖ Natural supports are encouraged.



# *Access to Housing*

- ❖ Eliminate barriers to housing.
- ❖ Research does not show that people with mental illnesses do better in housing if they pass a readiness screen.
- ❖ Access to housing should be restricted to those elements required of any tenant, for example, ability to pay rent.





# *Flexible, Voluntary Services*

- ❖ Services are voluntary for tenants, not staff!
  - Tenant can accept or refuse services, but staff must continue to offer support and use flexible engagement strategies.
  - Service providers must have a “whatever-it-takes” attitude toward helping people stay in the housing.
- ❖ Type, location, intensity, and frequency of services adjust to meet tenants’ changing needs.
- ❖ Recovery-oriented, consumer-driven, and evidence-based services work best.



# *Recovery-Based Services*

Recovery is...

“A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration*





# *One Size DOES NOT Fit All*

Support services are voluntary and individualized to meet what each client wants and needs. A broad array of services are made available. For example:

- Referring and connecting to physical and behavioral healthcare services
- Linking with vocational and employment opportunities
- Assisting with accessing mainstream benefits
- Connecting to rent subsidy programs
- Teaching independent living skills
- Building community connections
- Advocating with landlord



# *Housing First Philosophy*

- ❖ Housing First is an approach to quickly connect individuals to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry.
- ❖ Research supporting this practice confirms that before individuals can thrive, they need safe and stable housing.
- ❖ Following this guidance, our clients are not required to demonstrate sobriety, medication compliance, participation in treatment, or proof of “housing readiness” to be accepted into our program.
- ❖ We are Housing First, but not “Housing Only”.





# *Supportive Housing Works*

- Increases community tenure.
- Reduces the use of costly systems such as use of homeless shelters, prisons and jails, and health care — including emergency room visits, inpatient hospitalizations, and stays in nursing homes or psychiatric hospitals.
- Helps people with disabilities receive more appropriate health care resulting in improved health outcomes.
- Improved quality of life measures.



# *The Bottom Line*

Housing is a basic human right and people with SMI have the right to live in safe, decent, and affordable housing with access to individualized supports.

