Housing Case Management: Overcoming Challenges to Stable Rural Housing
Housing Case Manager’s Role

Empowerment

How many social workers does it take to change a lightbulb?

None. They empower it to change itself!
Challenges in Stable Rural Housing

- Substandard housing and lack of affordable housing
- Background checks increasing among landlords
- Transportation to services
- HIV+/AIDS stigma
Challenges in Stable Rural Housing

Substandard Housing and Lack of Affordable Housing

• Rural areas, especially Indian reservations, have fewer rental housing units that meet/exceed HUD quality standards
• Rental units tend to be older and often not up to code
• Code enforcement is often lacking
• HUD’s rent limits often place severe limitations on choices of housing
Overcoming Substandard and Lack of Affordable Housing

- Develop relationships with landlords and housing assistance providers
- Encourage clients to consider other locations for housing options
- Develop listings of reputable landlords in the client’s area
- Educate clients on housing standards and rent limits
- Utilize other case managers to assist with locating suitable housing for clients
- Utilize your inspectors and/or local government inspectors to encourage landlords to fix substandard housing problems
Challenges: Background Checks Increasing Among Landlords

• Background checks include sex offender, felony convictions, credit score and landlord reference
• Crime free housing units are increasing in number
• Background check standards are more difficult to meet as out of state property management companies move into local communities
Overcoming Background Checks

• Discuss your case management services to prospective landlords with client’s permission
• Maintain a listing of landlords who do not do extensive background checks
• Educate landlords, clients and yourself on fair housing laws
• Refer clients to other programs that target populations with specific needs
Challenges: Transportation to Services

• Physical locations of Ryan White services and HIV+/AIDS health care are severely limited
• Comprehensive mental health care availability limited to few communities
• Housing case management services limited by location
• Client transportation limited by car repairs, no car and/or limits of public transportation
Overcoming Transportation Barriers

- Utilize Ryan White funding
- Utilize other service providers’ programs
- Empower clients to obtain/share transportation with friends/relatives
- Do home visits for case management services
- Use email, toll free phone number and mail for housing case management services
- Assist clients with budgeting/obtaining income for securing transportation
Challenges: HIV+/AIDS Stigma

• Among service providers
• Among employers
• Among landlords
Overcoming HIV+/AIDS Stigma

- Utilize Ryan White case managers and/or nurse case manager
- Focus and develop trust and credibility with HIV+/AIDS clients
- Encourage clients not to reveal their medical issues to landlords and protect clients privacy with landlord interactions
Closing Comments

• Evaluate your methods
• Obtain feedback from clients, colleagues and supervisor
• Pursue continuing education with passion
“As we go about our daily work of helping people take steps to improve their lives and obtain/maintain stable housing, let us remember the importance of making a human connection. We are not about “fixing” people, but rather connecting with them as fellow human beings, as fragile and flawed and in need of love as we are.

Respect for human dignity and belief in the potential of each individual are the keys that unlock the door to the heart.”

-Author Unknown