

Housing First for Formerly Incarcerated People

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Goals

1

Consider common ground between Housing First and supervision requirements for formerly incarcerated people

2

Explore how to provide Housing First programs to formerly incarcerated people

3

Learn from peers about how to work across systems to serve formerly incarcerated people

Housing First, supervision, and the common ground between them

Benefits of Housing First

- Evidence-based
 - Houses people faster
 - Keeps more people stably housed
- Improves health outcomes
- Decreases use of services
- Saves money for participants, providers, and communities


Impacts of the criminal legal system (CLS)

- If people don't have stable housing, courts are less likely to:
 - Divert them from jail/prison
 - Grant them bail
 - Grant them parole
- 5 million formerly incarcerated people¹
 - 600,000 people return to communities from prison every year
 - Carceral trauma: physical injury, emotional distress, and/or psychological damage from the severe stress of incarceration


¹The Prison Policy Initiative, *Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people* (2018).

What happens when people return to communities?

Community Supervision: a person lives in the community under supervision of a **parole** or **probation** department



Parole: conditional release from incarceration after serving a portion of a jail sentence



Probation: a sentence served in the community in place of or following a jail sentence

What happens when people return to communities?

- Common supervision conditions:
 - Drug testing and/or mandated treatment programs
 - Restrictions on movement and/or location monitoring
 - Restrictions on housing/living arrangements
 - Regular meetings with supervision officers
 - Supervision officers can contact employer
- Much more likely to have violations and re-arrest without stable housing

Housing First and the CLS

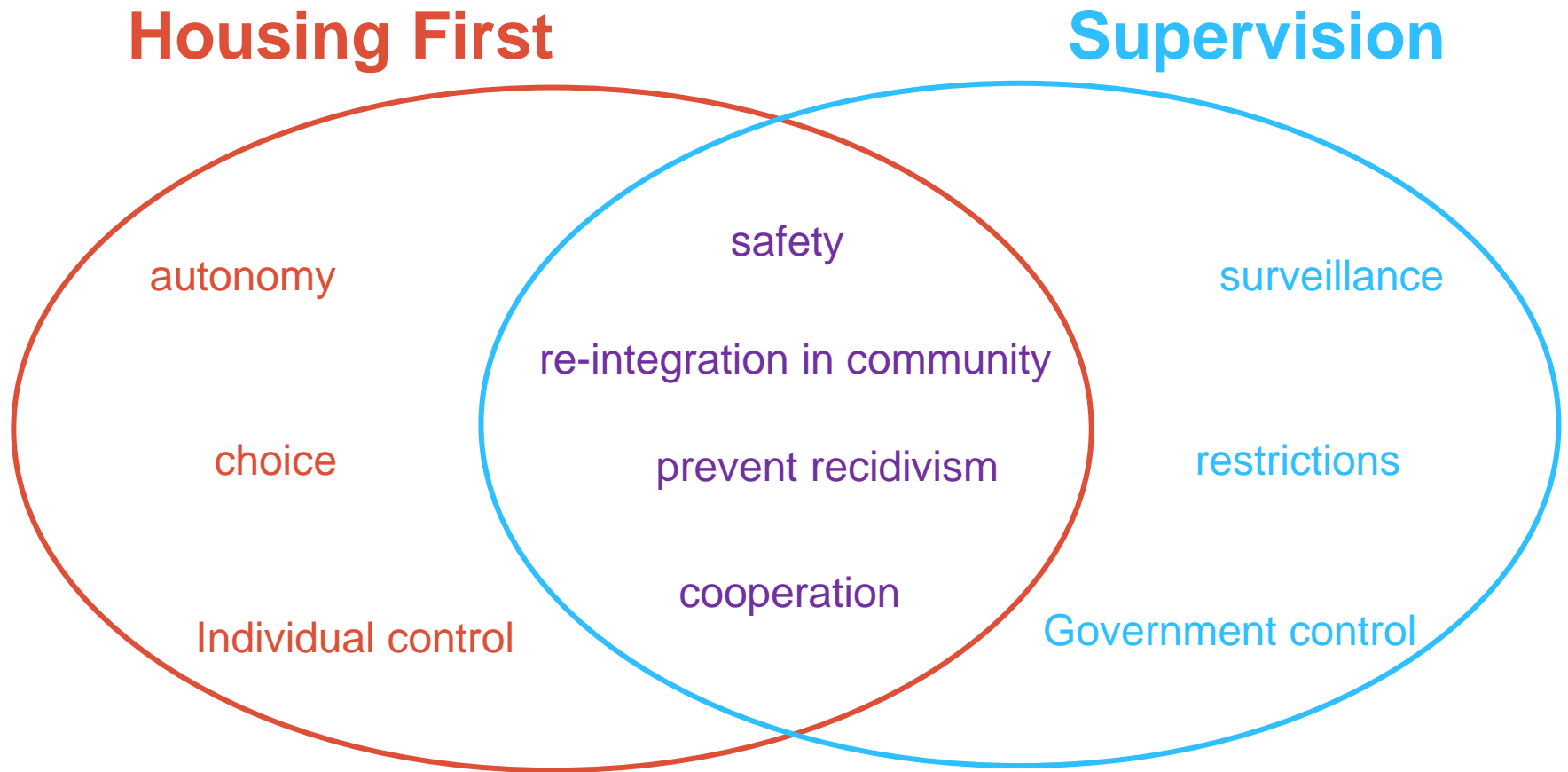
- Housing First reduces contact with the CLS
 - Reduces arrests¹
 - Reduces nights in jail¹
 - Reduces municipal citations²
- Housing First does not increase drug and alcohol use³

¹M. Lori Thomas et al., UNC Charlotte, *Moore Place Permanent Supportive Housing Evaluation Study Final Report* (2015).

²Housing First Milwaukee.

³Deborah K. Padgett et al., *Housing First Services for People Who Are Homeless with Co-occurring Serious Mental Illness and Substance Abuse*, 16:1 *Research on Social Work Practice* 74 (2006).

Common ground between Housing First and supervision



Why should we care?

Who benefits most from Housing First?

- People with complex needs
- People turned away from other options
- People least likely to be able to obtain housing/services on their own

Many formerly incarcerated people fit this profile



There's enormous opportunity to help by providing Housing First programs for these populations

Homelessness and incarceration are interrelated issues

Homelessness is a risk factor for incarceration

- Unsheltered people are **10 times more likely** to have police contact than sheltered people¹
- **15%** of formerly incarcerated people experience homelessness in the year before their incarceration²

Criminal history is a barrier to housing

- People who have been incarcerated once are **7 times more likely** to experience homelessness than the general population³
- People who have been incarcerated more than once are **13 times more likely** to experience homelessness than the general population³

Problems are even more extreme for populations that are already vulnerable (women, people of color, LGBTQIA)

Homelessness and incarceration create a cycle



How can we use this common ground?

- Homebase's Criminal Legal System Initiative
 - Cross-sector workshops and fostering partnerships
 - Visioning, planning, troubleshooting, and implementation
 - Curated tools and resources
 - Peer-to-peer learning and community building
- Spent 6 months researching organizations who are addressing the issue from multiple angles with creative solutions
 - Interviewed dozens of staff and participants
- Valuable to assess what effective programs have done and learned

Community Highlights

Housing First programs that work with people under supervision

Community Care Coordination Program (C3)

Location

San Diego, CA

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

Community Care Coordination Program (C3)

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

People with severe mental illness exiting local jails without stable housing

Community Care Coordination Program (C3)

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Partnership between:
 - Sheriff's Department
 - Probation Department
 - Public Defender's Office
 - District Attorney's Office
 - City Attorney's Office
 - Representatives of the County of San Diego's Public Safety Group

Community Care Coordination Program (C3)

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Uses in-reach to build relationships with participants and CLS entities
- Referrals are made through Sheriff's discharge planners and Public Defender's mental health clinicians
- Staff are always present at hearings, time of release, meetings with providers, medical appointments, and supervision check-ins
- 12 months of permanent housing and supportive services immediately upon release
 - option for extension to ensure connection to services and appropriate level of care

Community Care Coordination Program (C3)

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- 91% of participants experienced reduced contact with CLS compared to their previous 12 months
- 78% reduction in number of days participants spend in custody

Community Care Coordination Program (C3)

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Get all stakeholders at the table
- Emphasize shared goals across partner entities
- Showing up reliably and consistently builds trust
 - Better relationships with participants
 - Relationships with individual supervision officers facilitates better advocacy
 - CLS partners make decisions knowing the program will provide quality support

Interfaith Shelter Network

Location

Santa Rosa, CA

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

Interfaith Shelter Network

Location

People who have been incarcerated in a California state prison

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

Interfaith Shelter Network

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Transitional housing and services to people experiencing homelessness
- Recognized the intersection between homelessness and incarceration and started serving people who have been incarcerated

Interfaith Shelter Network

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Rapid Rehousing: promote the healing needed after incarceration
 - Having enough time in the program is key
 - Housing for 12 months with free psychotherapy and landlord liaison support for life
- Transitional Housing: Partnership with probation
 - Probation
 - Sex offense registry
 - Local drug court
 - People pre-trial with serious mental illness

Interfaith Shelter Network

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Rapid Rehousing has served 190 households since opening in 2019
- Transitional Housing serves 700-900 people per year across 7 locations

Interfaith Shelter Network

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Spend time fostering cross-system partnerships
 - IFSN and probation attend each other's meetings
 - Build relationships with landlords and public housing authorities
- Have a no secrets policy with participants
 - Foster open communication
 - Let participants decide where they want to conduct screenings required for supervision
 - Facilitate reporting if participants violate supervision requirements
- Don't remove anyone from the program

Home Free

Location

San Francisco, CA

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

Home Free

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

Female survivors of domestic violence who have served long prison sentences in California state prison for being criminalized for survival actions

Home Free

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- 2012 state law allowed parole board to consider the role of domestic violence in a person's commission of crimes
- Many survivors were released after 10+ years of incarceration and needed support
- Recognized the need for housing that isn't focused on substance use disorders
 - Not everyone needs it
 - Can feel carceral and trigger survivors

Home Free

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Focus is on safe, non-carceral, healing housing
 - Individualized plans and case management
 - Housing is free with no time limit
- Referrals through in-reach and word-of-mouth
- Clear delineation of roles between program staff and supervision
 - Staff are not enforcement officers
 - Establishes trust with participants

Home Free

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Design and construction have received national recognition
- Plans to open a location in Los Angeles

Home Free

Location

Population served

How it started

How it works

Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Be aware of the landscape
 - Laws can change and create new populations that need care
 - What needs are not being met elsewhere?
- Populations have unique needs – lead with trauma-informed care
- Negotiate with supervision entities to make sure program staff will not administer or manage supervision requirements
 - Need a clear understanding between staff, supervision, and participants



Key Lessons Learned

Get all stakeholders at the table



- During program design, implementation, and evaluation
- Establish a cross-system partners workgroup to streamline communication and cooperation
- Emphasize shared goals

Build cross-system relationships



- Consistently showing up builds trust with CLS entities and those who run them
- Long-term engagement with housing and service providers
- Knowledge building: look for opportunities for cross-system information exchange like meetings, conferences, trainings, and convenings

Clearly communicate roles to supervision



- Who is responsible for what?
- Be flexible and creative – solutions may differ for organizations based on their relationships and populations served
- Participants can see the program is committed to their safety, autonomy, and dignity

Commit to understanding carceral trauma



- Lead with trauma-informed care
 - Give staff cultural responsiveness training to address needs of formerly incarcerated people
 - Consider the barriers to housing created by carceral trauma
 - Hire staff with lived experience of incarceration
- Give participants enough time in your program to support healing
- Have a no secrets policy with participants

We believe that everyone



housing providers



supervision



advocates



legal partners

has the potential to serve these populations effectively

THANK YOU!

Learn more about us:

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Contact us:

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More resources from Homebase's Criminal Legal System Initiative

- Link/screenshot of Google Report
- Convening info/registration link

Discussion
