Housing First Evaluation: Realities of Collecting and Disseminating Outcome Data

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Learning Objectives

- Identify basic methods and approaches to evaluating a Housing First program
- Discuss how partners can be involved in each stage of the evaluation process
- Identify evaluation successes and lessons learned

Paths to Recovery Project
Cincinnati, Ohio

Project Partners

- Mental Health
  - Greater Cincinnati Behavioral

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services
Our Work is Life Changing

- Substance Abuse
  - Alcoholism Council
- Housing
  - OTRCH

Over-the-Rhine Community Housing

- Evaluation
  - SARDI – Wright State University

Overview

By the numbers

92 Admissions to date

73 current units of housing

25 Congregate units (JHH)

48 Scattered-site units

Target Population

Chronically homeless

Chronic Public Inebriates

- Multiple arrests
- Failed Treatment Hx
- Non-service connected
- Currently using
- Currently homeless

Official Start Date: October 2009

Team and Services

- 5 FTE's
- Program Manager
- Counselor
- Two Care Managers
- Peer Specialist
- Data person

Team

- Housing Support
- Care Management
- Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Groups
- Peer Mentoring

Services

Motivation

- Need for a response to the long-term shelter stays
  - Affectionately known as the “keep alives”

- Multiple sites reviewed for possible construction
- Public dissent
  - Corporate community disapproved of the model
  - Project delays and stoppage

Project History

2006

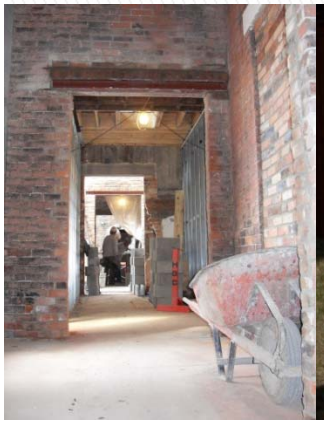
- Community Task Force
- InterAct for Health
- HUD SSH Funds Awarded

2007

- <u>Housing & Developers</u>
  - 3CDC
  - OTRCH
- Congregate site located

2008

- <u>Site Financing</u>
- HUD SHP
- Federal Home Loan Bank
- City HOME funds,
- Local foundations



2009

- SAMHSA Grant
- Services Agencies
- Design & Implementation

2010

- First Client Housed
- Jimmy Heath House Opened Dec 2010

Partnerships

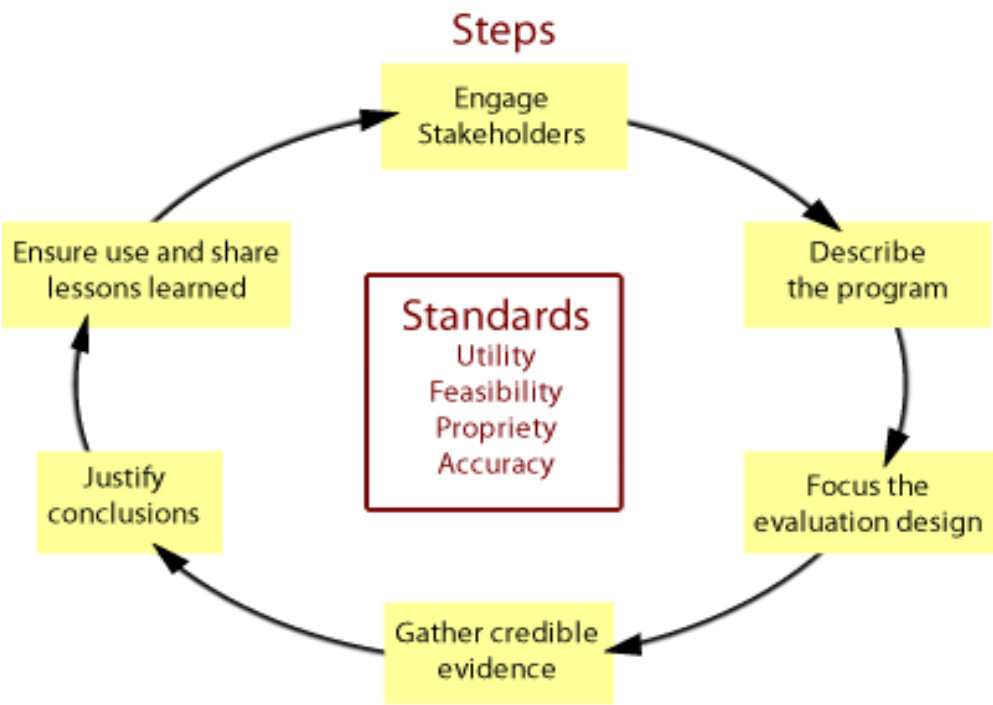
- Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Board, Cincinnati Police, Homeless Outreach teams, Hospitals, Continuum of Care Administrator, Area Religious Coalition, Homeless individuals, Hospital, Treatment provider, County Jail, HUD, Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, SAMHSA, Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services, Alcoholism Council, SARDI-Wright State, Local Drop Inn Shelter, Business Community, Legal Aid, Freestore Foodbank, Community Neighbors

- Paths to Recovery Advisory Board
- Jimmy Heath House Advisory Board
- Good Neighbor Committee
- Implementation Committee
- Selection Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Resident Council

Evaluation

What is Evaluation?

- A systematic way to improve and account for public health actions[1]



Evaluation Design

- Multiple methods and approaches to evaluation work
- Methods:
  - Quantitative methods (e.g., survey research)
  - Qualitative methods (e.g., focus groups)
- Approaches:

- Design influenced by multiple factors

Paths to Recovery Evaluation

- Blends traditional and participatory approaches using quantitative and qualitative methods

- Why traditional approach?
  - Funder requirements: GPRA & Cross-site evaluation
  - Resources

- Why participatory approach?
  - Utility: Examined issues relevant to stakeholders

  - Credibility: Invited multiple stakeholders to provide feedback on the evaluation, even those who did not support a harm reduction model

  - Sustainability: The more stakeholders involved, the more likely evaluation findings and recommendations will be used

Key Steps in P2R Evaluation

1. Planning and design of the evaluation
2. Gathering and analyzing data
3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations
4. Disseminating findings

1. Planning & Design of Evaluation

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- Involve key stakeholders early in the planning & design process
  - Housing
  - Substance abuse
  - Behavioral health
  - Local foundation

1. Planning & Design of Evaluation

- Allow stakeholders to actively participate in the planning & design process
  - Evaluation questions
  - Methods
  - Measures

1. Planning & Design of Evaluation

- Evaluation Goal
  - To monitor the implementation of a Housing First project with chronically homeless public inebriates in Hamilton County, Ohio and assess its impact on key project outcomes.

1. Planning & Design of Evaluation

- ***Process evaluation:*** Focuses on how a program operates and provides a framework for understanding outcome data
  - Monitor program implementation
  - Document service provision
  - Assess client experiences

1. Planning & Design of Evaluation

- ***Outcome evaluation:*** Measures program effects in the population of focus
  - Housing retention
  - Alcohol use
  - Mental health
  - Criminal justice activity

2. Gathering & Analyzing Data

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- Mixed methods data collection
  - Surveys
  - Service records
  - Focus groups
  - Administrative data

2. Gathering & Analyzing Data

- Data Analysis
  - Conducted by the evaluator, but shared with stakeholders

3. Identifying Evaluation Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

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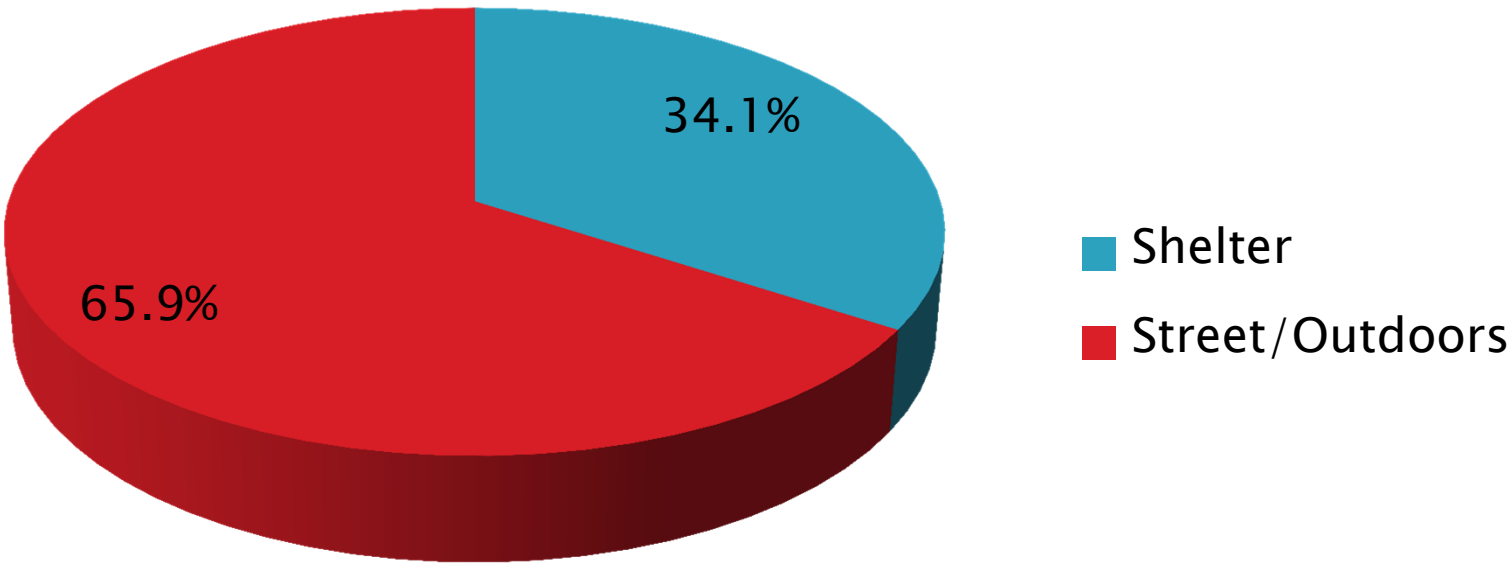
- **Demographical overview of clients (N=91)**
  - 91.2% male
  - 52.7% African American / 45.1% Caucasian
  - Average age = 50.11 years
  - 11.0% Veterans
  - 60.4% completed 12th grade
  - 97.8% unemployed

3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

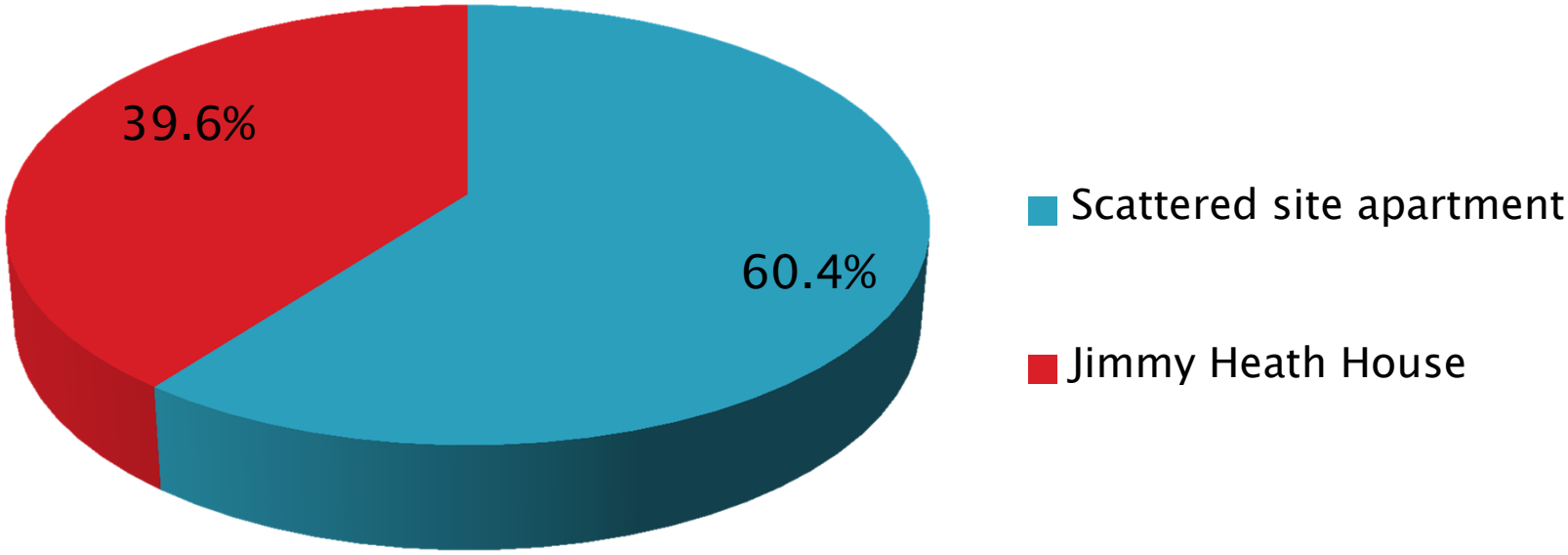
- Housing Retention



3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

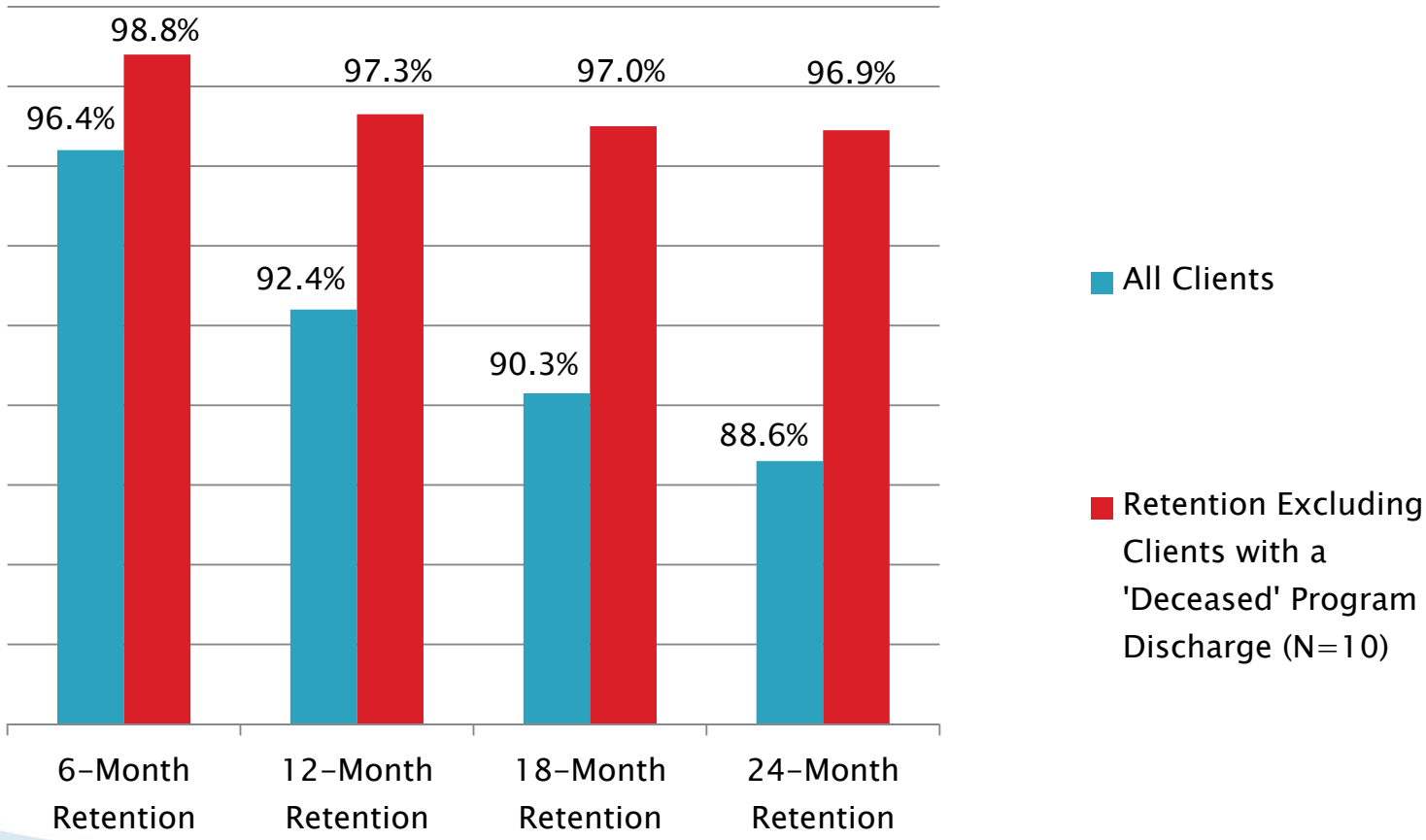
- Housing Retention

Living situation after Paths to Recovery



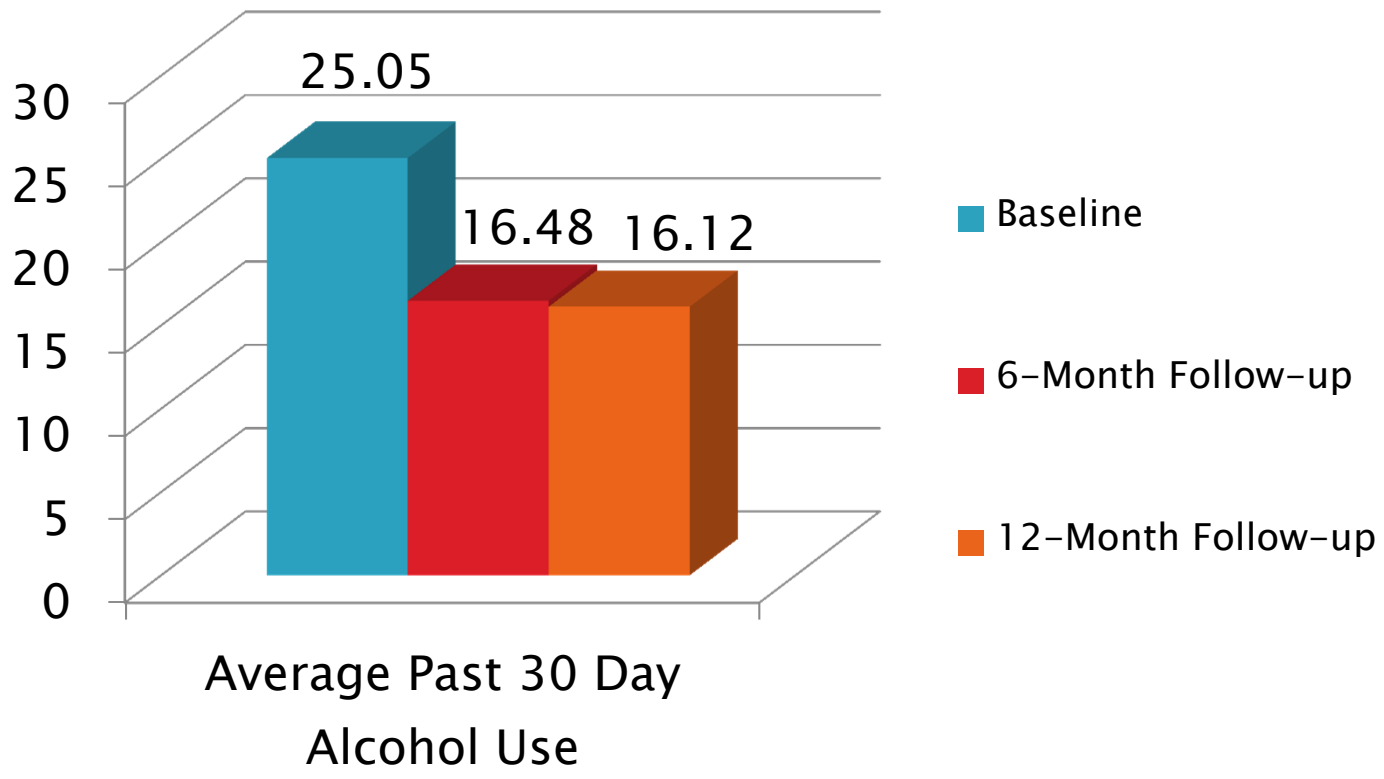
3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Housing Retention



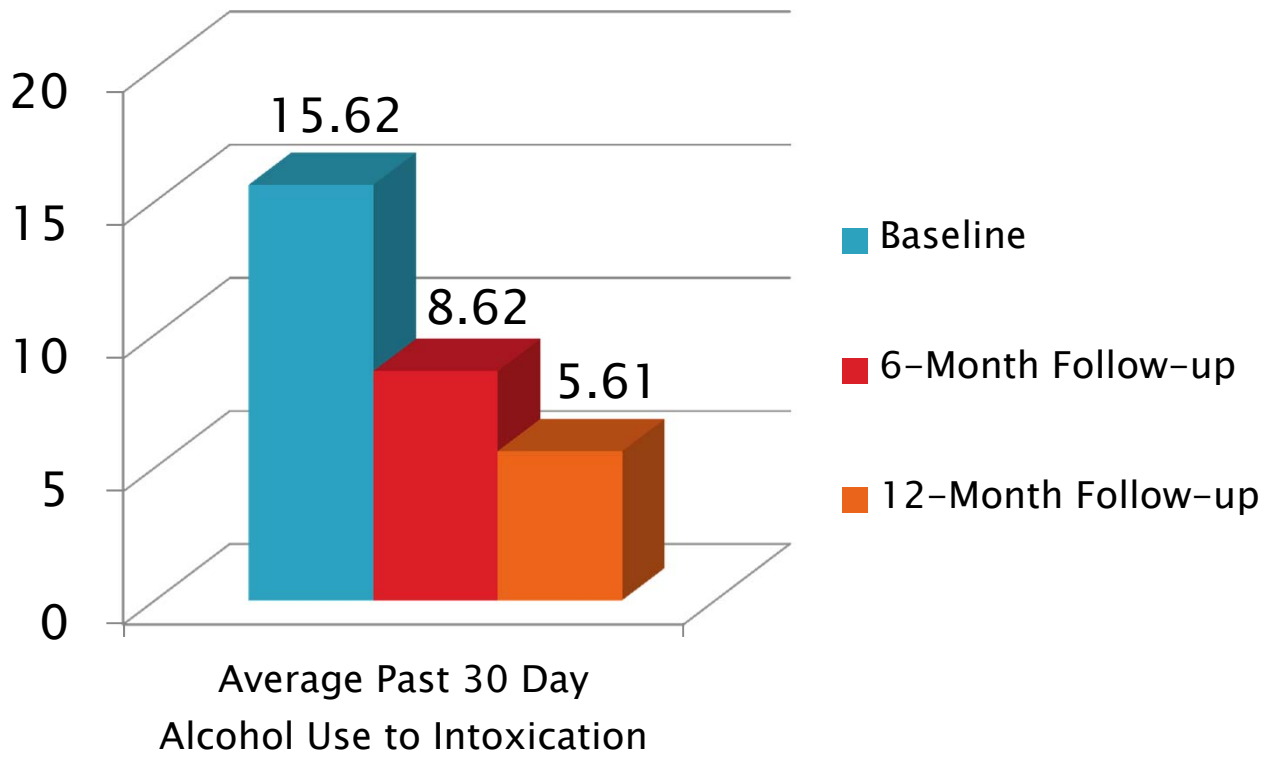
3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Past 30 Day Alcohol Use



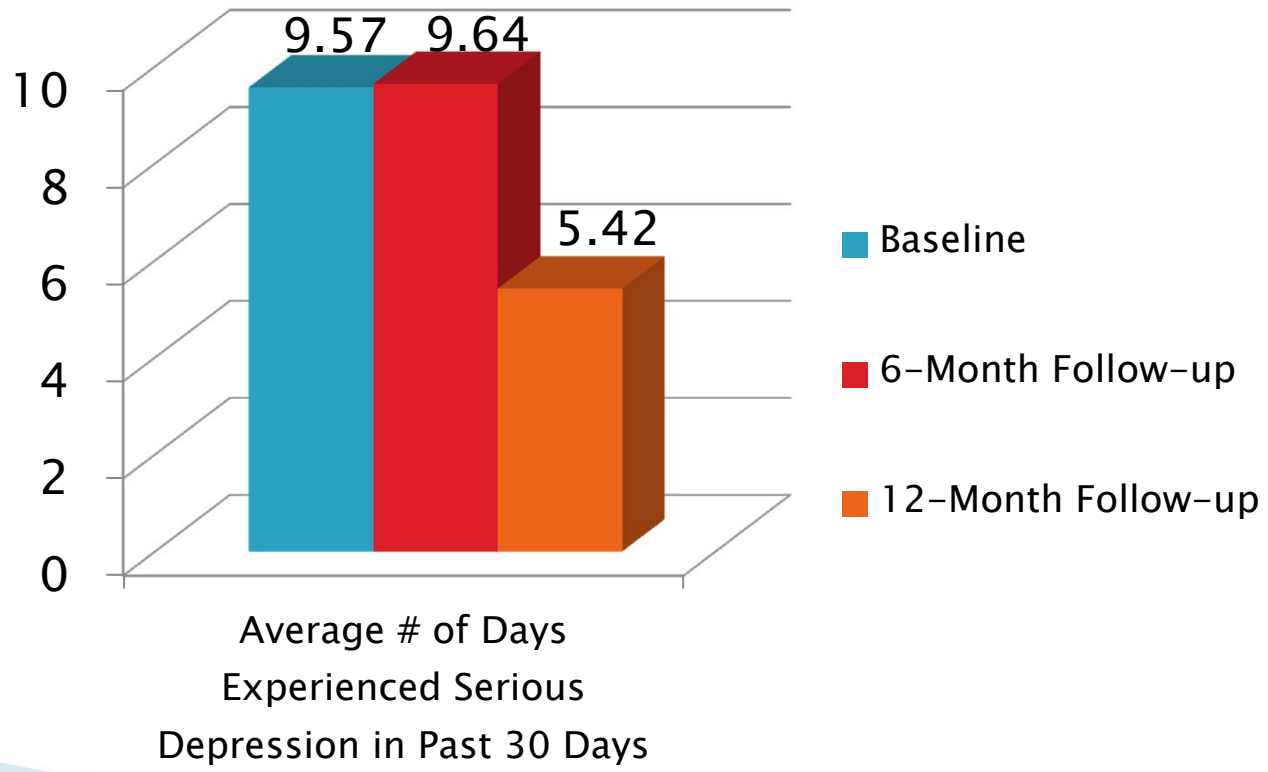
3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Past 30 Day Alcohol Use to Intoxication



3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Mental Health: Past 30 Day Depression



3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Criminal Justice Activity
  - Arrest and confinement data obtained from the Hamilton County Clerk of Courts for 57 clients
  - Criminal justice data obtained for the 24-month period before and after housing placement

3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Criminal Justice Activity
  - 60% reduction in arrests between the pre- and post-housing periods

Time Period	# of Arrests	% of Total Arrests
Pre-housing period	563	71.2%
Post-housing period	228	28.8%
Total	791	100%

3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Criminal Justice Activity
  - Statistically significant reduction in arrests

	Pre-housing period	Post-housing period	Level of significance
Average # of arrests	9.88	4.00	.000

3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Criminal Justice Activity
  - 44% reduction in jail days between the pre- and post-housing periods
  - 642 fewer jail days in the post-housing period

Time Period	# Days Confined	% of Total Confinement
Pre-housing period	1456	64.1%
Post-housing period	814	35.9%
Total	2270	100%

3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Criminal Justice Activity
  - No statistically significant reduction in jail days

	Pre-housing period	Post-housing period	Level of significance
Average # of days confined	25.54	14.28	.066

3. Identifying evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

- Service dosage & alcohol use
  - Examined the relationship between service dosage and changes in alcohol and mental health outcomes
  - Clients with greater baseline alcohol use and more individual counseling sessions had reduced alcohol consumption between baseline & 6-month follow-up ($F = 15.98$, $p = .000$)
  - Strong regression – 29.7% of the change in alcohol use explained by the model

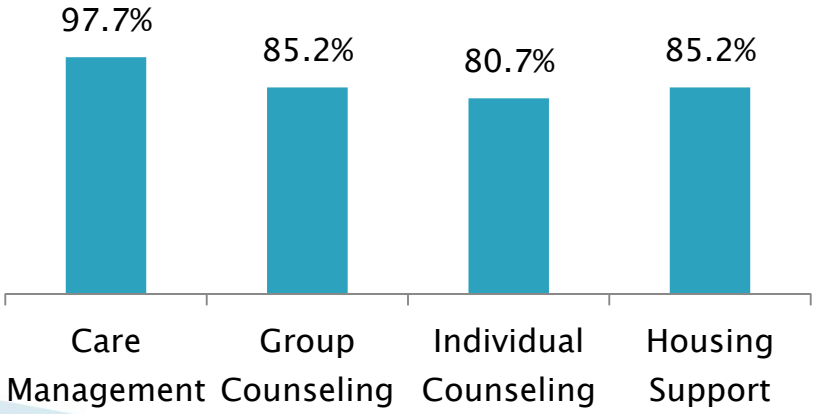
4. Disseminating Findings

4. Disseminating Findings

- <u>How have data been used?</u>
  - Inform service delivery
  - Provide regular program updates to Paths to Recovery and Jimmy Heath House advisory boards
  - Obtain continued funding from local Continuum of Care
  - Billing for services
  - Positive public relations
  - Grant applications
  - Funder reports
  - Conferences & publications

Program Successes

- Excellent housing retention
- Sustained reductions in alcohol use
- Reduced criminal justice activity
- Low staff turnover
- Strong, continued partnerships
- Active participation in services



Lessons Learned

- Data collection
  - Participant burden
  - Utility of self-report data
- Challenges with assessing fidelity
  - Must balance the need for fidelity assessment with evaluation resources
- Start getting administrative/cost data from the beginning – relationships really matter here!
- Ethnographic study
- Employment is a missing link – key to maintaining housing retention in the long run

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1999). Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 48(RR11), 1-40.

Other Resources

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating Your Program.* HHS Pub. No. SMA-10-4509, Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.

2. Burt, M.A. (2004). *The Do-It-Yourself Cost-Study Guide. Assessing Public Costs Before and After Permanent Supportive Housing: A Guide for State and Local Jurisdictions.* Corporation for Supportive Housing.