

# Training for Fidelity

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## Housing First Charlotte-Mecklenburg Research & Evaluation Project

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In Memory of  
John Yaeger



# Research Team

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# Overview

- Housing First Charlotte-Mecklenburg (HFCM)
- HFCM Research & Evaluation Study
- HFCM Training Strategy Team
- Initial Focus Group Findings
- Training Phase 1
- Training Phase 2
- Recent Focus Group Findings
- Discussion





# HOUSING FIRST

*Charlotte–Mecklenburg*

*Ending Chronic Homelessness in 2016*

## Implementation Strategies:

1. Registry
2. Outreach
3. PSH Housing Units
4. Coordinate Moves
5. Housing First Training
6. Community Engagement
7. Leadership and Staffing
8. Evaluation



## Housing First Fidelity Criteria:

- Maximize Choice in Housing
- Separate Housing from Service Compliance
- Ensure Voluntary & Person-Centered Services
- Provide a Range of Necessary Services
- Maintain a Program Structure to Support Above



End Chronic Homelessness



**6.3 years**  
average length of  
time homeless



**56**  
reported serving in  
the military



**46**  
average age



gender breakdown  
**433 men**  
**82 women**  
**1 transgender**

Registry completed  
January 29 - 31, 2015



**516**

# of chronically homeless  
individuals met during the  
3-day registry effort

### Disabling conditions

# of people who identified  
mental health issues:  
**415**  
  
# of people who identified  
physical health issues:  
**313**



# of people who identified  
substance abuse issues:  
**364**

# of people who identified all three:  
(mental, substance abuse  
and physical abuse)  
**77**

### Where people sleep most often

**Outside**



(street/camps/parks)

**239**

**Shelter**



**182**

**Places unfit for  
human habitation**



(abandoned buildings,  
storage units, stairwells)

**76**

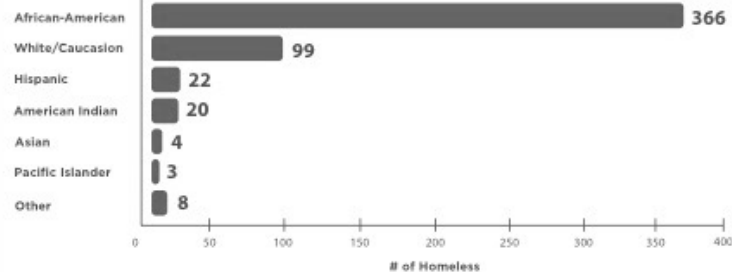
**Other**



**7**

\* 12 individuals did not answer this question

### Chronic Homelessness by race/ethnicity



# Research Questions

## Process Evaluation (n=119)

- Implemented as intended?
- Who was served? How were services delivered?
- Impact of project structure and management?
- Nature and role of collaboration?
- Problems encountered? How were they addressed?

## Outcomes Evaluation (n=339)

- Improved housing, health, mental health, and social outcomes?
- Housing first PSH compared to homeless adults housed in non-housing first programs or usual services?
- How do consumers describe their experience before and after being housed?

## Services Utilization (n=334)

- Impact on utilization of area health and human services?
- Housing first PSH compared to homeless adults housed in non-housing first programs or usual services?
- Cost savings or efficiencies using the housing first PSH?





# Training Strategy Team

- Composition – Mecklenburg County, Urban Ministry Center, UNC Charlotte
- Goal – Identify training needs
- Goal – Develop and implement training plan





## Initial Focus Groups

- How do you define housing first?
- What does it look like in your agency?
- What's working about housing first in your agency?
- What barriers does your organization face implementing housing first?



# Initial Focus Group Findings

- Housing & Landlord Barriers
- Public Perception Barriers
- Organizational Barriers
- Staff Barriers
  - Learning Curve
  - Attitude
  - Judgment
  - Training

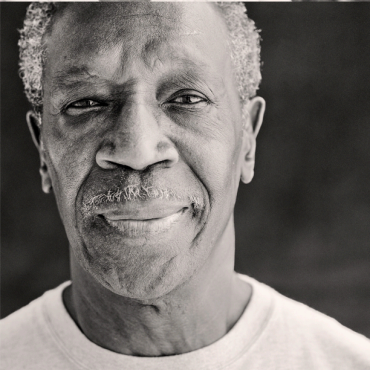


## Staff Barriers – Learning Curve

# We have a lot to learn!



*I think a lot of times, if staff doesn't really understand a program or, it's always difficult when it's a new transition. And it's just learning. And I think that's all it really it's. It's just really learning. If you've never worked with individuals who were homeless or, if you've never worked in the housing field. I think it just takes some time to kinda learn that whole process or program. [3:63]*





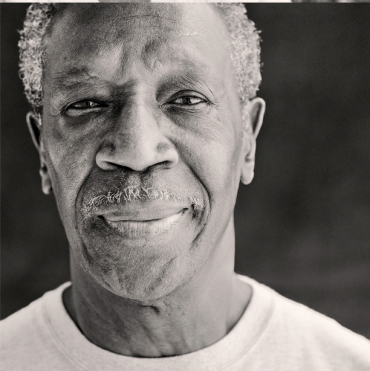


## Staff Barriers – Attitudes

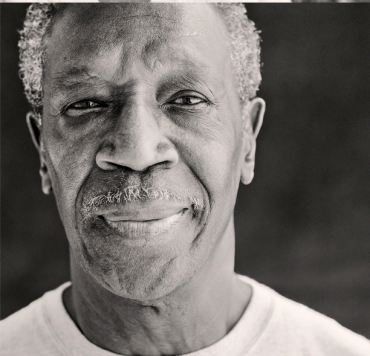
# Letting Go of My Way



*I think when you get set in your ways in doing some things a certain way and you're proving "MY WAY WORKS!" then why try something different? ...And like, the change is so drastic...like housing first is so different from transitional housing. So, I think there's resistance to...well... what was the middle ground? Like where can we meet in the middle of transitional housing and housing first? [5:27]*





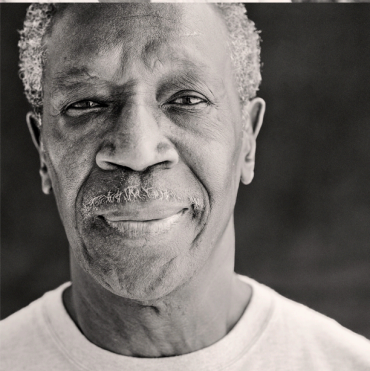


## Staff Barriers – Judgment

# Letting go of moral judgments

*... maybe just some judgment, like maybe someone's not as deserving of housing. If they're coming in with actively using or something like that or not working, because they're not able to find a job because of substance abuse. So maybe some, some judgment. A lot of us are trained not to show that. But it can be difference, maybe a perception of not as deserving, or something... [5:25]*





## Staff Barriers – Professional Training

# Clash of perceptions

*There's this philosophy – what I notice and what I see, is that we have all these institutions - DSS has one set of social workers having different 'investigate- report', when you cross transfer to a "take people where they are"....uh!! that's a clash! You can't take people where they are if I'm trained and programmed to investigate and report. [1:61]*





# Training Plan Evolution

## Phase 1 - Kickoff

- Tsemberis Training Kickoff
- Fidelity Visits
- Monthly Phone Calls

## Phase 2 – Training Consortium

- Dedicated Staff
- Train-the-Trainer
- Housing First 101
- Case Review Calls





## Phase 1 – Kickoff

- Full Day Conference
- CEUs for Social Workers
- PSH, RRH, and Shelter Staff
- Context for Housing First -  
Org and Structural v Individual
- Fidelity Criteria
- Questions & Case Review





## Phase 1 – Fidelity Visits

- 6 PSH Programs
- Fidelity Team
- Initial Program Surveys
- 5 Modified Fidelity Visits
- 1 Full Fidelity Visit
- Concluding gathering to discuss ongoing training



## Phase 1 – Monthly Phone Calls

- Case staffing
- Facilitated locally
- Case review led by Sam
- Development of Local Leaders



## Phase 2 – Training Consortium

- \*\*Dedicated staff\*\*
- Planning for sustainability
- Recruited Housing First Leaders & Champions
- Initial Gathering & Buy-In
- Regular Meetings to Develop Curriculum
- Bi-Monthly Phone Calls with Sam





## Phase 2 – Housing First 101

- \*\*Co-Development\*\*
- Based on Fidelity Criteria
- Case Development
- Lived Experience Panel
- Pilot Testing with Feedback Surveys
- 2-3 Annual Trainings





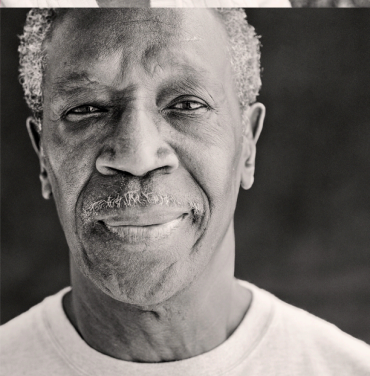
## Phase 2 – Case Staffing Calls

- Led by pairs
- Initially local leaders supported Sam on calls
- Eventually Sam supported local leaders on calls
- After a year, local trainers took over calls



## What We're Learning

- Focus Groups with Front Line Workers (2017)
- How would you describe your work as a direct service provider?
- What has been most challenging since the shift to housing first?



## What's Working

- Housing Choice
- Housing as a Right
- Separation of Housing & Services
- Harm Reduction
- Person-Centered Approach



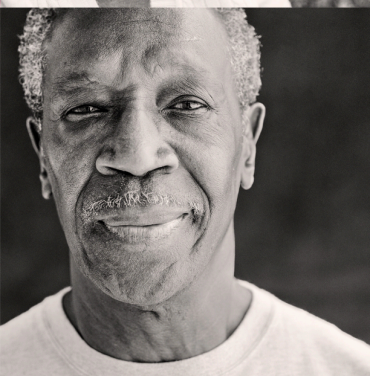


## What's Working

*"I met him where he was, I spoke the language that he spoke, but yet still I did my job, and that was being very flexible. You know, sometimes we come with what it should be, and it's not. Everyone doesn't speak to that same rhythm and you have to change your tune and change yourself to make it work."*

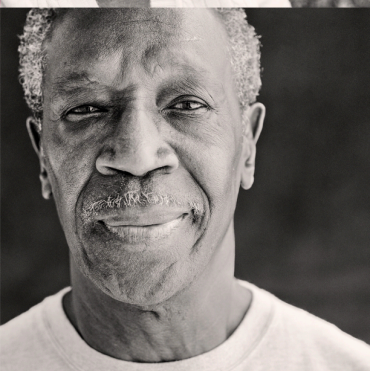






# Potential Threats to Fidelity

- Service Array
- Program Structure
- Varying Understandings of Housing First
- Housing Context



## Threats – Service Array

“We need a nurse to travel with us as a partner...We need a psych[iatrist] that can do house calls as well. We need a nutritionist that can work with people that have, that are diabetic” [10].

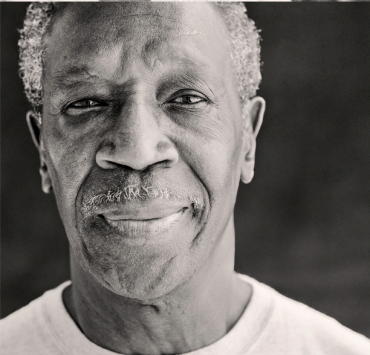


## Threats – Program Structure

“We are not 24/7” [10].



“We do not [have peer support], but I really wish we did. Let’s put it that way...” [10].



“I know it definitely sounds different coming from us, because we can tell them, here, you know, been there, did that, about 15 years ago, and I got the t-shirt for it” [7].







## Threats – Program Structure

“I’m not a fan of Housing First, I’ll say that. I don’t feel like it works. Being honest. I can see we take clients where they are. But then when you bring them in, there needs to be some parameters in place so they maintain their housing. We’re seeing them lose their housing. And that’s not the goal of this program. And we don’t have the funding to keep moving them from place to place. So I’m not a fan of it” [4].





## Threats – Housing Context

“But what I’ve seen...is that the community is saturated in trying to get these people housed, and a lot of landlords are tired of stuff that they’ve been through with our clients, that even though we’re kind of taking this housing first approach, and it’s shown to work, it doesn’t matter anymore, because of that history that Charlotte has with trying to house our Section 8, and just our people in general on that lower income scale” [5].

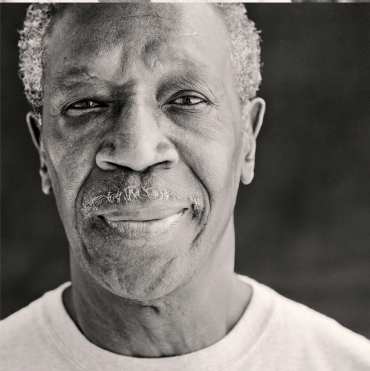




## Next Steps

- Continue Training
- Conclude Research
- Present Recommendations
  - Fidelity Gaps
  - Definition & Framing of Housing First
  - Connect to the Charlotte Context





# Thank you

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