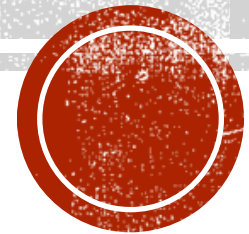


NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Hurdles in Telling the Housing First Story





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WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

When program participants share their story there is a tendency for them to relapse, experience intense mental health episodes, or to generally distance themselves. This makes sharing the purpose and impact of Housing First initiatives difficult and has led to proactive and preventative measures to address this nuanced need.



DISCLAIMER

- This is an important topic for folks practicing Housing First to be open about and address. We are realistically looking at what makes this model difficult and how we, as the people using and developing the model, can support program participants.
- By being here you are agreeing to be play a positive role in this conversation.
- Nothing is definitive. Our world is a rich and beautiful tapestry of greys. There are exceptions to everything – that's what makes some events and persons exceptional. We each have a story about a program participant who soared above and beyond all odds and overcame no matter what anyone said... that's not who we are talking about today. We are going to collectively focus on serving the 99% of people in desperate need of our respective programs.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Develop an understanding of this nuanced need through case study examples and surveyed data from housing first service providers
- Discuss reality based challenges in sharing the impact of the housing first model while acknowledging the humanity of the population served and the hurdles agencies must overcome internally
- Understand the episodic nature of where complex humans and systems intersect to highlight the positive impacts of housing first through the orbital model of participant need and program resources
- Share insights and steps to take when supporting program participants through small and large group discussion while focusing on the need to provide safe spaces, comprehensive services, and realistic interventions for program participants



- Housing – many individuals with a serious mental health issue live in group and/or supervised housing, or on their own in impoverished areas
- Employment – 85% of individuals with a serious mental health issue remain unemployed, developing a lifetime dependence on public support
- Social Networks – individuals with a serious mental health issue report 50% less people in their social networks, and of that number half are paid professionals
- Parenting – parents with a serious mental health issue are 2.8 times more likely to lose custody of their children
- Civic Life – more than half of US states restrict parenting and voting rights of individuals with a serious mental health issue

REALITY BASED CHALLENGES

What are some things our people are up against?

These are examples we can put numbers to. What about factors that are seemingly unmeasurable?



A couple short case study handouts to review and discuss

- **Larry**

“I’m good now. I’m going to leave the program because I don’t need it anymore. I’m going to graduate!”

- **Vern**

“I’m like you. I work hard and, just like everyone else, I want to go home and have a beer. I’m going to be fine. I learned my lesson and it’ll be different this time.”

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN

At different times we have tapped successful participants to share their story with outside agencies or funders in an attempt to tell our Housing First story. It seems like this leads to a fuse being lit.



Use your phone or computer to answer some survey questions using this link:

<http://etc.ch/CDUd>



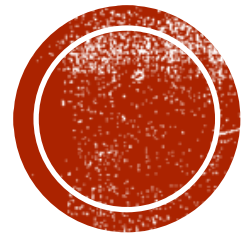
1. Have you noticed program participants tending to struggle after sharing their story?
2. Is this something you or your agency has discussed internally?
3. As an organization we are developing or have developed steps to address this issue.



HAVE YOU SEEN SOMETHING SIMILAR?

Your experience may be different, but are you tracking with some of these examples and can you, generally, agree this is an issue to unpack together?





WHAT DO WE THINK?

Results of first three questions in survey.

**We've answered a quick survey, but what about
a few stories?**

**Can we get two or three people to share brief examples of what
they have seen?**

WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN

**Let's take some time and
share if you've seen
anything like this before?
Please be mindful of time.**



SERVICES ARE NOT IN A VACUUM

We have the privilege of serving complex people with rich life experiences interacting with complex agencies that are trying to provide the best services possible. Sometimes we stick it. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes it's on us and sometimes it's on the program participant. Sometimes it's on the elected official or unelected bureaucrat.

Things would be easier if everyone did what I, you, or whoever said...



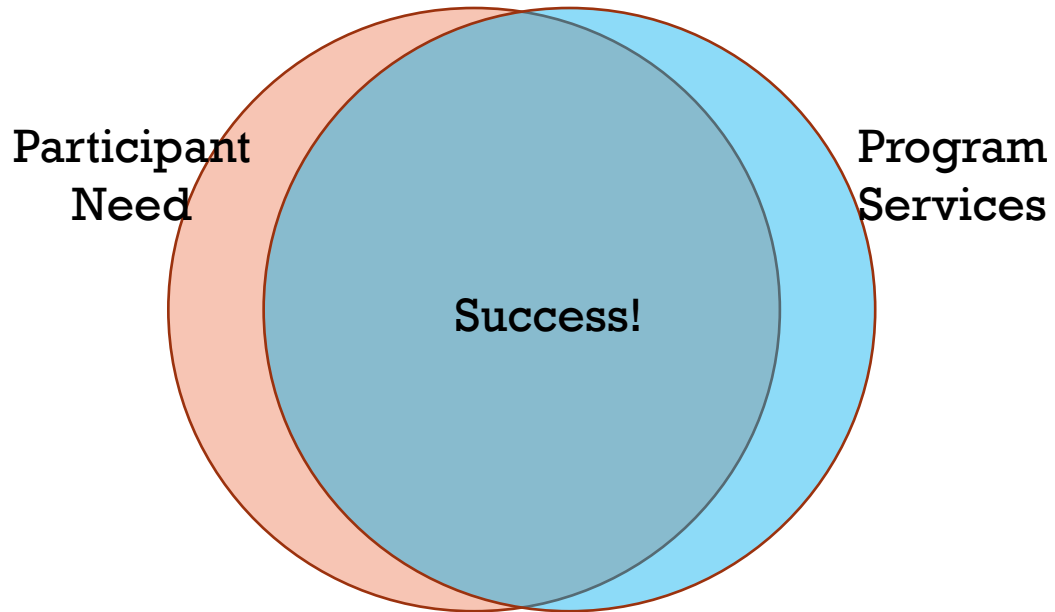
WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST?

- Guilt & Shame vs. Praise & Progress
 - Built in shame of addiction
 - Stigma of mental health
 - Lack of positive interactions
 - Retraumatized from telling the story
 - Defining success

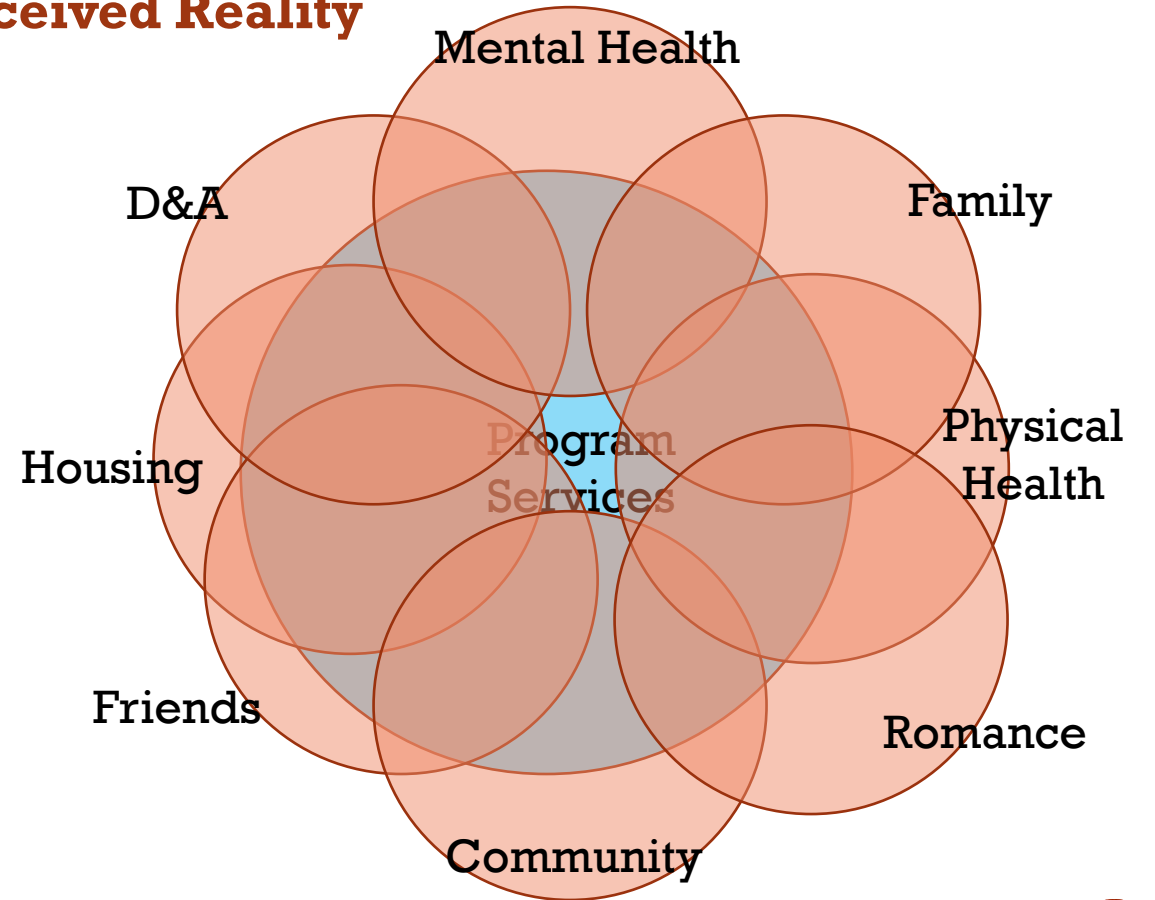


ORBITS ALIGNING

What We Want

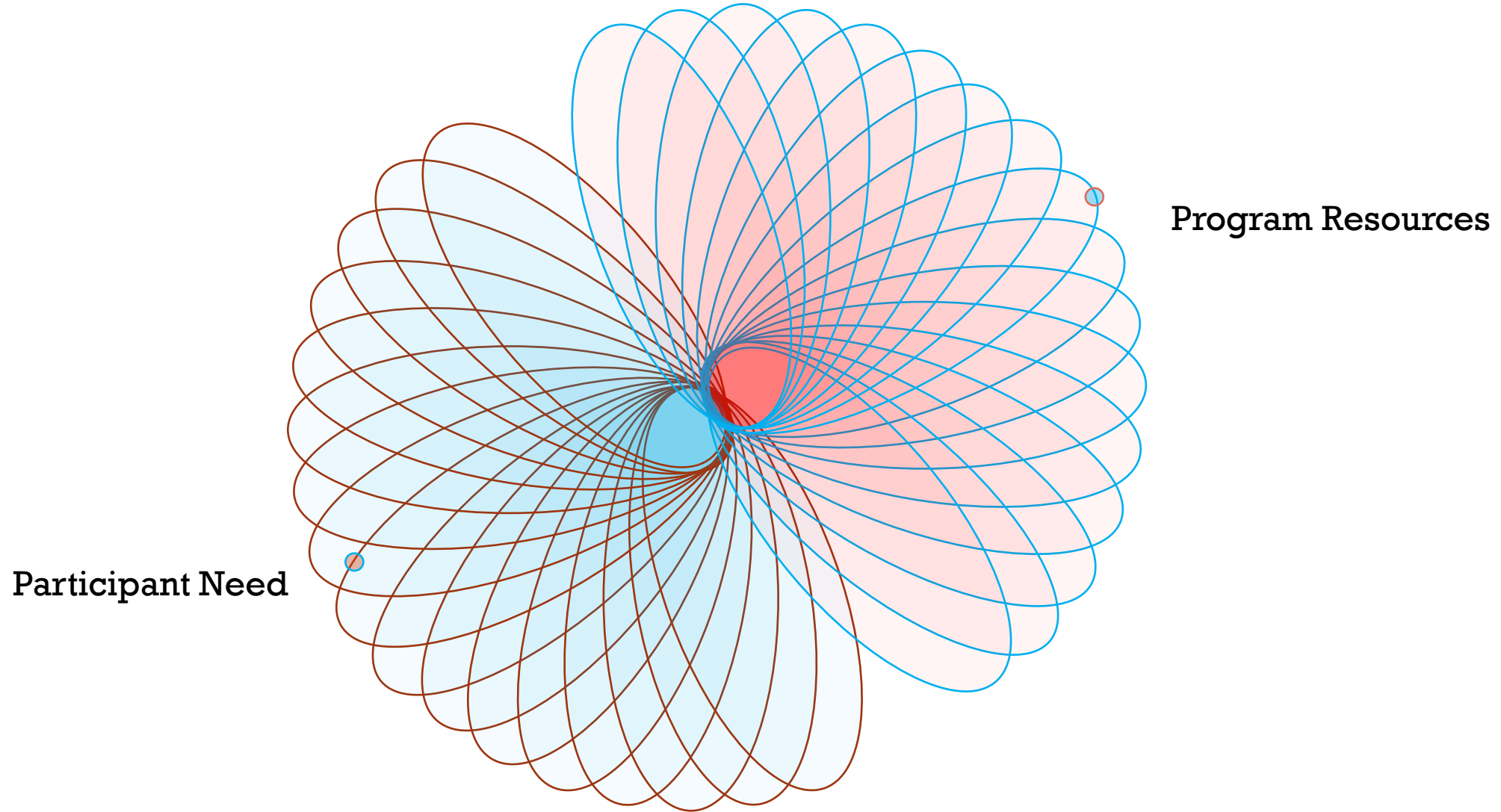


Perceived Reality



HARD REALITY

Orbital Model of Participant Need and Program Resources



BACK TO THE SURVEY

<http://etc.ch/CDUd>

Question Four

We try to be good clinicians, but sometimes praise and shame inadvertently affects participant wellness

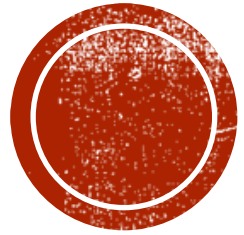
Question Five

Systemic factors have led to our agency failing to meet the needs of our participants while meeting the desires of funders

Question Six

Witnessing positive change in participant mental health, physical health, trauma, other areas of need, or seeing an increase of participant self-worth has led me to be more confident in services provided





WHAT DO WE DO?

Some strategies developed at Pathways to Housing PA to address the issues.

- **Community Inclusion Department**
 - Peer supports with Quarterly 10
 - Participant guided activities and outings
 - Fostering positive experiences and independence
- **Recovery Group** - creating a space to explore change without committing
- **Hear Our Voices: Homelessness Support Group** - removing the stigma and addressing the difficulties of coming out of homelessness into one's own home
- **Storytelling** — interviewing participants to tell their story in a digital audio format for others to listen to, but not putting them on a stage or in front of strangers
- **Community Participation Measure** to help participants identify areas where they want to connect outside of our services

SOME THINGS WE HAVE BEEN TRYING

We are doing a good job in a difficult situation and you probably are, too.

Let's talk about some things we are doing and try to brainstorm more ways we can support our program participants.



**These are some examples of what we've been doing at
Pathways to Housing PA.**

**Can we get two or three people to share brief examples
of what they have been doing?**

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

**Share some things you
are doing currently at
your agency**



We've identified an issue.

We've discussed some reasons it may exist.

I've shared some interventions we've incorporated at PTHPA

We've heard from a few other people about what they have done

What else can we do?

10 Minutes to talk in small groups then bring it back to the large group until it's time to wrap up

BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS

Get in groups of two or more and share what you are thinking about.



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Share the survey code with your coworkers and have them contribute to the data.

<http://etc.ch/CDUd>

Sign up with your email address and I'll send you the results of the survey in two weeks

Keep in touch!

Rob Wetherington

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[Current Survey Results](#)



