

CASE SCENARIO—Ongoing Support Services

Anthony, 37, served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and his life has been filled with conflict ever since. He has cycled through a series of jobs and has been unemployed for nearly six months. He has been married three times and was recently asked to leave his home by his current wife, Sarah, who is filing for divorce. She told him his drinking and unemployment make him a poor role model for their two children, 7 and 9, and they would have a better life trying to manage without him.

Anthony had nowhere to turn and no money when Sarah told him to leave, and he was feeling very shaky. He took a bus to his VAMC and they put him in touch with Katie, the local SSVF staff with responsibility for Rapid Resolution. Katie went to the VAMC to meet Anthony that day and talk with him his situation and about the potential of staying with a friend or relative. Anthony shared that Sarah had asked him to leave because he wasn't working and he drank but he didn't see why the drinking was a big deal. Anthony thought his cousin Matthew might be a resource. Katie talked with him about any concerns Matthew might have about sharing housing. Anthony wasn't sure Matthew had space for him or could afford to provide meals. Katie and Anthony talked about how he might respond if Matthew raised those issues. Anthony made the call, with Katie on an extension to be able to answer questions about supportive services SSVF could offer Anthony or Matthew. Matthew was very concerned about Anthony and he didn't raise the two issues and he agreed that the arrangement seemed workable. Anthony moved in that night.

Two weeks later, Matthew called Katie and said Anthony would have to move. Matthew was "tired of Anthony sitting around all day on the sofa, drinking all Matthew's beer and not making any effort to put his life together." Matthew would come home from work, tired, and Anthony would expect him to cook him dinner and listen to his marital problems all night. Sometimes when Matthew came home, Anthony had friends watching sports and drinking beer. Those friends would eat Matthew's food and even ask him "where's the beer?" Matthew said he's "had it" and Katie needs to "do something fast."

Talk with the other people at your table about this case. What would you do in this scenario? List out ways you could support the housing situation.

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Shaniqua, 22, served for 2 years in American-led interventions in Syria, Yemen and Iraq. At the time she left the military, one year ago, she had never lived independently. She had virtually no experience with leases, budgeting, paying bills. She had a job but spent every paycheck on clothing, and at restaurants and bars. She accumulated credit card bills and fell behind on her rent. Her job ended when the IT company relocated to another state. Shaniqua was badly in debt and the company offered no relocation allowance.

After her eviction, she spent a couple of months couch surfing with friends, her mother and her sister. All told her they couldn't let her stay. Her mother called the local 211 line to ask for help and handed her the phone. Shaniqua was connected by 211 with Michael, the SSVF RR coordinator. Michael asked Shaniqua if she might be able to stay longer with her mother. Shaniqua said she didn't think that would be possible but Michael should talk to her mother, so she handed the phone back to her mother. Michael asked the mother, Esther, if there were concerns she could share with him about letting Shaniqua stay longer while she got back on her feet. He also said he would be able to offer both Shaniqua and Esther help to make it work or, if it didn't work, he would help Shaniqua find other housing. Esther said she didn't know if it would work out but if Michael could meet with her and Shaniqua once a week "for awhile," she'd try hard.

Michael met with Esther and Shaniqua after a week and the two weren't on good terms. He met with each of them separately and then together. Esther said Shaniqua had a "terrible temper" and was constantly "sassing" her. Esther liked her life to be "just so," and Shaniqua didn't respect Esther's schedule or do any chores. She played her music "too loud" and other tenants were complaining to the landlord. Esther knew she could be kicked out of her apartment if Shaniqua caused too much trouble, and Esther was afraid. She loves Shaniqua but doesn't know what to do. Shaniqua said she was "going crazy with nothing to do," and missed having money for clothing and dancing. She kept saying "I'm not a little girl and you can't keep treating me like one."

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