

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

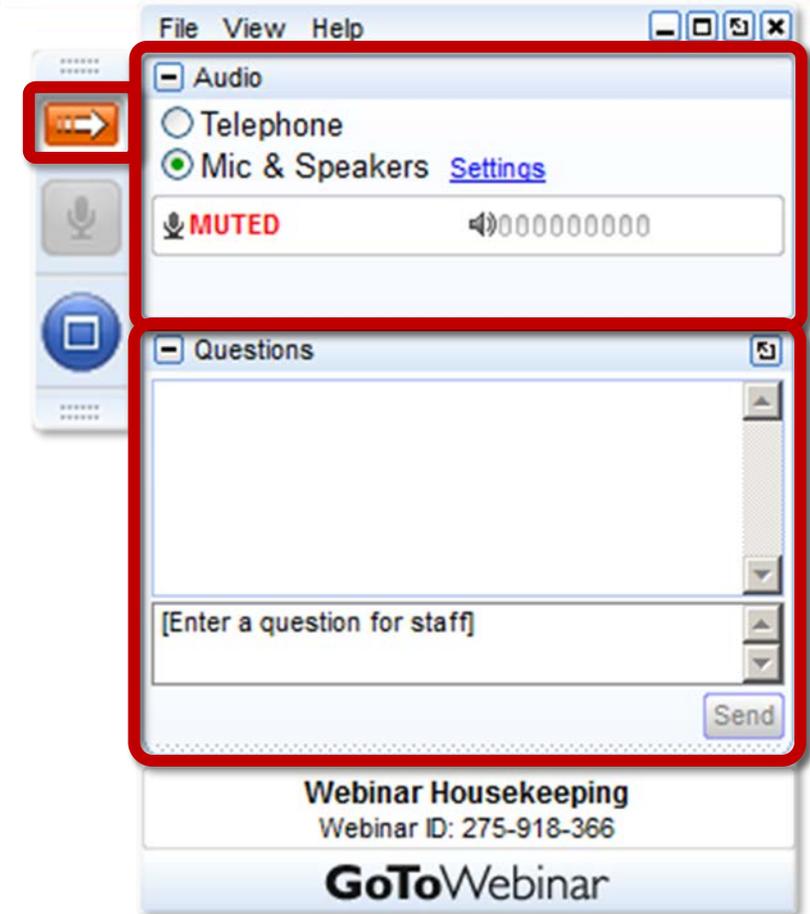
Emergency Housing Partnerships: Proactive Approaches for
Establishing Community Norms and Expectations

July 16, 2020

[Link to Audio recording](#)

Webinar Format

- Webinar will last approximately 75 minutes
- Participants' phone connections are "muted" due to the high number of callers.
- The identified representative from each site that will present will be unmuted upon log on.
 - **Questions can be submitted during the webinar using the Q&A function**



Agenda

- Purpose and Big Picture
- EHA Barriers and Opportunities
- EHA Hotel Orientation for Veterans Document Overview
- SSVF Hotel Problem Solving Quick Glance Document Overview
- U.S. VETS Hawaii: Emergency Housing Assistance by Katie Wharton, LCSW
- MACV Metro: Hotel Partner Overview by James McCloden
- Housing Innovations: Building NORMs to Sustain Hotel Stays by Andrea White
- Q&A

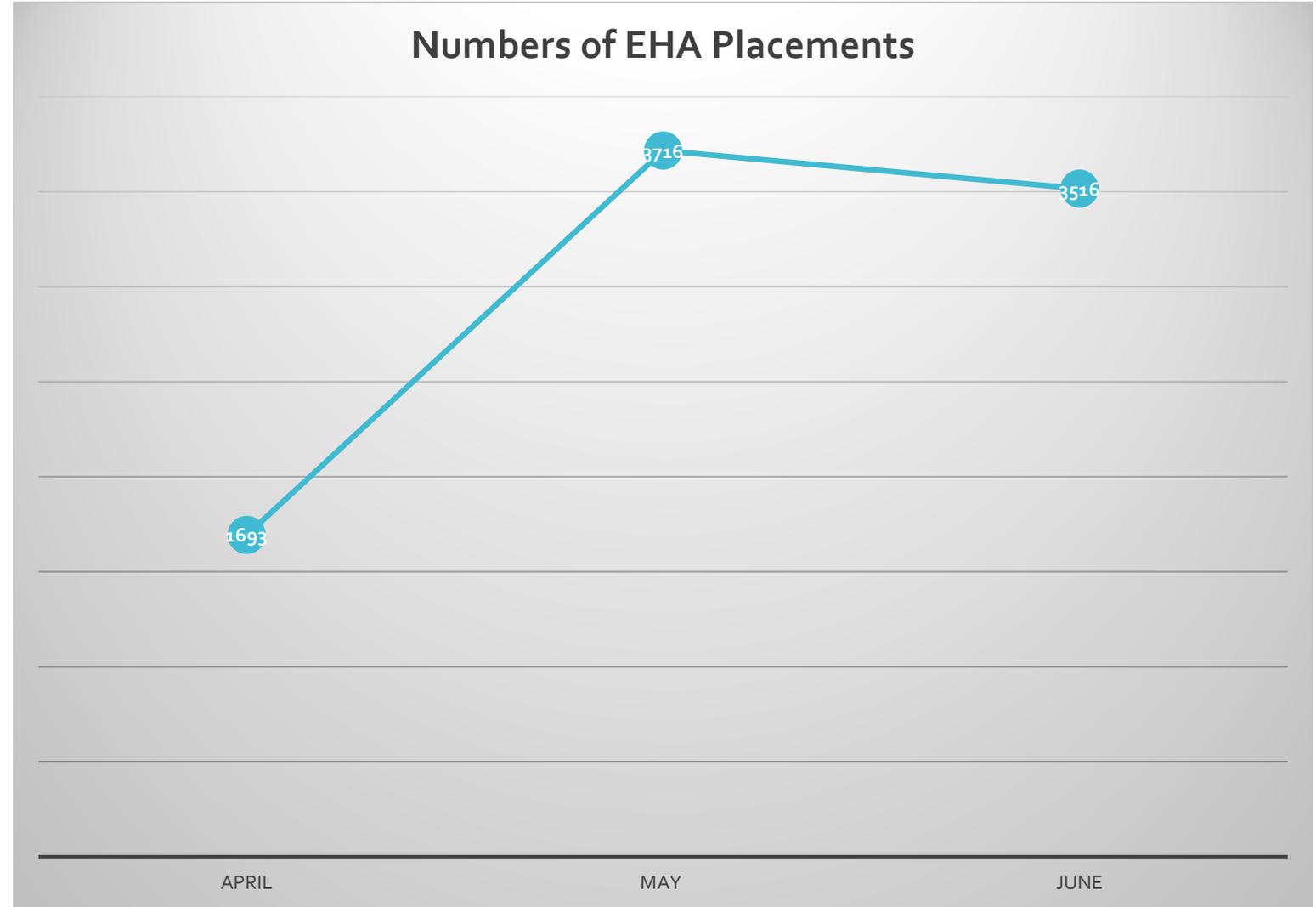
Goals for Today's Discussion

- To promote practices for successful emergency housing placements for Veterans
- To promote practices that strengthen collaborative partnerships with the hotel/motel community

8925 EHA Placements Since March

In addition to reviewing overall numbers, Jennifer has reviewed barriers and challenges reported by grantees

This will be shared with TA Providers next week



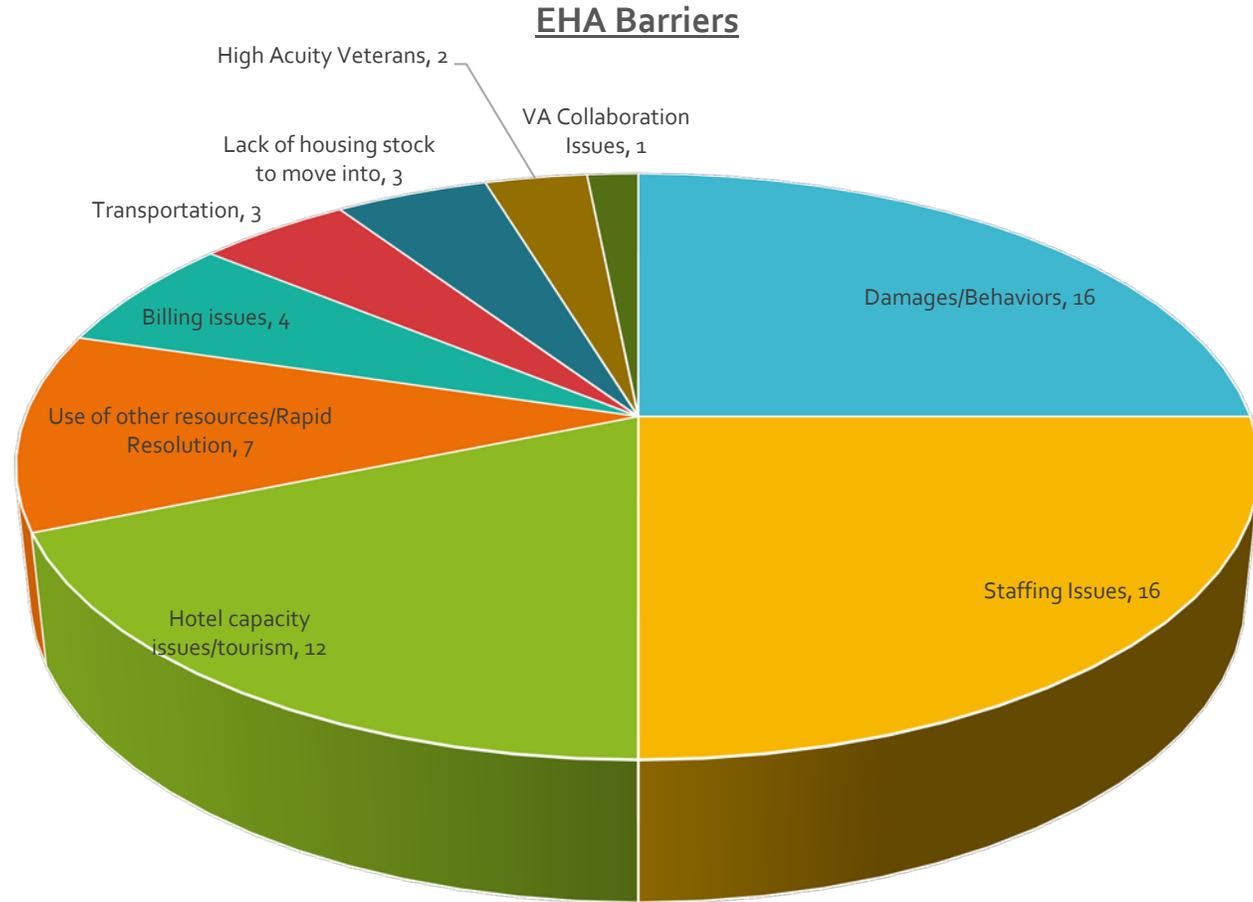
Grantee Identified Barriers to EHA

We had 58 grantees respond with barriers to EHA, and a total of 64 barriers.

Top barriers include

Damages/Behaviors in the hotel room

Staffing Issues



Opportunities for SSVF and EHA

- Establishing community norms and expectations early and consistently
- Safe and seamless transition to permanent housing
- Long term housing retention and community integration
- Lasting collaborative partnerships with hotel/motel partners

Available now! SSVF EHA Hotel Orientation

SSVF Hotel Orientation

July 2020, v1

Welcome

Dear Veteran,

The VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program may provide eligible Veterans with hotel and motel accommodations to ensure your safety during the COVID-19 public health crisis. SSVF's primary mission is to help you transition to permanent housing, either through SSVF's services or our VA and local partners. The hotel stay is a temporary accommodation to ensure your safety while we work on a long-term housing plan. While SSVF is providing temporary hotel stays to Veterans because of the COVID-19 pandemic, permanent housing is still the main focus of the program. We will be working with you to find suitable housing and will continue to work with you once you are housed. During this hotel stay, there are basic requirements and parameters that we expect from you, and that you can expect from us.

SSVF and Veteran Mutual Expectations

- Please respect the space and keep your hotel room and common spaces clean and free of clutter and damages. You will be responsible for **paying for damages** caused to your room or hotel property.
- Please return to the hotel and use your bed each night while at the hotel. Leaving your hotel room for a night or more without notice will result in the termination of your stay.
- Your hotel stay is temporary. Once your hotel stay is terminated, please leave the hotel in a safe and respectful manner. If you choose to stay in the hotel after the SSVF funded stay is terminated, you will be responsible for paying for your room.
- During your hotel stay, SSVF staff will work to connect you to medical and mental healthcare, if needed, and assist with meeting your basic needs such as access to food.
- SSVF or their partners may periodically ask you basic health questions during your stay to determine if COVID-19 testing or medical intervention is necessary. Please contact your SSVF case manager immediately or a health professional if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or if you are exposed to others who are known or presumptively thought to have COVID-19.
- Because your hotel stay is meant to be temporary, SSVF staff will work with you to develop a permanent housing plan. We will ask you to actively work with your SSVF Case Manager on securing permanent housing as quickly as possible. This includes regular communication and frequent phone meetings with your SSVF Case Manager and other SSVF staff.
- SSVF's goal is to meet your needs based on your individual choices and housing preferences. However, at times, we may encounter limited resources and we will ask you to be flexible with us as we work toward securing a permanent and sustainable housing solution that meets your needs.

Hotel Expectations

Hotels have rules and norms to keep all of their guests safe and comfortable, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. We encourage you to follow these guidelines and be mindful of other guests during your stay. These guidelines will help ensure that you are not asked to leave the hotel.

- While getting fresh air and exercise such as walking is encouraged, please avoid congregating in hallways and interacting with other guests while indoors during your stay.
- Whenever possible, please wear a mask to protect other hotel guests and yourself.
- Please limit guests coming from outside of the hotel as this may expose you and other hotel guests to COVID-19.
- Hotels prohibit the possession of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, and/or weapons on hotel premises. Please do not possess or use illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, and/or weapons on hotel premises.
- Open flames of any kind are not allowed in the hotel. This means no smoking, burning candles or incense in your hotel room.

Available now! SSVF Hotel Problem Solving Quick Glance

SSVF Hotel Problem Solving and Communication Quick Guide

Dear Hotel Staff,

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides grant funding and support to local non-profit organizations to serve Veterans and their families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Homeless and formerly homeless Veterans are uniquely vulnerable to COVID-19 due to their living conditions, advanced age, and high rate of chronic health problems. To ensure that Veterans can effectively isolate and quarantine, local SSVF providers have increased their use of temporary shelter placements in hotels and motels.

Hotel and Motel managers and staff are critical partners during this public health crisis. It is important for SSVF Grantees and hotel staff to have clear expectations how problems or challenges that may arise can be addressed. This quick guide provides information on possible actions and contacts for assistance should situations occur.

Thank you for partnering up with us in providing this vital service that honors the Veterans who helped protect and defend the nation. We look forward to working with you.

General Expectations and Guidelines

Partnerships between SSVF Grantees and hotel partners rely on good faith efforts from both parties to be successful. Here are some general expectations and commitments both parties should strive to meet.

Hotels are encouraged to give some flexibility knowing that the population SSVF serves typically have underlying health conditions and other vulnerabilities. SSVF urges its hotel partners to communicate with their SSVF Grantee Point of Contact (POC) about any issues that arise, it is always better to address an issue when it first occurs instead of after it becomes an entrenched problem. SSVF commits to doing everything possible to mitigate behavioral or health challenges with Veterans, including finding a new placement option if necessary.

SSVF commits to:

- Ensuring we are good stewards of our relationship with hotel managers and to communicate and work in good faith to promote each party's interests.
- Supporting the Veterans in hotel/motel settings to ensure their health and safety needs are being met or to coordinate non-emergency health services as needed.
- Working with Veterans while they reside in a hotel/motel to identify long term housing solutions and move them into permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- Promoting Veteran's safety during public health crisis while also maintaining good partnerships with hotels and motels.
- Frequent and consistent communication with Veterans about their hotel stay and service needs.
- Attempting to mitigate or resolve any conflicts or problematic situations that may arise.
- Clearly articulating to Veterans all rules or regulations associated with being a hotel/motel guest and supporting Veterans in meeting those requirements.
- Communicating as often as necessary with hotel and motel staff to ensure a good working relationship.

Hotel/Motel partner commit to:

- Providing agreed upon services and amenities to Veteran guests.
- Communicating to the SSVF Grantee POC when issues arise, or service/behavior interventions are required.
- Alerting SSVF staff to issues and allowing for mediation efforts prior to removing Veteran from the hotel/motel, unless such removal is required to meet an immediate safety concern.

U.S. VETS Hawaii: Emergency Housing Assistance

Katie Wharton, LCSW
SSVF Team Lead





Hotel Relationship Building

- ▶ Picking a Hotel: Oahu versus outer Islands
 - ▶ Oahu:
 - ▶ Hotels with established relationships to veteran agencies
 - ▶ Previous relationships utilized and new relationships established
 - ▶ Outer Islands:
 - ▶ Hotel Availability for the Big Island, Kauai and Maui
 - ▶ New relationships and establishing precedents
 - ▶ Limited available resources
- ▶ Presenting the mission and the necessity regarding COVID 19
- ▶ Explaining the role of inter-agency partnerships



Problems That Need Solving

- ▶ Inevitably, problems do arise, so developing a response is important!
- ▶ Barriers:
 - ▶ Substance Use
 - ▶ Behavioral issues (smoking, loud music, symptoms of psychosis etc.)
 - ▶ Traffic in the hotel rooms
 - ▶ Lack of communication or Veterans who are MIA (or on another Island)
 - ▶ Room cleanliness and hygiene
 - ▶ Pet issues
 - ▶ Refrigerator and grocery storage issues
 - ▶ Car parking issues
 - ▶ SATP and failure to attend remote therapeutic groups

Response

Collaboration: Partnerships with the VA, Outreach teams, and HUD VASH

- Quick response when issues arise
- Weekly check-in's
- Following up after incidents
- Shared accountability

Refining our referral process: Tracking Referrals and Admissions

- Group e-mail chain to track referrals
- Send weekly hotel tracker form to collaborating agencies to get case manager updates and status updates from case managers
- Veteran feedback regarding appropriateness of placement
- Level of care and referrals
- Brainstorm sessions for possible interventions

Examples of Creative Responses



Getting Creative



Tag teaming visits with HUD VASH workers

- ▶ HUD VASH bring canned goods or we order food through Instacart

Using community partners on neighboring islands to make contact with veterans

- ▶ Coordinating with Hope Services

Establishing relationships with front desk workers to communicate needs of veterans

- ▶ Front desk assisted veterans with storing food and giving quarters for laundry
- ▶ Front desk throwing birthday for veteran who turned 72
- ▶ Front desk assisting with car passes through external company
- ▶ Coordination with housekeeping and front desk to help navigate care of veterans with mental health issues
- ▶ Using hotel space for case conferencing

Hotel reviewing EHA agreement with veteran

Hotel and EHA case manager coordinating warning notice efforts for veteran behavior

Hotel Partner Overview

MACV Metro

1000 University Ave. W.

Suite #110

St. Paul, MN 55104



Overview

- Keys to Success
- Orientation Process for Veterans into EHA & Communication of Expectations
- Partnerships to Address Problematic Behaviors
- Check-ins with Clients regularly



Keys to Success

- Communication, Communication, Communication!
- Execution of problem solving
- Accountability and quick resolution/ responsiveness



Orientation Process for Veterans into EHA & Communication of Expectations

- Check-in paperwork and ROI packets
- Meals and catering
- Crisis management and prevention
- Ever evolving process
- Foundation of Expectations – Code of Conduct



MAC-V CODE OF CONDUCT ADDENDUM #1:

Attention Hotel Guest:

Thank you for staying with us here at the Days Hotel on University. In order to better service all of our guests needs, safety and security, we ask that you read and agree to the hotel rules and policies set forth below. Please make sure to print, sign and date at the bottom of the page once you have read and understood. Thank you again.

1. For the safety and security of all our guests, only the registered guests in the room are allowed into the hotel. Visitors are not allowed into the room or to park their vehicle anywhere on the Days hotel parking lot.
2. Only one vehicle allowed to park in the lot per room. There must be a valid parking pass displayed clearly on the dashboard of the vehicle and it must be registered with the front desk. Failure to do so may result in your vehicle being towed at your own expense.
3. Pet policies will be enforced including all pets must be on leash in public spaces, restrained or removed from room during housekeeping service and all waste removal is the responsibility of guest or will incur fees and/or will be evicted from the hotel.
4. Room types are not guaranteed and are based on availability. Rollaway beds and cots are not available for these rooms.
5. Please do not use deadbolts to keep the doors open at any time as this may damage the lock and deadbolt on the door and is a safety and security issue to all of our guests.
6. Keys will only be issued to the registered guest for each room. No more than 2 keys per room will be given out at any one time.

7. Local phone access will be available for duration of your stay from your in-room phone. No long distance.
8. As we have other guests and hospital patients staying in the hotel, noise must be kept to a minimum. Multiple noise issues may result in eviction from the hotel.
9. Smoking in non-designated areas, illicit drug use or excessive alcohol, and behavioral disruptions in room, public spaces or outside that affect the other guests experience or staff being able to not conduct regular course of business will result in immediate eviction from hotel.
10. Sexual harassment of any kind including leering, comments, or lewd behaviors will not be tolerated and is cause for immediate eviction and removal from hotel.

Failure to comply with the above rules and policies may result in eviction from the hotel without further notice and penalties and fees deducted from your security deposit. Thank you again for your understanding and we hope you enjoy your stay with us at the Days Hotel on University.

-Days Hotel Management

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Addressing Problematic Behaviors

- Communication from reservation to departure
- Immediate escalation of issues to appropriate persons
- Face to face interaction is important if it can be accomplished safely
- Anticipation and proactive approach to potential pain points (within 72 hours – hotel stability can be ascertained)
- 24-7 involvement and engagement- Answer the Phone (if not 24/7, then clear expectations of responsiveness)



Regular Check-ins with Clients

- Scheduled time to review issues and achievements
- Regular, multiple per week contact via phone and in-person
- Future options and idea sessions



Lessons Learned

- Set clear expectations regarding the rules and regulations and find out how we can best serve Veteran needs
- Early intervention and communication has been key in making sure we can continue to have the Veterans as guests of our partners
- Keep their eye on the prize, in regards to their housing plan.



Building NORMs to Sustain Hotel Stays

Andrea White

AWhite@HousingInnovations.us



Agenda



- Adjustments to Hotel Living
- Establishing NORMs
- Implementing NORMs
- Teaching Problem Solving Skills
- Working with Veterans towards Behavior Change
- Sustaining Housing

Hotel Move



- Moving to hotels is a big adjustment for Veterans
 - New structure
 - New Expectations
 - Single rooms, limited shared facilities
- The COVID response brings additional change
 - Use of safety precautions such as masks, distancing and hand washing
- The expectations in the hotels are largely consistent with expectations of tenancy
 - Can be used to teach these skill.

Teaching Norms

Expectations must be clear

They must reflect the community NORMs and Housing First friendly

- Example Veterans don't have to complete a program in order to stay in the hotel
- Veterans are expected to follow same rules as others staying there
 - No smoking in the room
 - Guests are limited
 - Use of Common Areas



Establishing NORMS



- Establishing NORMs is a practice to reinforce community expectations: could be smoking, public behavior, safety precautions
- It begins by introducing what you are focusing on to the entire community
- Everyone agrees that this is the focus and all staff develop a script to explain why, how and when
- The script is about 30 seconds to a minute and delivered as written by all staff
- Weekly to length of the script is increased as the behavior declines.
- Structure not consequences

Building Skills

- Educating on rights and responsibilities
- **Modeling** for each Veteran/family
- Trying it out and debrief
- Establishing regular check-ins to see if it is working
- Review cost and benefits – **critical thinking**
- **Recognizing** good skills and strong partners
- Renegotiate as necessary



Build problem solving skills

Slow	Slow it down
Think	Think - help people think evaluatively about their options
Try	Try – help people to try it out this is not an all of nothing scenario
Control	Control - know that if people feel like they have some control they are more likely to try options

Structure and Purpose

- Support roles in people's lives: Parent, Tenant, Resident, Friend, Worker
 - Roles and expectations provide a structure
- Help people to develop and stick to a schedule
- Provide activities that reinforce precautions and provide a break
 - Some programs are doing doorway bingo (with gift cards), outdoor tenancy classes with certificate, job seeking assistance, opportunity to help others, board games especially for families, book clubs, movie clubs, newsletters
 - Give people information and tools they can use independently





Questions?



Questions and Answers