

Shared Housing and Co-Housing

2019 Federal Permanent Housing Conference



Agenda

- What is Shared Housing/Co-housing
- Why We Need to Think About Shared Housing
- Shared Housing and Rent Subsidies
- Matching Roommates
- Working with Landlords



Welcome – Activity

- Show of hands – please raise your hand if you are:
 - SSVF Grantee Staff/admin
 - HVRP Staff
 - HUD-VASH Staff/admin
 - Public Housing Authority (PHA)
 - CoC





What is Shared Housing?

Two or more people who live in one permanent rental housing unit, sharing costs





What is Shared Housing?

Basically ... It's roommates!





Who can participate in Shared Housing

- Anyone who wants or is willing to have a roommate
- Who's that?
 - Eligible for the program
 - Wants to participate in shared housing
 - May have roommates that are not enrolled in a program (private market)
- There is no definitive list of who will “succeed” at shared housing





Why Shared Housing?

- Overall benefits
 - Increased Access to Diverse Housing Market with Desirable and Affordable Housing Options
 - Reduced Housing Cost Burden
 - Reduced Living Expenses
 - Increased Budget Control and Personal Savings
- Psychosocial Benefits
 - Increased Social Networks and Decreased Isolation
 - Sustain Independent Housing Longer
 - Help with Community Integration
 - Increased Problem Solving Skills





Why Shared Housing?

- Limitations on Shared Housing
 - Roommate Conflicts
 - Some roommate living situations will be short
 - Landlord Issues
 - May not want to provide separate leases
 - May not want rent from multiple people/organizations
 - Case Manager Involvement
 - Some roommate situations may take considerable case management time and follow-up
 - City, County, State Regulations
 - Local laws may not allow shared housing as defined by federal programs





Community Panel

How does Shared Housing work in your community?





Shared Housing Must Have ...

- Client Choice
- Separate Leases
- A Habitability/Housing Quality Review
- Separate Security Deposits and Assistance
- Roommate Agreements (if asked for)





Shared Housing Must Have ...

- Client Choice





Shared Housing Must Have ...

- Separate Leases
 - Required by some programs
 - Especially for TBRA
 - Ensures:
 - Each roommate has equal tenancy rights
 - One roommate is not responsible for other roommate's rent, even if they move out





Shared Housing Must Have ...

- A Habitability/Housing Quality Review
 - HQS or Habitability
 - Only need one per unit, even if more than one roommate has a housing subsidy
 - Need to do the one that is more stringent (HQS if required)





Shared Housing Might Have ...

- Roommate Agreements (if they want to!)
 - Not everyone wants/needs a formal agreement
 - Verbal agreements are good too
 - Agreements should cover roommate expectations for all roommates
 - Case managers can facilitate a conversation around expectations and an agreement





Case Scenarios

Meet your client!





Matching Roommates

- Possibly the most important aspect of shared housing
- May happen organically, may need to match two people who don't know each other
- Most successful when roommates choose each other
- Case managers should help guide clients to make the best choice for them, but case managers should NOT choose roommates for clients





Matching Roommates

What Makes a Good Match?





What Makes a Good Match?

- Things to consider:
 - Sleep Schedules
 - Work Schedules
 - Cleaning Tendencies
 - Chores Expectations
 - Settling Disputes
 - Preferred Environment





Case Scenarios

Let's match some roommates!



What happens next?

- Keeping a good situation going
 - Follow-up
 - Check in on a regular basis
 - Talk to client, as well as landlord
 - If you have permission from the client, speak with the roommate(s)



Shared Housing and Rent Subsidies

- Very few changes to rent subsidy calculation
- Knowing the rules and regulations will help you know if the unit is allowable under your program
 - Is the unit's rent reasonable?
 - Does it meet the PHA's payment standard?





Shared Housing and Rent Subsidies

- Determining Rental Subsidies and Contributions
 - Use a tool!
 - Rent Analysis Worksheet
 - Remember to document everything!
 - Each client receiving a subsidy must have:
 - A separate lease
 - A separate security deposit
 - Documentation of how much each roommate is receiving as a subsidy (if applicable)
 - Documentation of an appropriate inspection (if required)
 - Roommate Agreement (if requested)





Shared Housing without a Rent Subsidy

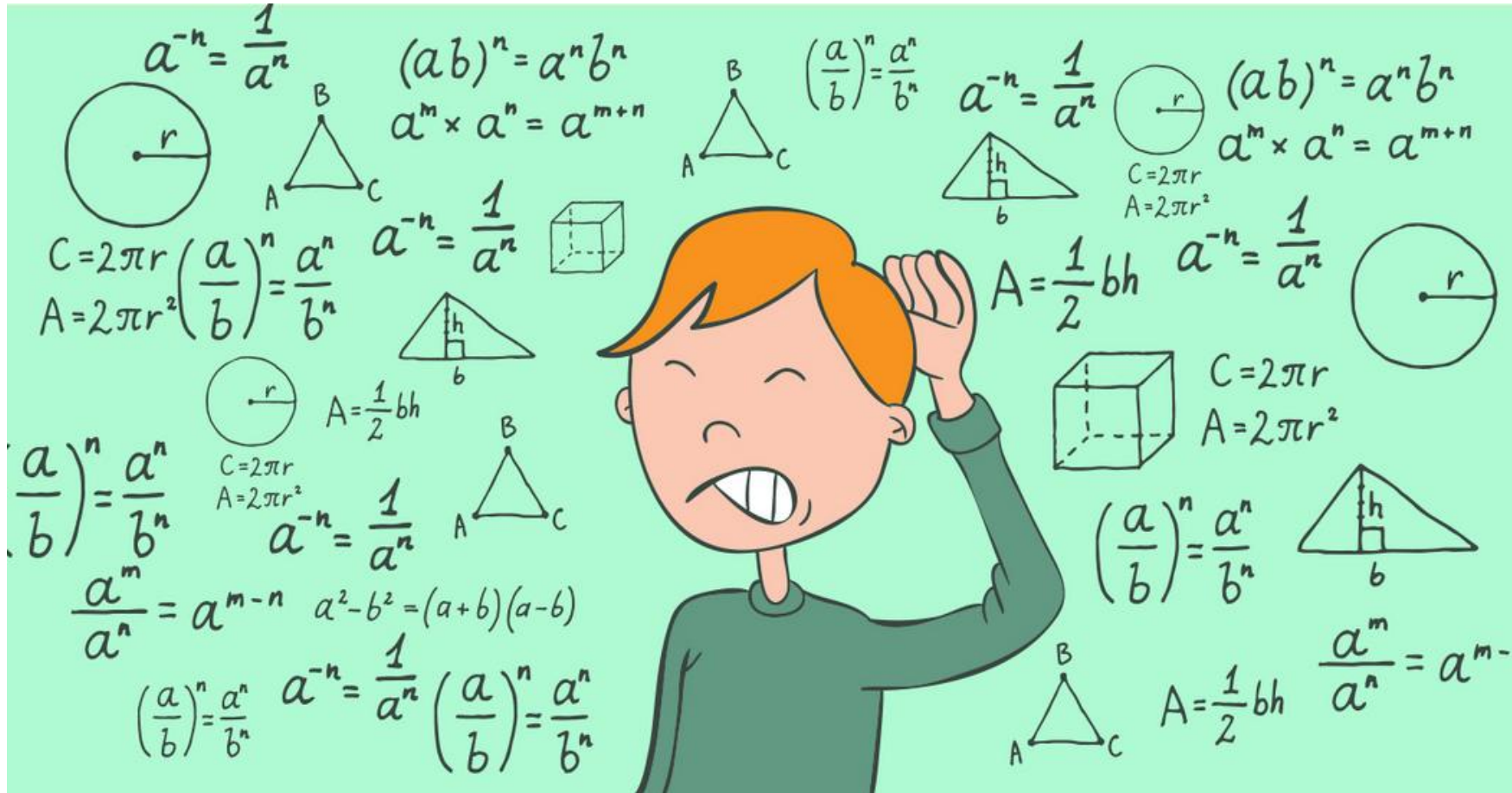
- Many clients receive services or TFA without receiving a rental subsidy
- They can still participate in shared housing!

Shared Housing does not require receiving a housing subsidy like rental assistance or a voucher



Case Scenarios

Let's figure out the rent for our roommates!





What Landlords Work Best?

- Have large units or single homes/properties to rent
- Have previously worked with your program
- Willing to do separate leases for each roommate





Engaging Landlords

How do you keep landlords engaged?





Landlord Benefits

- Shared housing allows landlords to:
 - Fill larger units faster
 - Handle tenant issues separately
 - Work with case managers to resolve conflicts early





Supporting Landlords

- Landlords and Case Management
 - Know what your case managers can provide
 - Monthly check-ins?
 - Do not say you will check in and then not do it
 - Provide contact information for case manager/housing navigator
 - Decide if program will provide a new resident if a roommate leaves



When the Roommate Leaves

- Work with the landlord ahead of time to answer these questions:
 - Who is responsible for replacing the roommate?
 - Does your program allow vacancy payments?
 - Were there issues with the remaining roommate(s) that the case manager needs to follow-up on?



Case Scenario

Oh no!
It's not working out!
What are our next
steps?



Questions?



Let's Recap

- Shared Housing can be:
 - A great housing opportunity
 - Very beneficial to clients and landlords
- Matching roommates is nuanced, but very doable
- Landlords can start filling larger units early
- Programs can help fill units if situations do not work out

Most importantly, this is just ONE tool in your large toolbox!

