



Midwest Harm Reduction Institute

Housing First and Harm Reduction: Lessons Learned

Cosponsored by MHRI, the Prince Charitable Trusts, and the Chicago Continuum of Care

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Registration: 8:30 am Workshop: 9-noon

Harm Reduction Housing Technical Assistance Project Info Session: 1-2 pm

Chicago Continuum of Care

1111 North Wells, Chicago

FACILITATOR: Scott Petersen (MHRI, Heartland Health Outreach)

PRESENTERS:

Kathy Booton Wilson (Deborah's Place)

Bill Streepy (Heartland Human Care Services, Rafael Center)

Joyce Grangent (Corporation for Supportive Housing)

Fred Maclin (Christian Community Health Center)

Ed Stellan (Heartland Health Outreach, Pathways Home)

The presenters will describe their approaches to providing harm reduction housing—i.e., housing that does not require abstinence as the ticket for admission. The presentation will be in the form of a panel discussion, with plenty of opportunity for audience questions and interaction (3 CEUs).

After a break for lunch (on your own), participants may attend an optional information session (1-2 pm) about the opportunity to apply for technical assistance that will support an agency in moving from abstinence-based to harm-reduction-based housing. **See the attached description of that project, "Shifting the Paradigm to Harm Reduction."** The afternoon session is free (no CEUs).

REGISTRATION

There is a charge of \$30 for the workshop, payable to **Heartland Health Outreach**. No refunds, but you may send a substitute. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

Name: _____ **Agency:** _____

Address: _____

_____ **Zip** _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax** _____

I will attend: Workshop only (\$30) Workshop & Info Session (\$30) Info Session only (free)*

In order for my registration to be processed, I am enclosing the following:

\$30 in the form of a: Check Money order Copy of agency purchase order * No \$ required

(NOTE: Registration for AM session is not complete until payment or copy of purchase order has been received.)

I will need certification of CEUs (3 awarded) for:

IAODAPCA LCSW/LSW LCPC/LPC No CEUs required
(Certificates of attendance will be available for people who do not require CEUs)

Send your registration form and payment to:

Jimmy Valentin, Heartland Health Outreach, Suite 500, 4750 N. Sheridan Rd, Chicago 60640

Fax: 773-751-4174

Phone: 773-751-4129

MHRI

Midwest Harm Reduction Institute

Shifting the Paradigm to Harm Reduction: The Housing Technical Assistance Project

**Information Session: Tuesday, July 25, 1-2 pm
Chicago Continuum of Care, 1111 N. Wells, Chicago**

In 2002, the Chicago Continuum of Care adopted a “housing first” approach, which emphasizes finding permanent housing for individuals, then following it with counseling, substance abuse treatment, and employment services. Simply being homeless should be the only condition for gaining access to housing. Yet, a recent survey found that 80 percent of permanent housing providers in Chicago require abstinence as a criterion for admission to their programs. This de facto “abstinence first” approach: many programs require three to six months’ abstinence prior to admission, with the added stipulation that abstinence is required to maintain housing.

If the housing-first model is to succeed, we must eliminate substance use as a barrier to accessing and keeping housing, and we must accord individuals with substance use problems the same housing options and rights as other people who are homeless. Changing from the current abstinence-only paradigm to one that embraces harm reduction will make this possible.

Prince Charitable Trusts awarded a grant to the Midwest Harm Reduction Institute to support a three-year Housing Technical Assistance Project. MHRI is a collaboration between Chicago’s Heartland Health Outreach and numerous research, policy, and service organizations throughout the region in consultation with the national Harm Reduction Coalition. Its goals are to increase understanding of the harm reduction philosophy throughout the Midwest; build the skills necessary to implement harm reduction strategies in diverse settings; strengthen harm reduction leadership across disciplines and communities; and develop an awareness of the attitudes that contribute to discrimination against drug users and other marginalized groups.

Under MHRI’s auspices, a technical assistance team will partner with a Chicago housing agency committed to transforming itself from an abstinence-only culture to one that incorporates and practices harm reduction. Through an open RFP, one agency will be selected to partner with MHRI, Prince, and the Continuum of Care in this endeavor. The team will assess the agency’s ideology, motivation, and readiness (from board of directors to line staff), as well as staff values and adaptability, in order to design and implement a template for transforming the agency’s culture and practices, and to ensure that the transformation will be effective and long lasting. The goal is to support a single agency from needs assessment through training, implementation, and sustained harm reduction practice in order to meet the needs of participants seeking and living in permanent supportive housing. An equally important goal is to develop a replicable practice that will help other housing agencies and providers, both locally and nationally, make the transition to the practice of harm reduction.

We invite agencies that are actively considering moving from an abstinence-based culture to one that embraces the harm reduction philosophy to find out more about the Housing Technical Assistance Project at the information session—whether or not you attend the morning workshop on Harm Reduction Housing. When we receive your registration, we will send you a copy of the RFP (applicants must be funded through the Chicago Continuum of Care). If you are unable to attend the information session, but wish to be considered for the project, contact Ed Stellan: estellan@heartlandalliance or 773-334-7117, ext. 1010.

The completed RFP will be due by 5 PM on Friday, August 11