Basics of Housing First

What is Housing First?

• Evidence-based program model
• Assists individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who are living with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorder
• Immediately offers rental subsidies and permanent housing
• No preconditions or barriers
• No end point
• Wrap-around supports are provided to assist the individual in maintaining their housing

Dispelling Housing First Myths

• Housing First is not “Housing only”
• Housing First does not mean “Anything goes”
• Does not condone, endorse, or encourage drug use or high risk behaviors
• Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the harms associated with high risk behaviors
• Participants are still accountable to the consequences of their actions
• Support is offered, but clients are not sheltered from what occurs from actions they choose
• Clients make their own decisions and observe the results, staff help clients to make informed decisions based on those results

Benefits

• Cost effective
• Reduces hospitalization time
• Increased participant satisfaction
• Quick start up time
• Wider community benefit
• 30+ year track record
• **85-90% retention rate after five years**
• Increased medication compliance & treatment adherence
• Eliminates need for more expensive programs

For questions please contact:
Andrew Spiers, LSW
Director of Training & Technical Assistance
Housing First University
ASpiers@PTHPA.org