



What to do When Housing is in Jeopardy?



JAMES APT, CASE MANAGER
BOSTON HEALTH CARE FOR THE
HOMELESS PROGRAM

JUNE 18, 2014

Why folks may lose housing?



- Some of the most common reasons are:
 - Non-payment of rent
 - ✦ Client may have other priorities or financial obligations
 - ✦ Unexpected and outstanding bills
 - ✦ Active addiction
 - Behavioral issues
 - ✦ Active addiction
 - ✦ Conflicts with neighbors
 - Jail or arrest
 - Information that was revealed after completing the housing process
- Remember if a client chooses not to tell you their housing is in jeopardy, there's probably a reason...client may not feel worthy of housing, may feel discouraged or unprepared for housing, afraid of disappointing you...

Effective Communication is KEY!



- Regular and routine check-ins will allow you to discuss issues that may affect housing
- Allows you time to address what matters...
 - How the situation is dealt with?
 - That a team approach is implemented and that communication is open and honest

If Your Client Receives a Notice to Quit...



Be sure to...

- Obtain and review the document with the client
- Discuss the circumstances leading up to the receipt of the notice to quit
- Re-review the terms of the lease
- Create clear next steps
 - Think realistically about leaving housing – what would you do with your belongings? Where would you stay?
 - Seek legal support

Lasting Effect of Losing Housing on Future Housing



- Notice to quit and subsequent court date; evictions; and abandoning housing can all have lasting marks on a client's historical record
- The deeper into the process the harder it can be to salvage the situation
- The ease (or difficulty) with which a client is evicted also relies heavily on how “tenant-friendly” your state's laws are

Landlords



- Not all landlords are honorable.
- Know landlord biases BEFORE the patient moves in.
- Discuss how rent will be paid (check, money order, direct deposit) and make sure to retain proof of payment to avoid future disputes.
- Take photographic evidence of room condition before moving in, to ensure the security deposit is returned to your client.

Reasonable Accommodations



- Can mean either modifications to existing housing or a move into different housing
- Can be asked for because of...
 - Medical conditions
 - Domestic violence issues
 - Physical limitations

Non-payment of Rent Evictions



Possible solutions to prevent from happening again:

- Engage client to utilize a payee service
 - What services are locally available?
 - Is there a trustworthy family member or friend?
- Would entering a detox or program help the client stay housed?
 - How can you discuss this with your client?