



TRAINING ACADEMY

HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST STANDARDS TOOLKIT



MISSION

Rebuilding hope through housing opportunities for families and individuals with support services in times of transition.



**COMMUNITY REBUILDERS TRAINING ACADEMY
HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST TOOLKIT © 2015**

**Community Rebuilders
1120 Monroe Avenue NW, Suite 220
Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

**Phone: (616) 458-5102
Fax: (616) 458-8788**

communityrebuilders.org

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HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST TOOLKIT

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The Community Rebuilders Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) Toolkit is designed as a resource for programs implementing the HRS model and standards. Implementation of the HRS model and standards represents the agency's commitment to continuous quality improvement efforts aimed at improving outcomes for individuals and families receiving HRS services.

CONTENTS OF THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit contains the standards and skill-building resources as well as a checklist to help Housing Resource Specialists and their supervisors chart progress toward meeting the standards.

- Housing Resource Specialist Standards
- Skill-Building Tools
- Self-Assessment and Monitoring Tools

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit creates a common frame of reference for Housing Resource Specialists. It is intended to be used creatively to involve everyone in a process of continuously improving the quality and outcomes of Housing Resource Specialist services.

It is strongly encouraged to utilize this toolkit when orienting new staff, as a refresher for veteran HRS staff, and to monitor a program's progress. The goal is to provide guidance and support to staff in order to sustain the changes that will be necessary for Housing Resource Specialists to implement best practices in case management.



SECTION 1

HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST HISTORY AND STANDARDS

HISTORY OF THE HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST MODEL

Community Rebuilders and the Housing Resource Specialist Model

Community Rebuilders developed the Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) Model in 2007. In 2008 the Coalition to End Homelessness adopted the model and asked Community Rebuilders to implement the model community wide. Today, the Housing Resource Specialist model is the standard for prevention and re-housing services delivered in Kent County.

HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST: Theoretical and Philosophical Framework

Strengths Based Philosophy

We view our consumers as experts on their lives and we partner with them. Strengths based practice is about partnering in order to **help consumers identify and use their own strengths and resources to overcome obstacles and live empowered lives**. It is an approach that focuses on what is strong, not what is wrong in a service recipient's life. By focusing on strengths rather than solely using deficits to guide services, hope and motivation increase, resulting in greater achievement of goals. At the foundation of the strengths based approach is the belief that everyone has unique talents, skills, and life events, in addition to specific unmet needs.

It is also helpful to note that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has strong influences in our use of the Strengths Based Model. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs maintains that basic human needs of housing, food, water, clothing, must be met before human beings can move on to identify and meet higher-level needs. Higher-level needs include such things as employment, education, family, and health. These needs can be best addressed after survival needs for housing, food, etc. are met. The HRS Model is based on several philosophical concepts that guide and inform the Prevention and Rehousing Services that are delivered by a Housing Resource Specialist. The following is intended to give a brief explanation of those concepts which guide and inform the HRS model.

PRACTICE AND CORE PRINCIPLES: STRENGTHS BASED PRACTICE

The Strengths-Based approach:

- Focuses on what is strong, not what is wrong in service recipient's life

- Uses strengths to guide services rather than deficits
- Sees the client/HRS relationship as a partnership
- Helps service recipients identify their own strengths and natural supports to live empowered lives

At the foundation of the strength-based approach is the belief that everyone has unique talents, skills, and life events, in addition to specific unmet needs. **By focusing on strengths rather than solely using deficits to guide services, hope and motivation increase, resulting in greater achievement of goals.**

HOUSING FIRST

The HRS model was developed around the belief that Housing First is the most cost effective, efficient strategy for ending homelessness. Housing Resource Specialists believe that housing is a basic human right and all persons should have access to safe, affordable housing. Our model required a shift in attention; some may call it a paradigm shift. In a strengths based model, service providers believe that behavior is shaped by the resources available to people (Davidson and Rapp 1976). Attention is not on specialized programs, training, or living programs that prepare persons for housing or compensate for deficits. A strengths based approach focuses attention on the necessary resources that will allow persons to live in their environment of choice.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness provides the following explanation of Housing First. "Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. What differentiates a Housing First approach from other strategies is that **there is an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing**. This approach has the benefit of being consistent with what most people experiencing homelessness want and seek help to achieve."

Housing First programs share critical elements:

- A variety of services are delivered primarily following a housing placement to promote housing stability and individual well-being;
- Such services are time-limited or long-term depending upon individual need; and



SECTION 2 COMMUNITY REBUILDERS' VALUES

FOUNDATION OF HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST WORK:

HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST VALUES:

The bedrock of HRS work is our values. It is vital that when working at Community Rebuilders that one has a clear understanding of the elements that comprise our model of service delivery.

All persons, by virtue of their humanity, have the right to be treated as valued human beings. We accept program consumers as they are, regardless of strengths, limitations, positive and negative attitudes, and seemingly healthy or unhealthy behaviors, qualities, and habits.

The Core Values listed below are what Community Rebuilders holds steadfast to and will not detour from in our thinking and in our service delivery:

<p>Individualizing Service</p> <p>All services are consumer driven and voluntary, services are based on the unique needs and strengths of each household.</p>	<p>Building on Strengths</p> <p>Identification of strengths expands resources and capacity, and restores hope.</p>	<p>Creating a Hope-Fostering Vision</p> <p>Goal setting and a positive view of the future are essential to housing plans.</p>
<p>Honoring Self Determination</p> <p>Consumers are viewed as experts in their lives and guide the helping process.</p>	<p>Empowerment</p> <p>We do “with” our consumers not “for” our consumers. Consumers are community members. Empowerment can come through resources that may be located within consumers themselves, within their social networks, or within the larger community.</p>	<p>Normalizing</p> <p>All human beings are special and precious. Human beings like all living things change constantly and grow.</p>
<p>Encouraging Consumer Participation</p> <p>Consumers are experts about their lives and the things that they hope to achieve; we anticipate obstacles and together with our consumer we plan and learn.</p>	<p>Fostering Transferability</p> <p>We look for strengths and skills that can be utilized to open new opportunities.</p>	<p>Protecting Confidentiality</p> <p>We educate consumers on their rights of confidentiality and utilize signed releases when sharing confidential information.</p>



SECTION 3 HOUSING FIRST, STRENGTHS BASED

“Knowledge is gained by learning, skill by practice.”

– Thomas S. Szasz

HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST CASE-MANAGEMENT MODEL

The HRS Model represents service delivery that is coordinated, consistent, and provides a high quality of care. Planning is responsive to all aspects of life with the primary focus on housing stability. The model is designed to identify needs and ensure timely access to and coordination of supportive services.

The HRS case-management process is an approach that is purposeful, reciprocal, genuine, trusting, and empowering.

Key components of the model include:

- I. ENGAGEMENT
- II. STRENGTH BASED PROCESS
- III. MONITORING PROGRESS
- IV. GRADUATED DISENGAGEMENT & TERMINATION

NOTES:

I) ENGAGEMENT:

Engagement is the beginning process and foundation of the relationship between the HRS and Program Consumer. The HRS gathers information from the Program Consumer about his/her strengths, resources, and needs. This information provides the basis for strengths based case management and the delivery of individualized program services.

Elements of Effective Engagement include:

- Mutually agreed upon meeting time and place
- Informal activity
- Conversational- explore common interests and experiences
- Use empathy and active listening
- Discussion of purpose of services and review of mutual expectations
- Identification of strengths

II) STRENGTHS BASED PROCESS:

- The Strengths Based Process differs vastly from the traditional problem-based processes which focus on the consumers’ deficits. The Strength Based Process assesses the inherent strengths of a person or family and then builds upon them.

Strengths Approach:

- Allows us to see the possibilities
- Approaches problem solving in the context of community
- Encourages seeing situations through the eyes of the client
- Applies resources to new tasks
- Sees the possibilities for improvement
- Draws upon personal power
- Results in a new sense of self and a new way of being in the world

NOTES:

PRE-TENANCY PLANNING AND BRIEFING SESSIONS:

Because we have a goal to shorten length of homelessness, we must work quickly to give households the information necessary to begin their housing search. This task is completed primarily by attending a briefing session.

A key component of the briefing session involves pre-tenancy planning. Planning ahead assists Consumers to make sound decisions about their housing from the start. Households may be so tired of living on the streets or in the shelter that they are almost willing to accept any housing. HRS staff must take a proactive approach to open dialogue about the type of home the Consumer would like.

This proactive approach of pre-tenancy planning is critical to ensuring that Consumers choose housing that they will be inspired to maintain long term. HRS staff should talk about housing through the perspective of permanent housing to be achieved right away. This opens up dialogue about what the Consumers are seeking in their housing, what worked well for them in the past, and what might help them succeed in housing long-term.

It is important to help Consumers believe that they deserve safe, decent housing that they will want to stay in for at least the length of their lease, while, at the same time, recognizing that once their financial picture improves they will be able to move to someplace they like even more.

Questions to ask Consumers

- Do they have a clear understanding of Program expectations?
- Are they prepared to talk with potential Landlords? How will they respond if things go well or if things don't go well?
- Housing
 - What kind of housing are they looking for?
 - Where would they like to live?
 - What is the maximum rent you feel confident paying in full once assistance ends?
 - Does housing need to be near the bus line?
 - Who will live in their household?
 - Do they want housing near their support system?

Creating and Implementing the HRS Strengths

Based Plan: Created by the Program Consumer and the Housing Resource Specialist, the HRS Strengths Based Plan will document the case management process utilizing HMIS.

Creating a Desired Situation: As an HRS, it is essential to be curious and patient. You must allow your Consumer to describe, in detail, the desired situation he or she would

like to create. What are the positive and concrete results the Consumer wants to see happen? After listening to your Consumer, you should be able to clearly articulate their desired situation.

Questions to ask:

- What does your desired situation look like?
- What do you hope your new housing situation will be like?
- How will you know when things have become better?

Exploring Past Success: Talking about past success builds pride and confidence that can support success in the new situation. Asking questions can bring hope and idea generation to Consumers. A situation that seemed hopeless can now seem more manageable.

Questions to ask:

- When have things been a bit better?
- Were you able to solve a similar situation in the past?
- Have you ever experienced a situation a bit like what you want to achieve now?

NOTES:

LIFE DOMAIN RATING SCALE

The Life Domain Rating Scale is an individualized rating scale, and it is created by the Consumer and the Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) together. It is referred to as a self-anchored rating scale. The major advantage of an individualized rating scale is that it is constructed to measure the specific concern or problem situation that your Consumer has identified as the focus of his or her work with the HRS.

The rating scale is directly connected to the thoughts, feelings, and or events that are being addressed in the helping process. Another important reason for the use of the individualized rating scale is that it is based on the Consumer's experiences and perceptions. The anchor points of the scale are defined by the Consumer.

Through the process, brief and explicit labels can be provided for the low, middle, and high points. They should be written in the consumer's language/words as much as possible. The labels provide examples of what the numbers represent. The anchors describe behaviors thoughts and feelings that the Consumer would experience at various points on the scale. Having the Consumer define the anchor points ensures that the points on the scale have relevance and meaning for the Consumer. The end result is a unique measure of the Consumer's feelings thoughts and behaviors that represent his or her perceptions and experiences.

HRS staff must review the life domains and complete the strengths process with each Consumer. Each life domain is reviewed to reveal obstacles and strengths in each life domain area and the impact of the life domain on the problem situation that has been presented. As for Community Rebuilders programming, the HRS will be gaining knowledge about the effect of each life domain on the housing stability and self-sufficiency of the household. Consumers are encouraged to prioritize life domain areas and goal setting to focus on those areas that will have the greatest potential for positive impact.

The Life Domain Rating Scale in combination with goal setting activities will:

- Provide direction to the helping process
- Ensure agreement between the consumer and the HRS about the desired end state of the helping process
- Facilitate the development of the intervention and evaluation plan
- Provide benchmarks to judge progress
- Provide outcome criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention and the helping process

HOW TO USE THE LIFE DOMAIN RATING SCALE

BASIC STEP	EXAMPLE FORMULATION
Introduction of the scale: Explain the scale	"Imagine a scale from 1 to 5. The 5 represents the desired situation: how would you like things to become?"
Current Position: Currently, where is the Consumer on the scale?	"The following is a list of rating scales regarding where you feel you are at this point in time. Please review each of the areas and give a rating between 1 and 5 (1 indicating what area you would like the most support with and 5 indicating an area you feel you need little or no help with)."
Primary and Secondary Goals determined:	"The Housing domain is the first goal we want to achieve. Our primary goal is for you to obtain housing within 14 days. The other domain areas, where you marked 3 or below, are secondary goals. We will work together on these once you get housed."
Past and Current Success: HRS focuses on domains that are 3, 4, and 5 as strengths of the Consumer	"I see that you have ____ areas on the life domain rating scale that you have ranked as a 3, 4, or 5. We see these as strengths. Can we talk about what is working well for you in these areas? What has helped you to achieve these goals? How can we put these strengths to work with your current goals?"
Step forward: HRS invites the Consumer to consider what small step forward they could take on the scale	"Has what we talked about been useful? What was useful in particular? How could you use that to take a small step forward? What would that step look like?"

~ Visser. 2009

Life Domain Rating Scale: The following is a list of rating scales regarding where you feel you are at this point in time along several different Life Domains. Please review each of these areas and give a rating between 1 and 5.

(One indicating what area you would like the most support with and 5 indicating what area you feel you need little or no help with.) The Housing Resource Specialist will talk with you about the ratings you provide and assist you in developing a plan at your request.

Life Domain Rating Scale (circle consumer responses from scale)					
Housing	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Resources	1	2	3	4	5
Supports Network	1	2	3	4	5
Transportation	1	2	3	4	5
Education	1	2	3	4	5
Landlord Relationship	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural/Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5
Health/Recovery	1	2	3	4	5
Other	1	2	3	4	5
If other, write life domain _____ _____					

GOAL SETTING AND PLANNING

In the goal setting process, GOALS must be stated positively and in a manner where progress can be noted. There is establishment of a clear understanding of the real results to achieve. Target dates have been set for the goal to be achieved. Strengths are identified to be used to achieve the goal, and Consumer feels confident in his or her ability to achieve the desired outcome (Confidence Scale).

The purpose of Goals are to direct the helping process.

1. Provide direction to the helping process
2. Ensure agreement between Consumer and HRS about the desired end state of the helping process
3. Facilitate the development of the intervention and evaluation plan

4. Provide benchmarks to judge progress
5. Provide outcome criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention and helping process

USING GOAL SETTING TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

Your Consumer has indicated they have a goal to obtain and maintain housing and goals to increase income and self-sufficiency. Although each Consumer in the program will share similar goals, each plan is individualized and based on the Consumer's needs, strengths, resources, wants, hopes, and dreams.

BASIC THINGS YOU NEED TO REMEMBER WHEN

SETTING GOALS: Goals are positive statements about a desired end. In a very broad way, they describe the desired end result when the helping process is complete. Be aware that people don't usually move from a problem situation to an accomplishment of a broad goal just by stating a goal. Instead, goals are most often obtained by moving through a series of measurable steps in order to reach the goal.

Objectives: The objectives are the intermediary steps that are taken to help us move closer to the broad goal or end result that we desire.

Limit your focus: The most common mistake that is made when setting goals is failure to focus on one or two manageable areas at a time. Use the life domain rating scale and be sure to ask your Consumer to prioritize the goals and objectives they want to focus on.

STEPS AN HRS WILL TAKE TO ASSIST CONSUMERS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

1. Ask your Consumers to describe in their own words the desired change they want to see as a result of working together.
2. Learn what will change for your Consumers when they achieve the goal.
3. Brainstorm with your Consumers all of the things they could say or do to achieve the goal. As an HRS you will help identify solutions; you do not provide the solutions. You will help your Consumers generate ideas that can become the objectives (steps) that will help them reach their desired end goal.
4. Once you and your Consumers have brainstormed potential steps that can be taken, you will test the ideas to see if they are: (a) realistic and obtainable, (b) can be measured, and (c) will get them one-step closer to achieving their goal. If the answer to each of these questions is yes, it is a potential action step.
5. To determine what steps will become actionable you and your Consumers should discuss two or three of the best immediate steps they want to take.

-
6. Once the steps to be taken are identified you should talk about what resources are available or are needed to help with achieving them. It is important to share with Consumers any strengths you have identified that you believe will be useful in completing the step.
 7. Finally, ask if there is anything that needs to be handled before your Consumer can move forward with the steps that have been identified.

MEMORIZE THE STEPS AND DO NOT SKIP ANY! A sure way to create frustration, discouragement, or make things appear impossible is by encouraging your Consumers to take on large, undefined problems or tasks by telling them to accomplish a lofty goal without assisting through the goal setting process. Only after completing the above steps can an HRS accurately record whether a Consumer has a clear understanding of the real results to achieve and knows the strengths that will be utilized to achieve his or her goals. These questions must be answered in the HRS strengths based plan each time a goal is updated. Consumers and the HRS should come to a consensus regarding the appropriate amount of progress to record.

ACTION PLAN FORM: We strive to make goal setting natural and hope that setting and obtaining goals will become a common experience for our Consumers. When possible, we want goals to be written in our Consumers words and we want them to have ownership over the action steps they will need to take.

The Action Plan form reinforces that we are partners with our Consumers, that they are in the driver's seat, and they are ultimately responsible for their success. The Action Plan form should be provided to each Consumer at each session as a way to document what occurred and what next steps are going to be taken.

Both the HRS and the Consumer use this form to make notes about follow-up actions or points to recall and most importantly to highlight strengths that are identified. This form does not become part of the permanent file, but is simply a tracking tool used to enhance the HRS strengths based planning process by recording action steps, strengths, and communication needs.

COMMUNITY REBUILDERS: ACTION PLAN FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Definition: An action plan explains who's going to do what, when they're going to do it by, and in what order they're going to do it to reach a goal.

USE THIS ACTION PLAN TO JOT DOWN NOTES FROM YOUR MEETING TODAY

- Include the concrete steps or to-dos that you need to accomplish in order to achieve your goals.
- Identify actions that need to occur within the next 30 days.
- Remind yourself of strengths and resources you will utilize.
- Record any notes you want to remember to discuss at your next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

STRENGTHS/RESOURCES:

NOTES:

CONFIDENCE SCALE:

A Confidence Scale provides a simple strategy to assess a Consumer's confidence in his or her ability to obtain the goal or action steps they have identified. This type of scale can be used for many purposes. It used in the HRS Strengths Based Plan to learn if the HRS and Consumer needs to bolster or re-evaluate a set goal or objective.

The process of using the scale is simple. HRS simply asks, "How confident are you that you will achieve the goal that you have set? An ideal answer would be "10" indicating 100% confident. Any answer that is less than a "10" is followed up by asking, "What would it take for you to move one number higher on the confidence scale?" If a consumer states that their confidence level is lower than a "7," a re-evaluation of the goal plan is required.

The confidence scale also provides helpful data giving the HRS feedback on the process of goal and objective development. You can use the data from the outcome scales of all of the Consumers you serve to know if our Consumers are leaving with a high level of confidence that they will achieve their goals.

If many of your Consumers do not have confidence in their ability to obtain their goals, then it may be an indication that you have not achieved mastery over the goal setting process, or you may need to increase your focus on the strengths and resources that are identified to help your Consumers achieve their goal to build confidence. HRS staff can use the data gained along with self-evaluation to gauge their effectiveness and to think about ways they might improve the goal setting process.

Consider the following example of goal development: (the what, duration, how often, where, confidence rating)

WHAT

I am going to try to walk more this week.

WHAT, DURATION

I plan to take 20-minute walks this week.

WHAT, DURATION, HOW OFTEN

*I plan 20-minute walks
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday this week.*

WHAT, DURATION, HOW OFTEN, WHERE

*I plan 20-minute walks to the mall and back on
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday this week.*

WHAT, DURATION, HOW OFTEN, WHERE, CONFIDENCE RATING

*My level of confidence of actually fulfilling this plan of
20 minutes walks to the mall and back on Monday,
Wednesday, and Friday this week is 7 out of a possible 10.*

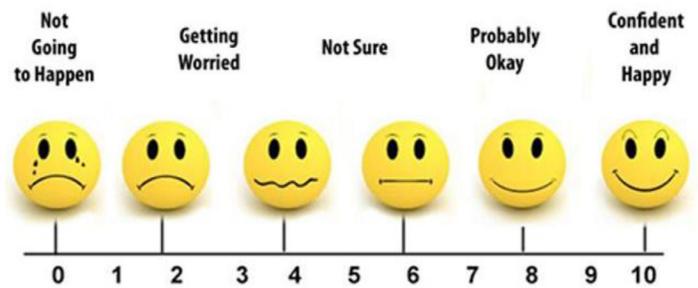
CONFIDENCE RATING SCALE

When goal plans are unspecific they are not very useful for helping Consumers follow through. When goals include what, duration, how often, where, and a confidence rating they are much more likely to be obtained.

You may find it useful to use a picture scale, such as the following, when discussing confidence levels with Consumers.

Sample scale:

Confidence



"If we ask people to look for deficits, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be colored by this. If we ask people to look for successes, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be colored by this." Kral, 1989

III) MONITORING AND PROGRESS:

The CR Housing Resource Specialist Strengths Based Plan requires ongoing evaluation, so that successes can be recognized, and adjustments can be made as necessary.

When Consumers are successful in carrying out agreed upon tasks the HRS gives credit to the Consumer for task achievement and amplifies success by encouraging the consumer to elaborate on how the specific task was achieved. This type of conversation reinforces the client's belief, and awareness, of their capacities. This conversation also helps the HRS to learn more about the Consumer's strengths and resources.

When the Consumer has not been successful in carrying out a task, the HRS assumes that the two need to do a better job of anticipating, and planning for obstacles. **This method is an essential solution focused intervention that the HRS utilizes to produce results, lift consumer spirits, and move forward with planning.** When goals need to be renegotiated, it is often to keep with the realities of the situation, or simply to recognize an environment

that limits options available to a family. The HRS offers essential support to reduce self-blame and feelings of inadequacy, so that the Consumer is not discouraged.

Useful Questions for Each Session:

- What would need to happen today in order for this to be a useful meeting to you?
- Are the goals and actions that we have established still relevant?
- Tell me about the actions you plan to take this next week to support your goals.
- What do we have to celebrate this week?

Useful Questions about Progress: “Using the “What’s better?” Question”

Use this question in follow-up as well as in later sessions with your Consumer. This question helps you and your Consumer focus on the progress that has been made and what has worked well. Usually it has a motivating effect, often leading to increased awareness of what works and useful ideas about next steps forward. Although the question may sound awkward, it really works well in the coaching process and allows Consumers to realize and share progress made in their journey in achieving housing sustainability.

- What changes have you noticed that have happened or started to happen as a result of moving into housing?
- **Continue to ask, “What is better?”**

This requires the HRS to be a good listener so to learn the details and important factors that have made things “better.”

What if Consumer responds with “**nothing is better**”? This then becomes an opportunity to ask and respond in the following way: “I am sorry to hear that nothing was better for you this week, how did you manage to handle such a rough week so well?”

Goal Progress Updates in HMIS:

Monthly monitoring of goal progress is entered into HMIS using a rating scale of 1-6. Consumers and HRS staff will decide together through discussion the appropriate amount of progress to record.

SERVICE TRANSACTIONS:

A service transaction is entered for each service provided. This may mean that multiple transactions of different types occur each time an HRS interacts with a Consumer. Program supervisors will offer specific direction regarding required service transactions that must be provided within each program.

Documenting Process – DAP:

USING DAP FORMAT TO DOCUMENT

DAP: What is it?

The DAP format stands for Data (D) Assessment (A) and Plan (P)

D - Data includes factual objective information

A - Subjective observation and assessment of the situation

P - Any plans for the future including tasks assigned:
FOLLOW UP REQUIRED

➤ Tips for Writing Good Progress Notes:

When to use DAP:

- 1. DAP is required when documenting critical or unusual incidents.**
- 2. DAP is required when completing a formal case note that will become part of the permanent file.**

HRS Test for good DAP format:

- If my Consumers read my progress notes, would they feel respected and would they agree with my objective account of our interaction?
- Are all of the relevant facts identified?
- Is my assessment/subjective information distinct from the data that is factual and objective?
- Have I included a plan or conclusion to the situation?
- Could anyone reading the document fully understand the situation?

IV) Graduated Disengagement and Termination:

The HRS will take a proactive approach in the disengagement and exit planning process with their Consumers.

- Services provided and proposed exit goals are discussed with consumers early on in the helping process.
- Progress towards established goals are recognized, and completion of goals is apparent.
- Consumers are assisted in strengthening natural supports as these, more than any funded project or service provider, are true sources of inspiration and hope.
- Normalization that acknowledges Consumers’ will likely continue to face financial, familial, and other problems, even though the family is no longer homeless or in a housing crisis. This allows the HRS to raise potential problems other clients have experienced, that the Consumer may or may not have considered as potential risk to their stability.

To increase the likelihood of successful termination with your Consumers:

- Be clear about the program exit date with Consumers early on in the process (within the first two meetings). Most program exits will coincide with the last day that financial assistance is provided. HRS can, at times, provide supportive services for households for up to six months after financial assistance ends. This however should be very rare and must include a goal and action plan related to the specific needs of the participant and how these needs will be met without the HRS in the future. This will more than likely include an increase in the participant’s natural support systems.
- Establish clear goals with your Consumers so that progress towards those goals can be recognized and completion of goals is apparent.
- Help Consumer identify and strengthen natural supports systems early on. These are true sources of inspiration and hope.

- Help clients review and celebrate the success they have had throughout the program
- Use scaling questions to help the Consumer identify signs of future housing instability. Support Consumers to anticipate how much of a problem they might have in a particular area. Together, the HRS and Consumer brainstorm coping techniques to utilize after program exit.
- Complete the exit paperwork. By completing the following forms, there should be no surprises, as this indicates that the program is ending:
 - Life Domain Rating Scale
 - Homeless Risk Prevention Plan
 - 30 Day Notice of financial assistance ending
 - Program Feedback Survey



SECTION 4 COMMUNITY REBUILDERS’ PROGRAM GOALS AND HUD PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

The Link between Community Rebuilders Program Goals and HUD HEARTH Act Performance Measure.

CR PROGRAM GOAL	BENCHMARK	INTENDED IMPACT	HEARTH ACT PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS
Obtain Housing	Lease signed within 21 days of Program Entry date	Housing stability	Housing stability
Maintain Housing	89% of Households served remain stably housed for at least 12 months	Permanent housing of Consumer’s choosing	Reduce the number of households entering or re-entering the homeless system
Increase Income	22% of Consumers served will have employment at exit	Increased household income	Increased Income
Increase Non-Cash Benefits	HRS will provide referral and linkage to all Program participants	Greater access to entitlement benefits	Housing stability
Increased Self-Sufficiency at Exit	90% of Consumers served will report enhanced health and/or well-being at exit	Increased self-sufficiency	Increased self-sufficiency at exit
Completion of Homeless Risk Prevention Plan	100% of Consumers complete at Exit	Reduction of number of households re-entering homeless system	Reduce the number of households entering or re-entering the homeless system
Data entered into HMIS	100% of data entered within 24 hours of entry into program	Enhanced use of HMIS	Enhanced use of HMIS to assist in Longitudinal Analysis of Community Outcomes



SECTION 5 THE VALUE OF CONSUMER FEEDBACK

What it Means To Be A Consumer-Driven Organization:

Consumer Feedback:

The primary purpose of each program is to help Program participants achieve long term housing stability and meet the goals set for their housing plans.

Ways in which we gather feedback include: Program feedback surveys, Focus groups, HRS satisfaction surveys, and HMIS.

Why ask for feedback

- We are a Customer centered agency. Consumer feedback and involvement is one of the most important Community Rebuilders values.
- Gives us tools to improve our programs
- Allows Community Rebuilders to respond to changes in the community (i.e. in 2010 Community Rebuilders wrote a grant proposal for prevention funding based on the fact that there weren't any prevention resources available in our Community at that time. We were awarded the grant from the Essential Needs Task Force and the ENTF program began.)
- It tells us what methods or approach are working (i.e. the most successful rapid re-housing program is one that allows Consumers to pay rent based on a graduated

scale: first and second month of program 25% of their total amount of rent, third and fourth 50%, fifth and sixth 75% of rent. Consumers felt most successful and well prepared to take over 100% of their rent using this method.)

- Tells us what is most important to participants, which might conflict with what the agency assumed.
- It can assure that our objectives make as much sense for Consumers as they do for our agency.
- A requirement of receiving continued program funding

NOTES:

SAMPLE PROGRAM FEEDBACK SURVEY To be completed at Consumer Program Entry and Exit

Rapid Re-Housing - Program Feedback Survey

Please take some time to answer these questions as honestly as possible. These surveys are used to help us provide the best services we can. Thank You!

Providing Agency: Community Rebuilders

Housing Resource Specialist: _____

Check the response that best matches how you feel.

1. **Rapid Re-Housing has helped me obtain decent, safe, and sanitary housing of my choosing.**

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

2. **I feel supported by my worker. Program staff respond to my needs.**

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

3. **With my worker, I have been able to develop goals that will help me in maintaining permanent housing.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

4. **I have met one or more of my personal goals because of my participation in this program.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

5. **I am satisfied with the services I received.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

6. **I felt respected as a person (age, race, religion etc.).**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

7. **Staff has helped me identify a new or different way to deal with my situation.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

8. **My worker has helped me identify other community resources that are available to me.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

9. **I have used or plan to use one or more of those other community resources.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

10. **This program has helped me to obtain employment or other income.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

11. **Please describe ways your worker was helpful.** _____

12. **How has the status of your difficulties changed since your contact with our agency?** _____

13. **How would you like to see our services changed?** _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS SURVEY

14. **If I have a problem with a staff member or program decision, I know how to appeal or file a grievance.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

15. **I understand program rules or guidelines.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

16. **I am not afraid to complain about the program.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

17. **I feel that the information I share with staff is kept confidential.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

Clients with Impairments or Special Needs Only:

1. **Staff was made aware of my impairment or special needs.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

2. **Staff recognized and accommodated my special needs.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

3. **Staff accommodated my needs by providing resources that I could understand.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Doesn't Apply

Name: (optional) _____



SECTION 6 SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL AND RESOURCES

Housing Resource Specialist

Strength Based Practices: Worker Assessment

An assessment tool to help workers identify the strengths they utilized in their interactions with clients

COLLABORATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION

- Y N My client was fully involved and an active participant in the decision-making process.
- Y N It was evident that I was working with the client not for the client or on behalf of the client.
- Y N I felt a sense of partnership with my client. We were working together to resolve difficulties.
- Y N I was not trying to reform or change my client.
- Y N I helped my client to expand his/her repertoire of choices and behaviors and to think about the pros and cons of each behavior.
- Y N A balance of power is evident in our relationship; it feels equitable.
- Y N Respect, trust, hope, understanding, inspiration, and appreciation are evident.

EMPOWERMENT

- Y N I openly shared my sources of power, my expertise, my access to resources, my interpersonal skills.
- Y N My resources were discussed as strengths I bring to the relationship vs. things I control.
- Y N My client was given a voice in defining resources and determining how they will be used.
- Y N I laid out the resource options available (my agency resources) and the conditions required to access them, and I explored the cost and possibility of each option with my client.
- Y N It was evident in my interaction that I expected the client to assume responsibility for him or her and the planned actions/interventions.
- Y N I listened.
- Y N Strengths were identified and utilized to promote hope, motivation, and action.

EVALUATION

- Y N I am aware and have documented my client's subjective assessment of whether the issues or concerns he or she is seeking help for has improved.
- Y N I continually evaluate the extent to which my understanding of the client's experience is consistent with the client's.
- Y N I am positive that there is agreement on the goals and action plans identified because we had an open dialogue about commitment and responsibility.

I follow a process and can identify where we are at in the process.

Assessment and Planning Phase

Identified client concerns and strengths
Discussed the helping process
Clarified worker and client roles
Established priorities

Action Phase

Developing Action and Evaluation Plan
Implementation of Action and Evaluation Plan
Prevention Planning
Terminating the helping relationship

HOUSING RESOURCE SPECIALIST ROLE PLAY SCENARIO AND RESPONSES

HRS = Housing Resource Specialist

P=Participant

HRS: Hi John, thanks for coming in today. How's your week been going?

P: Well, I had a pretty bad week; my car broke down and I need to get to work on Monday. If I'm not there, I could lose my job and I need it, even if I don't get many hours.

HRS: I'm sorry to hear that. I know how important your job is to you.

P: Yeah, I've got to get my car fixed. Can you guys help with that?

HRS: I can try to help figure out some solutions but unfortunately we don't have any funds for car repairs. I'm sensing that this is a pressing issue for you right now. Is this what you would like us to focus on first today?

P: Yeah, is there any way you can help me get to work on Monday?

HRS: I'm not allowed to do that but it does make sense to think about some possible options ahead of time. Has anyone helped you with rides in the past?

P: My neighbor took me to the doctor last week when my kids were sick.

HRS: Any chance you would feel comfortable explaining your situation and asking him to help again?

P: I could, but I don't know if he will be able to do it.

HRS: Well, let's throw out a few options that you think might work, and then you at least have somewhere to start. Hey, we might want to think about coworkers too, any possibilities there?

P: I don't want to bother them.

HRS: I understand that, but sometimes people really like to help out. Is there anyone of your coworkers you would be willing to ask?

P: I could ask Steve, I guess.

HRS: Okay, you've got Steve and your neighbor. Is there anyone else who has helped in the past that you want to add to our options?

P: My mom and my landlord.

HRS: Great! You've got your mom, your neighbor, Steve, and your Landlord. What do you think the chances are that one of them will be able to get you to work next week?

P: Probably pretty good for at least Monday and Tuesday.

HRS: Do you want to spend more time figuring out transportation and ideas for getting your car running again or do you want to focus on something else?

P: I think my car needs an alternator. When I get paid Wed, I'm going to get one and I can put it in myself.

HRS: I wish I had mechanical skills like that, I didn't know you could work on cars. What kinds of stuff can you do?

P: The basics; brakes, water pumps, radiators...

HRS: It sounds like you have some great skills. Maybe you can trade some of those skills for rides you will need. Heck, a lot of people I know would love having a friend who would change their oil.

P: I never thought of it like that. I just do what I have to do on my cars to get by.

HRS: How's it feel to think about it like that now?

P: Good, I guess, I kind of feel proud.

HRS: You should feel proud! I wish I had those skills. Keep me posted, I bet you can put those skills to good use with others. People are always looking for a way to save money on car repairs and wishing they had a friend who could help them out.

P: Hmmm, maybe.

HRS: Well, we don't have much time left; I want to make sure we talk about anything we need to related to your housing and the Keys First Program. Can we revisit your goals real quick?

P: Sure.

HRS: It looks like you wanted to get your GED paperwork turned in, how'd that go for you?

P: I was going to do that but just didn't have time, too much going on.

HRS: You have had a busy week, is it still a priority for you to get the paperwork turned in?

P: Yeah it is. I'll get to it this week.

HRS: Okay, how likely do you think it is that you will be able to get it done by Wednesday?

P: Pretty likely.

HRS: So, on a scale of one to five, with five being for sure, what do you think?

P: I'd say maybe a three.

HRS: Alright, I know how busy life can be, but I trust you when you tell me this is a priority, so I want to support you in this. Anyway we can get that number to a four or a five?

P: Yeah, I guess if I set aside some time tonight to work on it, I could probably move it to a four or a five.

HRS: Is it realistic to set some time aside tonight for yourself?

P: Yeah, I will do that.

HRS: Great! It sounds like you are going to be one step closer to your GED next week. I am really happy for you.

HRS: Were you able to set aside your rent portion this month?

P: I have \$75 saved.

HRS: Great, have you planned for saving the rest so that it will be paid on time?

P: I get a check on the 29th, so I will have the other half then.

HRS: Perfect. Let's write that on your calendar so we know it's a solid plan. I want to keep us on task and make sure our time together is valuable to you. Was it helpful to talk about your transportation options and do you feel like you will be successful in getting rides until you get your car fixed?

P: Yes, I'm going to ask people, even though I don't like to.

HRS: John, I know you to be a generous person. I cannot believe how many times you helped your neighbor by watching his kids. It's okay to be on the receiving end sometime. Good luck with the asking. Take care, see you next week.

NOTES:



Community Rebuilders • 1120 Monroe Avenue NW, Suite 220 • Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 458-5102 • Fax: (616) 458-8788 • communityrebuilders.org