

# Housing First to Treat and Prevent HIV

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# Carolyn Yorio Disclaimer

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# Presenter, Carolyn Yorio, MPH, LISW

Carolyn Yorio is the Director of Housing at Caracole. Caracole's mission is to positively change lives in the fight against HIV/AIDS through prevention, housing and care. Carolyn started at the organization in 2012 as a case management intern and moved to the housing department in 2019.

She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Cincinnati, a Master of Social Work from the University of Alabama, and a Master of Public Health from the University of Alabama Birmingham.

Ms. Yorio's work for the last several years has focused on the intersection of housing and chronic health condition management, as well as an internship in maternal addictions.



# Overview: Caracole Housing

Caracole is an AIDS service organization in Cincinnati, Ohio

- Provides permanent supportive housing to about 170 households every year
  - Mostly in scattered-site housing
  - A 19-unit site-based project
- Funding:
  - HUD Permanent Supportive Housing and Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)
  - Ryan White Part B through the Ohio Department of Health
  - Additional government and private funders, including the United Way

# How Are HIV and Housing Linked?

- Why are people living with HIV at increased risk of homelessness?
- How does homelessness increase the risk of contracting, transmitting, or having health complications from HIV?

# Linking HIV and Housing Stability

- Higher risk survival behavior
- Fear of people finding out HIV status
- Missed medical care
- Access to condoms & new needles
- Rx access & storage
- Lack of rest
- Food insecurity

# Intervention: Housing First to Treat and Prevent HIV

**Purpose:** to help clients achieve both housing stability and viral load suppression

**Priority population:** people who are homeless or unstably housed who have multiple barriers to housing stability:

- Multiple health conditions
- Low/no income
- Substance use
- Mental illness
- Legal histories

# Challenges

- Lack of affordable housing and landlords willing to work with subsidies
- Seeking to serve the most vulnerable means clients can be difficult to engage and difficult to house
  - No phone
  - No transportation
  - No income
  - Previous evictions
  - Legal histories
- Limitations based on funding availability and regulations





## Collaborative Care



Each client is assigned to a **housing specialist** and a **medical case manager** working together

Collaborative service plans

- Coordinated home visits
- Staff are trained and supervised together

The client, medical case manager, and housing specialist work as a team to:

- Identify needs
- Set goals
- Secure resources
- Move toward health and housing stability together

# Polling Question: Models for Client Intervention

Have you learned about or used any of these models in your work?

1. Harm Reduction — (Result: 81%)
2. Housing First — (Result: 39%)
3. Motivational Interviewing — (Result: 69%)

# Interventions Based on Values

## **Dignity, Respect & Empowerment**

- Housing First: Housing without precondition
- Motivational Interviewing: Engage in conversations about change
- Harm Reduction: Equip people to be as healthy and stable as they can be

# Outcomes: 2017 Study

- Project Entry
  - VLS: 66%
  - CD4>200: 28%
- Most Recent Labs
  - VLS: 79%
  - CD4>200: 45%

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# Outcomes: Measuring Success

Of the 169 households in Caracole permanent supportive housing in 2021:

- 83% achieved or maintained **viral load suppression**
- 72% in scattered-site housing **avoided a disruptive move** due to eviction or housing quality problems with the help of their Housing Specialists
- 94% **maintained their housing or graduated** to a more independent permanent option

# Lessons Learned: Equip Staff

- **Training** on client-centered service delivery models that empower both staff and clients in their work
- Support through **individual and group supervision**
- Appropriate **caseloads**: capped at 35 households
- Turnover happens; have the training tools and staff capacity to make vacancies and onboarding doable

# Lessons Learned: Find Flexible Funding

Leverage **private funds** alongside government grants to pay for all the pieces needed to provide this level of care

- Tenant meetings and classes
- Utility arrears
- Furniture and household items
- Cleaning supplies
- Cover damages beyond security deposit
- Incentives for program engagement

# References

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