

# **Shelter Diversion**

**A Conflict Resolution Approach to Keeping People Housed**

**CLEVELAND MEDIATION CENTER**

**[www.clevelandmediation.org](http://www.clevelandmediation.org)**

# Agenda Part 1

- **About Cleveland Mediation Center**
- **Introductions**
- **History of CMC's Diversion Program**
- **Diversion a Part of the Homeless System**
- **Role of Diversion in Ending Homelessness**
- **Diversion Outcomes**
- **CMC's Diversion Model**

# Agenda Part 2

- **Importance of Listening**
- **Diversion Steps**
- **Diversion Outcomes**
- **Diversion Video**
- **Funding Diversion**
- **Questions**
- **Closing**



# Cleveland Mediation Center

A Program of FrontLine Service

**Cleveland Mediation Center (CMC) has been mediating disputes and providing conflict resolution and mediation training to the greater Cleveland area since 1981.**

**Cleveland Mediation Center promotes just and peaceful community in Northeast Ohio by honoring all people, building their capacity to act, and facilitating opportunities for them to engage in conflict constructively.**

# CMC Programs



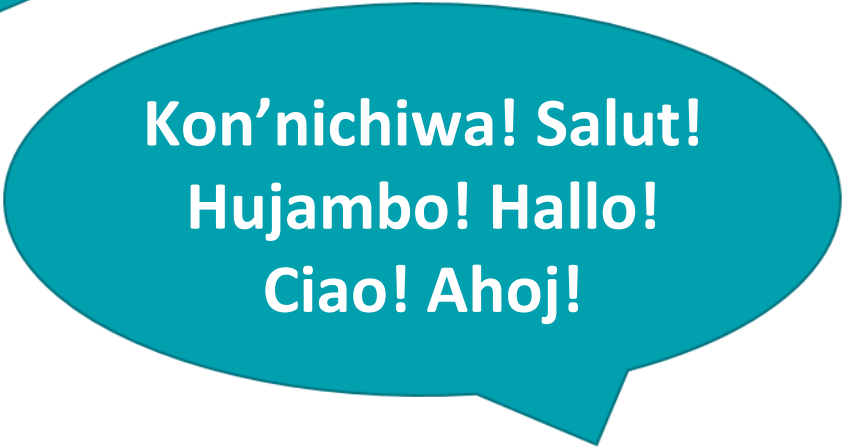
- **Community Mediation**
- **Court Connected Mediation**
- **Shelter Discharge Mediation**
- **Training**

# Introductions

- Name, where they work, role
- Favorite activity this season
- Any specific training expectations



Hola! Hello!  
Bog! Shalom!  
Marhaba!



Kon'nichiwa! Salut!  
Hujambo! Hallo!  
Ciao! Ahoj!

# **How Diversion Program started**

- **Learned about Diversion from National Alliance session**
- **Successful pilot in 2009 at men's shelter**
- **Conflict resolution/empowerment approach**
- **HPRP funding, full implementation**

# Coordinated Intake & Assessment

## Accessing Homeless Services in Cuyahoga County

- Centralized point of access
- In-person assessment required
- Public transportation system
- After hours access to shelter



# Diversion: A Part of the System

- **Not a separate system**
  - Provided within the existing Coordinated Entry System
- **Way of doing business...Commitment**
  - Part of the service design
- **Leveraging existing resources**
  - Collaboration and connections are key



# Diversion Is...

- **Empowering** people in crisis
- **NOT** a barrier to shelter
- People can begin **regaining control** over their situation and lives
- Can also be very helpful for persons already homeless, i.e. rapid rehousing clients

# Why is Diversion Important?

We understand that:

- The shelter experience is traumatic for everyone
- Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring
- Diversion can be short-term or permanent
- Reduces the number of families and individuals entering shelter

# How Does it Work?

## Everyone is at the table

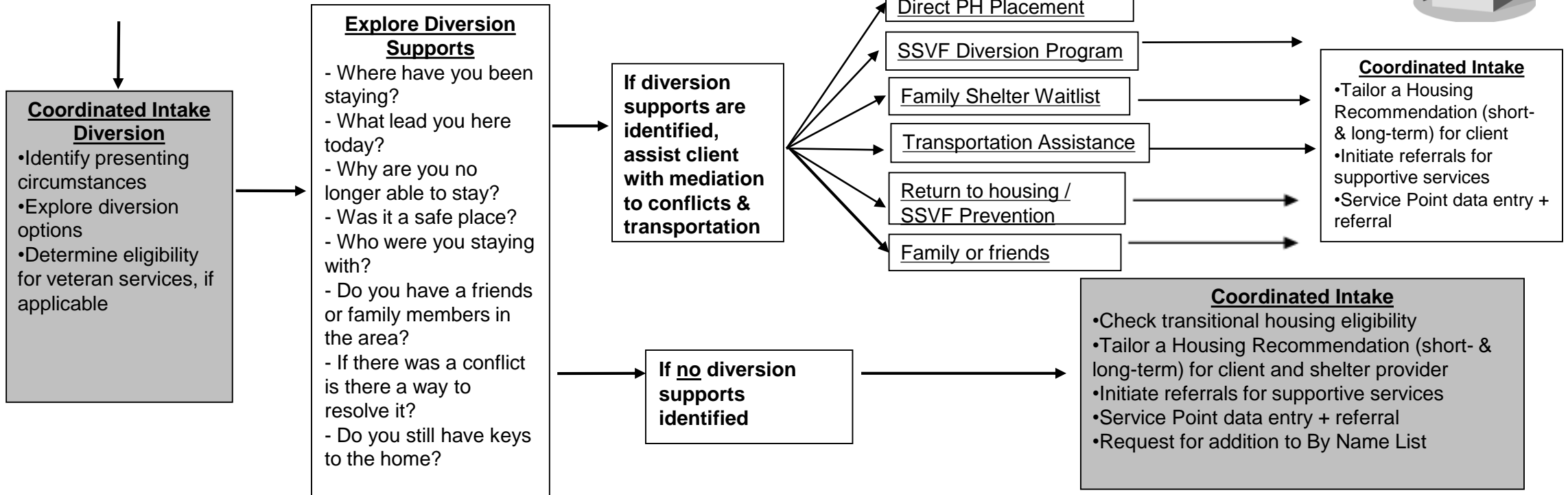
- Individualized, person-centered, quality problem solving
- Identification of other resources and supports
- Use of mediation and conflict resolution
- Financial support helpful, but not necessary



# Coordinated Intake & Diversion

## Lower Barrier to CI Access:

- No ID necessary
- No appointment necessary
- No income restriction
- No residency requirement
- No referral necessary
- Shelter-resistant...? OK!
- Open Mon-Fri (8a – 8p)

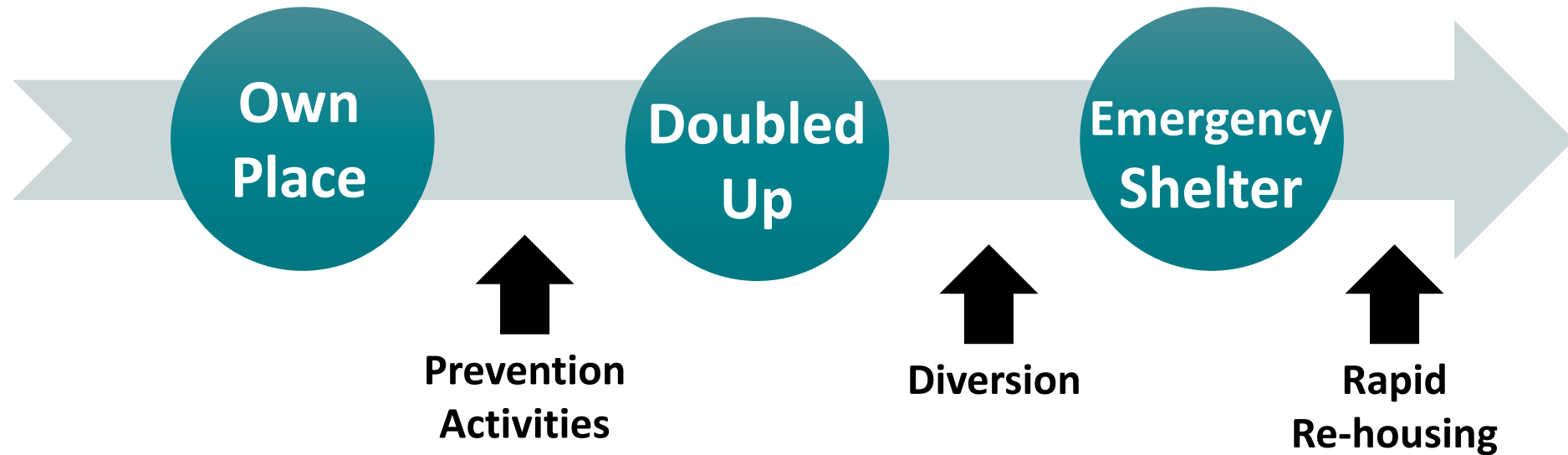


# Coordinated Assessment Analogy

Think of Coordinated Assessment as the emergency room of homeless services.

- 1. Patient (client) comes for emergency service**
- 2. Patient is triaged (Coordinated Assessment)**
- 3. Multi-disciplinary approach to treating and releasing**
- 4. ER's and hospitals in general operate from a treat and release as soon as possible approach**

# When and Where Diversion Can Happen



- **Diversion happens at the shelter door**
- **Diversion can happen in person, on the phone, or a combination of both**

# Bringing Diversion to the Table

The people we serve bring more than housing barriers to the table.

- Diversion acknowledges clientele resourcefulness
- Housing solutions come in surprising forms; diversion does not close the door to creative safe arrangements
- No one wants to end homelessness more than our clientele





# Diversion Improves all Homelessness

Diversion brings us toward Functional Zero, in more ways than “inflow reduction”

- Diversion prompts creating housing plan in advance of shelter placement
- Due to Diversion and ongoing housing offers, those who enter shelter in a diversion-focused system experience reductions in length of stay
- Ensures our limited PSH and RRH resources go to those with high-barriers who have no other options

# **Diversion Impact, real life stories**

- **Back to family in another state**
- **Managing shelter overflow**
- **Diverted temporarily and then to own housing**
- **No cost/low cost diversion**

# CMC Diversion Numbers

- Diverted 29% of families
- Diverted 20% of single adults
- Number diverted does not include people on shelter wait list
- Number diverted does include those who had short stay in shelter before being diverted

# Applying the Empowerment Theory of Conflict to Crisis

Can we apply similar strategies to people  
In CRISIS that we do to people in CONFLICT?

# Conflict Resolution Approach

- Homelessness is a crisis
- Listen and validate their experience
- Client-centered

# Conflict Resolution Approach

- **Strength-based approach**
- **Support and trust that people want to succeed.**

# Impact of Conflict and Crisis

**Conflict and crisis impedes the ability to:**

- **Be hopeful and confident**
- **Clarify goals**
- **Effectively advocate for oneself -- take back control of their lives**
- **Have positive interactions with other people**

**Questions?**



# **Shelter Diversion Part 2**

**LISTENING, DIVERSION STEPS, OUTCOMES, AND VIDEO**

# How Can We Help Change The Dynamic?

We start the empowerment process by \_\_\_\_\_.

# Listening

**National Alliance on Mental Illness:  
Empathy is the intimate comprehension of  
another person's thoughts and feelings without  
adding our own judgment or expectations.**

# Diversion Steps

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Active and Empathetic Listening**
- 3. Strength Exploration**
- 4. Moving forward**

# Group Exercise

- **Goal: to uncover strengths, successes, and networks for this particular client**
- **Each group will think about strengths, skills, successes, and networks that went into finding and maintaining clients own housing, their job at the restaurant, and their family connections**

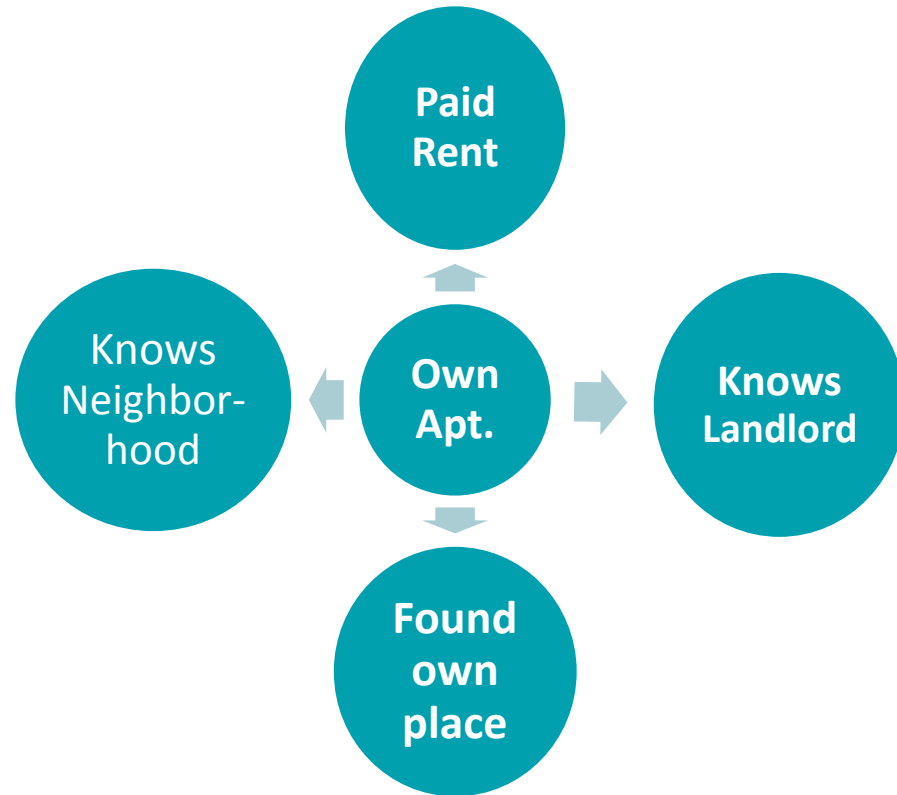
# Group Exercise

Imagine this scenario:

- **Your client and two children rented a house for two years**
- **Client moved out before eviction and stayed with Mom for almost a year**
- **Mom has given the client 3 days to move out – another child and her kids live there**
- **Client has high school diploma**
- **Client works part time at fast food restaurant**
- **Other parent contributes small amount of child support and helps out some with child care**

# Strengths and Resource Exploration

Using a client's previous apartment as an example of:  
successes (paid rent), relationships (knows landlord) and  
networks (knows neighborhood)



# **Diversion Outcomes**

- 1. Permanently back with friends of family**
- 2. Return to their own residence**
- 3. Temporarily diverted as they seek new housing**
- 4. Relocating permanently to safe place out of town**





# Funding Diversion

## DIVERSION ASSISTANCE CAN BE:

- Simple phone conciliation (no assistance funds)
- Mediation + small amount of food (\$35)
- Greyhound bus ticket (\$30-\$500)
- Other assistance like utility bills or back fees (\$200)
- First Month Rent + Deposit (\$1000+)

## LESS EXPENSIVE THAN:

- Rapid Rehousing (average for a family, \$880)
- Shelter stay (average for a family, \$4,819)
- Transitional Housing (average for a family, \$2,706)
- [Source:](http://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf)  
[www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf](http://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf)

# Diversion Training

- 2-day Diversion Training
- Train the Trainer session
- Highly rated trainings



**Questions?**

# Thank You!

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