



Coordination of Property Management and Supportive Services in Permanent Supportive Housing

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

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About CSH

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is a national non-profit organization and Community Development Financial Institution that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. Founded in 1991, CSH advances its mission by providing advocacy, expertise, leadership, and financial resources to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing. CSH seeks to help create an expanded supply of supportive housing for people, including single adults, families with children, and young adults, who have extremely low-incomes, who have disabling conditions, and/or face other significant challenges that place them at on-going risk of homelessness. For information regarding CSH's current office locations, please see www.csh.org/contactus.

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Information provided in this publication is suggestive only and is not legal advice. Readers should consult their government program representative and legal counsel for specific issues of concern and to receive proper legal opinion regarding any course of action.



Introduction

Permanent supportive housing is a successful, cost-effective combination of affordable housing with services that helps people live more stable, productive lives. A key practice in supportive housing is that supportive services staff — charged with advocating for tenants and linking them to essential services — work in partnership with property management staff to meet the needs of tenants. (Note: Such coordination of activities with property management staff may not be appropriate for some tenant-based supportive housing initiatives in which the landlord/property manager may not be aware of the tenant’s service needs or participation in services programming.)

Effectively coordinating supportive services and property management functions requires careful planning, including clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, and communication and confidentiality guidelines, among other considerations. Shared staff “buy-in” regarding the mission and philosophy of supportive housing is critical. To be successful, supportive housing operators must strike a balance among competing objectives — the cost of operating the housing, the safety and well-being of the tenant community, and the needs of individual tenants. Without careful planning and coordination, staff may find themselves caught off guard and unprepared to deal with the tensions that may arise as a result of these sometimes divergent but equally important goals.

The Coordination Self Assessment Tool

While supportive housing providers are repeatedly evaluated by outside stakeholders, these organizations may not have the opportunity to step back and assess their own performance and capacity.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing created this Coordination Self Assessment Tool to allow the management and staff of supportive housing units to take a deeper look at the level of coordination between their property management and supportive services functions, and how this relationship impacts tenants as well as staff. This assessment process may offer new insight into the collaboration between property management and supportive services staff. Recognizing that property management and supportive services have different and sometimes overlapping roles in supportive housing, this Tool aims to provide practical guidance on how staff can collaborate and coordinate their efforts more effectively.

Why Undertake the Self Assessment Process?

The management team may choose to conduct this self assessment at any stage, including:

- As part of the planning and development process for the creation of new supportive housing units;
- As a facet of an agency or department evaluation process,
- As part of an agency strategic planning process; or
- In response to feedback received from staff members, tenants, or outside stakeholders.

During the planning and development process, this Self Assessment Tool can be helpful in ensuring that the necessary groundwork for successful collaboration between property management and supportive services staff is in place. For supportive housing units already in operation, the assessment can prevent or troubleshoot some common pitfalls in the collaborative relationship between the property management and supportive service functions. An existing supportive housing provider may use this Tool to refine its policies and procedures or develop new systems, as needed.

About the Tool

There are three parts to this Coordination Self Assessment Tool:

- **PART 1:** Organizational Self Assessment by Senior Management
- **PART 2:** Interviews and Focus Groups with Staff
- **PART 3:** Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Tenants

Part 1 of this Tool offers a series of questions for staff, highlighting critical elements of a well-coordinated relationship between property management and supportive services functions. The section includes guidance for property managers and service providers. The management team that oversees housing operations and services staff should conduct Part 1. Ideally, the most senior position(s) overseeing property management and supportive services will complete this section.

Parts 2 and 3 consist of guidelines for conducting interviews and/or focus groups with staff and tenants of supportive housing. If appropriate, staff and tenants may be solicited to respond to anonymous surveys or be interviewed by a third party facilitator. A third party facilitator may contribute to a more in-depth evaluation and generate additional recommendations for improving coordination, but this step is not essential for the completion of the self assessment process.

How to Use the Tool

The Self Assessment Tool is intended to capture a snapshot of the extent of coordination between property management and supportive services staff. This Tool may be most effective when the following approach is used:

- Use this Tool as a worksheet to record responses to the questions posed in the self assessment process.
- Use these responses to guide efforts to improve the collaborative relationship between property management and supportive services functions.
- Look for red flags that may require immediate attention by management staff—a red flag represents an opportunity for strengthening the collaborative relationship between property management and supportive services staff.

During this self assessment process, assurances of confidentiality to staff members and tenants will increase their willingness to share their opinions and experiences.

Please note that the information gathered by the Self Assessment Tool should be considered carefully before being released. Staff members and tenants will benefit from learning about the results, but direct feedback about specific individuals should not be shared. The management team responsible for conducting the assessment process should take care to glean the important messages without introducing any unnecessary division into the relationship between property management and supportive services.



PART 1

Organizational Self Assessment by Senior Management

Part 1 of this Tool is a self assessment by senior manager(s) to identify whether adequate infrastructure to support everyday operations and service provision exists to promote effective collaboration between property management and supportive services staff. This section will help managers analyze whether the supportive housing operations include a well-defined organizational structure, well-articulated roles and responsibilities, clearly written policies and procedures, and — most importantly — shared goals for the tenants of the housing units.

The best person(s) to complete the self assessment may vary based upon the organizational structure. Typically, the ideal candidate has management-level responsibility for the implementation of property management and/or supportive services functions.

The topics covered in Part 1 are applicable whether the property management and supportive services functions are located in separate departments within the same organization or if one of these functions is performed by a separate organization. The questions at the end of Part 1, however, are intended specifically for supportive housing with partnerships in place between separate organizations.

Organizational Structure

There are different approaches to the provision of property management and supportive services in permanent supportive housing. The two most common approaches are:

- **Single Provider:** In this model, one organization provides both property management and supportive services with clear distinctions between these separate functions.
- **Partnership:** In this model, two or more organizations partner to provide property management and supportive services, with clearly delineated organizational responsibilities.

Regardless of the organizational structure, it is important to delineate clear lines of authority and identify who has the final word in decision-making. Invariably, circumstances will arise where property management and supportive services staff members will disagree on how to proceed with difficult situations, such as a tenant’s late rent payments or disruptive behavior. In these cases, having policies and procedures in place for resolving conflicts may help minimize tensions among staff.

LESSONS LEARNED

- If one organization has chosen to provide both property management and services functions, these two roles should be distinguished as separate departments or, at a minimum, separate roles and job functions. For example, the person who collects the rent and is responsible for eviction should not also be expected to run the weekly relapse prevention group. Providers and tenants should be clear which staff member is responsible for which functions.
- To ensure that the management and staffing structure reflects a balanced emphasis on property management and supportive services functions, key managers should review the organizational chart and staffing plans. An obvious disparity in the level of authority between managers of parallel departments can lead to a lop-sided staffing structure or the perception that one department is less valued within the supportive housing community.

1. Are the property management and supportive services functions separate and distinct, and is the distinction made clear to tenants and staff? For example, is rent collection performed by someone who does not also provide supportive services?

Response/Next steps »

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2. What is the highest ranking position among property management staff? What is the highest ranking position among supportive services staff? Is the highest-level property management manager at the same level as the highest ranking supportive services manager in the project’s organizational structure? To whom are they accountable?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Planning and Administration

Whether the supportive housing units are provided through a partnership between separate organizations or by a single organization providing both property management and supportive services, managers should consider whether good coordination is in place for these two core functions and whether staff members are working as a team.

When staff members from different organizations or departments operate under a common mission or philosophy, reaching agreement on day-to-day strategies may be easier to achieve. Staff from property management and supportive services should have a shared understanding of the goals of supportive housing. They should also understand each other's respective roles in helping tenants maintain their housing and achieve greater independence.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Management may consider devoting staff meeting time to discuss how the day-to-day activities in the project are linked to the larger mission and goals of the participating organization(s). Clearly developed goals should be reflected in the operating policies and procedures.
- When developing a working relationship with such significant impacts on the lives of tenants, organizations are advised to make sure their policies and procedures for the housing are well-coordinated and complementary. Staff members should understand how to navigate areas of overlap, and when they should pass on or pick up responsibility.
- Forming cross-department committees (with representatives from both property management and supportive services staff) to draft, review, and revise specific policies and procedures creates opportunities to learn about each other's roles and reach agreement on how staff can best coordinate their efforts.

1. When the supportive housing units were in the planning stages, were the following issues discussed between property management and supportive services staff? Are they addressed in policies and procedures? Do staff periodically revisit and revise their approaches to the following issues jointly?

A. Organizational mission and philosophy

Response/Next steps »

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B. Goals (e.g. housing retention vs. program goals, expectations regarding sobriety, employment) and the purpose of providing supportive services

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Planning and Administration (continued)

1. When the supportive housing units were in the planning stages, were the following issues discussed between property management and supportive services staff? Are they addressed in policies and procedures? Do staff periodically revisit and revise their approaches to the following issues jointly? (continued)

C. Conditions of tenancy and expectations for tenant behavior, including participation in services and grounds for eviction and/or denial of services (e.g. due to threats, violence, or other lease violations)

Response/Next steps »

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D. Areas of primary responsibility and overlapping responsibility between property management and supportive services functions

Response/Next steps »

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2. Do staff work together on creating and/or revising the following policies, procedures, and key documents?

A. Organizational chart

Response/Next steps »

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B. Tenant selection criteria

Response/Next steps »

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C. Confidentiality policies (how information about tenants will be shared between property management and supportive services staff)

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Planning and Administration (continued)

2. Do staff work together on creating and/or revising the following policies, procedures, and key documents? (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

D. House rules and visitor policies

Response/Next steps »

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E. Tenant handbook

Response/Next steps »

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F. Tenant grievance procedures

Response/Next steps »

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G. Lease agreement

Response/Next steps »

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H. Community building goals (e.g. monthly tenant council meetings, community events, etc.)

Response/Next steps »

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I. Structured opportunities for tenant involvement (e.g. participation in tenant council, volunteer opportunities, etc.)

Response/Next steps »

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Roles and Responsibilities

A. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A strong partnership between property management and supportive services staff is critical to ensuring that a supportive housing units are operated smoothly and effectively. For this partnership to develop, staff should discuss and adopt policies and procedures in line with their distinct roles and responsibilities. Most importantly, staff should address areas of overlapping responsibility between property management and supportive services functions.

Property Management Role — The key role of property management is maintenance, rent collection, and financial management of the housing. Property management staff should work collaboratively with supportive services staff on such tasks as tenant selection and screening, move-in and orientation, and crisis management.

Supportive Services Role — The key role of supportive services is to promote housing stability by helping tenants fulfill the obligations of their tenancy. Services staff help tenants identify and address their goals and meet their needs by helping them access a wide range of services, including crisis management, recovery services, medication management, education and vocational services, and socialization and recreational activities. Since services are provided in a permanent housing setting,

the services should also be geared toward creating a sense of community that is welcoming and comfortable for all.

While property management and supportive services staff should maintain distinct roles, their sometimes divergent goals can lead to tensions that are actually healthy in a working relationship. If property management and services staff commit to the shared goal of ensuring the effective operation of the supportive housing community, they should be able to acknowledge and negotiate their potential conflicts, especially when these involve areas of overlapping responsibility.

LESSONS LEARNED

For more detailed guidance on the key functions of property management and supportive services staff, please refer to CSH’s web-based *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, www.csh.org/toolkit2, including the following resources:

- [Key Principles for Coordinating Property Management and Supportive Services in Supportive Housing](#)
- [Property Management and Supportive Services: Roles and Responsibilities and Areas of Overlap](#)

1. Are policies and procedures in place that address the respective roles and responsibilities of property management and supportive services staff in the following areas?

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

A. Tenant screening and selection (including applicant interviews)

Response/Next steps »

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B. Tenant orientation

Response/Next steps »

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Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

1. Are policies and procedures in place that address the respective roles and responsibilities of property management and supportive services staff in the following areas? (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

C. Building maintenance problems

Response/Next steps »

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D. Non-payment of rent

Response/Next steps »

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E. Behavioral issues

Response/Next steps »

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F. Evictions

Response/Next steps »

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G. Crises (e.g. medical, psychiatric, violence, fire, etc.)

Response/Next steps »

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H. Unit inspections and habitability problems (e.g. hoarding and cluttering, etc.)

Response/Next steps »

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I. Visitor policies

Response/Next steps »

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Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

B. OUTREACH AND TENANT SELECTION

Property management and services staff should be clear about their roles and responsibilities in an effective outreach and tenant selection process. Providers should give careful consideration to those who may be living in supportive housing and what their needs may be. Supportive housing providers should develop clear policies and procedures for conducting applicant interviews and for sharing information

about prospective tenants. Because fair housing laws offer numerous protections for applicants, supportive housing providers should document their tenant outreach and selection policies and procedures. Management staff should consult their governmental program representative or legal counsel for additional guidance.

2. Who is involved in outreach efforts to solicit applicants for the supportive housing units? (e.g. Who is wait list contact? Who makes announcements to appropriate venues?)

Response/Next steps »

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3. Do staff members and other authorized participants (e.g., tenant leaders or tenant representatives) understand what questions may be asked during prospective tenant interviews and what questions should not be asked in order to protect an applicant's fair housing rights?

Response/Next steps »

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4. Do staff members understand what information from the services interview may be shared with property management staff?

Response/Next steps »

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5. Who makes the final decision regarding whether to select a tenant (property management or supportive services departments)? Who is involved in hearing appeals of the decision to accept or reject an application for housing? How does the final decision maker consider the recommendations or concerns of other parties? Do staff members know what process the decision-maker uses to consider that input?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

C. DEALING WITH RENT PAYMENT, RENT ARREARS, AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

An effective collaboration between property management and supportive services staff should have regular forums for discussing a tenant’s non-payment of rent and other lease violations. The supportive housing community’s written policies should specify who will communicate

with the tenant in these situations, and what form the communication will take. Oftentimes, supportive housing providers will choose to have the most senior position overseeing property management and supportive services functions make any eviction-related decisions.

6. How do staff coordinate their efforts to address a tenant’s non-payment of rent? What about other issues such as nuisance and disruptive behavior (e.g. house rule/lease violations, etc.)?

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7. Who makes the final decision regarding whether to evict a tenant (property management and/or supportive services departments)?

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8. How does the final decision take into consideration the recommendations or concerns of other parties? Do supportive services staff review and “sign off” every eviction decision to signal that all appropriate interventions have failed?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Staff Supervision and Training

To operate successful supportive housing, all involved organizations should invest in regular supervision and training to build staff capacity to address the needs of the tenants. Providers should consider designing a training plan to increase the awareness of property management and supportive services staff regarding their distinct roles in the community.

If resources are limited, providers may be able to take advantage of trainings available in the general community. Cross training may also help build understanding and collaboration among staff, while providing an opportunity for staff to be recognized for their expertise.

- 1. Are regular cross trainings offered for property management and supportive services staff? Are new staff members oriented to the roles and responsibilities of other staff (including another department's staff members)? Are regular trainings held on issues of common concern?**

Response/Next steps »

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- 2. Do staff members have an outside resource to which they can turn for consultation when an issue presents that is beyond their training and expertise?**

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- 3. Does the employee evaluation system provide feedback and goals related to teamwork, coordination, and tenant outcomes?**

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Cross-Team Communication

Communication between property management and supportive services staff — including regular cross-team meetings and shared documentation — is crucial to well-coordinated operations in supportive housing. Issues requiring frequent communication include tenant selection, move-ins, changes in household composition, rent collection, lease violations, incidents/crises, and health and safety issues.

A coordinated response to crises and incidents is only possible through effective lines of communication between property management and supportive services staff.

Staff should have a mutual understanding of when and how information about tenants will be shared between teams. The sharing of confidential information about tenants has legal implications, and all staff members should receive training on relevant laws and policies.

- 1. Do high ranking property management staff and high ranking supportive services staff have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss ongoing communication, staff issues, and policies and procedures? Is there a standard agenda for these meetings that identifies what issues can and will be discussed?**

Response/Next steps »

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- 2. Is there a regularly scheduled forum for discussing and mediating issues related to specific tenants (e.g. case conference meeting)? Who facilitates this meeting?**

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Cross-Team Communication (continued)

3. Is there an incident review committee with representation by property management and supportive services staff?

Response/Next steps »

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4. Do supportive services staff members receive copies of incident reports and all tenant correspondence pertaining to non-payment of rent, nuisance behaviors, property damage, etc.?

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5. Do supportive services staff members inform property management staff of activities it sponsors, especially if these activities impact operations (e.g. use of space, equipment, tools and/or resources, etc.)?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Cross-Team Communication (continued)

Contracted services for property management or supportive services, or for specific job functions within these responsibilities, often bring valuable expertise and experience to a supportive housing project. Successful coordination with partners, however, requires setting realistic expectations regarding what outside parties may be able to contribute. Outlining these expectations in a formal agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), is a helpful step to provide a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of each partner organization. Confusion may arise over roles and responsibilities if partners do not reach specific agreements

in these areas. It is recommended that these agreements contain accountability and evaluation requirements for partner organizations to achieve. Additionally, supportive housing providers should assign a specific staff person to supervise and communicate with partner organizations.

NOTE: The following questions are for projects that are operated by a partnership (either property management or supportive services functions are contracted out to another entity), or projects that subcontract out any aspect of operations or services to another party.

6. Is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement in place that defines the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner or contractor?

Response/Next steps »

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7. Where do contractors fit into the organizational structure/hierarchy? To whom are the contractors accountable?

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8. Are procedures in place that include the regular evaluation of the contractor’s performance and regular opportunities to revisit and revise the MOU or partnership agreement?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

PART 2

Interviews and Focus Groups with Staff

Part 2 of this Coordination Self Assessment Tool provides suggested guidelines for conducting interviews and focus groups with staff members to collect their experiences and perspectives regarding the working relationship between property management and supportive service functions. Senior managers may wish to engage a neutral third-party facilitator to conduct the interviews and focus groups to yield more candid feedback. However, this approach is not essential for the self assessment, and organizations may be able to capture this information through the involvement of impartial staff or by using anonymous surveys.

The guidelines for conducting the interviews and focus groups consist of five phases:

Phase 1: Focus Groups with Front-Line Staff

Phase 2: Interviews with Managers

Phase 3: Interviews with Senior Management

Phase 4: Interview with Human Resources Manager

Phase 5: Analysis of Interviews and Focus Groups

The guidelines for the interviews and focus groups assume that property management staff and supportive services staff report to different departments or supervisors and that the manager of each department reports to a member of the executive management team. The guidelines should be adapted as necessary to align with the actual organizational structure.

Phase I: Focus Groups with Front-Line Staff

A. Conduct a focus group with all property management staff members (separate from supportive services staff).

B. Conduct a focus group with all supportive services staff members (separate from property management staff).

1. Have each focus group brainstorm the specific roles and responsibilities of property management and supportive services staff in the following areas:

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

A. Tenant selection »

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B. Tenant orientation »

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C. Building maintenance problems »

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D. Non-payment of rent »

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E. Behavioral issues »

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F. Evictions »

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Phase I: Focus Groups with Front-Line Staff (continued)

1. Have each focus group brainstorm the specific roles and responsibilities of property management and supportive services staff in the following areas: (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

G. Crises (e.g. medical, psychiatric, violence, fire, etc.) »

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H. Unit inspections and habitability problems (e.g. hoarding and cluttering, etc.) »

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I. Strategizing to remedy ongoing violations of the house rules and/or lease agreement »

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J. Problematic behavior by visitors »

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K. Child neglect and abuse issues/supporting the development of parenting skills »

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L. Criminal activity in the community »

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Phase I: Focus Groups with Front-Line Staff (continued)

2. Have each group brainstorm responses to the following questions.

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

A. What are the goals of your supportive housing project?

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B. What are the goals for tenants who have chemical dependency issues? (e.g. total abstinence, harm reduction, housing stability, etc.)

Response/Next steps »

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C. What is the project's approach to dealing with nuisance and disruptive behavior by tenants?

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D. What are the criteria for eviction?

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3. Ask each group the following questions: What are your perceptions of the collaborative relationship between the property management and supportive services functions? What are some of the areas where the departments work well with each other, and some of the areas that could be improved? Do you have specific suggestions for improvement?

Response/Next steps »

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Phase 2: Interviews with Managers

Separate interviews should be performed with the manager of supportive services and the manager of property management.

1. Which of the following issues have caused conflicts within the supportive housing community?

Rate each between 1 and 5, with 1 meaning no conflict and 5 meaning significant conflict. Respondents may wish to elaborate and should be encouraged to do so, especially when a rating of 3 or higher is given.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Satisfactory

Challenged

A. Project Goals: Do staff members from different teams — as well as tenants — agree on the goals of supportive housing? *(1 means all agree with and understand goals, 5 means everyone has different goals.)*

- 1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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B. Tenant selection: Do staff members have clearly defined policies and procedures to follow regarding the use of information revealed in the tenant screening process, including eviction records search, criminal background checks, and landlord references? *(1 means all parties agree on and understand how this information will be treated, 5 means the standards are a significant source of conflict.)*

- 1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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C. Nuisance and Disruptive Behavior: Do staff members have rules and procedures for how inappropriate behavior by tenants and/or their guests will be handled? *(1 means the rules and procedures are clear and understood by all and that everyone understands how to proceed when they are violated, 5 means the standards are unclear and/or are not applied consistently.)*

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Response/Next steps »

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Phase 2: Interviews with Managers (continued)

1. Which of the following issues have caused conflicts within the supportive housing community?
Rate each between 1 and 5, with 1 meaning no conflict and 5 meaning significant conflict. Respondents may wish to elaborate and should be encouraged to do so, especially when a rating of 3 or higher is given.
 (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
 Satisfactory Challenged

D. Confidentiality: Are procedures on maintaining tenant confidentiality made clear? Do staff members and tenants disagree about what information can be shared? *(1 means that all staff understand and follow policies and procedures related to confidentiality, 5 means that significant disagreement or lack of understanding exists about the rules.)*

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Response/Next steps »

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E. Evictions: Are the protocols for evictions clear and agreed upon? *(1 means that staff all teams understand their respective roles regarding the steps toward eviction and no major disagreement occurs regarding the need to evict a tenant, 5 means that department staff have significant disagreements regarding tenant evictions and blame one another when tenants do not successfully maintain housing stability.)*

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Response/Next steps »

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F. At-Risk of Eviction: Do staff members understand how to access support services to help prevent evictions? *(1 means that staff members in property management and supportive services collaborate to access support services to help prevent evictions, 5 means that property management does not understand the role of supportive services to help prevent evictions.)*

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Response/Next steps »

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Phase 2: Interviews with Managers (continued)

1. Which of the following issues have caused conflicts within the supportive housing community? Rate each between 1 and 5, with 1 meaning no conflict and 5 meaning significant conflict. Respondents may wish to elaborate and should be encouraged to do so, especially when a rating of 3 or higher is given. (continued)

G. Voluntary Services: Do staff and tenants agree that participation in services (e.g. case management) should not be a condition of tenancy? (1 means that a policy of voluntary services is understood and accepted by all staff, 5 means that there is no policy or the policy is a source of significant disagreement.)

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Response/Next steps »

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H. Tenant Satisfaction: If a tenant is dissatisfied with the supportive housing community, do staff members blame each other? (1 means staff members never blame one another, 5 means staff members blame one another frequently.)

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Response/Next steps »

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I. Staff Conflict: Do staff members or tenants believe conflict exists between property management and supportive services functions? (1 means staff members and tenants do not believe the current structure presents a conflict, 5 means that a significant perception of favoritism exists toward one team or the other.)

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Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT

Satisfactory

Challenged

Phase 3: Interviews with Senior Management Staff

A. Interview the individual(s) who supervise the managers of the property management and supportive service departments. This group may or may not include the executive director(s) of the organization(s).

1. Which of the following are in place? Which of these are challenging and require staff attention?

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

A. Clearly defined goals: How are they communicated to managers? »

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B. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities: Are job descriptions updated regularly? »

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C. Clear communication protocols: How do you make sure everyone involved in the housing gets needed information? »

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D. Personal accountability: Do managers and front-line staff have an opportunity to provide input on the performance of senior management? »

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Phase 3: Interviews with Senior Management Staff (continued)

1. Which of the following are in place? Which of these are challenging and require staff attention? (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

E. Unity of approach: How do you work with your management team to make sure you are all “on the same page”? »

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F. Commitment to learning: How often are you able to focus on your professional development? What skills would you like to work on? Are all employees provided an opportunity for ongoing professional development? »

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G. Leadership: Is the distribution of authority in the organization clear and supported? Do people look to you when they need guidance? »

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H. Community input: Do you solicit input from the tenant community on project/staff performance? Do you regularly survey tenants? »

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Phase 3: Interview with Senior Management (continued)

2. Do staff members report feelings of frustration when tenants show uneven progress? How do managers support staff members when they are feeling frustrated?

Response/Next steps »

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3. Does the current staff evaluation system include consideration of collaborative decision-making and team building practices?

Response/Next steps »

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4. To what extent does the current organizational culture embrace the goals of collaboration and team building (e.g. cross-training, retreats, etc.)? What else could be done to encourage more collaboration?

Response/Next steps »

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5. How does the agency view its current capacity in both property management and supportive services functions? How do you see that organizational capacity developing in the future?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Phase 3: Interview with Senior Management (continued)

6. Which of the following issues have caused conflicts? Rate each between 1 and 5, with 1 meaning no conflict and 5 meaning significant conflict. Respondents may wish to elaborate and should be encouraged to do so, especially when a rating of 3 or higher is given.

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

A. Goals: Do staff members from different teams — as well as tenants — agree on the goals of the supportive housing community? (1 means all agree on and understand goals, 5 means everyone has different goals.)

- 1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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B. Tenant selection: Do staff members have clearly defined policies and procedures to follow regarding the use of information revealed in the tenant screening process, including eviction records search, criminal background checks, and landlord references? (1 means all parties agree on and understand how this information will be treated, 5 means the standards are a significant source of conflict.)

- 1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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C. Nuisance and Disruptive Behavior: Do staff members have rules and procedures for how inappropriate behavior by tenants and/or their guests will be handled? (1 means the rules and procedures are clear and understood by all and that everyone understands how to proceed when they are violated, 5 means the standards are unclear and/or are not applied consistently.)

- 1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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Phase 3: Interview with Senior Management (continued)

6. Which of the following issues have caused conflicts? Rate each between 1 and 5, with 1 meaning no conflict and 5 meaning significant conflict. Respondents may wish to elaborate and should be encouraged to do so, especially when a rating of 3 or higher is given. (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

D. Confidentiality: Are procedures on maintaining tenant confidentiality made clear? Do staff and tenants disagree about what information can be shared? (1 means that all staff understand and follow rules and procedures related to confidentiality, 5 means that there is significant disagreement or lack of understanding about the rules.)

1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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E. Evictions: Are the protocols for evictions clear and agreed upon? (1 means that staff in all teams understand their respective roles regarding the steps toward eviction and no major disagreement occurs regarding the need to evict a tenant, 5 means that department staff have significant disagreements regarding tenant evictions and blame one another when tenants do not successfully maintain housing stability.)

1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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F. At-Risk of Eviction: Do staff members understand how to access support services to help prevent evictions? (1 means that staff members in property management and supportive services collaborate to access support services to help prevent evictions, 5 means that property management does not understand the role of supportive services to help prevent evictions.)

1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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Phase 3: Interview with Senior Management (continued)

6. Which of the following issues have caused conflicts? Rate each between 1 and 5, with 1 meaning no conflict and 5 meaning significant conflict. Respondents may wish to elaborate and should be encouraged to do so, especially when a rating of 3 or higher is given. (continued)

SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

G. Voluntary Services: Do staff and tenants agree that participation in services (e.g. case management) should not be a condition of tenancy? (1 means that all staff understand and accept a policy of voluntary services, 5 means that there is no policy or the policy is a source of significant disagreement.)

1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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H. Tenant Satisfaction: If a tenant is dissatisfied with the supportive housing community, do staff members blame each other? (1 means staff members never blame one another, 5 means staff members blame one another frequently.)

1 2 3 4 5

Response/Next steps »

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I. Staff Conflict: Do staff members or tenants believe conflict exists between property management and supportive services functions? (1 means staff members and tenants do not believe the current structure presents a conflict, 5 means that there is a significant perception of favoritism toward one team or the other.)

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Response/Next steps »

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Phase 4: Interview with Human Resources Manager

Interview the Human Resources Manager (or staff person with Human Resources responsibilities.)

1. Does the current staff member evaluation system recognize collaborative decision-making and team building?

Response/Next steps »

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2. To what extent does the current organizational culture embrace the goals of collaboration and team building (e.g. cross-training, retreats, etc.)?

Response/Next steps »

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3. Do staff members report feelings of frustration when they work collaboratively across teams? What more does the organization need to do to support collaboration among staff members?

Response/Next steps »

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4. Does the organization conduct exit interviews of staff members? What issues are cited as common reasons for leaving?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Phase 5: Analysis of Interviews and Focus Groups with Staff

The staff interviews and focus groups will yield a great deal of helpful information for the overall management of supportive housing. Listed below are a few suggestions for analyzing the

information collected from the interviews and focus groups and for formulating responses.

- 1. Identify gaps in policies and procedures that are leaving property management and supportive services staff feeling “stranded,” unaware of how to proceed and how to collaborate with other staff. (Note: Such situations can lead to blaming and “splitting” among staff members.)**

Response/Next steps »

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- 2. Identify philosophical differences between staff. (Note: Uniting staff members behind supportive housing mission and goals is often the first step to effective collaboration.)**

Response/Next steps »

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- 3. Identify key sources of conflict. Look for common perceptions of the nature of the problem. (Note: Staff often agree about what the problems are, but differ in their perceptions of the origin of the problem and/or who is responsible for addressing it.)**

Response/Next steps »

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- 4. Determine whether staff have an adequate understanding of each others’ roles and responsibilities.**

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Phase 5: Analysis of Interviews and Focus Groups with Staff (continued)

5. Identify gaps in communication protocols.

Response/Next steps »

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6. Identify needs for additional staff training.

Response/Next steps »

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7. Assess management staff’s effectiveness in fostering the values of collaboration, empathy and commitment to the mission across departments.

Response/Next steps »

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8. Most importantly, highlight what is working well.

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged



PART 3

Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Tenants

Part 3 of this Self Assessment Tool provides suggested guidelines for conducting interviews and/or focus groups with supportive housing tenants to understand their experiences and perspectives regarding the collaborative relationship between property management and supportive services staff. The interviews and/or focus groups are intended to be conducted by a neutral third-party facilitator as this will likely yield more candid feedback. However, this approach is not essential, and organizations may be able to capture this valuable information through the involvement of impartial staff members or by using anonymous tenant surveys. The guidelines for conducting the interviews and/or focus groups consist of two phases:

Phase 1: Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Tenants

Phase 2: Analysis of Interviews and/or Focus Groups

Phase 1: Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Tenants

Conduct interviews and/or focus groups with a representative group of supportive housing tenants. Involve one representative for every 6-10 residents within the supportive housing community, with a maximum of 15 tenants.

1. How do tenants participate in deciding how the supportive housing is operated?

Response/Next steps »

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2. How were you informed of behaviors that could lead to eviction? How are the rules enforced?

Response/Next steps »

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3. If you have a serious problem with a staff member, who would you talk to?

Response/Next steps »

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4. With what types of issues have staff provided you the most help?

Response/Next steps »

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5. With what types of issues do you wish staff members had been more helpful?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT

Satisfactory

Challenged

Phase 1: Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Tenants (continued)

6. How is the role of your case manager different from the role of your property manager?

Response/Next steps »

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7. Do you feel certain that what you tell your case manager will not be repeated to others?

Response/Next steps »

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8. What types of activities or support services offered have been most helpful to you?

Response/Next steps »

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9. If there was one thing you wish staff members could do better, what would that be?

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged

Phase 2: Analysis of Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Tenants

The interviews and/or focus groups with tenants will yield a great deal of helpful information for the management of the housing operations and the delivery of services. Listed below

are several suggestions for analyzing the information collected from the interviews and focus groups and for formulating responses.

1. Assess the need for improved communication with tenants about the roles and responsibilities of property management and supportive services staff.

Response/Next steps »

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2. Assess the need for a clearer explanation of lease provisions and house rules.

Response/Next steps »

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3. Assess the adequacy of current initiatives to collect tenant feedback and involve tenants in the decisions that impact their housing.

Response/Next steps »

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4. Use the information to inform staff training plans.

Response/Next steps »

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5. Assess whether current engagement strategies are adequate, and whether more needs to be done to publicize the services available.

Response/Next steps »

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6. Most importantly, highlight what is working well.

Response/Next steps »

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SELF ASSESSMENT
Satisfactory Challenged



Additional Resources

For additional resources on coordinating property management and supportive services in permanent supportive housing, please refer to the Corporation for Supportive Housing's web site at www.csh.org. Resources that may be of particular interest include:

- The *Coordinating Management and Social Services in Supportive Housing Training Curriculum* and handouts, available at www.csh.org/training.
- CSH's publication *Not a Solo Act: Creating Successful Partnerships to Develop and Operate Supportive Housing*, available at www.csh.org/publications.
- The web-based *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, available at www.csh.org/toolkit2, and includes the following resources:
 - [Key Principles for Coordinating Property Management and Supportive Services in Supportive Housing](#)
 - [Property Management and Supportive Services: Roles and Responsibilities and Areas of Overlap](#)
 - [Roles in Supportive Housing Development and Operations](#)
 - [Coordinated Responses to Inappropriate Behavior by a Tenant](#)
- The web-based *Toolkit for Ending Long-Term Homelessness*, which is available at www.csh.org/toolkit, and which includes a profile of a successful collaboration between property management and supportive services staff at Cedar Hill Apartments in New Haven, Connecticut.

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Inquiries

If you are interested in developing and operating supportive housing, please see www.csh.org for additional on-line resources and materials, including information regarding the communities in which we currently work. If you have questions or comments regarding this self assessment tool, please contact CSH's Resource Center at info@csh.org. This document is available to download for free at www.csh.org/publications.