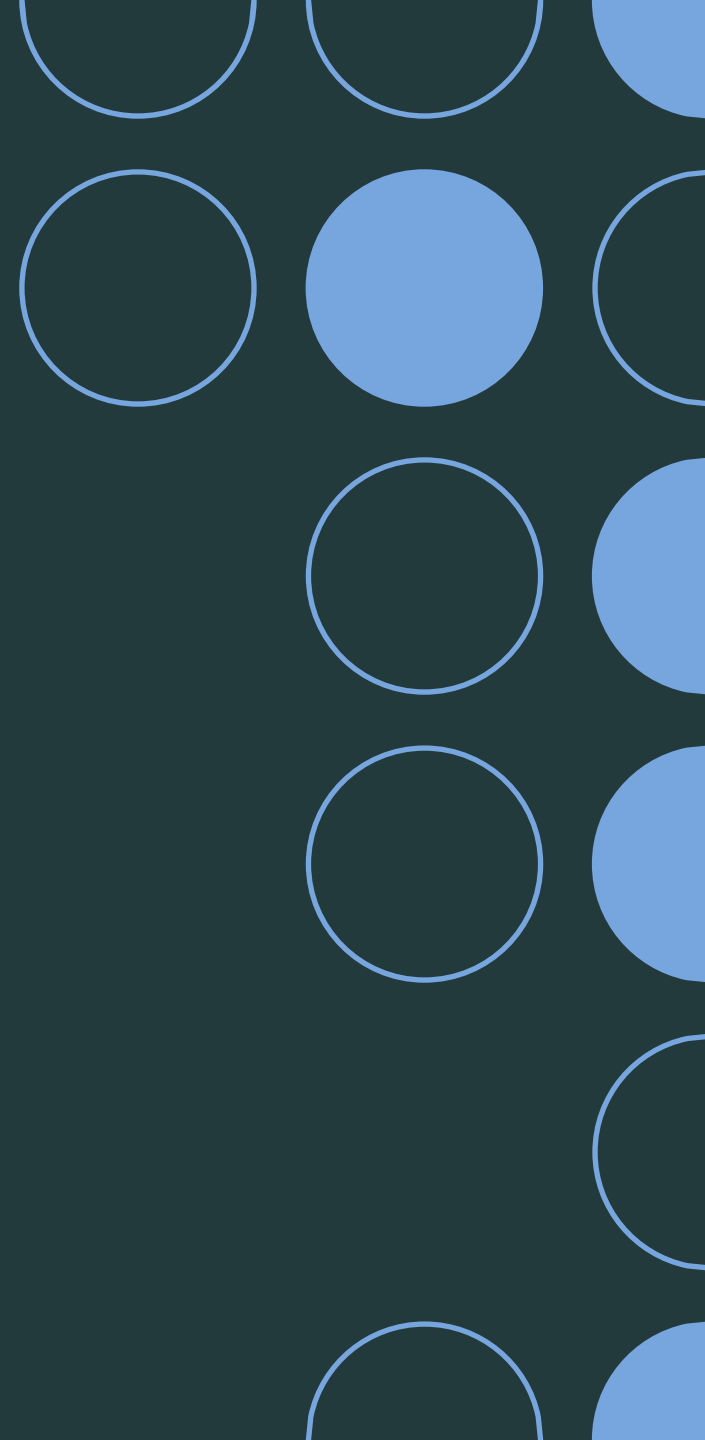# WHY.

Courtney R. Knoll, MSW, LGSW
Courtney.knoll@gmail.com

# Courtney – she/they

- 14ish years in housing and homelessness; micro, macro, mezzo ☺

- 5+ years working with families in Transitional Housing, specifically with kiddos and young people; 6 years planning & policy (System Design & Technical Assistance Specialist)

- Currently, Program Director of Supportive Housing for Avivo's State & Federal Subsidy Programs (since 9/2019); Deepened by commitment to Housing First and Harm Reduction.

- Nerd Social Worker – macro work, policy, theory, history. Self-declared queen of nuance, gray and loopholes.

- I love books, articles, news, podcasts, Instagram and tiktok, etc. It's especially important to learn from folks most impacted by a topic

- I'm from Wisconsin and super cheesy, but it works for me. ☺

"sometimes the only realists are the dreamers." – Wellstone.

# A list of why questions.

- Why coordinated entry?
- Why was what we were doing not working?
- Why create a new way? Why is the new way still not quite it?
- Why do we do what we do?
- Why end homelessness?
- Why use coordinated entry to end homelessness?
- Why did we go into this work?
- Why do we keep trying to learn and solve problems that feel so huge?
- Why does it matter that we show up?
- Why does it matter that we work together?

Then I got super overwhelmed and asked…. why did I agree to do this?!

# STOP. BREATHE. START AT THE BEGINNING.

"The why for Coordinated Entry is lost when **stakeholders** don't feel Coordinated Entry is <u>person-centered</u>."

# Let's Reflect.

Pre-Coordinated Entry.

** What worked well?

** What were our limitations?

Now that we have CE

**What works well?

**What are our limitations?

Why do we do what we do?

How does our homeless response system align with community needs?
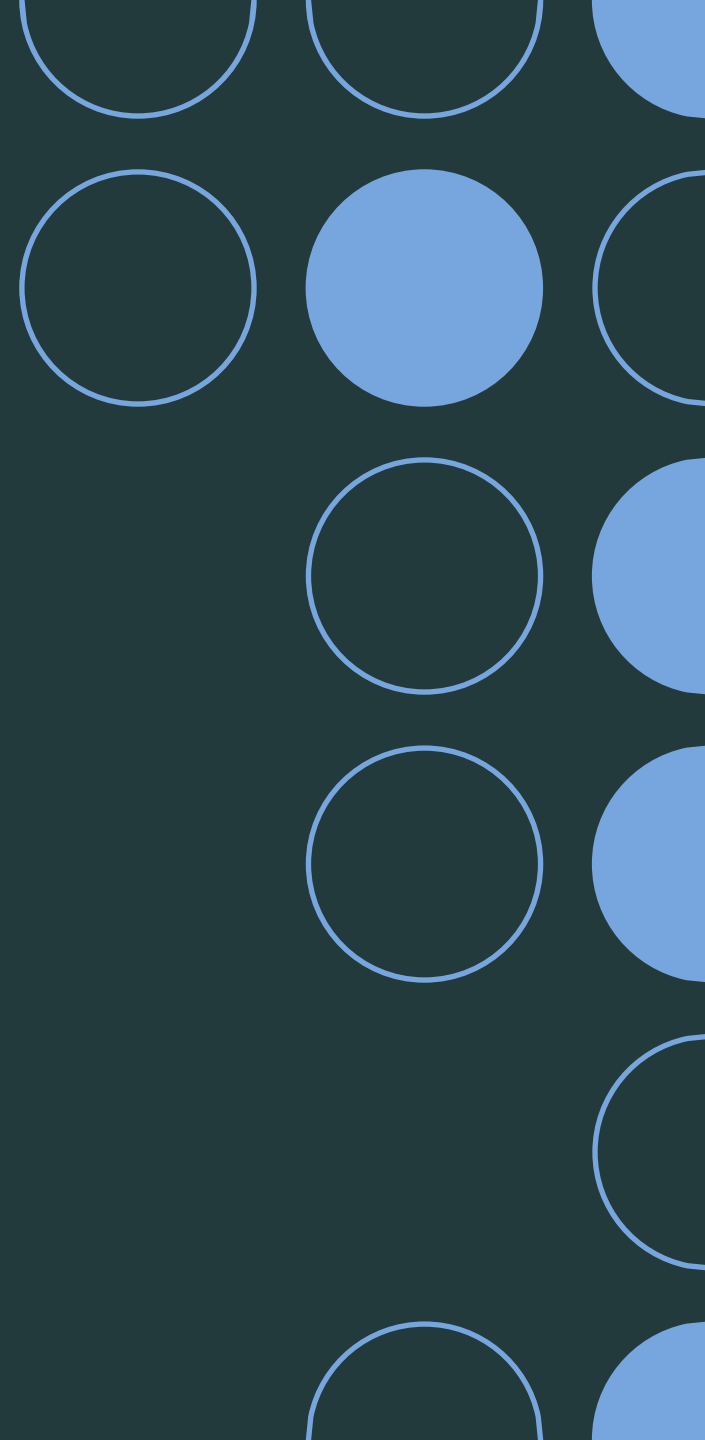
How do people access help?

How well do our service models serve people?

What is your role in the homeless response system?

# Why do we do what we do?

# Let's talk about Ending Homelessness.

- Homeless-ness is a modern phenomenon. People have always had housing crises, but living in a perpetual state of homeless-ness is modern.

- Rare, Brief, Non-reoccurring.

- Homelessness is a choice. A policy choice. A political will issue.

- Housing is a human right.

- Deeply connected to the history of this country and the folks most continuously, systemically marginalized.

**Hierarchy of Needs**
(Informed by Blackfoot Nation ALTA)

**First Nations Perspective**

This is described as "**The Breath of Life Theory**," which considers a holistic nature and more expansive concepts of time and dimensions of reality.

Cultural perpetuity

Community actualization

Self actualization

Self-actualization is at the base of the tipi and is the foundation on which community actualization is built.

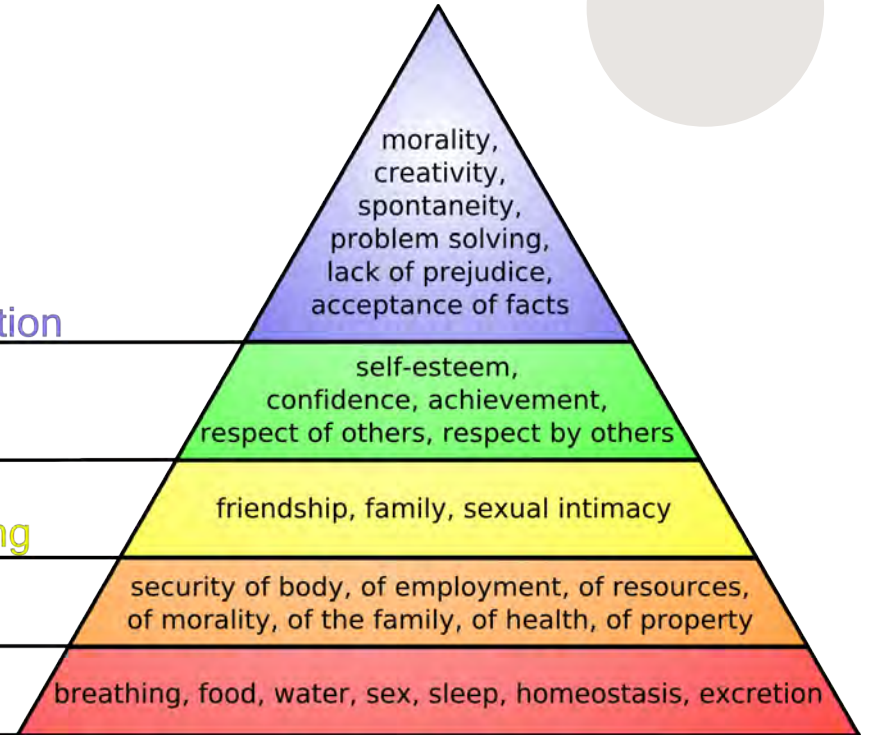Source: The Emergence of the Breath of Life Theory, Cindy Blackstock, PhD

Slow Factory Foundation

**Self-actualization** — morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

**Esteem** — self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

**Love/Belonging** — friendship, family, sexual intimacy

**Safety** — security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property

**Physiological** — breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

# HEIRARCHY OF NEEDS

They Made "Poor Choices" or "Bad Decisions"

They are Lazy & Won't Work

They are "Criminals."

What are the reasons society THINKS people are homeless?

Mental Illness

Drug Use

Extreme Poverty

# Reasons People Experience Homelessness

- Structural Factors
  - Economic and societal issues that affect opportunities and social environments
  - Lack of affordable housing
  - Poverty
  - Racism
  - Lack of income, access to affordable housing, access to healthcare, etc.
- Systems Failures
  - When other systems of care and support fail or are otherwise inadequate
  - Child welfare, exiting institutions (hospitals, mental health/addiction facilities, corrections), immigrant/refugee systems, etc.
- Individual Circumstances
  - Trauma & Traumatic events, including historical trauma
  - Personal or relationship crisis
  - Health & Mental health conditions

Systems Failures

Structural Factors

Individual Circumstances

Content from Homelesshub.ca

12
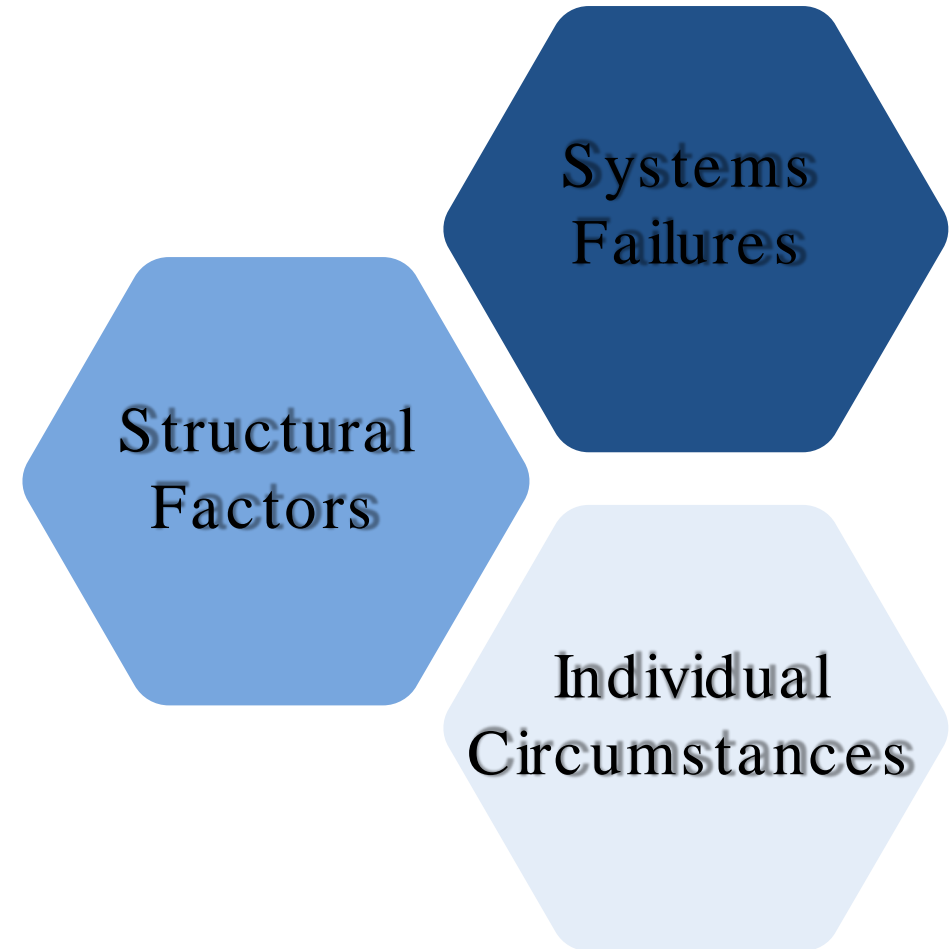
# "Causes" of Homelessness

Per Wilder Foundation:

"Lack of affordable housing is the primary barrier for getting out of homelessness."

"There is no single cause of homelessness, but there are often common and inter-related themes of economic, social, and safety issues; eviction or foreclosure; and entry into the criminal justice or other institutional systems."

"The combination of a lack of affordable housing, lack of income, and lack of access to timely housing subsidies makes it extremely difficult for homeless adults to find and keep safe and stable housing even before accounting for other housing barriers they may face."
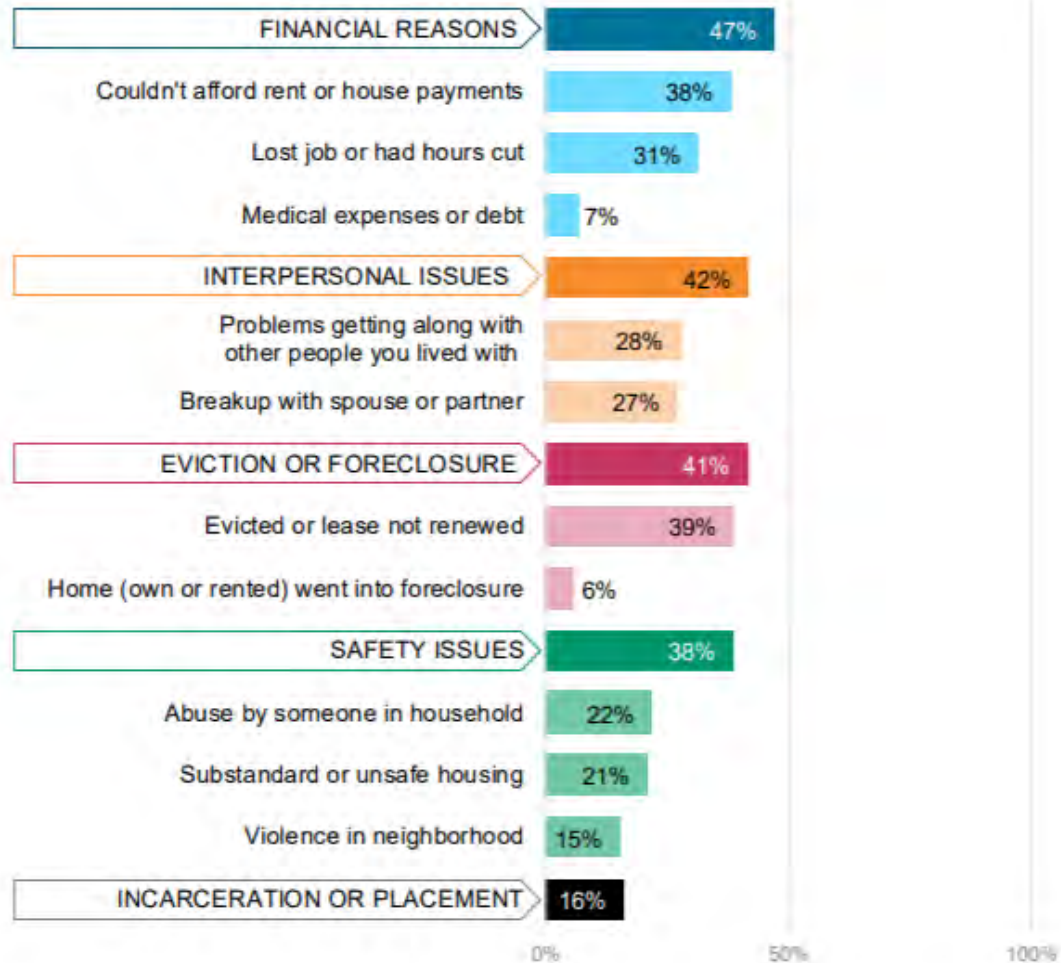
Per National Alliance to End Homelessness:

- Housing is "Out of Reach"
- Income and Housing Affordability
- Connecting Homelessness & Health
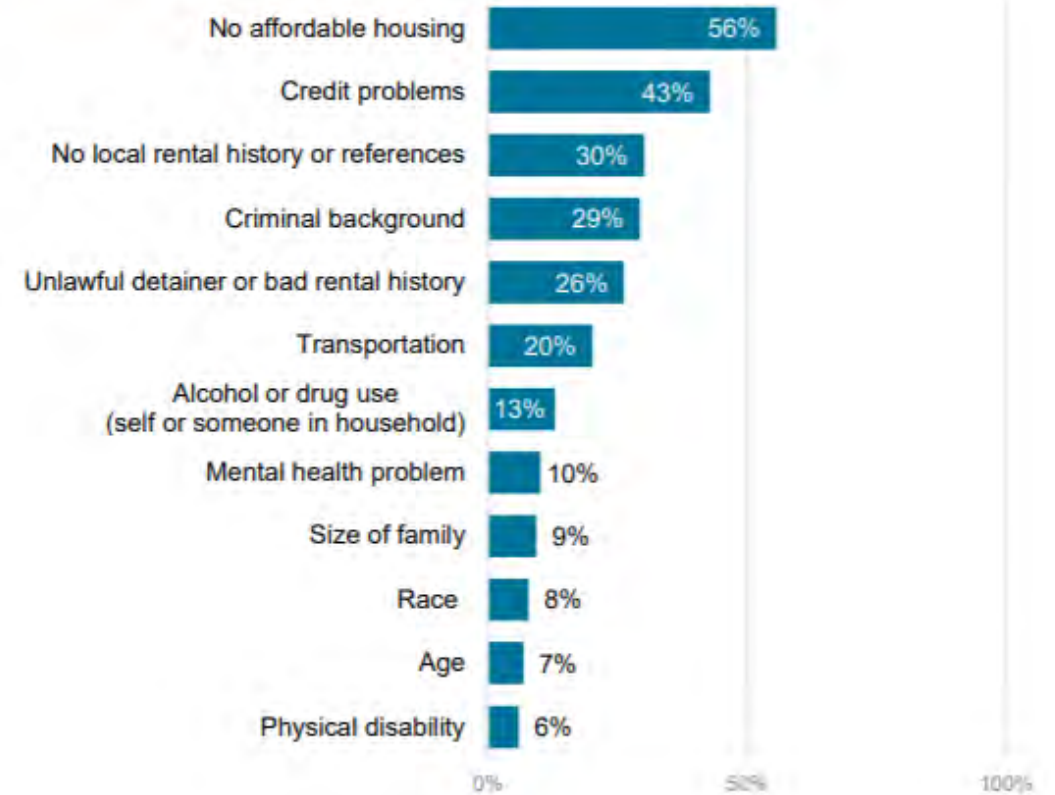- Escaping Violence
- Impact of Racial Disparities

https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/

# Wilder 2018, self-reports:



**28. Reasons why homeless adults left their last housing**

| Reason | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| FINANCIAL REASONS | 47% |
| Couldn't afford rent or house payments | 38% |
| Lost job or had hours cut | 31% |
| Medical expenses or debt | 7% |
| INTERPERSONAL ISSUES | 42% |
| Problems getting along with other people you lived with | 28% |
| Breakup with spouse or partner | 27% |
| EVICTION OR FORECLOSURE | 41% |
| Evicted or lease not renewed | 39% |
| Home (own or rented) went into foreclosure | 6% |
| SAFETY ISSUES | 38% |
| Abuse by someone in household | 22% |
| Substandard or unsafe housing | 21% |
| Violence in neighborhood | 15% |
| INCARCERATION OR PLACEMENT | 16% |

**29. Barriers to getting housing**

| Barrier | Percent |
|---------|---------|
| No affordable housing | 56% |
| Credit problems | 43% |
| No local rental history or references | 30% |
| Criminal background | 29% |
| Unlawful detainer or bad rental history | 26% |
| Transportation | 20% |
| Alcohol or drug use (self or someone in household) | 13% |
| Mental health problem | 10% |
| Size of family | 9% |
| Race | 8% |
| Age | 7% |
| Physical disability | 6% |

# One-night study counts of people experiencing homelessness, 1991-2018

Total count including American Indian reservations

**11,371**

**10,233** Total count

3,079

889

**3,265** Children with parents

1991    2018

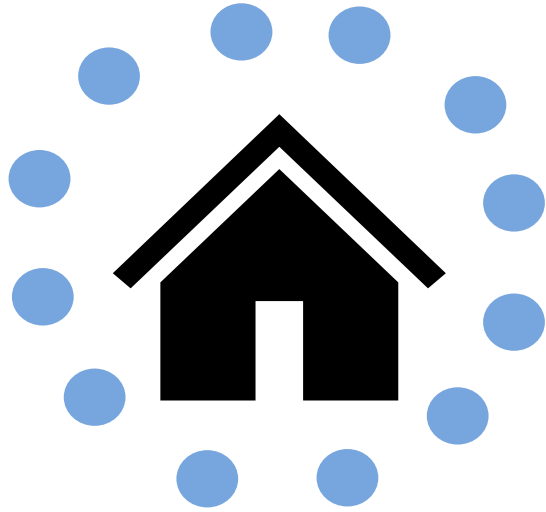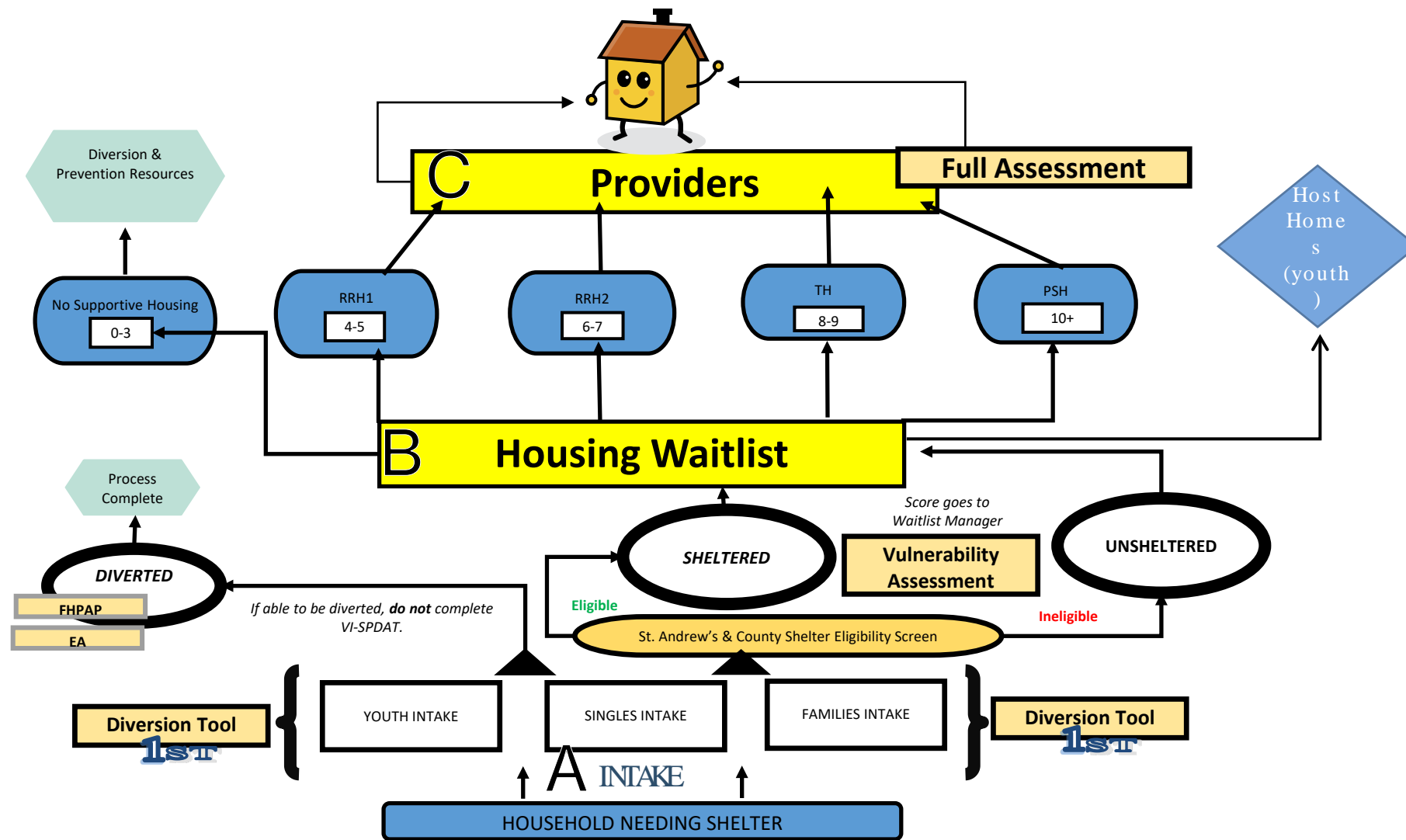2018 Minnesota Homeless Study | mnhomeless.org
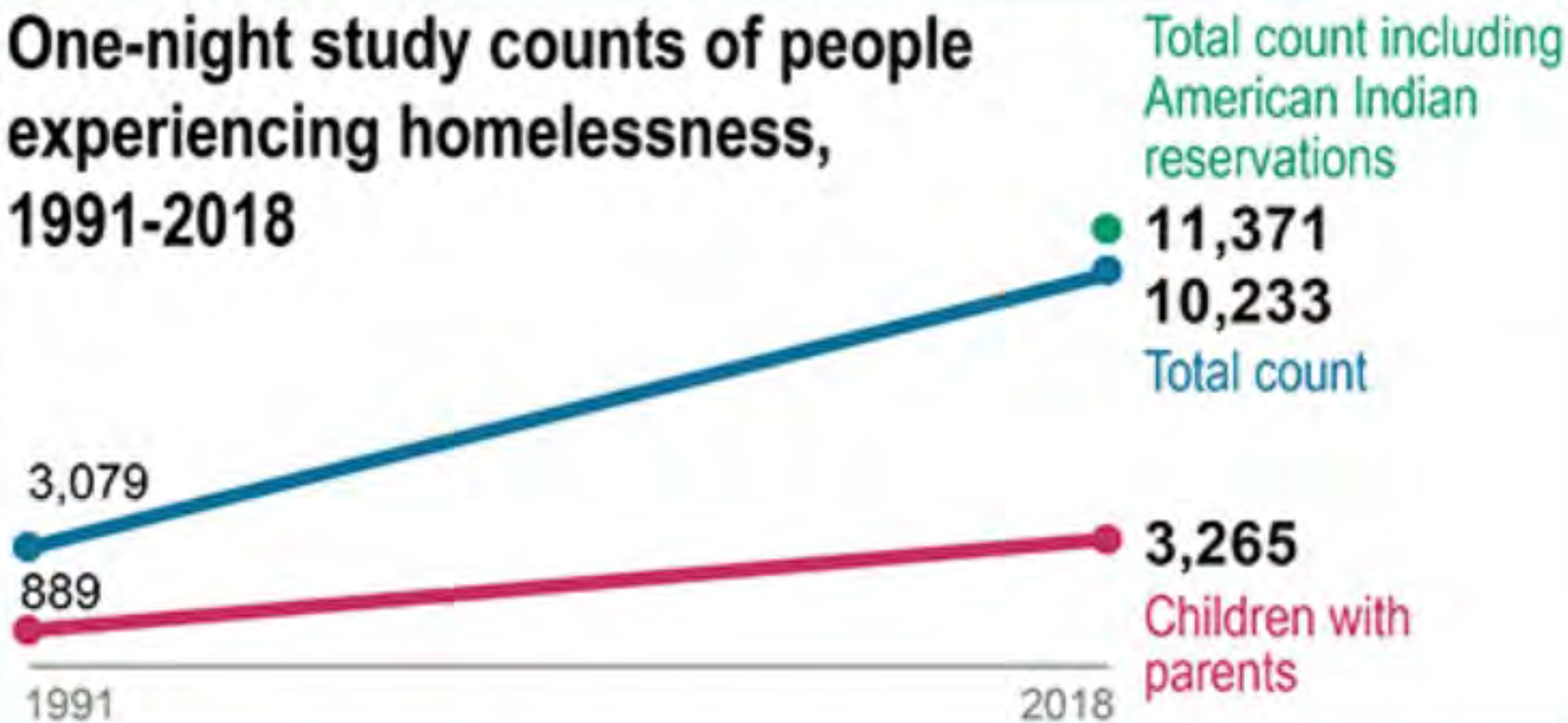
# Re-visiting early CE
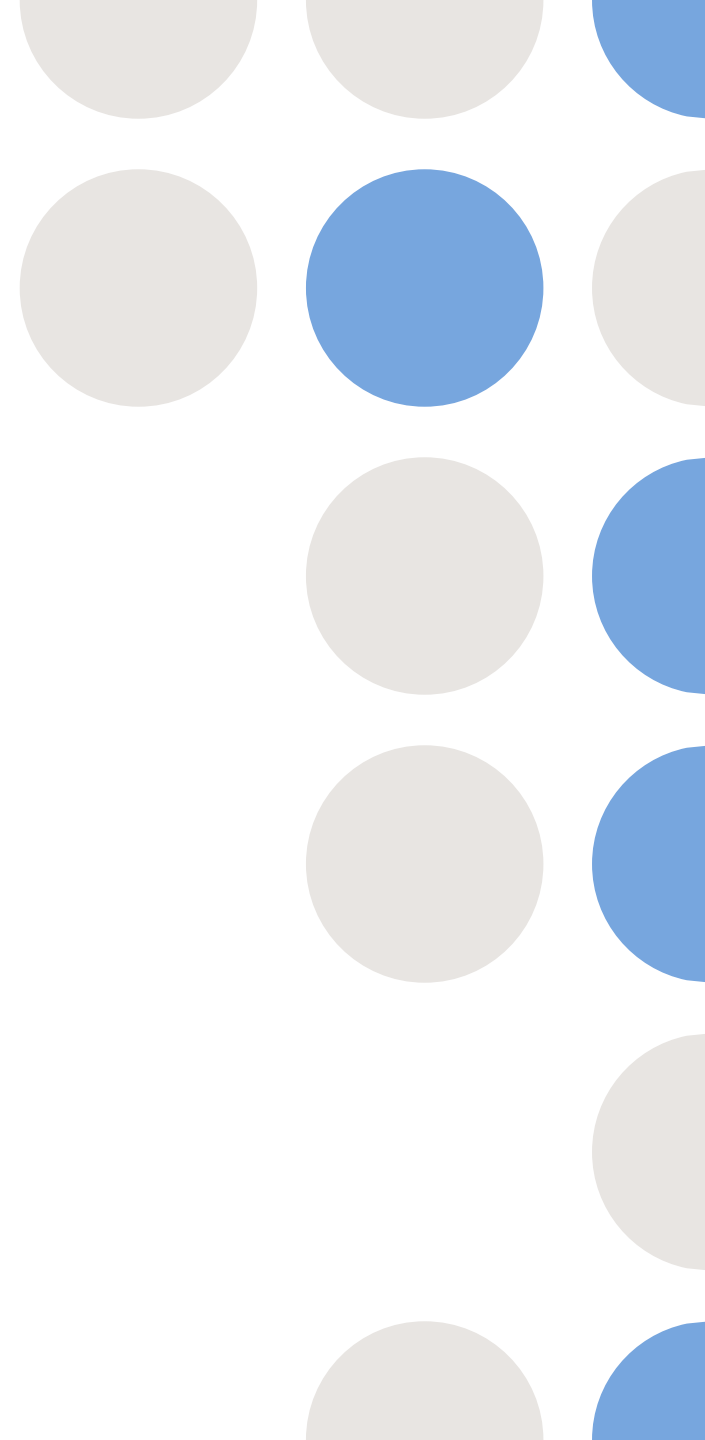
# HUD Policy Brief on CE Main Components

- Prioritization
- Low Barrier
- Housing First
- Person-Centered
- Fair & Equal Access
- Emergency Services
- Standardized Access & Assessment
- Inclusive

- Referral to Projects
- Referral to Protocols
- Outreach
- Ongoing planning and Stakeholder connection
- Informs local policy
- Leverage local attributes to capacity

- Safety planning
- HMIS
- Full Coverage

# Who we used to be.

**C** **Providers**

**Full Assessment**

Diversion & Prevention Resources

No Supportive Housing — 0-3

RRH1 — 4-5

RRH2 — 6-7

TH — 8-9

PSH — 10+

Host Homes (youth)

**B** **Housing Waitlist**

Process Complete

*DIVERTED*

FHPAP

EA

*Score goes to Waitlist Manager*

**SHELTERED**

**Vulnerability Assessment**

**UNSHELTERED**

*If able to be diverted, **do not** complete VI-SPDAT.*

Eligible

St. Andrew's & County Shelter Eligibility Screen

Ineligible

**Diversion Tool** 1ST

YOUTH INTAKE

SINGLES INTAKE

FAMILIES INTAKE

**Diversion Tool** 1ST

**A** INTAKE

HOUSEHOLD NEEDING SHELTER

# HEARTH Act, 2009

- Reduce average length of time homeless
- Reduce returns to homelessness
- Improve program coverage
- Reduce number of homeless
- Improve employment rate and income amount
- Reduce first time homelessness
- Prevent homelessness for families/youth

# Federal Goals are pushing us to...

- Better Data
  - Improving HMIS – allowing for data sharing
  - Using Data to inform what's needed, what's working
  - Inform strategies and targeting of resources
- More Coordinated Systems
  - Sharing limited resources and maximizing dollars by targeting funds
  - Improving communications to reduce barriers for client access
  - A system that is client-centric rather than program-centric
  - User-friendly for those we serve (and advocates/service providers too!)
- Evidenced-Based/Best Practice Models
  - Housing First
  - Rapid Rehousing

# No system to A System.

- Services popped up as a response to a "NEW" problem.
- Little oversight, to significantly more – although we're still figuring this out…
- 10 Year Plans were all the rage.
- Increased collaboration now required through the creation of the CoC idea
- Hearth Act created performance measures
- Changing how we plan and how we do our work
- How does THIS end homelessness? Is XYZ activity getting us closer to that goal?
- Investing in what works and what data says is needed.

# Moving to the "NEW" System

- Moving from "managing" to "ending"
  - Targeting limited resources to those who need them most
  - Investing in strategies that are effective in both outcomes and costs
- Moving from "reactive" to "proactive"
  - Using data to study trends and target resources
  - Example: Prevention Targeting
- Moving from "program-centric" to "client-centric"
  - Common assessment, more standardized entry practices
  - More transparency
- Housing First SYSTEM, not just programming

# System Comparison

## Old System

"Should we accept this family into our program?"

- Program Centric
- Unique forms and assessment processes to each organization or small subgroup of programs
- Ad hoc referral process between programs
- Uneven knowledge about available housing and service interventions in the CoC

## New System

"What strategy is best for each individual?"

- Client-Centric, emphasize client choice, more trauma informed
- Standard forms and assessment processes used by every program for every client
- Coordinated referral process across the CoC
- Accessible information about available housing and service interventions in the CoC

# Hope for a better way

- While this was a federal mandate, there were a lot of struggles with the old way of doing things that were not working.

- Designing a new system, focused on client needs, has the potential to be something great

- Transparency and Accountability

- We knew going in from other regions nationally, that there would be significant growing pains and several new roles / programs created, while other roles/programs would be obsolete

"May your choices reflect your hopes not your fears." – Nelson Mandela

# Okay, so we've actually come a long way...

What are some of the things we've accomplished since we started this change?
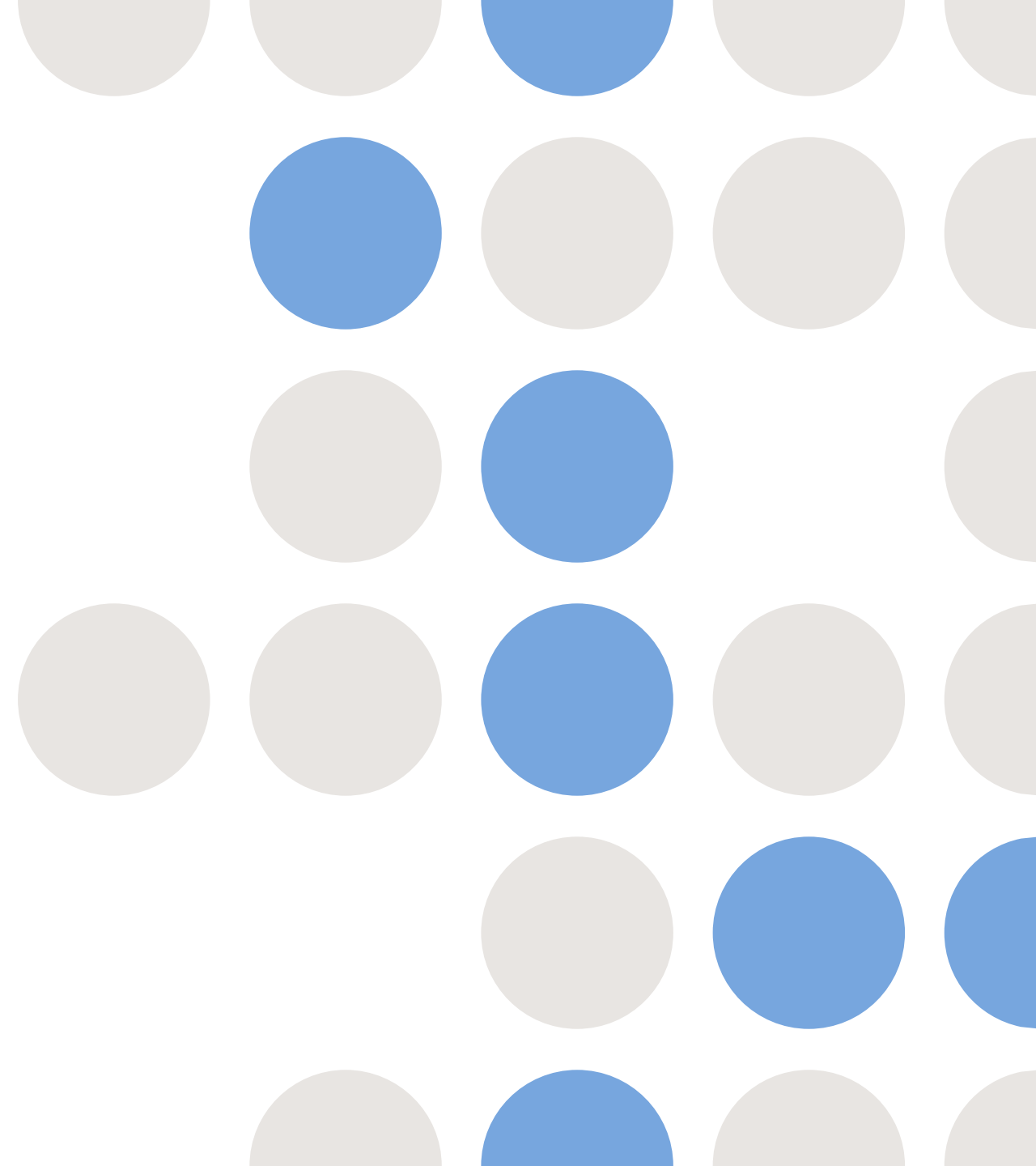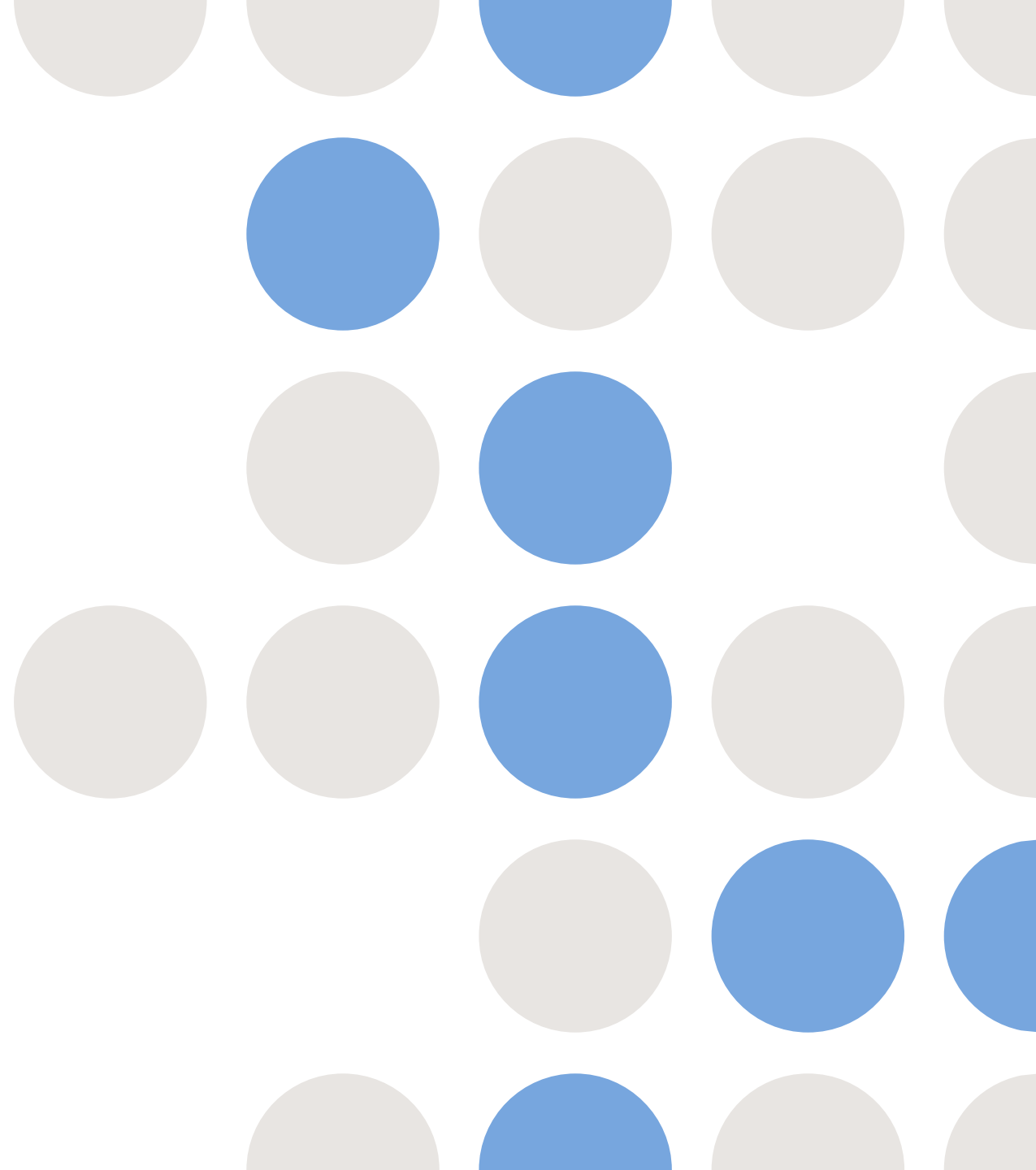
# Some accomplishments:

- Implemented a system, process
- List – getting a better understanding of actual need
- Significant HMIS changes
  - Open system
  - Actual, useable data
- Streamlined some processes
- Adopted a common assessment, realized its limitations and are moving away from it
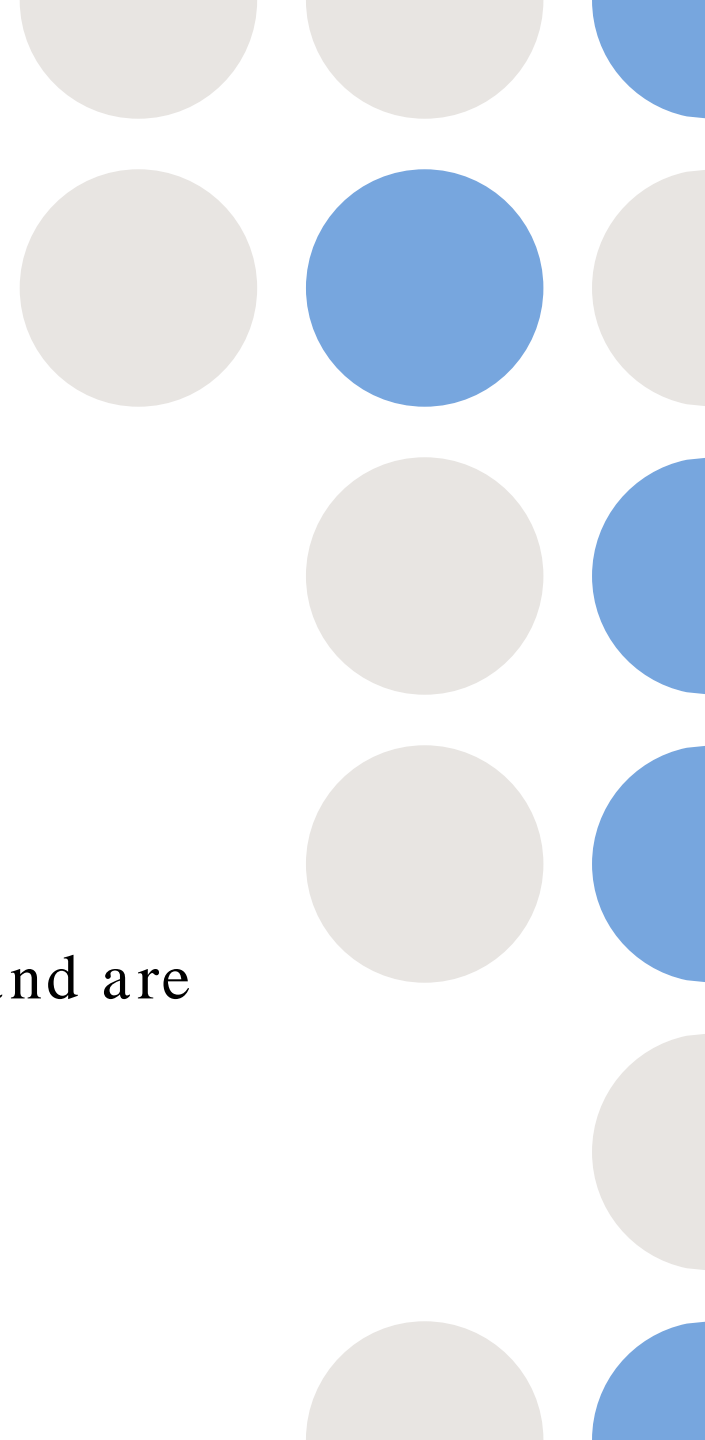
Come along way..and yet numbers continue to rise..and there's a pandemic

# Homelessness is a choice. Policy & Political Will Issue

- Homeowners Tax Credit and Mass Incarceration are ways our society invests in housing
- McKinney Vento bill was past after many years of de-investment in public housing and other safety net resources
- CE process is not in and of itself going to end homelessness
- What can we learn from CE that can help us message and build momentum for political will?



A SOCIETY IS NOT SUCCESSFUL IF PRISONS ARE ITS LARGEST FORM OF PUBLIC HOUSING.
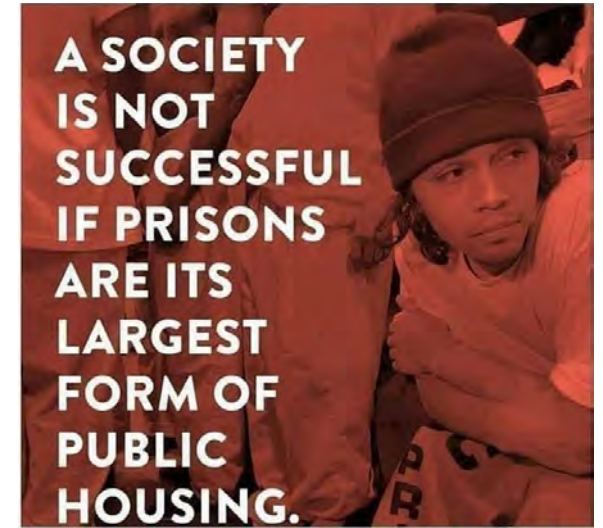


DSA Los Angeles 🌹 ✓
@DSA_LosAngeles

You're "just not that into politics?"
Your boss is.
Your landlord is.
Your insurance company is.
And every day they use their political power to keep your pay low, raise your rent, and deny you coverage.
Its time to get into politics.

# Person Centered Practices



EMPATHY

UNCONDITIONAL
POSITIVE REGARD

MOTIVATIONAL
CONGRUENCE

there is a
significant
difference between
"all are welcome
here" and "this
was created with
you in mind"

Wise colleague of mine said, "one step better
would be – 'this was created alongside you.'

PROGRESS IS
GETTING CLOSER
TO YOUR CLIENT'S
DESTINATION,
NOT YOURS

@COUNSELORSFORJUSTICE
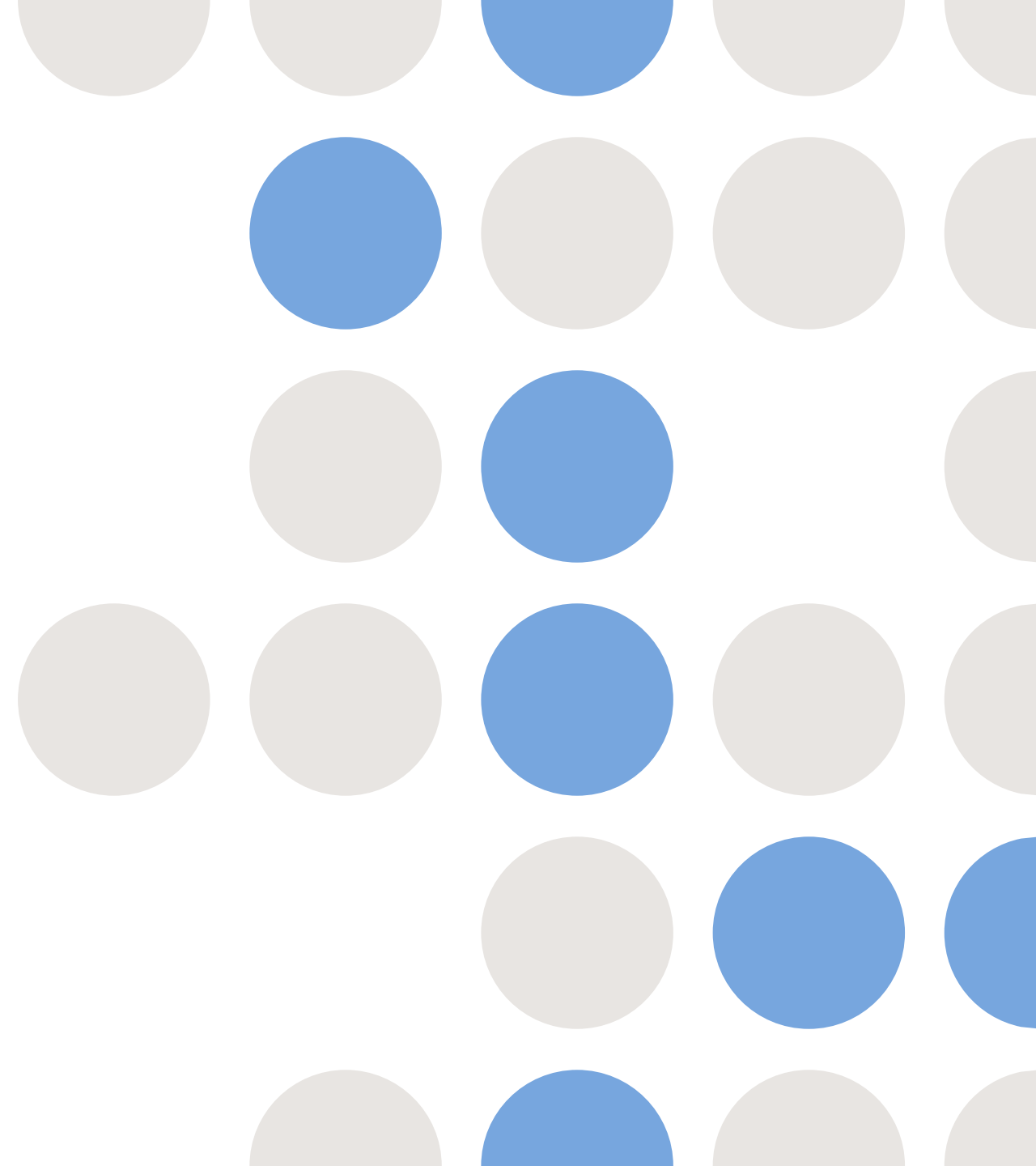
# Housing First SYSTEM.

- Hinges on housing as a human right.
- Low barrier – screening in, not screening out.
- Pushing on partners or providers who could be creating undue barriers for people in crisis.
- Find ways to INCREASE accessibility

Smiff Season 🏁
@MacSmiff

Imagine if "cracking down on homelessness" meant "getting people in housing".

Wouldn't that be cool?

11:59 AM · 9/11/19 · Twitter for Android

# Choice.

"Oppression means the absence of choices." – bell hooks

# Dream Bigger.

**Garrett Reuscher**
@GarrettReuscher

"Everyone gets a plate before anyone gets seconds" but for housing.

4:24 PM · 05 Oct 19 · Twitter for iPhone

# Identify Gaps & Solutions

- CE is really good at showing us what we don't have…the system itself does not create immediate resources. (this sucks)
- Starting to see what is needing can help us start to think through where we need to grow or work for resources
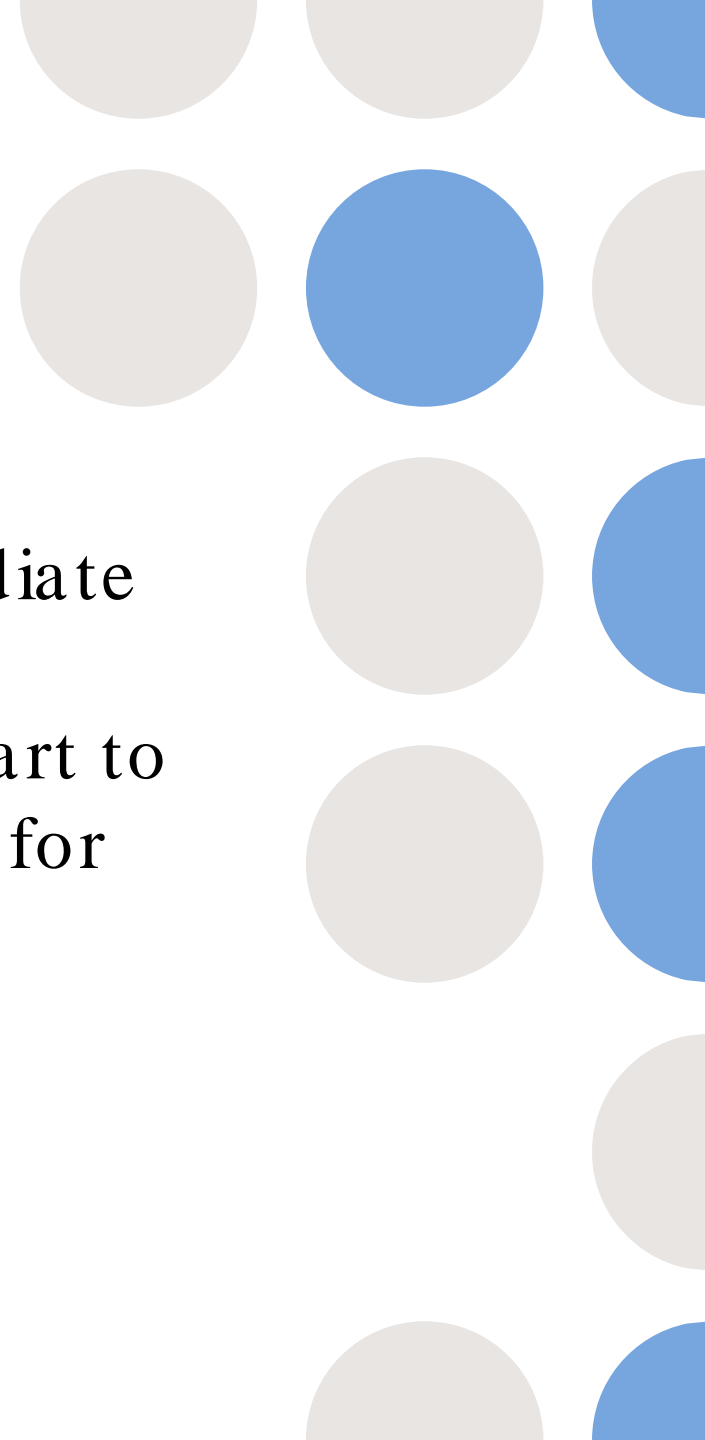
# Collaboration & Creativity

- Case consultation
- Developing new partnerships, ie. Health Plans
- Who else has a stake in housing stability? Who else will see benefits if folks get their needs met?
- No cookie cutter solutions!
- What makes your community unique, resources exist
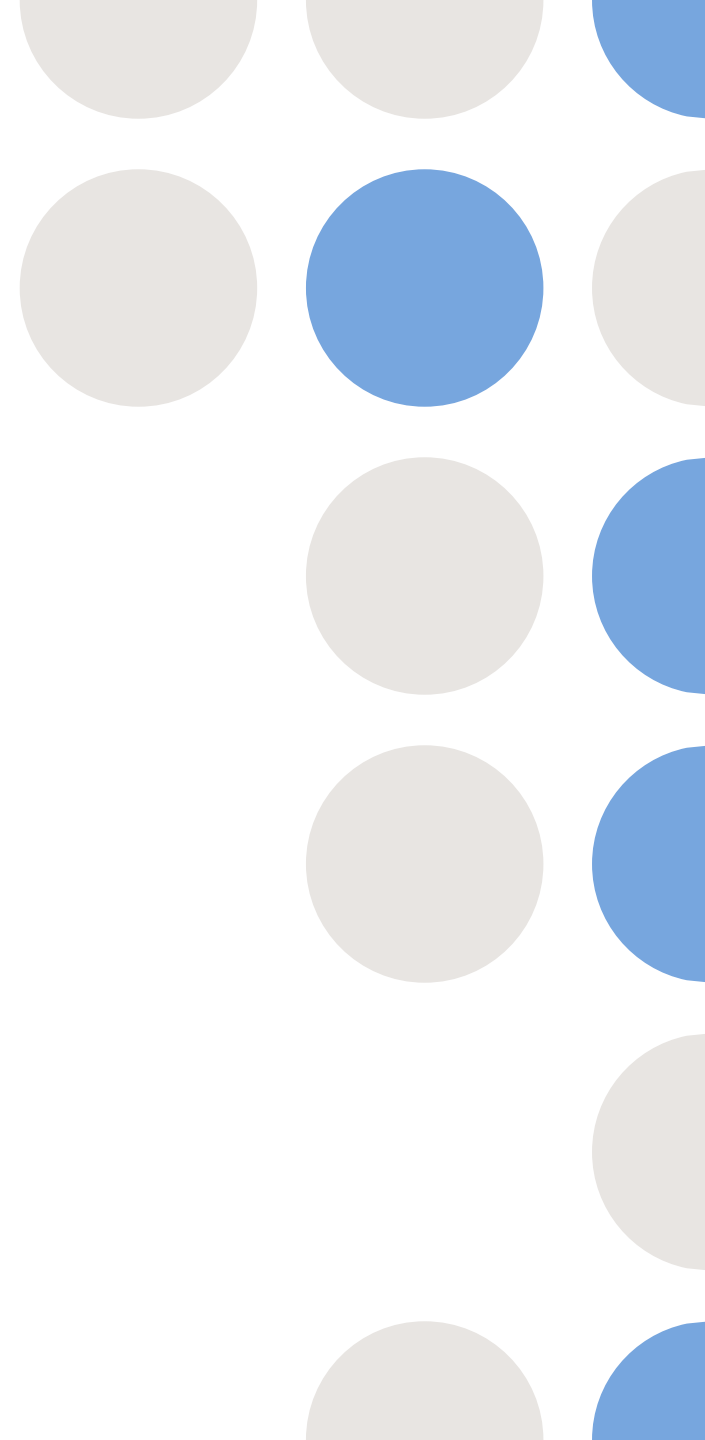
# Continue Learning & UNLEARNING.

○ Stigma limits a person's ability to access services they need because they feel unworthy of receiving or requesting services

○ Stigma creates barriers while receiving services by people feeling unwelcome or judged by program staff that offers services

**MYTH:** Homeless people don't want jobs.

**FACT:** Nobody wants a job.

**MYTH:** It's expensive to house the homeless.

**FACT:** Our prison system is quite profitable.

**MYTH:** The homeless spend their money on drugs and alcohol.

**FACT:** You also do that.

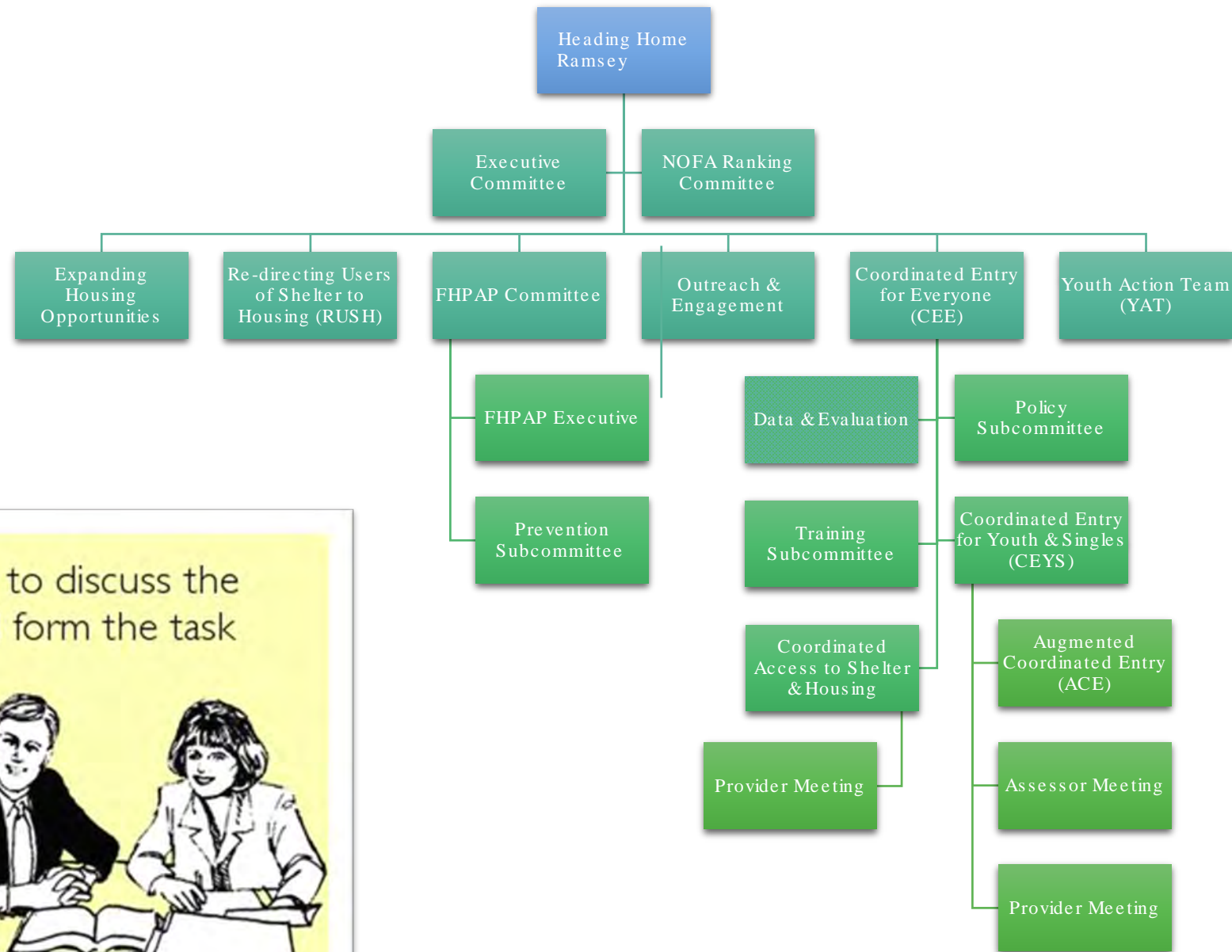# What is your role in the housing crisis response system?

## RARE

- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- PREVENTION
- LEGAL SERVICES
- SYSTEM WORKS

## BRIEF

- QUALITY REFERRALS
- HOUSING PLACEMENT
- LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT
- SHORTER SHELTER STAYS
- SUPPORT SERVICES

## NON-RE-OCCURING

- PERMANENT HOUSING
- STABILITY SERVICES
- MAINSTREAM RESOURCES
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Heading Home Ramsey

Executive Committee

NOFA Ranking Committee

Expanding Housing Opportunities

Re-directing Users of Shelter to Housing (RUSH)

FHPAP Committee

Outreach & Engagement

Coordinated Entry for Everyone (CEE)

Youth Action Team (YAT)

FHPAP Executive

Prevention Subcommittee

Data & Evaluation

Policy Subcommittee

Training Subcommittee

Coordinated Entry for Youth & Singles (CEYS)

Coordinated Access to Shelter & Housing

Augmented Coordinated Entry (ACE)

Provider Meeting

Assessor Meeting

Provider Meeting

Let's have a meeting to discuss the committees who will form the task forces, who will then have more meetings.

someecards
user card

# Big P, Little p – what begins with P.



systems don't
change because
we identify them;
they change because
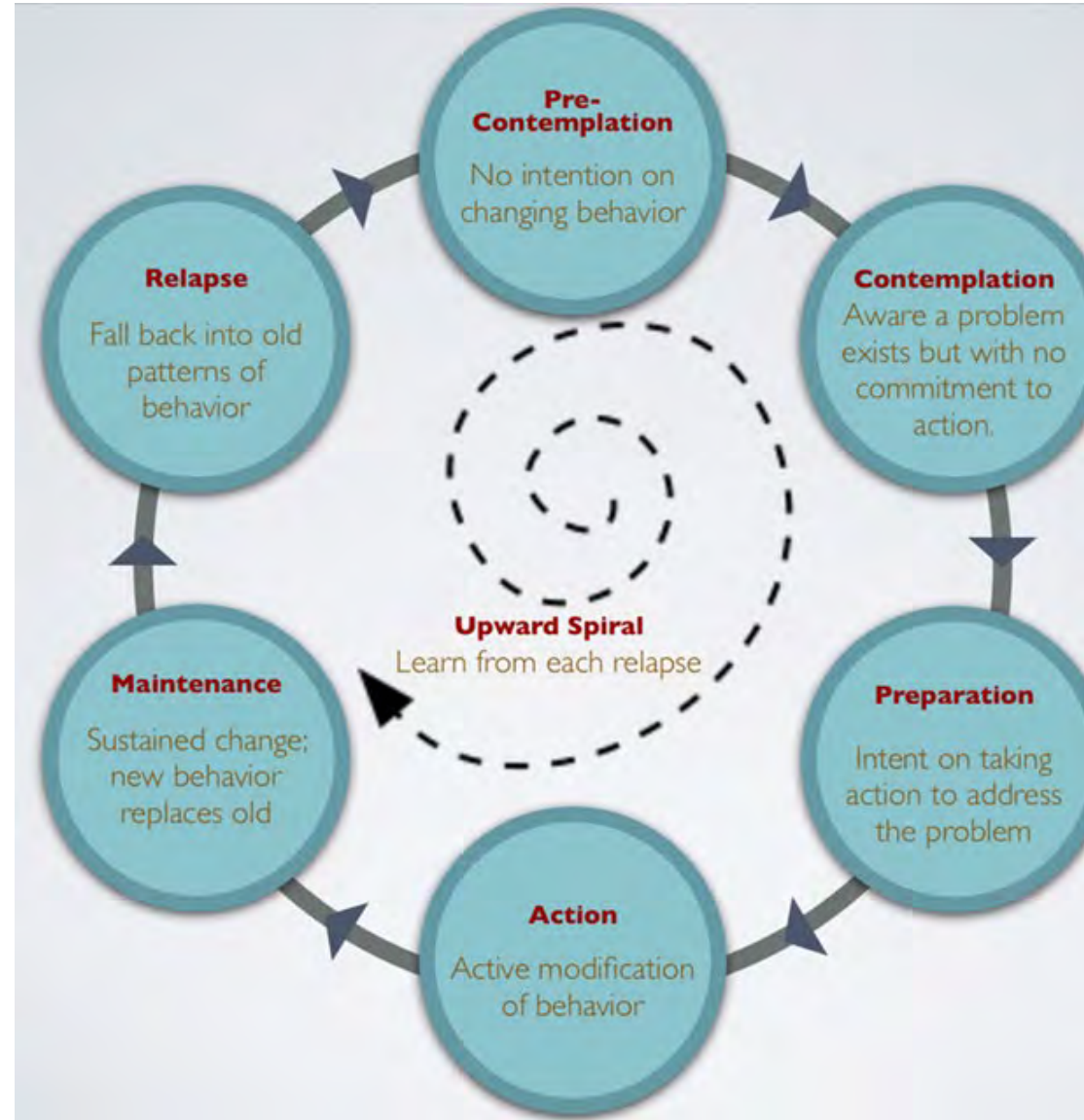we disrupt them.

-We Got This by Cornelius Minor



**Todd Nesloney**
@TechNinjaTodd

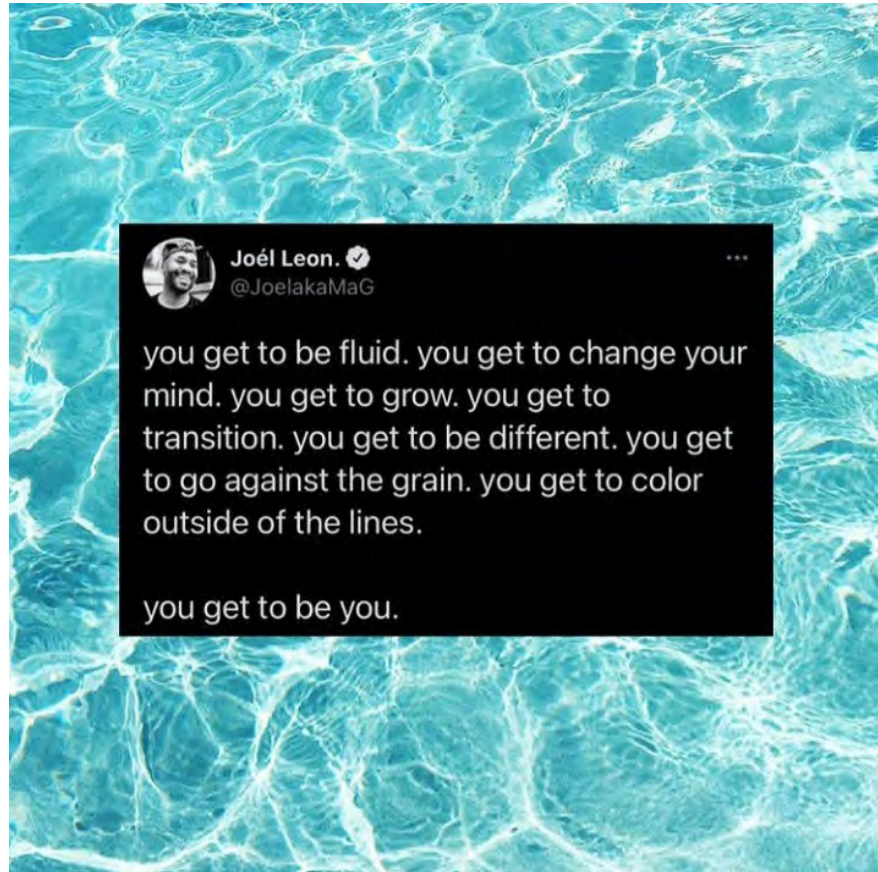Make sure your circle includes people who will tell you....

- No
- Are you sure?
- Have you thought about it this way?
- That was inappropriate

We have to have people in our circles who will push back, challenge, and therein make us better. All from a place of love.

# Change is hard.



**Pre-Contemplation**
No intention on changing behavior

**Contemplation**
Aware a problem exists but with no commitment to action.

**Preparation**
Intent on taking action to address the problem

**Action**
Active modification of behavior

**Maintenance**
Sustained change; new behavior replaces old

**Relapse**
Fall back into old patterns of behavior

**Upward Spiral**
Learn from each relapse

# Self-care.

https://youtu.be/ZyVF1glhAfk?t=60