

CoC Training: Problem Solving Conversations



Bertha Lopez, HUME Center
Shelby Ferguson, Contra Costa
Health, Housing and Homeless
Services (H3)

Video of Training: https://youtu.be/5uT_4Mxtdwc

Housekeeping



please mute yourself



Agenda

- ☆ What is problem solving
- ☆ Why is problem solving important
- ☆ Who should conduct problem solving and with what populations
- ☆ How to have a problem-solving conversation
- ☆ Examples and Break Outs

What is Problem Solving?

A creative conversation that seeks to quickly address a person's homeless or housing crisis

Goals of Problem Solving



Prevent Entry in Homelessness

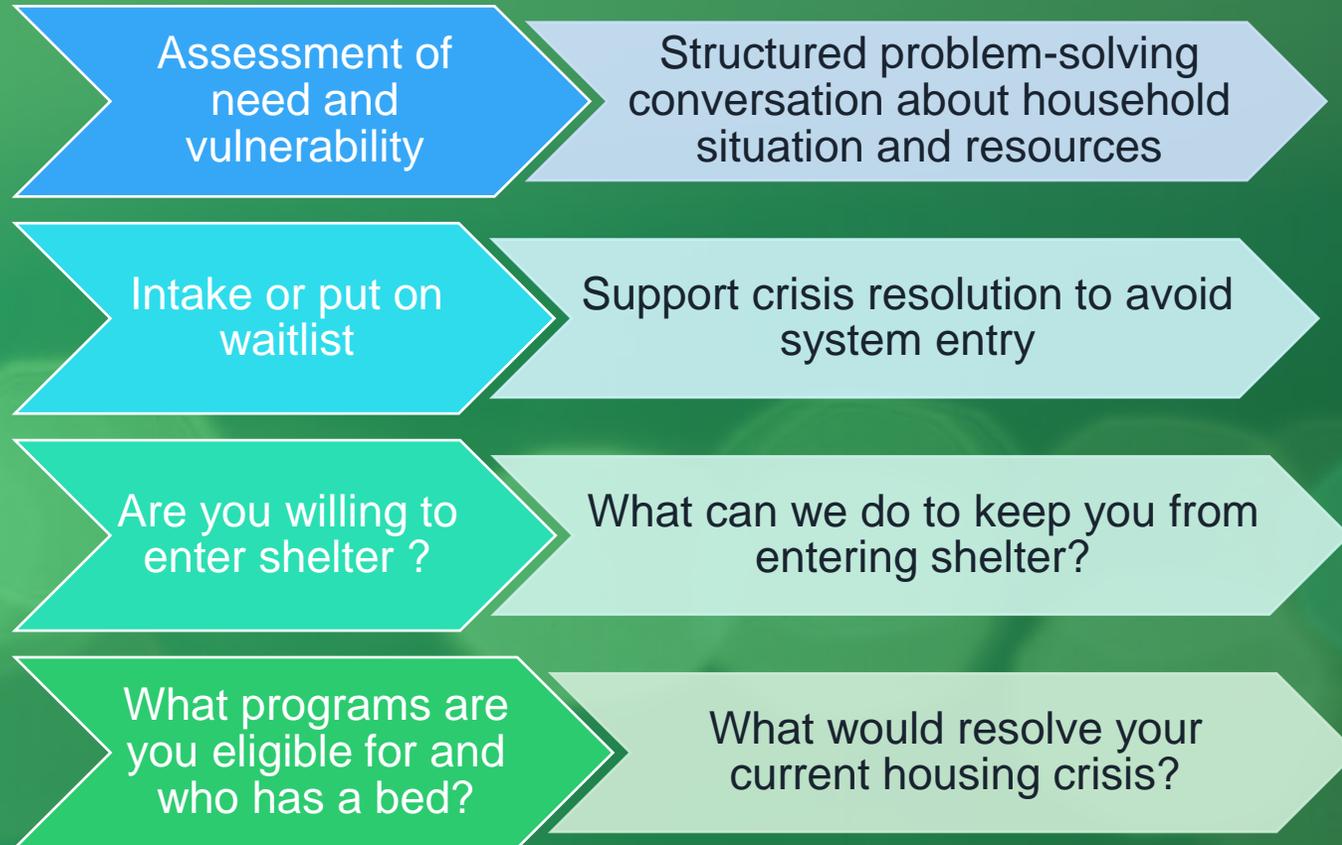


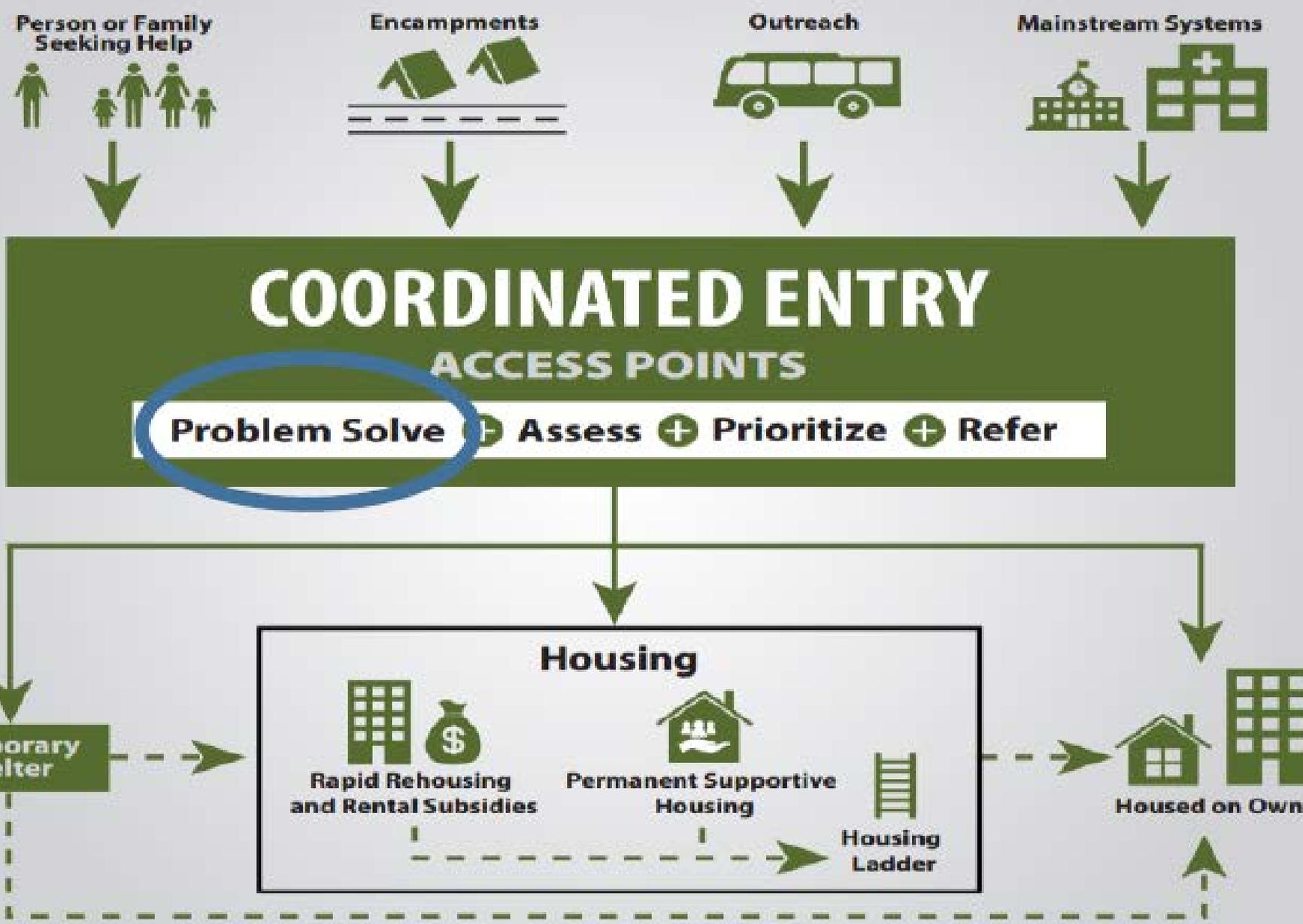
Immediately resolve homelessness
once in system



Goals of Problem Solving

Shifting our Approach





Triage Tool

TRIAGE / PROBLEM SOLVING (Skip if you are a RRH/PSH program, or if client is already enrolled in CES)

What is your current living situation? (Select one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter
<input type="checkbox"/> Safe haven
<input type="checkbox"/> Foster care home or foster care group home
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility
<input type="checkbox"/> Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term care facility or nursing home
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility
<input type="checkbox"/> Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher
<input type="checkbox"/> Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)
<input type="checkbox"/> Host home (non-crisis)
<input type="checkbox"/> Client doesn't know
<input type="checkbox"/> Client refused | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (other than RRH)
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with GPD TIP housing subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) (tenant or project based)
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client in a public housing unit
<input type="checkbox"/> Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house |
|--|---|

If at risk of losing housing w/i 14 days, engage in problem solving (sample questions below)...

OUTCOME

Why do you need to leave this place?	
Is it a safe housing situation? If so, what would you need to help you stay? (income, landlord mediation, family mediation, transportation, substance abuse services, other)	
Do you belong to a church, AA, or other recovery or social group, that may have resources to assist with your situation? Have you explored these resources?	
Is there anyone else you can stay with for the next 3-7 days if I were to assist you with limited financial support?	

- [For staff] Was a subsequent residence identified? Yes / No **If yes, attempt diversion for the next 1-3 days.**
- [For staff] Does client have resources/support network to obtain other permanent housing? Yes / No
- [For staff] Did client have their own permanent housing unit in last 60 days? Yes / No
- [For staff] Has client moved 2 or more times in last 60 days? Yes / No

- Provided problem solving intervention
- Client was successfully diverted to: (indicate where housed) :
- If problem solving is successful and time-limited financial support is needed, schedule appt for
- Home Diversion/Prevention (510-447-1752)

If currently on the streets or in shelter...

OUTCOME

1. Have you been homeless less than 1 month? Yes / No
If yes, engage in problem solving conversation (sample questions below):

What was the cause of your homelessness?	
Do you have friends/familv/a support network	

- Provided problem solving intervention
- Client was successfully diverted to: (indicate where housed) :

Why Problem Solving?

Faster

More Reliable

Less Costly

Benefits of Problem Solving



Avoids trauma/retraumatizing



Decreases inflow into our shelters



Less costly to our system of care



Client-driven approach



Ability to find the appropriate resource

Who should be doing problem solving?

- **EVERYONE!**
- **Problem solving should happen at first encounter, access points, and throughout working with a participant if their homeless crisis remains**

Remember, problem solving is not the solution for everyone, but is worth exploring with everyone!

Basics of Problem Solving



Observing without
judgment



Empathy



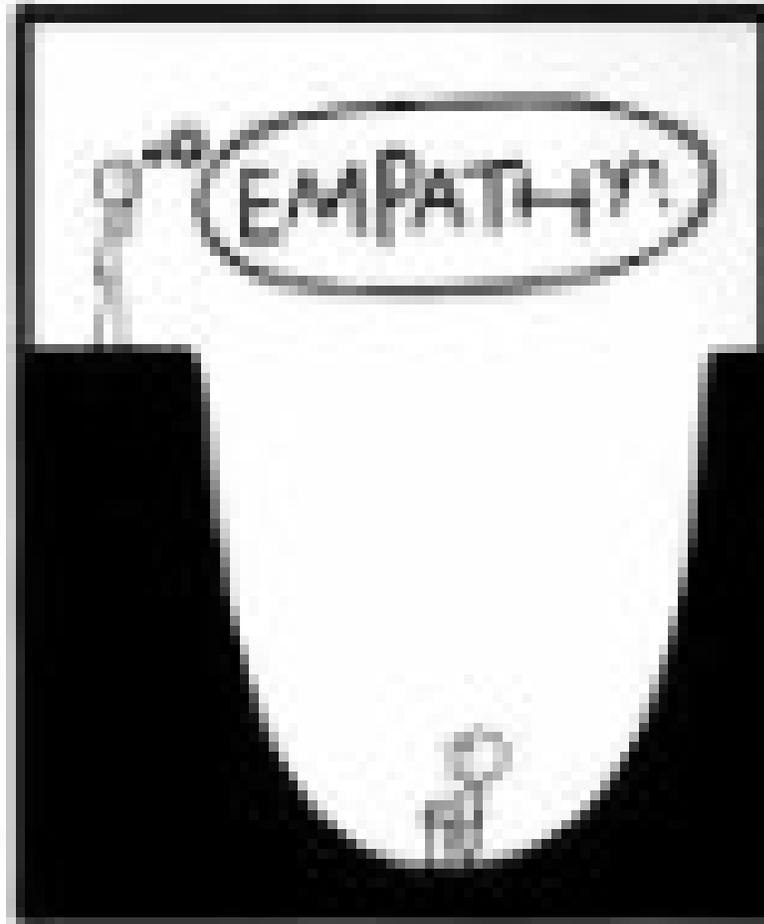
Active Listening



Understanding
Feelings and Needs



Motivational
Interviewing



Motivating Your Clients



Open Ended Questions & Active Listening



OARS- Open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections and summaries



Work alongside the person experiencing the crisis



No wrong answers



You are not the expert, the are!



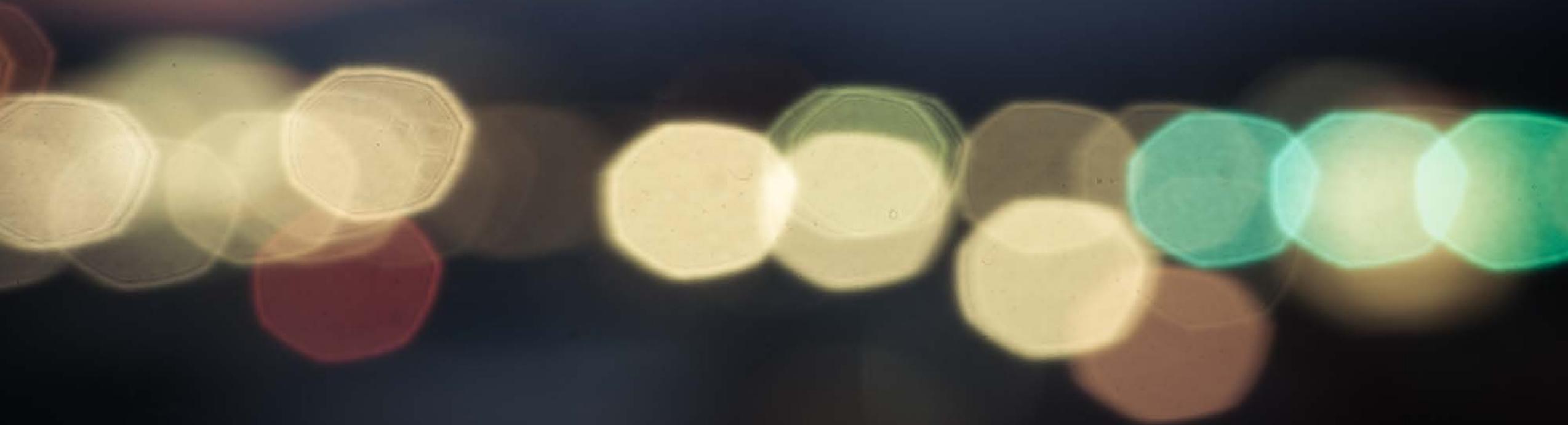
Listen for change talk!

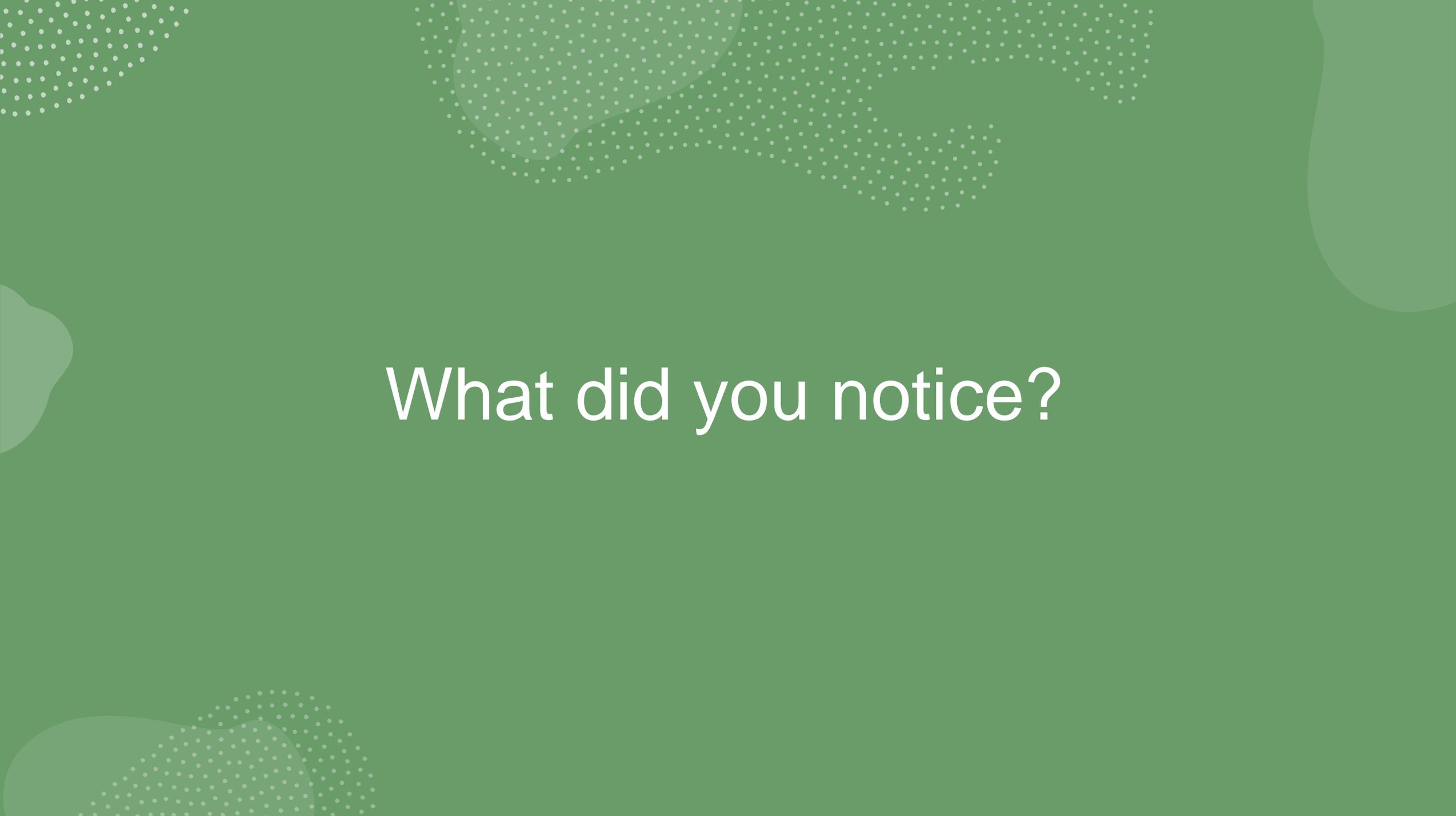
Examples



*Before Problem Solving vs. After
Problem Solving*

Example Conversation #1



The background is a solid green color. It features several decorative elements: a cluster of white dots in the top-left corner, a larger, irregularly shaped area of white dots in the top-center, a solid green abstract shape on the right side, a solid green abstract shape on the left side, and another cluster of white dots in the bottom-left corner.

What did you notice?

Example Conversation #2



The background is a solid green color. It features several decorative elements: a cluster of white dots in the top-left corner, a larger, irregularly shaped area of white dots in the top-center, a solid green abstract shape on the right side, a solid green abstract shape on the left side, and another cluster of white dots in the bottom-left corner.

What did you notice?

Example 1: Large Group

Steve enters shelter after being displaced from his home due to his roommate and best friend, Debbie moving to another state. Despite losing contact with Debbie, Steve has Debbie listed as his emergency contact. Steve ended up having an emergency, so staff contacted Debbie to let her know. Debbie didn't know Steve was in the shelter and mentions she was so glad someone contacted her about Steve, as she's been trying to get in touch with him, but he must have changed his number. Once Steve was better, shelter staff let Steve know Debbie would like to connect with Steve and gave him Debbie's contact information. Debbie let Steve know she wanted him to come live with her, as they had been best friends for years and didn't want to see him in a shelter. Steve worked with staff at the shelter to develop a housing plan in collaboration with Debbie and shelter staff assisted Steve in getting a plane ticket to go live with Debbie.

Discussion



What did you observe in this example?



Was this a good resolution? Why or why not?



Who benefits from this reunification?



What problem solving skills were used in this example?

Breakout Sessions!



Scenario 2: Prevention

You encounter a family who is living in their RV. The family has zero income, their tags had expired on the RV, the RV was broken down and needed repairing and they were going to be towed if they could not relocate and felt they were being harassed by police.

- ✓ What would you do first? What is the family's immediate crisis?
- ✓ What other steps could be taken to resolve the family's crisis?
- ✓ If resolution is possible, what resolution did you come up with?
- ✓ Could there be more than one resolution?

Scenario 3: Homeless

Mary comes into your shelter using substances and is experiencing some psychosis from the substance use. Due to the psychosis, you're unable to make any headway with Mary at first. After some time stabilizing in shelter though, Mary stops using substances and is no longer experiencing psychotic episodes. Mary mentions she ran into her sister, whom she used to live with before coming into shelter. Mary states she wishes she could go back to living with her sister, but she feels she "messed everything up".

- ✓ How do you start a problem-solving conversation from here?
- ✓ What resolution did you come to?
- ✓ Who/what benefits from this resolution?
- ✓ Anything you didn't think of?
- ✓ Could there be more than one resolution?

Discussion



What basics of problem solving did you use?



What resolution did you come to?



Who/what benefits from the resolution?



Did you explore everything?
What might you have missed?

Questions?

Shelby Ferguson: Shelby.Ferguson@cchealth.org

Bertha Lopez: blopez@humecenter.org

Example 1: Before Coordinated Entry (The old way)

Client: Can you help me? I'm homeless, I need to get into a shelter.

Respondent: OK, sorry to hear that. Have you ever been in shelter here in Contra Costa before?

Client: No

Respondent: OK, there's three ways you can do this. These shelters (hands list) let people in daily, but you have to line up in advance. The list tells you what time they open. I suggest you get there at least two hours before they open the doors.

You can also get on the wait list for longer term shelter – those are beds that let you stay 90 days. I think the wait list is about 4 months now so that's not going to help tonight, but I can help you get on the list.

Client: I just want to get out of my car right now. I have a job starting in a few weeks, but this is too much. What happens if I don't get in to shelter today?

Respondent: You can try again tomorrow for overnight shelter. For long-term shelter we need to sign you up and then you just need to keep checking in online or calling in.

Client: What about housing? How can I get help to get my own housing?

Respondent: There's a website that you can apply for some housing on. You have to have income to get that housing. Do you have income right now?

Client: No. I'm supposed to be starting my job in a few weeks.

Respondent: OK, you can also apply for Housing Authority waitlists if they are open. And I saw there was a lottery coming up in Alameda County – here's the info about applying for that.

Client: Is there anything else I can do?

Respondent: I'm sorry, not at this time. I think if you want shelter tonight you better go now and see if you can get in.

Client: OK, I guess I will go line up now.

Example 2: After Coordinated Entry (THE NEW WAY)

Client: Can you help me? I'm homeless, I need to get into shelter.

Respondent: OK, thanks for coming in. There isn't a lot of shelter and it's really unlikely I could get you a bed today. I'd like to help you find a safe place to stay tonight. Do you have time for a conversation with me?

Client: Yeah, OK

Respondent: Can you tell me a little bit about your situation? Where have you been staying?

Client: I'm sleeping in my car in the parking lot at the Target store. A friend told me he'd seen people staying there. It's pretty messed up and there's a lot of people doing crazy stuff there.

Respondent: I'm sorry to hear that. How long have you been staying there in your car?

Client: since last Friday.

Respondent: Oh, okay, so not so long. Where were you staying before that?

Client: I was staying with my grandma, but she threw me out and told me I better find somewhere else to go.

Respondent: I'm sorry to hear that. How long had you been staying with your grandmother?

Client: I'd been there for about six months.

Respondent: Oh okay, so your grandma let you stay with her but then she told you to leave. Can you tell me what happened?

Client: She got mad because I wasn't doing anything. She knows I am starting a job next month but she didn't want me hanging out all day and I have a friend who comes over sometimes she doesn't like.

Respondent: Oh, you have a job lined up?

Client: Yeah, it's just a few hours a week to start but I got a friend who is getting a business ready to open who said I could come and paint and fix up the store and then might be able to work there.

Respondent: That sounds great. So, you think that might turn into something full time or long term?

Client: I don't know. Maybe. I hope so because I want to get my own place soon.

Respondent: I can understand that. Would you be open to renting a room?

Client: I guess. I'd rather have my own apartment.

Respondent: Do you think your grandma would let you stay there again if she knew that there isn't a shelter for you and that we are going to work with you to find a place you can rent once your job starts?

Client: I don't know. She's pretty mad.

Respondent: What do you think would make it better?

Client: I think if it stopped bringing my friend over and got a job, maybe she wouldn't be so mad.

Respondent: Okay, those are some ideas. What if you and your friend made plans to meet other places?

Client: Yeah, I could do that but I think if I call her now she might hang up on me.

Respondent: What about your friend, is that someone you could stay with?

Client: No. He doesn't have any room and I don't want to ask him that.

Respondent: Okay that's fine, let's keep thinking about your grandma. Would it help if I talked to her? I can tell her about how little shelter we have here, about your plans to visit with your friend somewhere else and that you have a job lined up?

Client: I'm afraid she's too mad.

Respondent: Do you think if you offered to help with some groceries that would help?

Client: Yeah, but I haven't got any money yet.

Respondent: What if I could offer you a grocery gift card for \$50 this month until you start your job. Do you think that would help?

Client: Yeah, I think that might help. I guess I can call her. What would I say though?

Respondent: You can ask her if she'll let you come back temporarily and offer to bring some groceries when you come back. Why don't you call her and see what she says. I can sit here with you if you like and you can hand the phone to me if she wants to hear it from me. Then, if she says yes we can start talking about how you look for a room when your job starts. Does that sound like a good plan?

Client: Yeah, okay.

Respondent: I think so too.