



Bridge Housing and Program Co-Enrollment

One Element of a Community Plan to End Homelessness among Veterans

Lisa Pape, LISW
Executive Director
VHA Homeless Programs

Jeff Quarles, MRC, LICDC
National Director, GPD

Robert Hallett
National Director, HCHV

Jesse K. Vazzano, LICSW
National Director, HUD-VASH

John Kuhn, LCSW, MPH
National Director, SSVF

Bridge Housing and Its Role Within Homeless Services

- To end homelessness, we must support evidence-based models of care. This is a moral and economic imperative.
 - This has led VA to move from a “Treatment First” model to a “Housing First” model of care.
- Resource deployment has reflected this change (HUD-VASH and SSVF) and is being extended to GPD as part of its transformation.

GPD Transformation and Evolving Homeless Services

Homeless Services continues to evolve. Success is gauged by progress towards federal benchmarks.

- Bridge Housing supports Housing First by providing safe, temporary housing while awaiting permanent housing placement through HUD-VASH and SSVF.
- Available services should reflect community needs, so mix of resources needs to change as the community changes.
- Collaboration essential to identify Veteran needs and then ensure that every Veteran is quickly matched to the right level of care.

Bridge Housing Definition

- What is Bridge Housing?
 - Bridge Housing is when a Veteran has been admitted to transitional housing (GPD) or HCHV Contract Residential Services (CRS) and this admission is being used as a short-term stay *when a Veteran has been offered and has accepted a permanent housing intervention (e.g., SSVF, HUD-VASH, Housing Coalition/CoC)* but, is not able to immediately enter the permanent housing.
 - Though length of stay in Bridge Housing can and should be individually determined based on Veteran need, in general it is not expected to exceed 90 days.

Developing Bridge Housing

- Have a conversation with your GPD/HCHV CRS programs, VA Homeless Programs and local community (i.e. Continuum of Care) to determine need and opportunity to develop Bridge Housing
 - Ultimately it is the GPD/HCHV CRS funded organization's decision to pursue
 - Does your community have coordinated assessment/entry process, and if so, how will GPD/HCHV CRS be integrated?
 - What role will GPD/HCHV CRS play in the short stay Individual Service Plan?

Developing Bridge Housing

- **Lower Barriers/ Short term Expectations.**

- Given the short time-frame of Bridge Housing, there should be an expectation that Veterans in this ‘track’ will not complete many some parts of the GPD/HCHV CRS program.
- Goals in the Individual Service Plan should be very short-term with the focus on the move to permanent housing, rather than the completion of treatment goals.
- Many Veterans in this track may also have unresolved mental health or substance abuse issues that might keep them from participating in a traditional GPD/HCHV CRS program.
 - Use of Low Demand approaches focusing on safety may be considered
 - Assisting Veterans access services as needed/requested by the Veteran (available of a menu of services)

Developing Bridge Housing

- Examine any policies and procedures that need to be added/adapted as a result of adding this new service
- What type of training my need to provided to staff?
 - As with any change, it will be important to have staff “buy-in”
- Communication with Veterans who are currently in the program about the program change

Developing Bridge Housing-GPD

- Keep in mind the entire GPD project cannot be converted to Bridge Housing
 - Would be major departure from original grant application, can be an additional service offered by the grantee
 - Up to 50% of transitional housing beds at any given time can be used for Bridge Housing
 - The Bridge Housing beds can be flexible and do not have to be used for Bridge Housing only
- A written change of scope by the GPD funded should be submitted by the organization to the GPD National Program Office
 - The GPD Office must approve any change to the original application. Program changes include: services provided, staffing, admission and/or discharge criteria, etc.

Moving from Bridge Housing to HUD-VASH

- Veterans who are participating in a HCHV CRS or GPD Bridge Housing track have been accepted into HUD-VASH and are being provided a safe place while going through the lease up process in HUD-VASH.
- HCHV CRS and GPD providers may assist Veterans who are going to be rapidly moving into HUD-VASH to gather the necessary documents and may also help with the housing search and initial lease up process
- Veterans who are participating in a Bridge Housing track should still receive case management and support from the service provided but it should be coordinated with the HUD-VASH team
 - Who is going to assist the Veteran with completing their housing authority application?
 - Who is going to assist with the housing search process?
 - How will the HCHV CRS/GPD provider and the HUD-VASH team communicate with each other? With the Veteran?

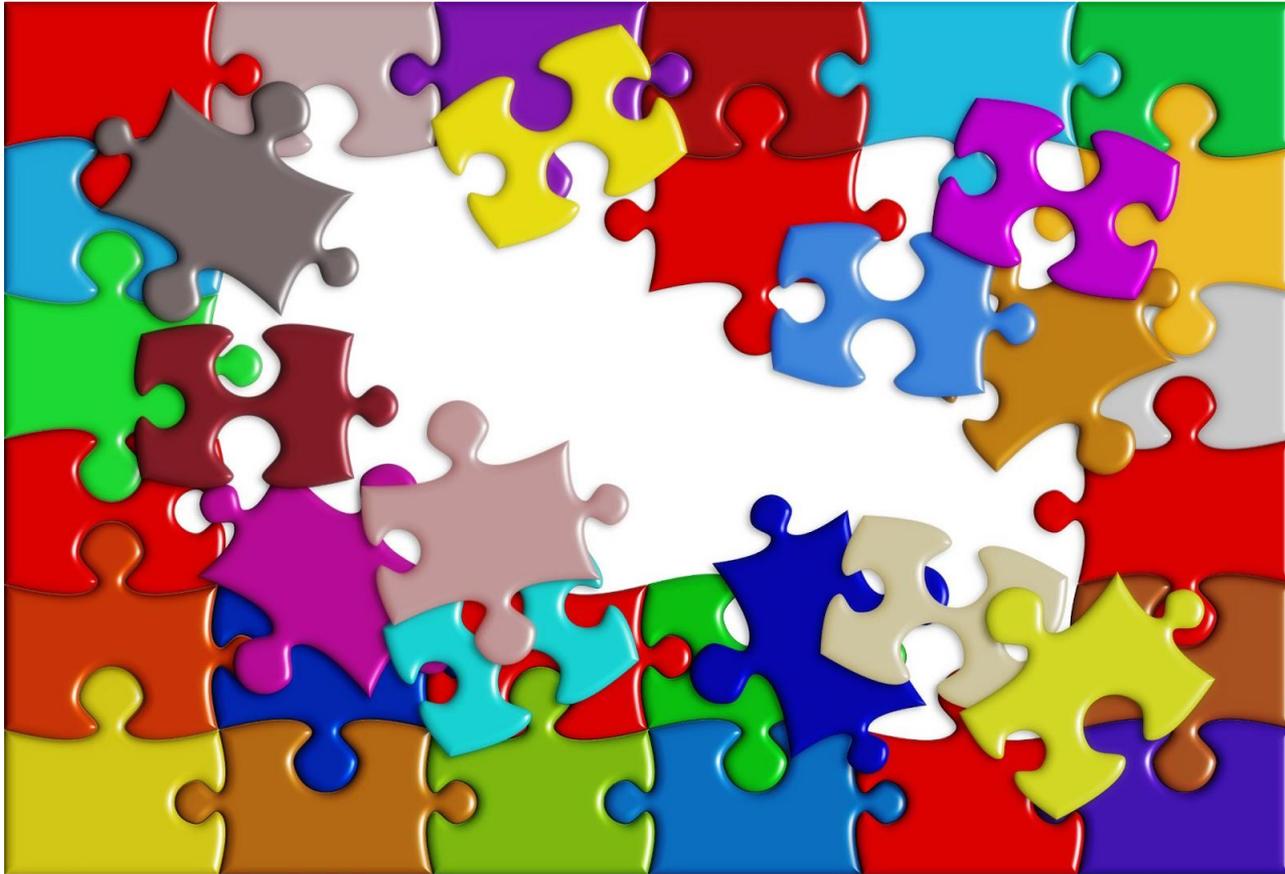
Role of VA Staff

- Coordinate services for Veterans
- Ensure that there is a warm hand-off between programs and the Veteran
- Continuity of care
 - Veteran goals
 - Treatment plan
- Assisting Veteran with housing application process
- Assisting Veteran with housing search
- Supporting Veteran with the transition from HCHV CRS/GPD setting to their HUD-VASH apartment

Coordinating with the Veteran

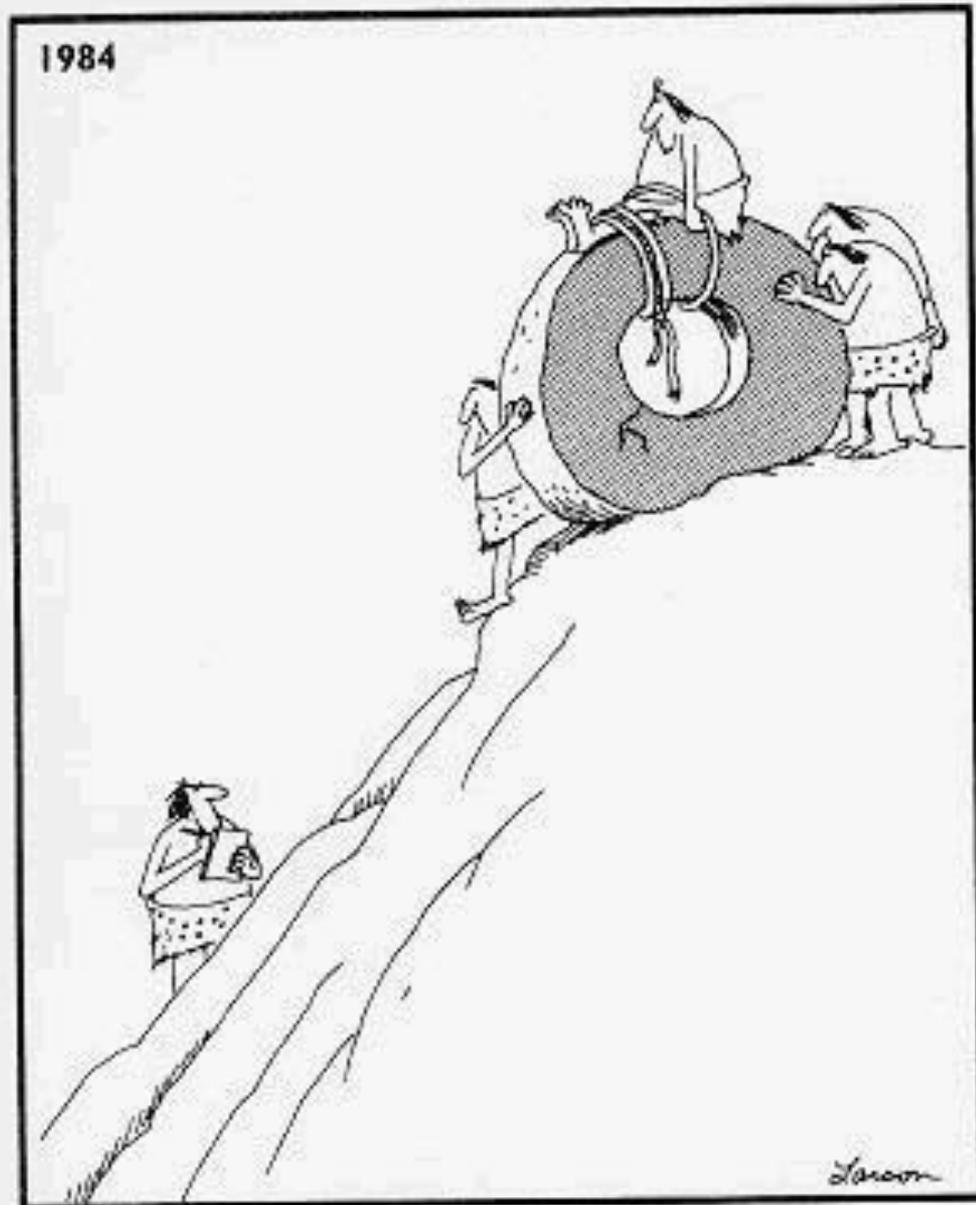
- Including the Veteran in the warm hand-off
 - Transition of lead service provider
 - Does the Veteran know who to contact
- Reviewing and updating goals
 - Short-term
 - Long-term
 - Treatment plan

Where Does Bridge Housing Fit?



The Advance of Homeless “Tech”

- We know what works!



Early experiments in transportation

Use of Housing First Approach

We use Housing First because it is evidence-based

Info:

- <http://shnny.org/learn-more/video/why-housing-first-saves-homeless-lives-and-public-money/>
- http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housing_first

Works Within a Community Plan

Coordinated entry & assessment

- No wrong door
- Rapid, efficient engagement

- Creation of a Master List
- Regular case conferences to collectively review and plan interventions
- Matching available resources to demand

The Goal is to End Homelessness!

- Focus on how to use resources to best meet community needs.
- All program elements incorporated in overall strategy.
- Examples of developing community plans:
www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/ssvf_university/community_coordination_and_plans

Community Plan Goals

- Success is measured by meeting federal benchmarks found at www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-for-ending-veteran-homelessness
- The goal is to create a well-coordinated and efficient community system that assures homelessness is *rare, brief and non-recurring* and *no Veteran is forced to live on the street.*

Bridge Housing

- How much is needed?
- Who makes referrals to bridge housing?
- How does it meet current gaps in service needs?

Bridge Housing is a program that needs to be integrated into an overall strategy.

Available Resources

How long does it take between intake and placement? During this period:

- Access to safe, temporary shelter
- Condition and location of existing units
- Number of additional beds required to meet demand

SSVF Co-Enrolling with GPD or HCHV

- Bridge Housing provides safe, temporary housing while SSVF provides primary case management, including housing search.
- Even without formal Bridge Housing designation, GPD/HCHV and SSVF encouraged to co-enroll if within 30 days of program admission. Though LOS determined based on Veteran need, in general it is not expected to exceed 90 days.
- Bridge Housing generally for individual Veterans. Families will likely get temporary housing through SSVF (up to 45 days).
- Regular communication to coordinate service delivery.

Continuous Review of Needs

Ongoing Engagement

- Providers
- CoC
- VA
- Policy makers
- Technical assistance



Thank You!