

CoC Training: Housing First

3.11.24





please mute yourself

Housekeeping

1

Respect the
trainer(s)

2

Respect
attendees

3

Make and
take space

4

Share the mic

5

Acknowledge
power and
privilege

Training Norms & Agreements

About

- **Continuum of Care Trainings:** Monthly trainings for homeless service providers covering information or skills considered essential by HUD or our system of care
- Hosted by H3 the **2nd Monday** of every month from **10am-Noon**
- **Required** for direct service staff (case managers, care coordinators, etc.) and program managers.

Required Trainings

- Some trainings such as **Housing First** are required by our funder, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (**HUD**) to ensure all programs and staff in our CoC operate under the same principles and practices
- Other trainings are relevant trainings H3 and/or providers has identified as important such as **Housing Focused Case Management**

Required Elements for This Training

HUD

- Required

CoC Written Standards

- See p. 18

Monitoring

- Attendance is monitored by H3 staff and discussed during monthly/quarterly provider check-ins with CE Manager and/or CoC Administrator
- **Providers/programs lacking attendance at trainings can be subject to Corrective Action Plans**

Equity questions to consider

- Have you noticed inequities in your own work on this topic?
- Have you contributed to or interrupted inequities?
- What barriers still exist? How might they be addressed?



Trainers

- David Dirks, *Directing Attorney and Racial Equity Action and Coordination Team (REACT) Lead*
- Michele Byrnes, *Directing Analyst*
- Riley Maeve, *Research Associate*

Home Base

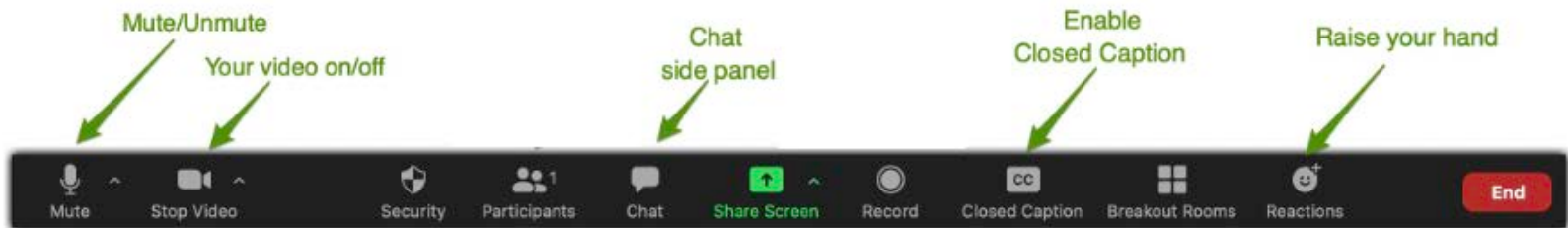
Practical Implications and Applications of Housing First Principles

Contra Costa County Continuum of Care

March 11, 2024

Zoom Reminders

- **Closed captioning** is available.
- We are **recording** this training.
- **Questions?** Chat, unmute, or raise your virtual hand.
- **Tech issues?** Send a message to Riley.



Homebase Team



Michele Byrnes,
*Directing
Analyst*



David Dirks,
*Directing
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Riley Meve,
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Why are we here?

- Each person and program has a crucial role to play in ending homelessness
- This is a community facing a challenging housing crisis
- You are helping people in urgent crisis navigate the housing market
- A system is only as strong as each component
- What brings you to this challenging work?

Learning Objectives



Core Principles & Key Characteristics of Housing First Programs



Individual & Community Benefits of Housing First



Housing First and Equity



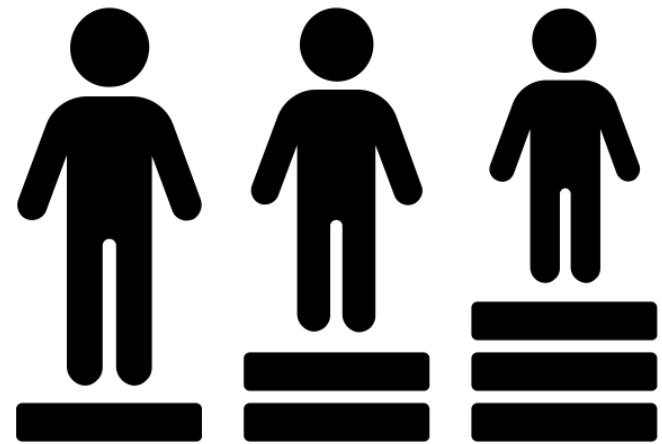
Implementing Housing First

Check-In

- 1) How long have you been living and/or working in the homelessness system of care?
- 2) How would you rate your knowledge of Housing First principles?
 - 1 = I'm a total beginner
 - 10 = I am an expert

Housing First is an Equity Issue

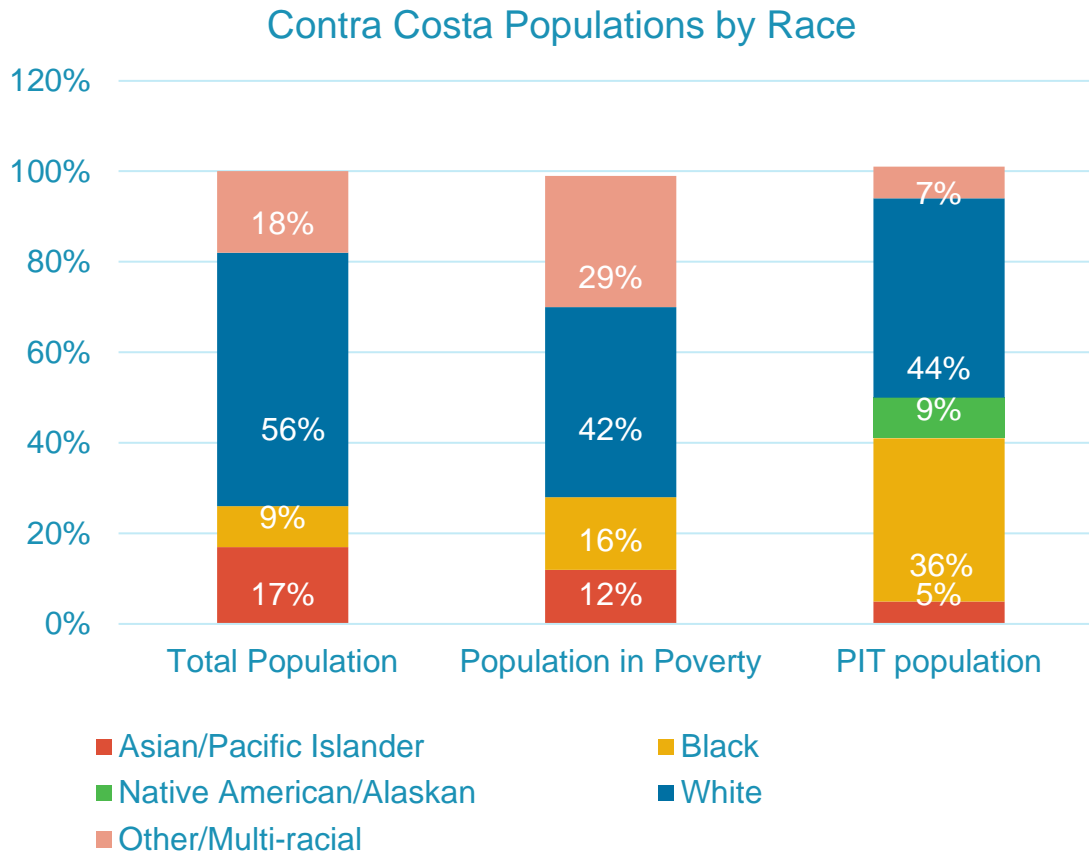
- Housing First ensures that the most marginalized and vulnerable individuals that face systemic barriers and discrimination are **NOT FURTHER** marginalized by complex eligibility requirements or exclusionary practices.
- It recognizes that everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, deserves the opportunity to have a place they can call home.



Systemic Barriers

- People experiencing unsheltered homelessness are 10.5x more likely to have police contact than people experiencing sheltered homelessness.
- Black people are overrepresented in the national, state, and local homeless population.
- Black Californians experiencing homelessness are more likely to have a history of incarceration in prison than other racial groups.

Racial Disparities in Homelessness in Contra Costa County



- Black people are **4x** overrepresented in the homeless population
- Native American people are **8x** overrepresented in the homeless population

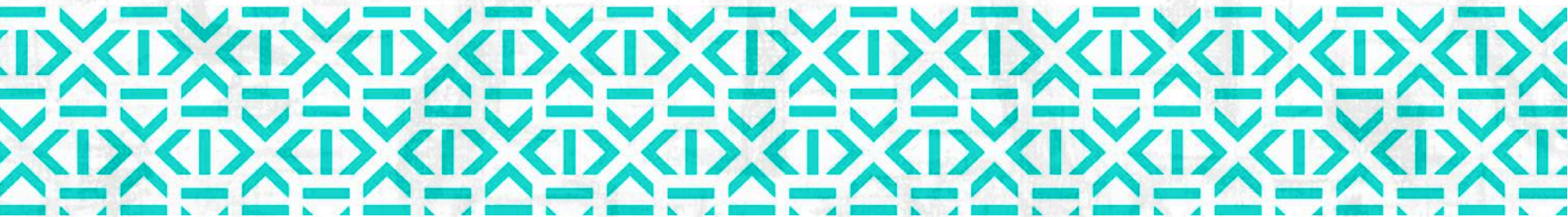
What is Implicit Bias?

Implicit bias is an automatic reaction we have towards other people. These attitudes and stereotypes can negatively impact our understanding, actions, decisions, and policymaking.

Check-In

- Do you think implicit bias affects access to homelessness services?
- Menti: In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Key Characteristics of Housing First Programs



What is housing first?



- **Housing First** is an approach where homeless persons are provided immediate access to housing & then offered the supportive services that may be needed to foster long-term stability & prevent a return to homelessness. This approach removes unnecessary barriers & assumes that supportive services are more effective in addressing needs when the individual or family is housed – when the daily stress of being homeless is taken out of the equation.

Ann Marie Oliva
Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs
August 21, 2016

Core Principles

Principle #1: Homelessness is primarily a housing problem

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Principle #2: Persons experiencing homelessness should be returned to or stabilized in permanent housing as soon as possible & connected with the resources required to sustain that housing.

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Principle #1: Homelessness is primarily a housing problem

Principle #2: Persons experiencing homelessness should be returned to or stabilized in permanent housing as soon as possible & connected with the resources required to sustain that housing.

Principle #3: Underlying issues are best addressed once that person is in a stable housing environment.

Who does Housing First work for?

- **Everyone!**
- BUT most effective for:

Persons with **complex service needs**

Persons **often turned away** from shelter and other affordable housing options

Persons **least likely** to be able to proactively **seek & obtain housing on their own**

Key Characteristics of Housing First Programs

Few or no
barriers

Reasonable
accommodations

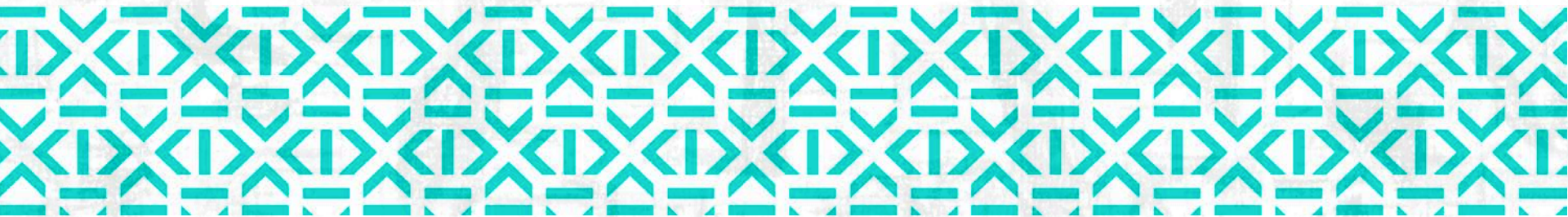
Identification of
alternatives

Voluntary, client-
driven services

Flexible payment

Eviction
prevention

Individual & Community Benefits of Housing First



Why Housing First?



Residential stability



Social benefits



Cost effectiveness

And...it is impossible to meaningfully change the impact of homelessness without Housing First

Residential Stability

Housing First has been shown to lead to increased housing stability:

Greater housing retention

Longer stays in housing

Social Benefits

Participants in Housing First programs show improvements in **overall wellbeing**:

Improved psychological wellbeing

Increased integration into the community

Higher housing satisfaction

Lower incarceration rates

No greater rate of alcohol or substance abuse

Cost Effectiveness

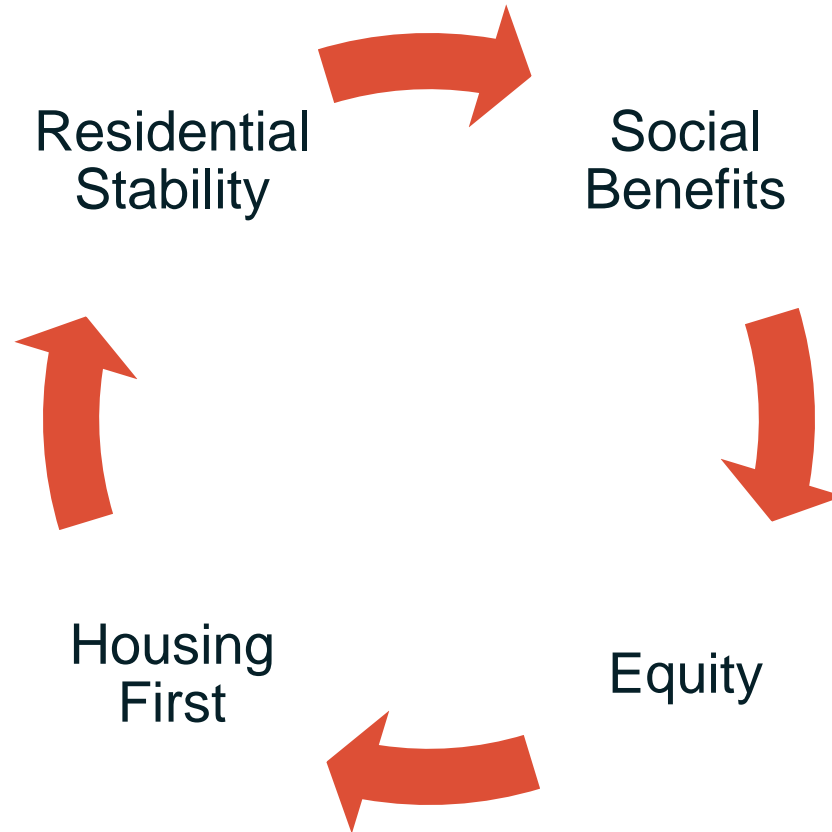
Implementing Housing First is **cost-effective** & has been shown to lead to:

Reduced costs overall

Declining costs over time

Reduced strain on community resources

Housing First, Not Housing Only



Necessary Equity Components

Equal Access: ensures that all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal access to housing

No Eligibility Requirements: prioritize immediate access to housing without preconditions or requirements, such as sobriety or participation in treatment programs

Anti-Discrimination Policies: prevent bias and ensure fair access. Train staff on fair housing practices, implement nondiscrimination policies, and actively address instances of discrimination

Culturally Competent Services: understand and respect diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and traditions to ensure that individuals receive appropriate and equitable support

Outreach and Engagement: engage marginalized populations in a respectful and inclusive manner. Collaborate with CBOs, cultural groups, and advocacy networks to ensure that housing resources are accessible and available to all

Scenario #1

- A woman is referred to your PSH program. She has a substance use disorder and was recently discharged from the hospital. She is currently living outdoors while she awaits housing. She has stated that she is not interested in reducing her substance use.
- **Questions**
 - Which Housing First principles come into play here?
 - What biases do you recognize in yourself as you meet with her?
 - What community resources or partnerships could help in this situation?

Implementing Housing First

Foundations of Housing First

- Focus the conversation on:
 - Getting housed AND staying housed
 - Not just housing first, but housing second, third, fourth . . .

Foundations of Housing First

- Start with the households who have the highest barriers to housing:
 - The most vulnerable
 - Those having the highest impact on the community
 - Those who absolutely would not exit homelessness without your help

Foundations of Housing First

- A participant-centered approach is key
 - Eliminate unnecessary rules & requirements
 - Implement strengths-based approaches to empower participant autonomy & independence
 - Challenge the idea of the “non-compliant” participant

What should we consider in a participant-centered approach?

Rental Assistance

- Length of assistance
- Initial amount
- Step-down
- **What else?**

Case Management

- Frequency of check-ins
- Location of meetings
- Role of case manager
- After subsidy ends
- **What else?**

Housing Options

- Geographic location
- Unit size
- Shared Housing
- Affordable housing waitlists
- **What else?**

Services

- Health Insurance
- Medical care
- Behavioral health care
- Employment
- Benefits
- Child care
- Transportation
- Immigration
- Education
- Life skills
- Legal services
- Credit repair
- Record clearance
- **What else?**

Scenario 2: Two households, one unit

A college-aged student, Felix has been referred to your PSH program. They identify as queer and their family kicked them out due to their identity, and they have been sleeping in their car on the college campus. They have clinical depression and anxiety and have expressed thoughts of self-harm.

Tom, 54, has been referred to your PSH program. He has no source of income and was evicted from his apartment. He has been staying with family, but the property manager is not happy with Tom's presence and keeps threatening him and his family with eviction.

Scenario #3

- A father with a young daughter has been living in a scattered site unit through the Housing First permanent supportive housing program for two years. Recently, the father has missed multiple rent payments and there have been complaints from other residents and desk staff that he is smoking in the unit. After missing the third rent payment in a row, property management issued a 10-day notice to pay or quit.
- **Questions:**
 - How do Housing First principles come into play here?
 - What biases do you recognize in yourself as you meet this family and learn about their eviction notice?
 - What community resources or partnerships could help in this situation?
 - How do we ensure this doesn't happen again? How can we rebuild the relationship with this participant so he tells us when he is struggling in the future?
 - How do we ensure this doesn't occur with other participants?

Scenario #4

- A married couple with a child lives in your PSH program. The father has a disability and is unable to work. The mother is out of work for reasons that seem related to substance use disorder, and the family is struggling to make ends meet financially. The child has been exhibiting behavior problems at school, and the parents cannot afford his school materials, so he is falling behind.
- **Questions:**
 - What resources would you connect the father to?
 - How would you support the wife in securing employment?
 - What longer-term resources would you connect them to in order to ensure they have the support needed to stay housed?
 - Are there additional resources or supports you could include to help the child as well as support them as parents?

Scenario #5

- Helen is a participant in your PSH program. You need to conduct an annual unit inspection. The case manager has been unsuccessful in multiple attempts to reach Helen, and she does not return calls or emails.
- **Questions**
 - Should Helen be terminated from the program?

Share Out & Questions

Thank You!

Questions?

ContraCosta@homebaseccc.org

Instructions

Go to

www.menti.com

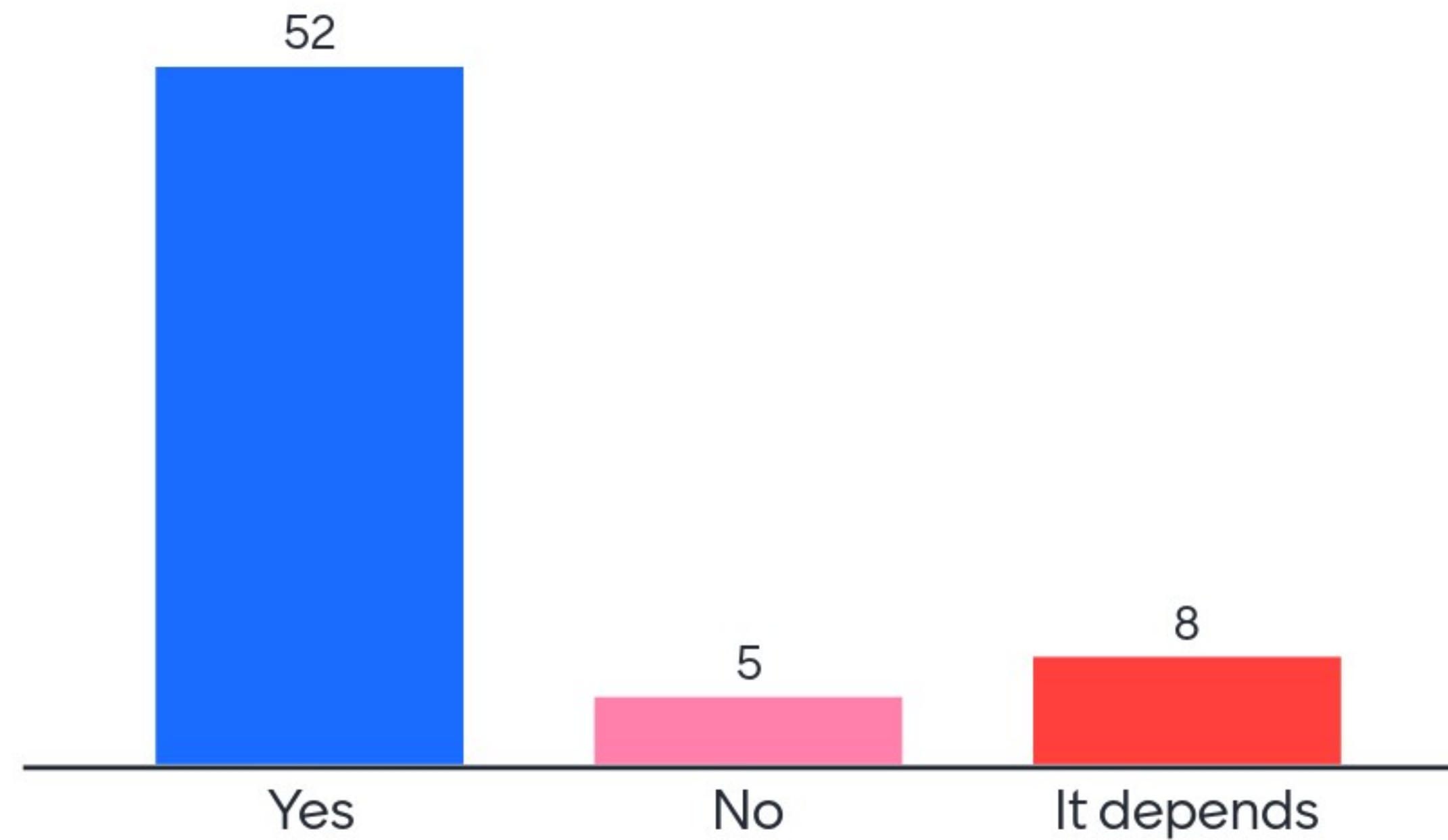
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Or use QR code

Do you think implicit bias affects access to homelessness services?



In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Preconceived notions
about people

Judging whether
someone deserves
services

Judging people by their
circumstances and assuming
things that are not true.

Denial of housing

Discrimination

Inadequate housing
support

stereotypes

Racial

In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Choosing when resources are limited

Wrong information given

Deciding who is more "worthy"

Bias against homelessness

Judging people by appearance

It can actually stop someone from getting housed.
Potentially an improper housing situation that may not be an appropriate fit.

judging people financial choices with little information , looking at budgets etc

Judgment against difference

In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Judging a book by its cover

discrimination on race

When bias goes unchecked, service providers are likely to treat clients differently (either better or worse) based on their biases rather than making sure every client receives the same opportunities

Less effort in getting persons connected

Limiting areas where folks live or want to live.

Misconcieved notions on people of color and homeless folks

judgment

favoritism, higher expectations, denial of housing, stereotypes, forces clients not to feel safe

In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Possibly retraumatizing individuals

Denial of housing
Increased financial responsibility
Limited access to certain neighborhoods

The idea that someone doesn't deserve housing because of some experience like substance abuse

Those who control access to housing may have negative, discriminatory beliefs about applicants

Cherry picking

Inappropriate services offered

Communication or cultural misinterpretations

Can affect who people are willing to rent to.

In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Discrimination Race
gender and criminal
justice

Stigmas

income

Judgement

neighborhood where they
are applying -
affordability

Poorly informed
subjective opinions based
on negative associations

By assuming we know a
population and not really
assessing their situation by
not asking or being thorough
in our interview process

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In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

Prejudice in regards to recovering addicts

how we respond to clients--type of care, timing

it depends on how those Biases affect you as a person due a persons trauma and if they can push through

Income

Discrimination, judgment

Behavior resulting from trauma and discrimination may be seen by providers as "problematic" and affect access to services and support

Discrimination, income, prejudice in regards to recovering addicts

stereo type, homeless

In what ways can implicit bias affect access to housing?

people face discrimination and lose the opportunity of being able to be housed on their own. or those that are housed and have language barriers are disproportionately taken advantage of by their LL

Denial of housing

Instructions

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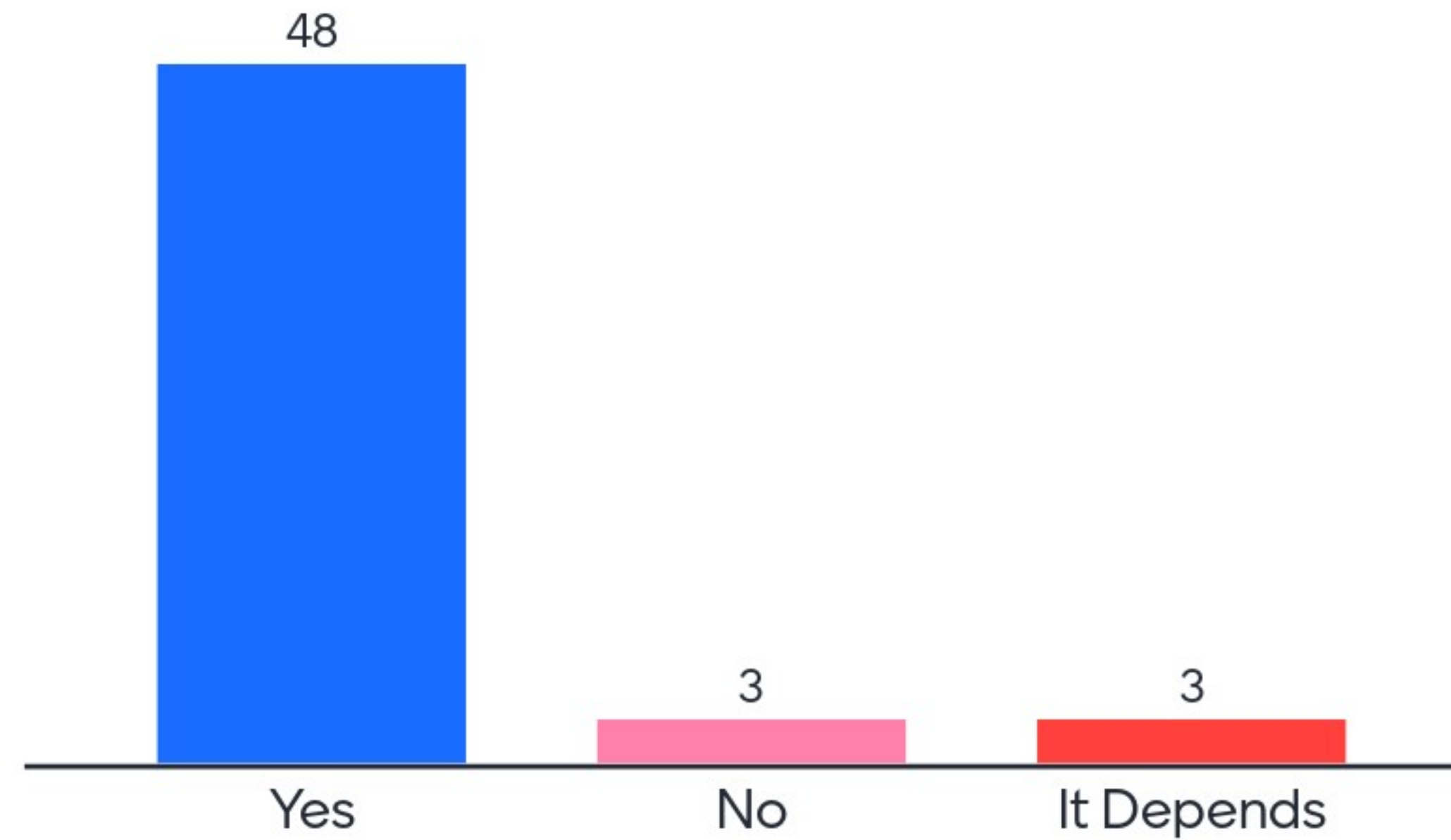
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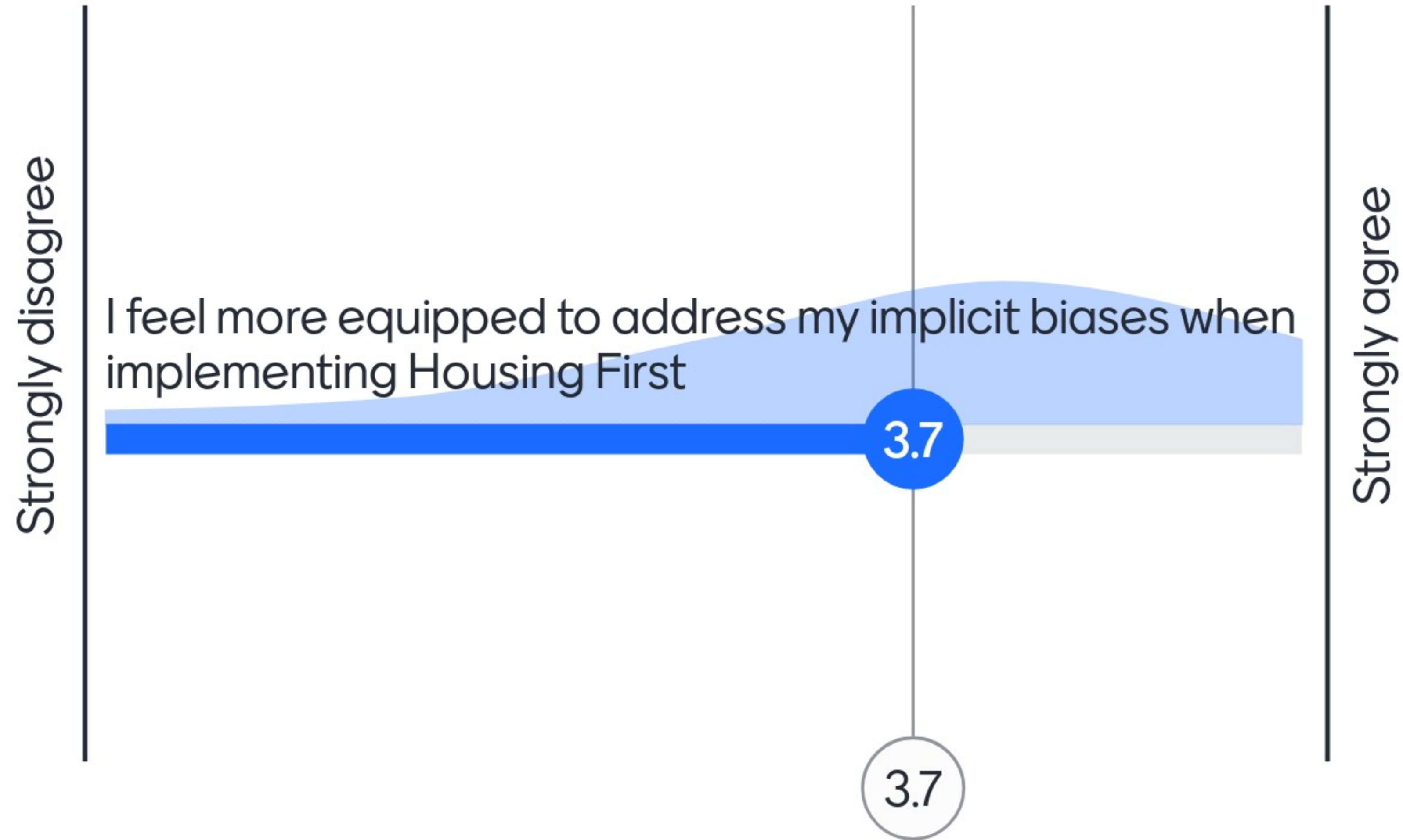
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Or use QR code

Post Survey: Do you think implicit bias affects access to homelessness services?





What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

Commutation and meet
the client where they are
at

To keep in mind why we
do this work.

It was a review from what
i heard before.

We all need to work
together to make it work

WE HAVE AMAZING
SERVICE PROVIDERS IN
CONTRA COSTA

The issue isn't as simple
as it sounds. It takes work
and effort.

It doesn't matter how much
work we do, there's always
more that needs to be done.

Evaluation of self for
biasPartnership

What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

Communication with the landlords

Communication and meeting clients where they are at

We need a lot of diversity to help her clients

The most important thing that I took away is you got a listen to what the client is telling us because sometimes that's all they want us to do is listen.

This was a good beginning to understanding Housing First

Meet them where they are

Making sure I'm meeting them right where they are

We can only offer services, it is up to the clients to want to make that change.

What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

A better understanding of the principles of the housing first model

That a lot of are are feeling the same frustrations.

Communication working with landlord

Communication, set realistic expectations

Knowing what is House First... and seeing alot of service providers all over ccc

Remembering to meet participants Exactly where they are

Reminds of how the housing first model works

Working together

What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

Communication is key

how to think about my thoughts before meeting with our clients


Communicate Listen Meeting residents where they are
Work as team when needed

Partnerships with other agencies! Empowering the web of resources in CCC

Recognizing the conflict between Housing First and additional services provided within the agency,

We have a long way to go!

good reminder to check myself of biases in every aspect. also reminder to help clients with what they *want*, not necessarily what we think they need

To leave opinions at home, meet people where they are, be kind and provide services


What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

Amazing training and space to share

Meeting Partner where they are as well as remaining humble in keeping Housing First concept a Priority !!

Primary issue STILL not enough housing, which HF doesn't change! In fact it makes it harder!

It is important to not let my biases get in the way, try harder to see and hear the client more and be a little more creative in housing approaches to work more with others to get our clients housed.

Remembering to leave your own stuff at the door and meet the clients where they're at

I appreciate the work everyone does and thoughts were very helpful

Reminded that it's ok to speak up around the real issues

Addressing and communication - using available resources - partnership

What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

Doing HF well requires commitment and funding!

It's a team effort, communication is key, teach the associated life skills through HPS and ongoing case management

My biggest takeaway is just how important it is for housing to come first and foremost in order for the client to be successful in the process of everything. I would also like to talk more about the m

focus on client's strengths and connect them to services that will help them not only short term but long term

EMAIL addresses if we have additional questions after this training

What do we do when, despite our best efforts, someone loses their housing.....

it was a review

I would however also like to talk more about and brainstorm the mental health access component again to the whole program.

What is your biggest takeaway from today's training?

To be openminded and
you are making a
difference

communication is key and
meet clients where they are.
Take time to listen and see
them.

What additional questions do you have about Housing First?

None that I can think of

Thanks

N/A

Can we address the
addiction and housing
first piece

None that I can think of

Are there agencies that
help with housing search?

None at this time.

None, thank you

What additional questions do you have about Housing First?

If we follow the housing first rule, but the landlords and property owners don't, how do we fix that?

What happens when HF conflicts with program regulations?

Open discussion about how things can be changed

None at this time 😊

How can we help clients if they continue to make bad decisions that ruin their housing placement.

Is this model supporting change or enabling continued behaviors that contributes to the cycle of homelessness?

NA

how can we get more landlords on board with helping folks with significant barriers; background, credit, income, etc.

What additional questions do you have about Housing First?

This was comprehensive

How can we improve the push toward housing 1st while keeping sustainability in mind? We have been encouraged to place clients into housing that is 90% of their income bc we are focused on housing 1st

What mental health opportunities/ organizations can we reach out to for support?

None