



Low Barrier Shelter: Lessons Learned in Year One

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Workshop Objectives

**Key Components of
Emergency Shelter
Operation**



**Criteria and Referral
Process for SAMMinistries'
Low Barrier Shelter**



**Collaboration – Key to
Client Success**

History

On a cold winter morning in 1981, the plight of the unsheltered homeless population was brought into stark perspective for the members of First Presbyterian Church in downtown San Antonio.

A homeless man, frozen to death, was found on the church grounds. In response, volunteers started a ministry in the church gymnasium to shelter and care for the growing number of homeless individuals.



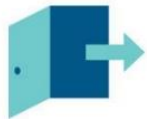
**HOUSING FIRST
APPROACH**



**SAFE &
APPROPRIATE
DIVERSION**



**IMMEDIATE &
LOW-BARRIER
ACCESS**



**HOUSING-FOCUSED,
RAPID EXIT SERVICES**



**DATA TO MEASURE
PERFORMANCE**

The 5 Keys to Effective Emergency Shelter

Low Barrier Shelter



45 Room Facility

Staff

- **4 Case Managers**
- **4 Resident Advocates**
- **Intake Coordinator**
- **Support Services**
- **Program Manager**
- **Project Director**

Security 24/7/365

Project Basics

Low barrier → minimal requirements for entry

Intensive on-site case management

Housing focused

Supportive Services

- **ID Recovery**
- **Health Care**
- **Counseling**
- **Psychiatric Services**
- **Medication Management**
- **Life Skills**

Target Population

- Referral from a Street Outreach partner
- Unsheltered
- Chronically homeless
- Prioritized for housing
- Disabling condition
- **Unable** to meet congregate/traditional shelter criteria



A Look At Our Clients

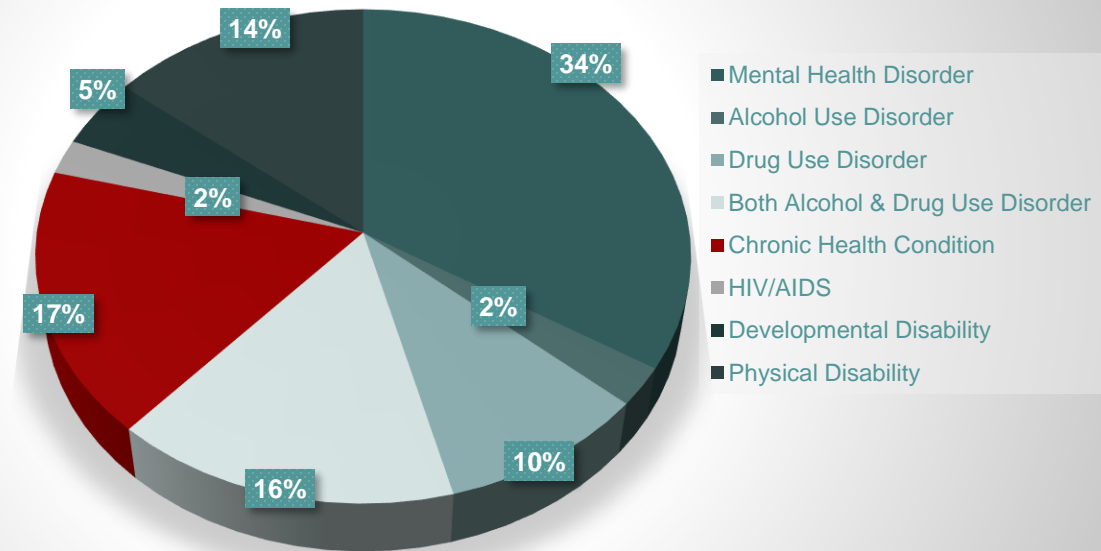
<u>Race</u>	
White	118
Black	63
Asian	1
Am. Indian Native	2
Native Hawaiiin/ Pacific Islander	0
Multiple Races	5
Client Doesn't Know/ Refused/ Not Collected	0
<u>Ethnicity</u>	
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	118
Hispanic/Latino	71
Client Doesn't Know/ Refused/ Not Collected	0

<u>Gender Identity</u>	
Male	128
Female	60
Transgender	1
Ques/Non-Bin/Other/Refused	0

<u>Age</u>	
18-24	17
25-34	19
35-44	47
45-54	57
55-61	31
62+	18

A Look At Our Clients

Physical and Mental Health Conditions

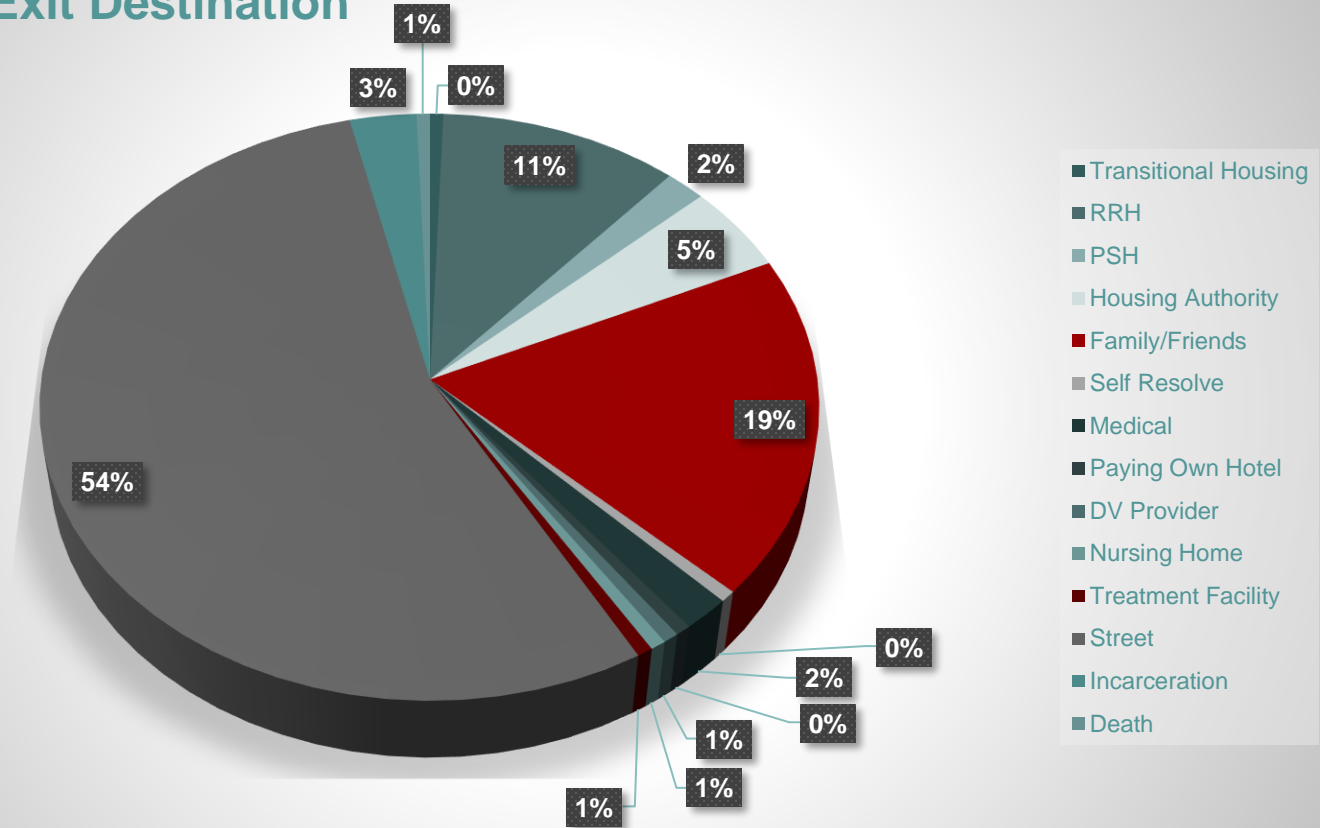


Client Expectations

- **No visitors are allowed.**
- **Smoking allowed in designated areas only.**
- **No drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol.**
- **Weapons are not allowed in rooms.**
- **No pets are allowed.**
- **Clothing is required in common areas.**
- **Treat everyone with dignity and respect.**
- **Maintain a clean room.**
- **Curfew is 10pm. If client is going to be gone for more than 24-hours staff should be informed.**

Success

Exit Destination



Collaboration



Lessons Learned

Low barrier does not mean anything goes!

Needs

- On-Site psychiatric services
- Crisis stabilization
- Individual and group therapy
- Housed peer support group

Challenges

- Client/Staff pushback on expectations
- Boundary issues
- Triggering events for staff and clients
- Relationships with referring partners
- Site conversion

Questions

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