

## WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS?

**APPROACH:** Use the bolded headings below as a framework and ask students what they know about each topic before explaining each category. If nothing else, make sure that the takeaway point is clear.

**HOOK:** Homeless people are seen as disadvantaged from an economic and humane point of view, but studies suggest they are also a quantifiably sicker population. Housing is a key social determinant of health. Evidence-based approaches exist for reducing homelessness.

### CONTENT:

#### Housing First

- Hallmark: Lack of pre-conditions to obtain housing
- Outcomes:
  - Homelessness: faster exits from homelessness AND more time spent in housing
  - Cost: questionable as lower-quality studies have suggested cost-savings, but not larger trials
  - Health: some studies have shown benefits for HIV control and decreasing alcohol use, other health indicators have not shown significant improvements
- *Takeaway: Housing First works in getting and keeping people off the streets, data for cost-savings less clear, but appears to be best approach we have to decrease prevalence of homelessness*

#### Critical Time Intervention (CTI)

- Hallmark: bolstering support services during transition to community living
- Outcomes:
  - Homelessness: significant reduction in post-discharge homelessness from institutions
  - Cost: did not reduce costs for medical, housing, and criminal justice services
  - Health: significant decrease in negative but not positive symptoms of schizophrenia
- *Takeaway: Critical Time Intervention helps get people off the streets, not only gives people more support but trains them how to maintain it*

#### Assertive Community Treatment

- Hallmark: Meeting people where they are physically
- Outcomes:
  - Homelessness: 25 RCTs evaluating effectiveness, faster exits from homelessness AND more time spent in housing compared to traditional approaches
  - Cost: costly, reduction in hospitalizations, no reliable reduction in outpatient use
  - Health: improves treatment adherence, quality of life, adherence, social skills, employment
- *Takeaway: ACT services helps get and keep people off streets, not time-limited, reduces psychiatric hospital use and improves quality of life*

#### Clubhouse Model

- Hallmark: not focused on illness/treatment model, but focused on strengths, purpose, structure
- Outcomes:
  - Homelessness: not studied
  - Cost: not studied
  - Health: decreased rates of hospitalization, improvement in quality of life, employment
- *Takeaway: Clubhouse model gives people who are homeless structure and purpose, but effect on outcomes not well-studied*