

The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag. The top portion shows the red and white stripes, while the bottom portion shows the blue field with white stars. The flag appears to be waving or draped.

Veterans Welcome Home

Progressive Engagement and Stages of Change

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**NEW ENGLAND CENTER
AND HOME FOR VETERANS**
EDUCATION | SUPPORT | EMPLOYMENT | HOUSING

New England Center and Home for Veterans



A Community-based Critical Resource for Veterans Facing Challenges





Veterans Working Group

- Is a response to the call to end veteran homelessness
- Is made up of non-profits, city government, state and federal partners
- Creates a bi-annual list of all the homeless in Boston, it is used to bring service providers and homeless individuals together



BOSTON'S WAY HOME
MAYOR MARTIN J. WALSH





Boston Continuum of Care (COC)

- The Boston Continuum of Care is coordinated by the Neighborhood Development Supportive Housing Division, with direction from the Boston Continuum of Care Leadership Council
- Boston COC is made up of numerous community partners that work together on the goal to end homelessness in Boston
- All of Boston is one COC



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Veterans Welcome Home (VWH)

Provides housing search assistance,
access to low threshold vouchers,
and ongoing supportive services to
ensure that Veterans achieve and
maintain stabilization in the
community.



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Eligibility Criteria

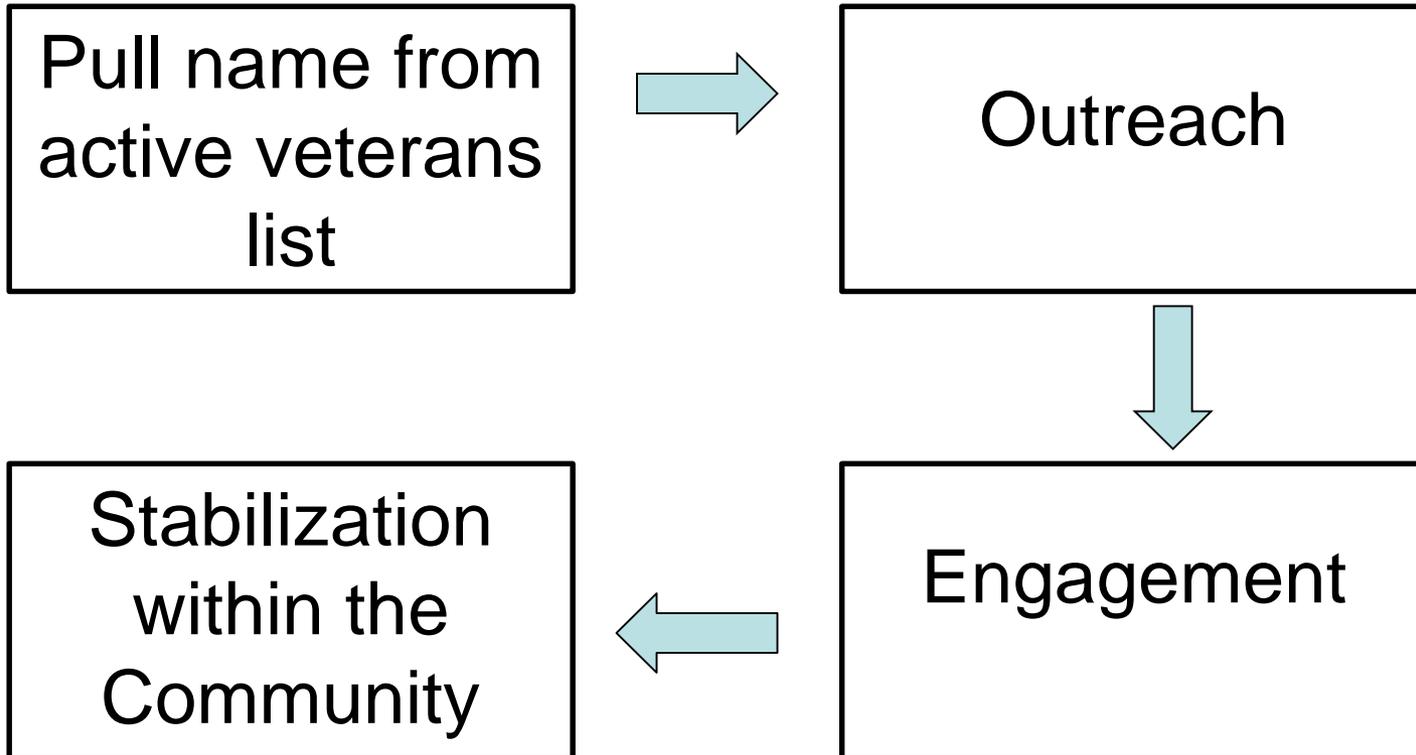
- Identified by the city of Boston as chronically homeless and a veteran
- Agree to participant guidelines
- Is able to produce a DD214
- Is categorically ineligible for VASH



Veterans Welcome Home



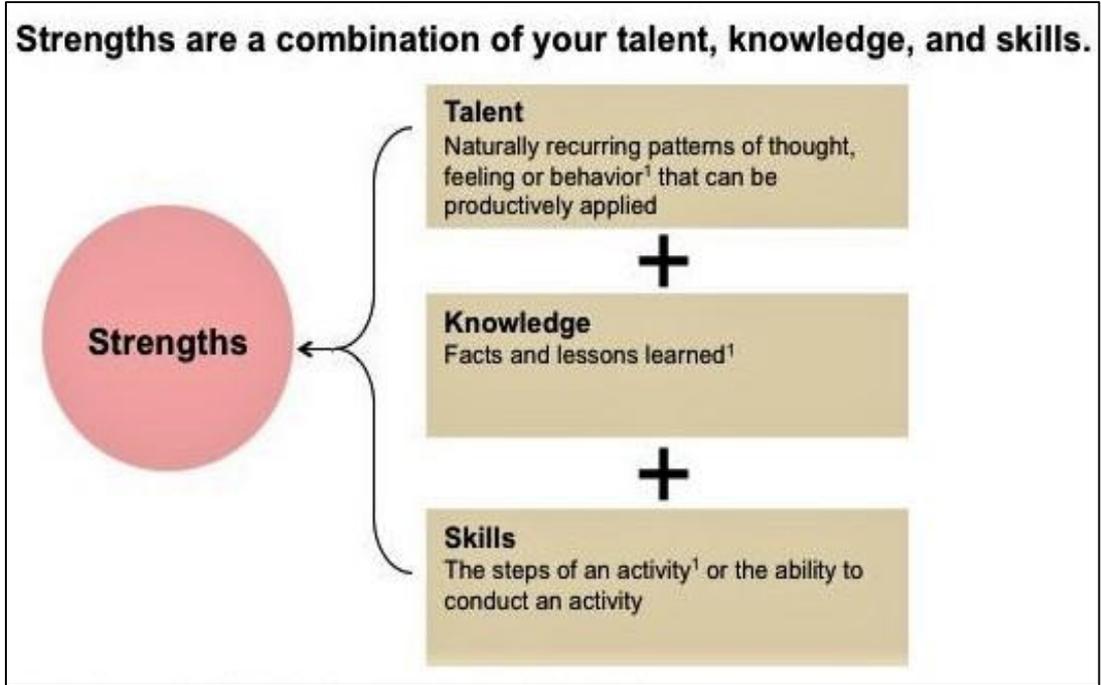
VWH Process





VWH Population Strengths

- Adaptability
- Self Advocacy
- Perseverance
- Perseverance
- Creativity





VWH Population Challenges

- Individual barriers: legal history, past evictions, mental and physical health, substance use, and low income
- Psychological barriers: moving away from the normalized experience of living on the street, the challenges of taking care of ones self, and a home



Shelter Plus Care Vouchers

- Low threshold
- Willing to work with folks with complex criminal backgrounds
- No expiration date
- Based on the needs of our clients
 - Must be chronically homeless
 - Have a disability



Metro Housing[™]
B O S T O N



Collaboration of Care

- Veterans are often working with multiple agencies at the same time
- Importance of establishing relationships with all their providers to create a coordinated care plan
- Create clear roles for each provider with Veteran to prevent confusion



Creating a Outreach Network

- We have a point of contact in many of the city emergency shelters
- We work collaboratively with homeless service providers, including outreach staff from two major shelters, the staff at the local overnight drop in center, and the needle exchange
- We are constantly looking to expand our network of providers so that we can better serve our veterans





Theories of Engagement

Veterans Welcome Home is founded on the principles of progressive engagement and collaboration of care. Meeting veterans where they are at, utilizing the stages of change and motivational interviewing, accompanying them as they navigate complicated systems and challenging situations. Moving from homelessness to stably housed.



Progressive Engagement

- Voluntary and flexible participation
- Solutions focused; The main goal being to resolve the crises of homelessness as quickly as possible
- Offers support based on the client needs and can lessen or be increased as needed
- A focus on connecting with community resources
- Builds on the resiliency and strengths already possessed by the veteran



Progressive engagement Cont.

VWH uses progressive engagement to meet the veteran where they are at, offer light touch or more intensive case management depending on the individual veteran, and offer light touch financial assistance if a veteran is in need.



Stages of Change

- Pre-contemplation: Individuals who do not see their behaviors as a problem, therefore no need to change
- Contemplation: Individuals who recognize a problem and are contemplating a change but haven't committed to making the change



Stages of Change Cont.

- Preparation: Individuals who have decided to change their behaviors within a month
- Action: Individuals who have changed their behavior at least one day and no more than six months
- Maintenance: Individuals who have been engaged in the new behavior for at least six months and are committed to mandating the new behavior



Pre-Contemplation

- Veterans in our program who are in this stage are not engaged with a housing track at all and refuse all housing options
- Content with staying in a shelter or living on the streets



Example 1

- Bill is a long term stayer at the same shelter (since 2011)
- He has never had his own place to live
- The process of housing applications is extremely overwhelming for him
- He continues to refuse all housing options



Contemplation

- Veterans in this stage are aware that their living situations in shelters/streets are not a safe or stable option for them
- They express that they should make a change, however they make little progress towards the goal
- Often refuse housing opportunities when presented to them



Example 2

- Robert has been staying on the streets for almost 2 years after an eviction
- He grew up in Boston, surrounded by a lot of violence
- He expresses that he has lived a certain way his whole life and it is hard to change that lifestyle
- He also expresses that he wants to make that change, but feels it will take him time



Preparation

- Veterans in this stage are getting ready to take action in changing behaviors
- They are more decisive, committed and confident
- They are developing a plan, and may have already taken small steps
- That change is usually regarding housing, income, legal barriers, and/or focusing on physical and mental health



Example 3

- Kevin stayed at an emergency shelter for several years, then came into transitional housing
- He filled out many housing applications and recently received a voucher
- He also recently obtained employment to increase his income
- He continues to maintain his treatment for mental and physical health



Action

- Veterans in this stage are beyond thinking about making a change, but in the act of changing
- All the small steps and choices begin to make a huge difference
- The Action stage is often when a Veteran has overcome many barriers to finally obtain housing



Example 3

- Kelly was living in emergency shelters and transitional housing for almost 3 years
- She has a 14 year old son who was placed in foster care, and finally reached reunification as the goal
- She was able to obtain income through SSI
- She worked hard on her recovery and has maintained her sobriety
- She has been housed for about a month now



Maintenance

- Veterans in this stage have successfully avoided or overcome obstacles that could cause them to go back to old behaviors
- Through practice they've attained greater level of confidence
- These new behaviors are now integrated into their lifestyle



Example 4

- When Jeff first enrolled in VWH he had no access to his SSI, no other benefits, and no ID
- He now rents a studio with the support of a voucher
- Has increased his benefits, has access to his SSI, and has full identification
- He (mostly) keeps his appointments and continues to work with his case manager



Motivational Interviewing

A client centered, directive treatment that increases motivation to change by recognizing and resolving ambivalence and reinforcing the client's statements about his or her reasons, desire, ability, need and commitment to change.



Motivational Interviewing Cont.

- Motivation belongs to the person
- It is influenced by the providers style
- Focus of attention: strengthen clients verbalization of motivation



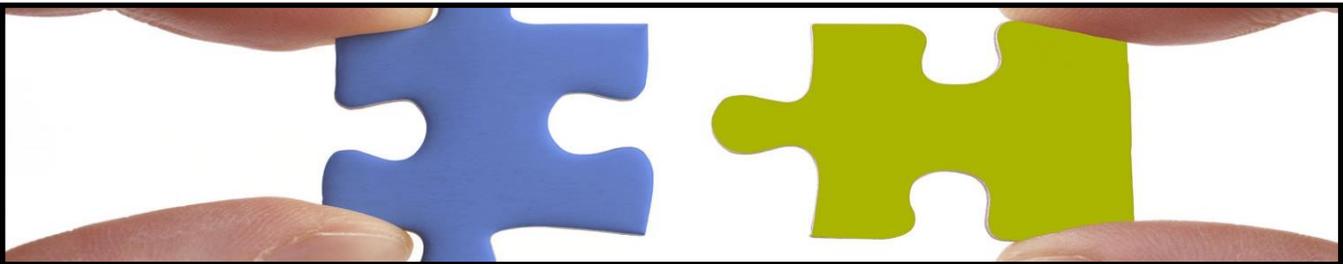
Using MI with a Veteran

- Draw out vs. implant ideas
 - “What concerns you about maintaining housing” vs. “You need to find housing now”
- Allow the freedom not to change vs. push commitment
 - “How are you ready to change” vs. “If you don’t get sober soon you could die”
- Collaborate
 - “What do you think you will do” vs. “You need to get a job”



Bringing it all Together

At Veterans Welcome Home we really believe that we are working with the veterans who have slipped through the cracks, we want to bring them back into the fold of the community and help them to establish lasting stabilization there.





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Questions?