A11: A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO DIVERSION

King County Diversion Coaches
Introductions
Homelessness Crisis Response

- Funders/City/County chose to pursue pilot of innovative approach to training in the community with creation of the King County Diversion Coaches
  - Create formal leadership development approach for direct service providers who exhibit leadership skills in their daily work
  - Strengthen champions in diversion (service providers)
  - Test coaches training model
Leading with Diversion as a frontline approach

King County Diversion Guidelines
- Implementation and timeline
- Everyone experiencing unsheltered homelessness is eligible for diversion

Central Diversion Fund established 2019
- Goal to provide streamlined access to flexible diversion funding for SA, families, & YYA
Origins of Diversion Coaches

- Objective: train service providers in Diversion Approach and implement KC Diversion Guidelines
- Application process resulted in June 2018, 17 coaches took multiple trainings on Diversion approach
- Training other providers began in July of 2018
- Spring 2019: Revamped Diversion Training with equity lens and anti-racist language
- Regional Learning Circles for trained service providers began in 2019

Currently 10 core coaches

→ 10 facilitated trainings

→ 460 service providers trained to date
Activity

- Take two minutes to identify what is your understanding of Diversion?

- Share out!
What is Diversion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversion IS...</th>
<th>Diversion IS NOT...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Fast!</td>
<td>✓ Slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Housing First</td>
<td>✓ Housing Ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Strength Based</td>
<td>✓ Deficit Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Equitable</td>
<td>✓ Racist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Person Centric</td>
<td>✓ System Centric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Explorative</td>
<td>✓ Directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ CREATIVE</td>
<td>✓ Traditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversion is an **Approach**

- Supports people’s self determination with impartiality and powerful questions — **honoring strengths**
- Become a “thought partner”— **focusing on exploration**
- Provides **equitable** services
- People seeking assistance connect to **housing**!
- **Anti-Racist**

The *Diversion Approach* draws on the values of housing first, trauma informed care, motivational interviewing, harm reduction, and person centered engagement.
Person Centered Theory

- The idea that every human being strives for and can attain their full potential.

- Trusts human potential.

- Aims to provide empathy, unconditional positive regard, support and structure so people discover solutions within themselves.
Diversion: Person Based Approach

For people to grow they need…

- Genuineness (openness)
- Transparency (don’t sugar coat reality)
- Acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard)
- Empathy (being listened to and understood).
Attentive Listening Cycle

**INTERNAL FOCUS**
- Decide to listen
- No distractions
- Quiet your mind
- Focus on what the person is saying

**SUMMARIZE**
- Repeat what you heard, in THEIR words
- Check that you heard correctly

**ATTENDING**
- Show attentive behaviors
- Make soft eye contact
- Open face & posture
- Watch other person’s non-verbal reactions

**EMPATHY**
- Understand their perspective
- Avoid taking on their trauma

**IMPARTIALITY**
- Neither agree or disagree
- Keep your opinion to yourself
- Impartiality ≠ indifference

**NON-JUDGMENTAL**
- Don’t plan your response
- Avoid assumptions
- Avoid thinking “that’s not what I would have done”
Diversion Conversation: Steps for Being a Thought Partner

**INDIVIDUAL**

**BARRIERS & NEEDS**

**LISTEN**
- Flatten power dynamic
- Hear their story

**STORY**

**SUMMARIZE**
- Hear their story

**REFLECTION & INSIGHT**

**POWERFUL QUESTIONS**
- Stay curious

**OPTIONS**

**REALITY TESTING**
- Budget honestly
- Explore support systems

**DIVERSION PLAN**

**RESOURCES, NEXT STEPS**
- Use expertise & encourage

**CRITERIA for DECISION-MAKING**
Equity in Diversion Approach

- Diversion serves everyone because there is no eligibility or program requirements to screen them out.
- By evoking and not instilling and by accepting and not judging, Diversion does not impose white dominant values on people of color.
- Diversion gives power back to communities whose power has been taken away by giving them autonomy and trust.
Racial Disproportionality

Disproportionality in homelessness exists because of the racism these systems were designed to perpetuate.
Homelessness disproportionately impacts people of color in King County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>% of General Population</th>
<th>% of People Experiencing Homelessness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Races</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data.
King County Centralized Diversion Fund

Number of Households Served

460

Average Cost per Household

$2,202

Household Race/Ethnicity

- American Indian or Alaska Native: 8
- Asian: 10
- Black or African American: 287
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 11
- Two or More Races: 11
- Unknown: 16
- White: 122

Household Type

- Null: 3
- Households with at least one adult and one child: 227
- Households without children: 220
- Unknown: 13
- Youth and Young Adults (18-24): 92

Cost Type

- Households with at least one adult and one child: 2
- Households without children: 1
- Move-in costs: 373
- Other (Background checks required by landlords, Car re...): 29
- Payment on previous housing/rental debt: 37
- Relocation assistance: 25
Diversion Scenarios

- Doubled up
- Re-establish rental (landlord negotiation or mediation with past landlord or family)
- Relocation
- New rental
- Other? Think outside the box!
Questions & Contact Info

- Shanee Colston
  - scolston@desc.org, (206)682-2371 x5100

- Duane Parker
  - duanepa@nexus4kids.org, ?

- Angie Merrill
  - angiem@nhmin.org, (206)374-0866 x126

- Miriam Clithero
  - miriam@marysplacesseattle.org, (971)251-5360
Thank you!

- Emily Harris-Shears, Building Changes
- Zachary DeWolf, formerly with All Home of King County
- Klarissa Monteros, Building Changes
- Fellow Diversion Coaches