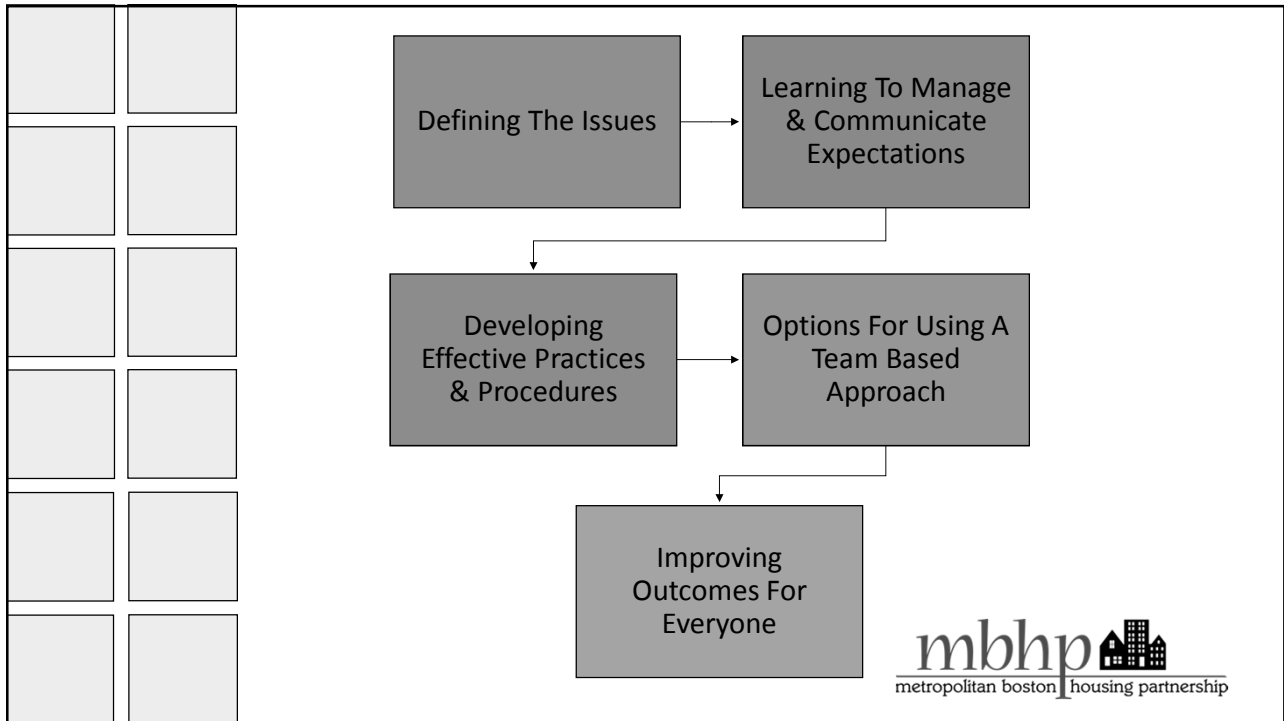




# Housing, Health, and Safety: Innovative Approaches to Bringing Homes Into Compliance

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Toronto Hoarding Conference  
October 20, 2016



# Defining The Issues




- Fire Safety
- Lack of Egress
- Avalanche Risks
- Fall Hazards
- Squalid Conditions
- Infestation

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## Defining Hoarding


- √ Is there the acquisition of and failure to discard a large volume of possessions
- √ Does the clutter make it difficult to use rooms for their intended purpose?
- √ Is there distress or impairment in functioning caused by the clutter?

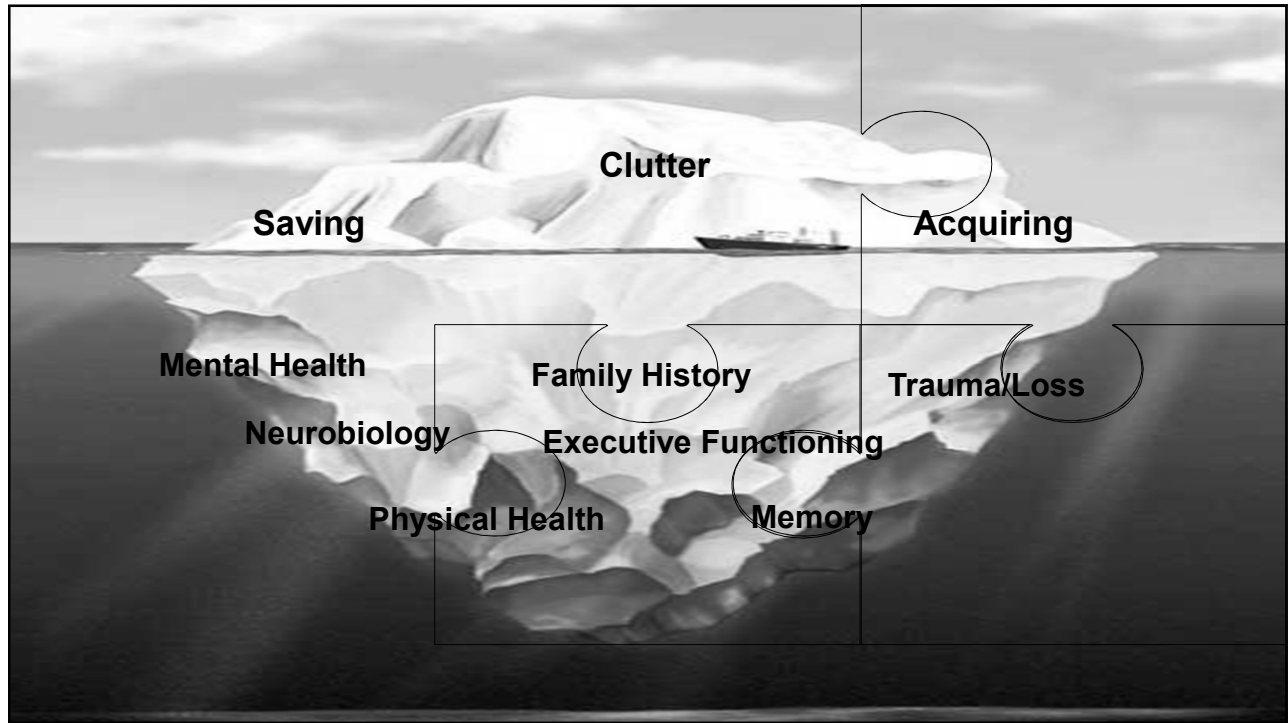
(Frost & Hartl, 1996)

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## Hoarding vs. Squalor


- Hoarding and squalor are not the same
- Squalor is defined as filthiness or degradation from neglect
- Hoarding is typically characterized as a cluttered living environment; clutter may exist with or without poor sanitation

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Effective Assessment Tools

		<h2 style="margin: 0;">Hoarding Interview</h2> <p style="margin: 10px 0;"><u>Anyone</u> (Property Managers, Maintenance staff, etc.) interacting with the resident should use the hoarding interview</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">Goal is to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why the items being saved are important to the resident (regardless of your perspective about the items)</li> <li>• Where the items are acquired</li> <li>• What the resident's perspective is</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>

		<h2 style="margin: 0;">Hoarding Interview</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about your _____ (tea pots, games, books, etc.)</li> <li>• Are there ways that you would like to be able to do in your home that are difficult now?</li> <li>• I wonder if there was a time when you felt that you successfully organized your home?</li> <li>• Have others in your life commented on your clutter before?</li> <li>• It seems that there are some health/safety concerns being expressed by your housing provider. What are your thoughts about those concerns?</li> <li>• Are there ways that the clutter prevents you from doing things that are important to you?</li> <li>• Has anyone offered to help you address your clutter before?</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>

# HOMES Risk Assessment Tool

## HOMES® Multi-disciplinary Hoarding Risk Assessment

### Health

- Cannot use bathtub/shower       Cannot prepare food       Presence of spoiled food       Presence of insects/rodents
- Cannot access toilet       Cannot sleep in bed       Presence of feces/Urine (human or animal)       Presence of mold or
- Garbage/Trash Overflow       Cannot use stove/fridge/sink       Cannot locate medications or equipment       Chronic dampness

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Obstacles

- Cannot move freely/safely in home       Unstable piles/avalanche risk
- Inability for EMT to enter/gain access       Egresses, exits or vents blocked or unusable

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Mental health (Note that this is not a clinical diagnosis; use only to identify risk factors)

- Does not seem to understand seriousness of problem       Defensive or angry       Unaware, not alert, or confused
- Does not seem to accept likely consequence of problem       Anxious or apprehensive

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Endangerment (evaluate threat based on other sections with attention to specific populations listed below)

- Threat to health or safety of child/minor       Threat to health or safety of person with disability       Threat to neighbor with common wall
- Threat to health or safety of older adult       Threat to health or safety of animal

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Structure & Safety

- Unstable floorboards/stairs/porch       Leaking roof       Electrical wires/cords exposed       No running water/plumbing problems
- Flammable items beside heat source       Caving walls       No heat/electricity       Blocked/unsafe electric heater or vents
- Storage of hazardous materials/weapons

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

© Bratiotis, 2009

## Documenting Violations

- Use clear, simple language
- Be specific
- Make goals measurable
- Set realistic timeframes for compliance
- Avoid jargon when possible
- Work with service providers and the resident to answer questions or clarify information

EVENT NAME | EVENT DATE




## Documenting Violations

Doors, passageways and exits shall be maintained free from hazardous conditions, obstructions and impediments.

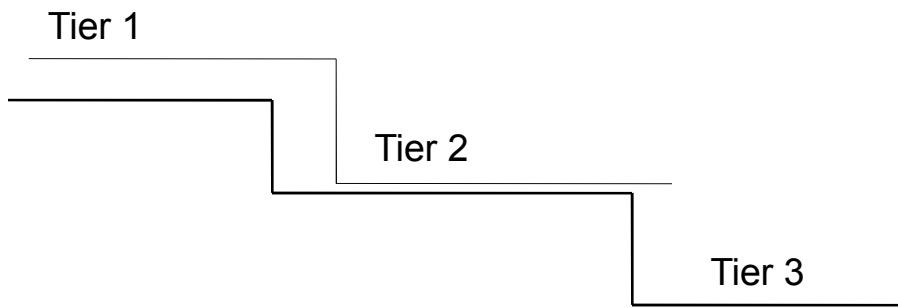
(629-28. TORONTO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 629, PROPERTY STANDARDS)

Specific and measurable:

Egress path must be 36" from door to window in each room and to all exits

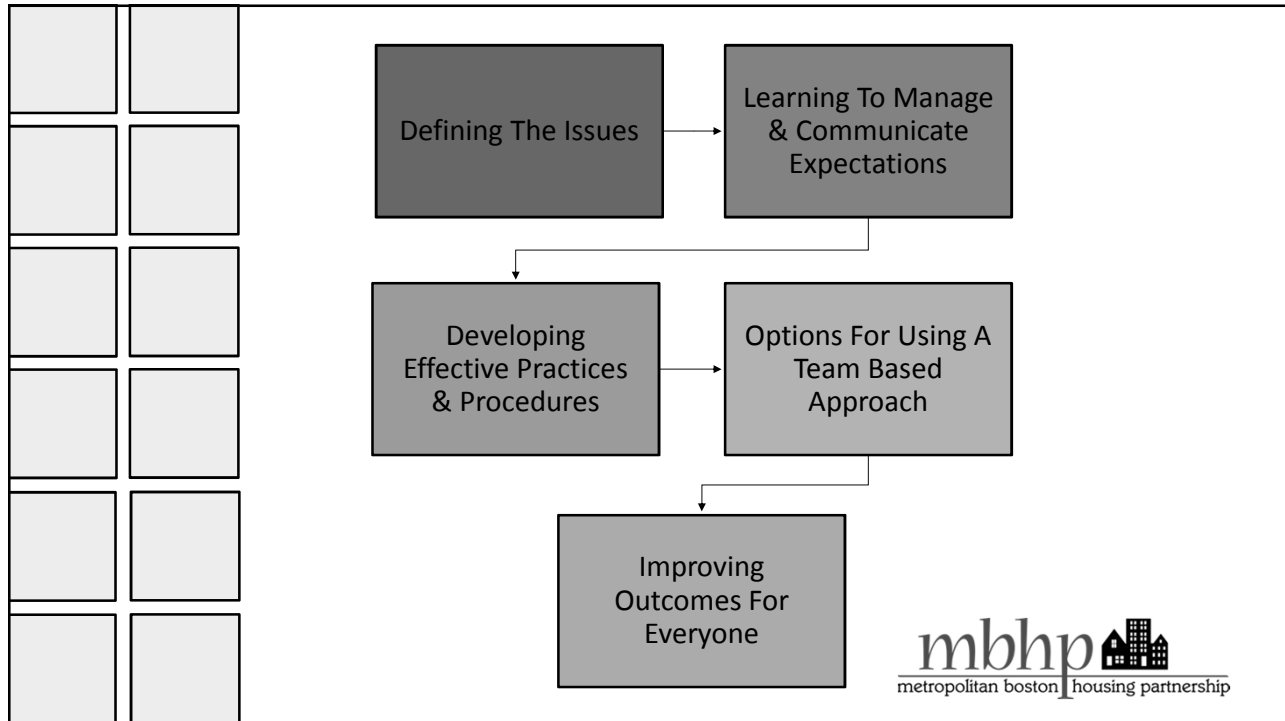



## Using A Tiered Approach




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## Keys To Communication

- Focus on factual information
- Be specific and concrete
- Deliver information verbally and in writing
- Talk with the resident and service providers about setting priorities for bringing the unit into compliance
- The manner in which information about code violations is delivered can be just as important as providing a “to-do” list



  
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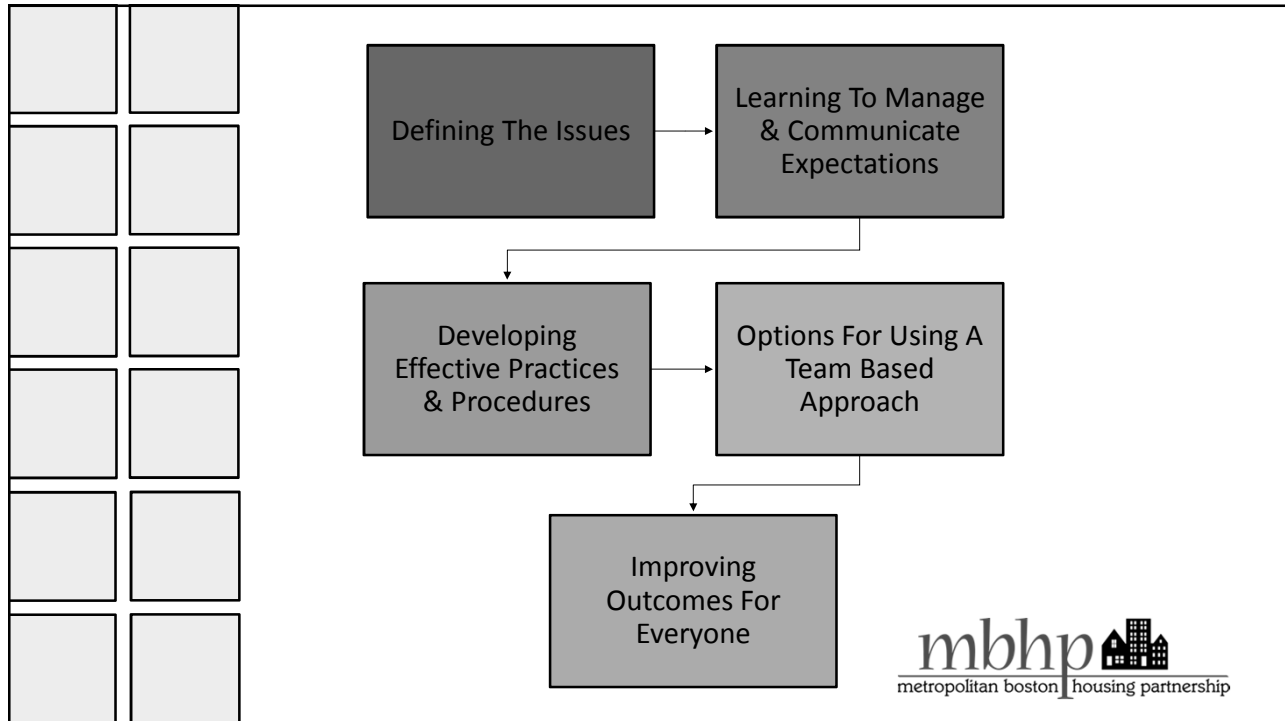


		<h2>Strategies for Communication and Coordination</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Use carrot/stick approach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If your professional identity is one of enforcement, it is helpful to pair with a supportive professional</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Use coordinated service plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clearly outlines roles/responsibilities of all agencies and resident</li> <li>● Useful for clear communication and holding all accountable</li> <li>● Outlines limitations and contingency plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Ensure everyone has a copy of all violations and an understanding of the compliance timeframes in all communication/services</b></li> </ul>




		<h2>ACES</h2> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Action Words:</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Show me... Tell me about...</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Curious Questioning:</td> <td style="border: none;">I wonder if... Help me understand....</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Empathetic Statements:</td> <td style="border: none;">It sounds like you are feeling(worried about, feeling, etc)...I can understand (how hard this is, that you are feeling sad, etc)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Statements of Concern:</td> <td style="border: none;">I worry that... I am concerned because...</td> </tr> </table>	Action Words:	Show me... Tell me about...	Curious Questioning:	I wonder if... Help me understand....	Empathetic Statements:	It sounds like you are feeling(worried about, feeling, etc)...I can understand (how hard this is, that you are feeling sad, etc)	Statements of Concern:	I worry that... I am concerned because...
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Statements of Concern:	I worry that... I am concerned because...									






## Why Change Practices & Procedures?

- Current systems are not effective at addressing hoarding
- Hoarding requires a multi-disciplinary intervention
- Systems for tracking frequency of cases and associated costs is key
- Focus has been on short-term change (immediate compliance)


  
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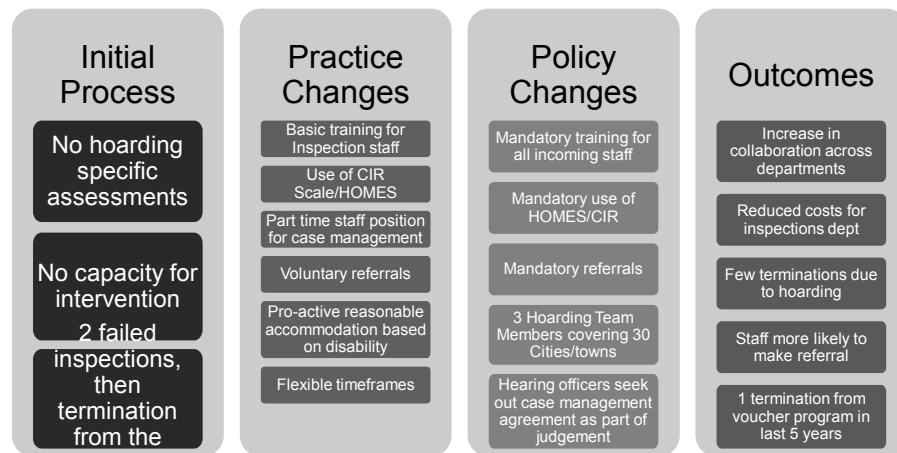

## Questions To Consider

- What are the strengths and limitations of your organization
- Who are your community partners?
- What training can you institutionalize within your task force or organization?
- What is your assessment protocol? Is it voluntary or mandatory?
- Are there ways to incorporate hoarding assessment and/or intervention into existing staffing patterns?
- What systems can you put into place to track data?

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## Improved Outcomes Through Practice Change




## Policy and Practice Change Example

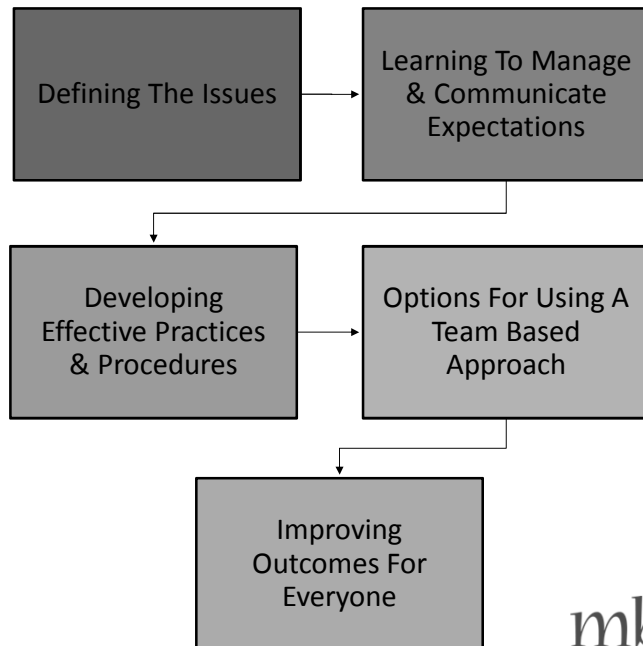
### Initial Approach:

- 12 hours of voluntary training for all shelter, case management, clinical, and transitional housing staff
- No protocols for assessment or intervention


### Current Plan:

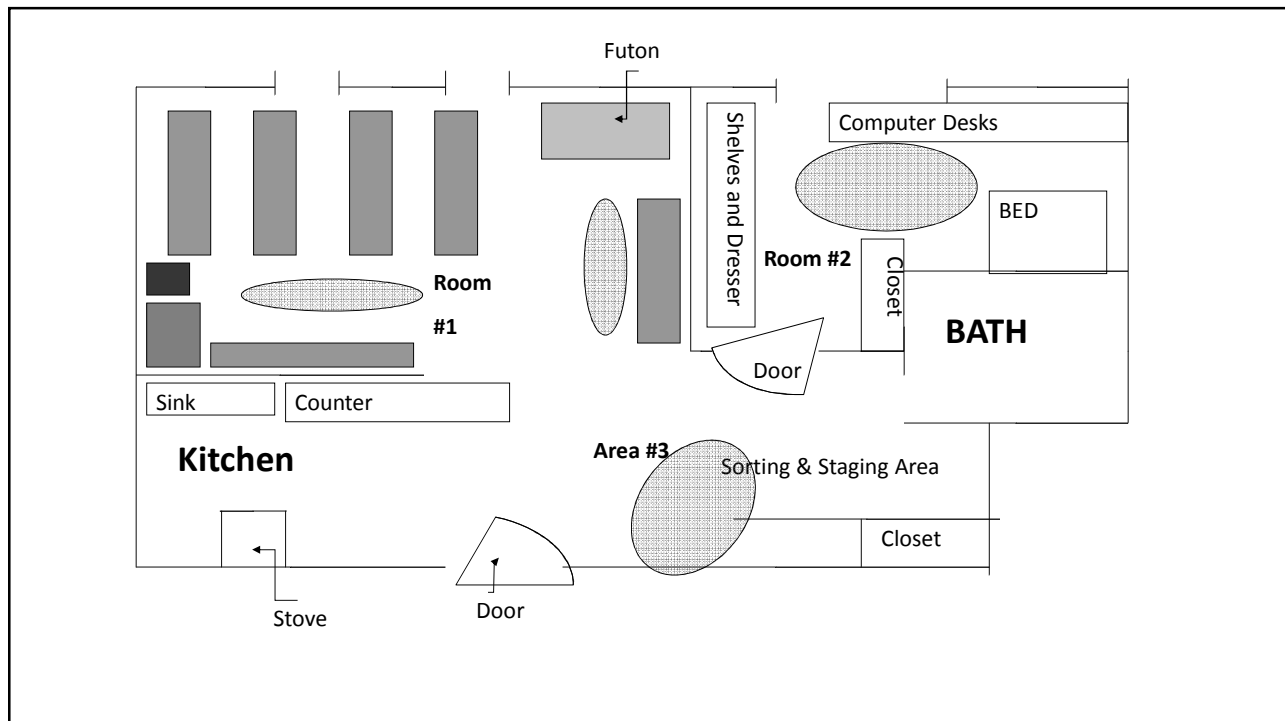
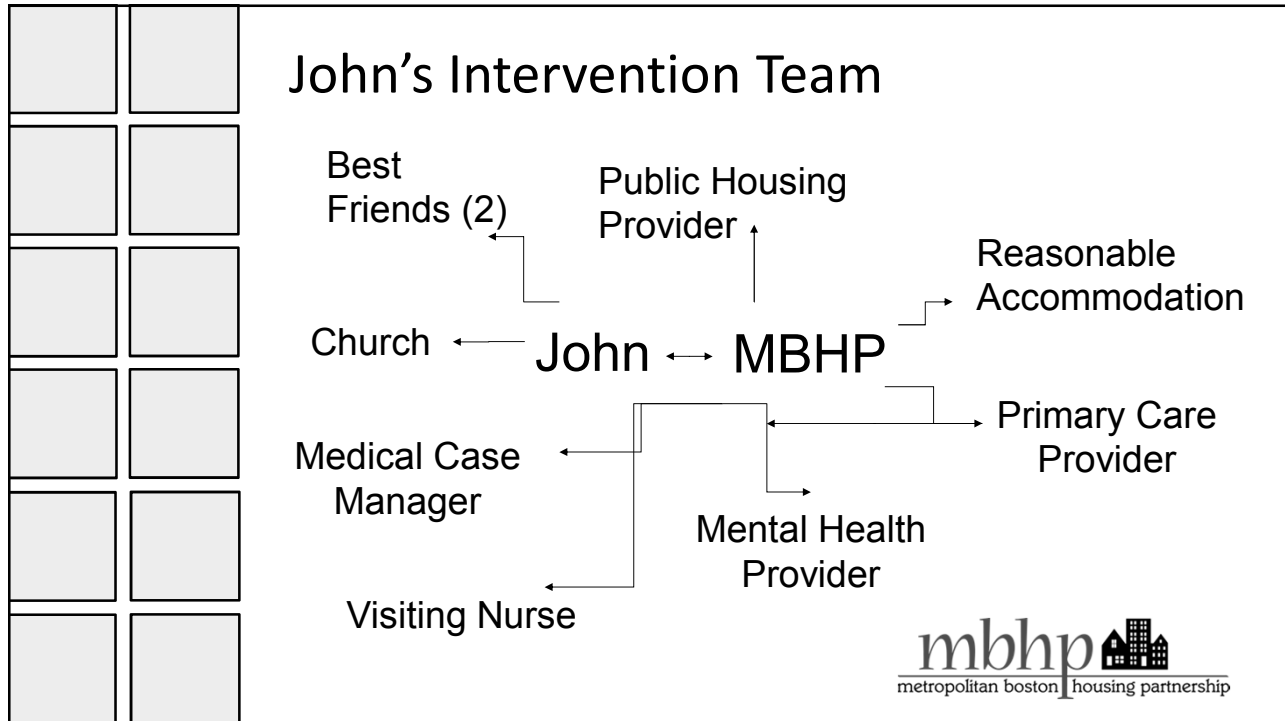
- 12 hours of mandatory training for all shelter, case management, clinical, and transitional housing staff
- Required use of Clutter Image Rating and HOMES Tool for assessment
- Mandatory referral for case management and/or clinical intervention

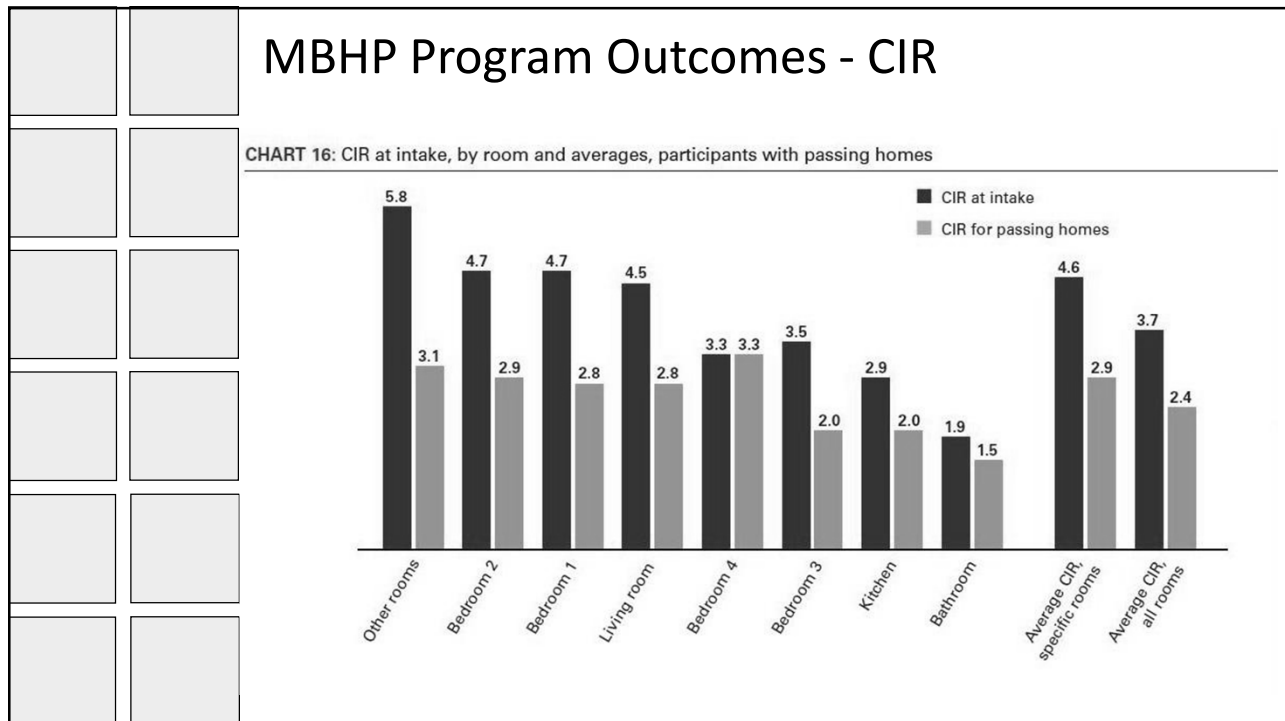
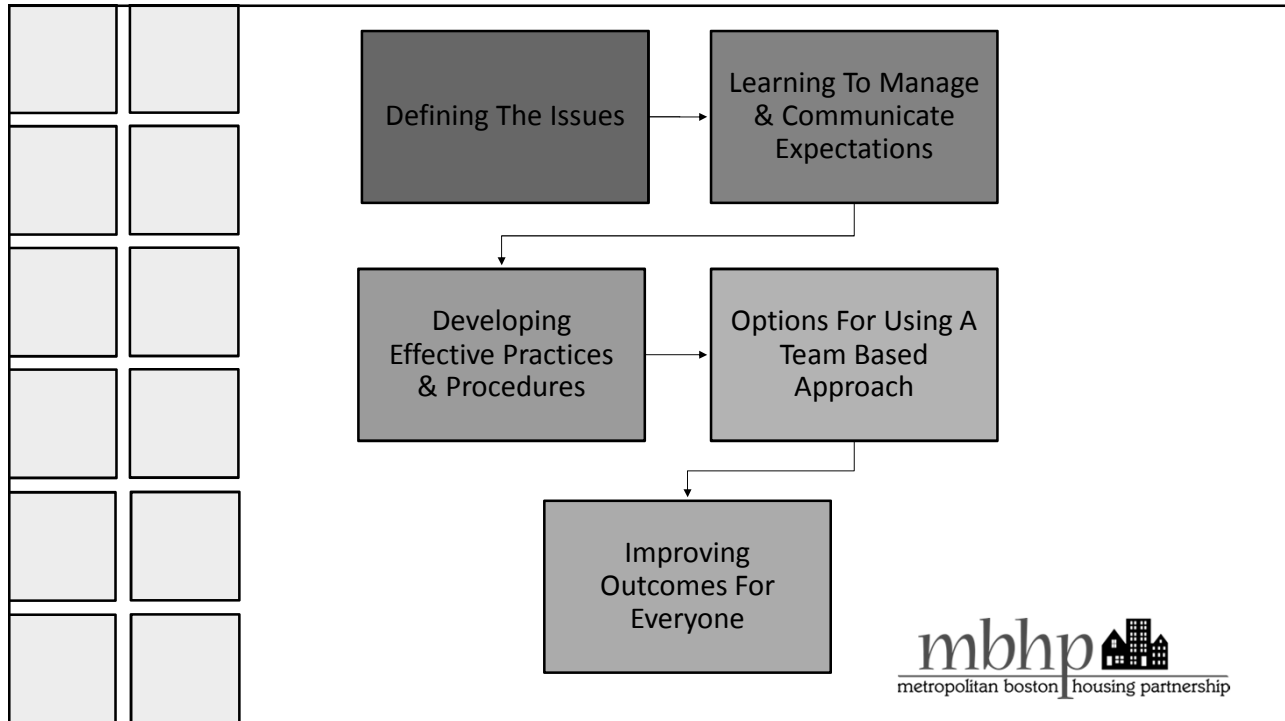






		<h2 style="margin: 0;">LOOKING BEYOND SHORT TERM COMPLIANCE</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to reduce clutter AND address issues contributing to the hoarding behaviors</li> <li>• No discipline has all the expertise needed; increases range of knowledge and skill available to resident</li> <li>• Greater opportunity for resource identification; reduces resources required by any one agency</li> </ul>
EVENT NAME   EVENT DATE		

		<h2 style="margin: 0;">EXPANDING OPTIONS FOR INTERVENTION</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Supportive, step-by-step reduction of clutter             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management or behavioral coach (in home)</li> <li>• Mental health treatment (specialized CBT for hoarding)</li> <li>• Utilize harm reduction strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Supported clean-out</li> <li>· Clean out without control/presence</li> <li>· Eviction/Condemnation</li> </ul>
		





		<h2>MBHP Program Outcomes</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term reduction in Clutter Image Rating scores</li> <li>• Fewer issues with recidivism</li> <li>• Reduction in costs associated with non-compliance</li> <li>• Termination and eviction rates due to hoarding have dropped</li> <li>• Tenants and property owners contact MBHP for assistance before a crisis</li> <li>• Earlier identification means more effective intervention</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">    <small>metropolitan boston housing partnership</small> </p>

		<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Jesse Edsell-Vetter</b>  <b>Center for Hoarding Intervention</b>  <b>Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership</b>  <u><a href="mailto:Jesse.vetter@mbhp.org">Jesse.vetter@mbhp.org</a></u>   <a href="http://www.mbhp.org">www.mbhp.org</a> </p> <p style="text-align: right;">    <small>metropolitan boston housing partnership</small> </p>