



About Us

- Our House provides serves to families and children 365 days of the year.
- We are dedicated and mission driven; providing Shelter to Live and Education to Thrive to each family that we serve.
- We are game changers. We offer children and families experiencing homelessness the tools, support, and education they need to thrive. By tackling homelessness at its source, we help the generation experiencing homelessness today, and break the cycle for those most likely to experience it tomorrow!



About Us

Tyese Lawyer, President and CEO, Our House

- Ms. Lawyer holds a Master's Degree in Psychology and has over 26 years of experience in managing non-profit programs for homeless and low income families. She has also served as a NAEYC Validator and presently serves as Chair on the DeKalb County Continuum of Care Board of Directors. Ms. Lawyer has been Our House's chief executive since 2004.



About Us

Kim Massenburg Ph.D.

Dr. Kim Massenburg holds a Master's of Arts in Counseling with a certificate in Addiction Studies and a Doctorate in Counseling Education and Supervision. She has over 14 years of providing direct services to marginalized populations including those with mental disabilities, substance abuse, and women, children, and families experiencing homelessness. She relocated from Chicago where she last held the position as the Director of Social Services at the YMCA. She has served as the Director of Housing and Family Services for Our House since May of 2017.



Learning Objectives

- **Understanding Families Experiencing Homeless**
 - Who experiences homelessness?
 - What are some effects of homelessness on families?
- **How to work with families experiencing homelessness and other trauma**
 - Trauma- An informed approach
 - Advantageous qualities
- **Engagement Strategies**
 - 5 Categories
 - Tips for building engagement
 - Stages of Change- Fighting Resistance
- **Resources for Families**



Activity

- What comes to your mind when I say the word homeless.
- What comes to your mind when I say families that are experiencing homelessness.



Understanding Families Experiencing Homelessness



National Homeless Data

- One in 45 children experience homelessness in America each year. That's over 1.6 million children.
- In any given day, researchers estimate that more than 200,000 children have no place to live.
- 42% of children in homeless families are under the age of six.
- Of sheltered homeless children in families 50.5% were under the age of six.



Georgia Homeless Data

- Total Children Population Under age 6 in 2013 = 787,646
- Estimated number of children under age 6 Identified as Homeless = 37,716
- 1 in 21 children are experiencing homelessness
- According to the DOE's McKinney-Vento Program 2016 Data report 822 preschool children are homeless.



•Causes of Family Homelessness

- Economic challenges (lack of affordable housing, poverty, unemployment, underemployment, low education levels, single parenting)
- Health challenges (disabilities, mental health issues, substance abuse)
- Domestic violence
- "Low social capital"
- There is a correlation between adverse childhood experiences and experiencing homelessness as an adult



•Effects of Family Homelessness

- High mobility and its trickle-down effects
- Higher than average rates of:
 - Emotional, behavioral, and health problems
 - Developmental delays and school problems
 - Hunger and food insecurity
 - Witnessing violence
 - Correlation between adverse childhood experiences and experiencing homelessness as an adult



•Effects of Family Homelessness

Low rates of access to and enrollment in early childhood services by young homeless children.

Barriers to participation in early care and education

- Difficulty with identification and engagement
- Insufficient program capacity
- Enrollment requirements
- Lack of transportation



•Effects of Family Homelessness

- The causes of homelessness are varied, and many families who experience homelessness are hardworking people like you and me.
- Experiencing homelessness does not define the family. It is an experience in their life that can be overcome.
- The experiences that parents have had as young children impact how they interact with the world today.



How to work with Families Experiencing Homelessness and Other Trauma



Trauma- An Informed Approach

6 Key Principles

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment (voice and choice)
- Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues



Advantageous Qualities

- Social Justice Awareness
- Objectivity
- Empathy
- Resiliency / Self-Care Skills
- Professionalism



Engagement Strategies



Strategies For Engagement

- Building relationships;
- Leveraging existing supportive relations;
- Designing and providing responsive and respectful services;
- Using strategic and strengths-based marketing
- Addressing and removing participation barriers.



Building Relationships

- Establishing a relationship between the service provider and the family as early as possible in the service pathway increases attendance at initial appointments.
- Building on this early relationship throughout the family's participation in services, by attending to the family's concerns and needs and engaging family members as equal partners in the help seeking process, helps ensure sustained engagement in services.



Building Relationships

- Make contact with the family prior to the first appointment:
- Use reminder letters (state rewards of attending and consequences of missed appointments)
- Engage the whole family system and address family concerns not directly related to parent-child interactions
- Show consistent respect for families—Teaching specific communication, encouragement, and disciplinary techniques to staff can increase retention of families



Leveraging Existing Supportive Relations

- Identify key individuals (leaders, elders, helpers, etc.):
 - Use other parents, staff from community-based agencies, school personnel, or otherwise credible members of the community to contact potential participants directly. This can be important for ensuring cultural competence
- Identify key social spaces
 - Key social spaces will likely increase the family's comfort and sense of safety
- Spaces should have geographical proximity to the target population. Families should feel comfortable and safe about traveling to the location or facility.



Designing and Providing Responsive and Respectful Services

- Involve target participants:
- Ensure ethnic & language congruence:
- Match families' participation style with opportunities offered:
- Provide multilingual materials.
- Adapt curricula:
- Foster a sense of anticipation, progress, and achievement:
- Include parents and children together:
- Include socialization opportunities:
- Make reminder calls:



Using Strategic and Strengths -Based Marketing

- Design "What's in It for Me" advertising:
- Use strengths-based marketing:
- Take advantage of naturally occurring event:
- Conduct door-to-door canvassing and one-to-one recruiting:
- Use bilingual and bi-cultural individuals:
- Advertise frequently, using a variety of methods:
- Leave brochures at local community-based organizations.



Addressing and Removing Participation Barriers

The combined engagement intervention:

Schedule services at times convenient for families:



Theoretical Process-Family Engagement

- Treatment relevance and acceptability
 - Families' perceptions about the treatment process, outcomes, provider, and treatment setting influence their level of engagement
- Cognitions and beliefs about treatment
 - Families may be at different stages of "readiness to change." In this model, providers focus on enhancing families' intrinsic motivation to engage in activities to promote their health by helping them to realize how participation in treatment helps them to achieve their ultimate goals



Theoretical Process-Family Engagement

- Daily stresses
 - reflects the finding that when personal stressors (e.g. low social support, family conflicts) are high, families' attention may be focused on these concerns, reducing their commitment and capacity to engage in treatment
- External barriers to treatment
 - such as lack of transportation, scheduling difficulties, high cost, and lack of insurance have been associated with low engagement and premature termination
- Therapeutic alliance.
 - Families who experience a personal bond with the provider and a collaborative relationship for developing tasks and goals of treatment are more likely to remain engaged in intervention



Tips For Building Parent Engagement

Understanding power is very important in helping relationships. Workers may not understand that their power can be an agent of change or reinforce of negative beliefs.

Friendliness is fundamental to engaging parents. Experts who tell parents what is best, without listening to parents and learning from them, tend to alienate parents.



Tips For Building Parent Engagement

Interacting with unfamiliar people may be required when attending parenting programs. This is a significant accomplishment if you are shy, a new parent or new to the community.

Staff must be community workers, out making contacts, building partnerships, thinking about community needs, and connecting with parents



Tips For Building Parent Engagement

- Drop in programs
- Partnerships with agencies
- A non-threatening appearance
- Clear, simple language
- There needs to be value for the family.



Fighting Resistance

- **Pre-contemplation** – not thinking about change
- **Contemplation** – maybe there is a reason to consider doing something different
- **Preparation** – decided to change and looking for ideas how to do this
- **Action** – make a plan and begin making changes
- **Maintenance** – continue with changes but still need to stay connected to supports
- **Termination** – do not need support any longer to continue new behavior
- **Relapse** – returning to old behavior can occur at any stage and is framed as an opportunity to learn and re-enter the process



Activity

- Kahoot

<https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/6412d3df-3cd0-4edb-a6fa-fd354c918288>



Resources

Salvation Army Georgia

<https://salvationarmygeorgia.org/locations/>

Georgia Department of Family and Children Services

<https://dfcs.georgia.gov/locations/dfcs-office>

United Way 2-1-1

<http://211online.unitedwayatlanta.org/>



Resources

Handout 3

Continuums of Care are consortiums of agencies and services designated to receive Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dollars.

They are often the most interconnected resources in an area.

They are HUD mandated to develop coordinated entry and access systems.



Resources

Organization Name	Assistance Type	Number	Website	Service Area
Buckhead Christian Ministry, Inc	Rental Assistance	404.239.0038	http://buckheadchristianministry.org	Metro Atlanta
Partnership Against Domestic Violence	Supportive Housing Program	404.873.1766	www.padv.org	Decatur
Atlanta Mission - My Sister's House	Individualized Programs	404.367.2465	http://atlantamission.org/service/s/shelter-for-women-children/ http://211online.unitedwayatlanta.org/	Metro Atlanta
United Way	Local Resources Adult Education (CAN)	211	http://211online.unitedwayatlanta.org/	Metro Atlanta
New Hope Enterprise	Adult Education (CAN)	404.223.3303	www.tcwfi.org	Metro Atlanta

Resources

Organization Name	Assistance Type	Number	Website	Service Area
City of Refuge	Adult Education (Culinary Arts)	404.874.2241	http://cityofrefugeatl.org/	Atlanta, Dalton, Augusta
Salvation Army	Adult Education (GED Classes)	404.486.2900	http://salvationarmyatlanta.org/	Metro Atlanta
CAPN Healthcare	Health services	404.658.1500	http://www.capn.org/	Metro Atlanta
Family Promise of Gwinnett County	Overnight Emergency Program	678.376.8950	http://familypromisegwinnett.org/	Gwinnett County
Mary Hall Freedom House	Housing and Support Services	770.642.5500	http://www.maryhallfreedomhouse.org/	Metro Atlanta
Rainbow Village	Transitional Housing	770.497.1888	http://rainbowvillage.org/	Metro Atlanta