

LIGHTLY EDITED FILE

Determining Housing Needs for DV/SV Survivors:
A Decision Tree as an Alternative to a Score Sheet
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

(NRCDV)

Remote CART

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Paradigm Reporting & Captioning, a Veritext Company

612.339.0545

captioning-paradigm@veritext.com

2

>> Hi, everyone.

Welcome to today's webinar.

This is Heidi Notario.

I'm the vice president of strategic partnerships and systems change with the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

Today is the first in a series of coordinated entry resources and approaches that we're very pleased to present to you as part of the Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium.

I'm joined today by Dr. Cris Sullivan and Gabriela Lopez-Zeron from the research consortium on gender-

based

violence at Michigan State University and my colleague Kathy Moore from NRC DV and Brittany who will be supporting the technology pieces of this presentation today.

Before we get started, I would like to go over a few housekeeping items.

for The first thing is that there is a link in the chat

those of you that would like to follow the caption of today's webinar, and that appears on the chat.

access That's typically on the right-hand side, and you

of that if you click on the bubble that's at the bottom

the screen that reads chat.

share This webinar is going to be recorded, and we will

3

of the recording and the presentation materials with all

you following this webinar.

to Also a reminder that if you haven't done this already

please sign up for our newsletter and how to do that will be part of our follow-up materials.

With that I am going to get started then with the presentation.

Housing

As I mentioned before, the Domestic Violence and

victims

Technical Assistance Consortium DVHTAC is a collaboration, it's a partnership among the family violence prevention and services program, from the office of health and human services, the Office on Violence Against Women from DOJ, the office for against crime, the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs from HUD and the U.S. interagency council on homelessness.

the

National

for

And also through a great collaboration by technical assistance providers, and that includes the National Alliance for Safe Housing, Collaborative Solutions,

National Network to End Domestic Violence, the

Resource Center on Domestic Violence, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, and the Corporation

Supportive Housing.

we

As part of the commitment of the consortium to racial equity and centering black lives and black survivors,

4

want to share this info graphic with all of you that highlights the presentation of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color in the homelessness space.

other

>> Homelessness is an issue that far too many people face, people of color, specifically Black people,

persons of color and indigenous people experience homelessness in a dramatic different way than their White counterparts.

homelessness

People who hold multiple identities such as those who live at the intersection of disability, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity and more experience compounded barriers that further

and housing instability.

A recent study found that 66% of people experiencing homelessness were Black while 28% were White.

Black individuals are only 13% of the U.S. general population compared to 74% of those who are White.

Rates of homelessness within native communities are three to eight times higher than that of the general population.

In total 78% of people experiencing homelessness identified as people of color.

This overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black and other people of color experiencing homelessness cannot be explained by poverty or identity alone.

5

in

Structural racism, historical policies, institutional practices, and cultural narratives that perpetuate racial inequity put people of color at a disadvantage obtaining safe and affordable housing.

Statistically women of color are much more likely to experience domestic and sexual violence, and survivors often face network impoverishment.

Network impoverishment occurs when the addition of a financial distressed household member places an extra strain on family resources.

homelessness

Oftentimes we tell a survivor experiencing

to go to a relative or friend's house.

the

However network impoverishment can cause burdens on

existing limited finances and available support from that network.

welfare

Racial disparities arise at every juncture from the legal system to housing to health care to child

to public benefits.

an

Understanding the intersection between domestic and sexual violence, racism and homelessness and applying

equity survivor-centered lens in our work is the only pathway to stability, safe housing and healing for all survivors.

If we want to address racial inequity, we have to acknowledge it, learn about it and talk about it so we

6

can do more about it together.

To learn more, visit safehousingpartnerships.org.

>> Thanks, Brittany.

shift

So after bringing some of the context and part of the reason why we're inviting all of you to make this

and

around coordinated entry and assessing priorities, particularly in the context of survivors of domestic sexual violence, I wanted to go over some of the other reasons why we're putting out this invitation and why the purpose of this series of coordinated entry papers that we are about to introduce starting with this one today.

I also wanted to highlight that early this month HUD presented a guidance that explicitly named disparities experienced by Black, Indigenous, People of Color and LGBTQ populations.

That guidance highlighted their intended goal of ensuring that the most vulnerable are prioritized.

We also know that there is a unique convergence of numerous public health crisis.

double

We're talking now some people refer to these as a pandemic, although none of these things are new.

In addition to COVID-19 we're seeing many, many situations of systemic racism but those of us who work in the antiviolence movement we also know that in this

context that we're living there is an increase in domestic and sexual violence and all compounded by poverty and homelessness.

We know that some of the recent ways of assessing priorities when it comes to survivors really

exacerbate

inequities.

And place survivors in particular in difficult situations as they tend not to score as they should to secure housing.

And connected to that we know that many communities

are

dissatisfied with the VI-SPDAT which is a tool that originally intend wasn't to become what it did, but

it's

widely utilized and we are hearing of many communities asking for a new alternative and many are trying something different.

So we are at a critical time where a bold move towards increasing equity for all is necessary.

those

It's an imperative, and it's something that we for
of us comitted to ending violence in our communities
it's something we have to do.

So with that I'm going to turn it over to our
presenters, Cris, welcome and Gaby.

>> Thank you very much, Heidi and Kathy and Jenny and
Brittany for making this possible for inviting us to
have a conversation with people about this really

8

important topic so we're making sure we leave time for
questions and conversation.

people

It's been exciting to see who is on this webinar,

disclaimer

from all over the country, so before we get started I
did just want to have the acknowledgment and
slide on here.

families,

This wouldn't be possible without incredible support
from the administration on children, youth and
family and youth services bureau, so we really

appreciate them funding this effort, but obviously everything you hear today is the responsibility and views of myself and Dr. Gaby Lopez-Zeron and not necessarily the funders.

So I want to start by talking about why this is an important issue and what we're trying to accomplish. Basically as Heidi started to talk about, HUD requires that CoCs utilize this coordinated entry system.

Probably most of you are aware of that which is why you're on this call and the point of that is to have

one

system in place that ideally is fair that will prioritize home homeless people into what we all know are very limited housing options.

So the system was intended to make sure that people

have

equal access to housing and fair access to housing because we don't want people to be experiencing

9

prejudice, so the idea is that we would prioritize those

in most need and the most vulnerable individuals and families into these limited options.

Now it's hard to argue with that.

That's a laudable goal.

The idea is fantastic.

making We want to minimize favoritism and prejudice and

decisions that are not equitable, but as we all know, it's a lot more difficult than it sounds, and people have been working very hard at this, and I just really think that the most -- most of the people really

trying

to figure this out have good hearts.

They want to get it right.

well They're really trying to make sure that this works

and we are still to this day struggling with this.

So we're hoping that this at least moves some of our thinking forward or at the very least gets us all talking a little bit more about next steps.

these

So the most frequently used screening tool within

its

coordinated entry systems is the VI-SPDAT or one of

tool

iterations, and that's primarily because it was the

that was out there.

Some people think that HUD recommended this tool or

even

mandated this tool.

They did not.

10

They never mandated people use the VI-SPDAT but some people do believe this they did.

They just said that you had to have something and most people had nothing else so this VI-SPDAT has spread

like

wild fire as the tool that people are using and it's very problematic.

So we could do an entire webinar on why the VI-SPDAT

is

problematic and we don't have time for that today.

One of the papers in this series is specifically on

the

problems with the VI-SPDAT and so you can hear more about that I think at the end of this webinar but I'm just going to go through some of the real basic major problems with it.

This is not an exhaustive list.

There are series issues with the VI-SPDAT.

The first is it was really created to assess the
vulnerabilities of chronically homeless individuals
and

I do mean individuals, not families, who are
experiencing severe mental illness and substance
abuse.

So it was really set up for the chronically homeless
and
violence
was not originally intended to support domestic

survivors or many other groups of homeless individuals
for that matter.

And even as they have modified this tool over time, it
it
continues to be very, very problematic, and certainly

11

is not traumatic-informed in the types of questions it
asks and how it asks them.

More recently an empirical study has now found that
this
tool lacks validity and reliability so in short it
doesn't give us what we're looking for.

You can't trust it.

And I won't get into details for that.

in It's not a great tool for doing this and probably the most important to many of us is now we have realized

it has resulted in racial bias in prioritization.

So as more and more people are using this tool you're hearing more and more critiques and I have yet to meet too many people who like the VI-SPDAT.

the And again, you know, I don't mean any disrespect to people who created it.

Many it works well with chronically mentally ill homeless individuals with substance abuse and again we're all learning together but I do think we have to really think of an alternative to this tool.

I get that people want a brief and easy to use scoring tool.

Who doesn't want a brief and easy to use scoring tool that's going to help us reliably rank people's vulnerabilities, document their preferences and needs, and help us match them to appropriate housing.

That would be fabulous.

We all would love to see that.

done

Unfortunately, though, I think those of us who have

this

this work on the ground seeing the complexities of

they

recognize that these overly simple solutions while

might sound good are rarely the answer to complicated problems.

that

So we propose moving away from this scoring system for having focused conversations that will cover topics

are actually relevant through choosing strategies that will lead to safe and stable housing.

see

I do want to say about a year ago, probably even more than that, I lose track of time, we did think let's

a

if we can come up with a different scoring tool.

Let's just come up with a better scoring tool, create

better mouse trap.

We had really wanted to do that people from DVHTAC consortium had many meetings.

We talked about how to create a tool, pilot it.

ever

We really went down this road, and what we realized is every time we got together, though, and talked about this, all we talked about is how no scoring tool is going to be what we want it to be.

tool

And so why would we try to come up with yet another

people.

when we actually just don't think you can score

13

And so that's when we backed up and said, then how do you help people get into housing?

just

We don't want to go back to situations where people

are

provide housing to the people that they like or that

to

likeable or that are grateful and don't give services

people that they may not like all that much.

We're not suggesting we would ever want to go back to that.

But we also know that there are questions that we can ask people that will get at the safety and stability

help

concerns that would give us information we need to
prioritize people into housing.

and

So I want to make a couple of caveats here because I
think it's really important that we always remember

talk about not just amongst ourselves but to
policymakers, funders that the need for housing far
exceeds the supply.

One of the problems with any of these tools that we're
talking about, any -- the problem we have with
prioritizing people into housing is that there are not
enough housing options.

There's not enough affordable permanent housing.

There's not enough shelter beds in domestic violence
programs.

There's not enough domestic violence transitional

14

housing programs.

There's not enough flexible funding that we know and

help people stay in their homes.

So we have to keep fighting for more housing.

And that's one of the pet peeves I have about spending

a

lot of time about prioritizing people into housing

when

we know there simply isn't enough housing and people

joke but obviously it's not funny that what we're

doing

often is prioritizing people on to wait lists and

that's

really painful for the people in the field doing this

work, and it's certainly even more painful for the

individuals and families who are homeless and unstably

housed.

So agencies are really having a difficult time, then.

There aren't enough resources in most communities.

There's not an array of resources in most communities,

so not everybody has transitional housing anymore in

their communities.

Not everybody has rapid rehousing.

Certainly nobody that I'm aware of has enough

permanent

affordable housing in their area.

So agencies are now faced with this really difficult

decision of we have one housing unit that just opened

up

or we just got a housing voucher, and yet we have

multiple people who are similarly disadvantaged and

15

whether you know that because you've scored them on
the
are
VI-SPDAT or used some other tool, we know that there
are
many people who are going to have the same score or
who
are going to be in the same situation, so we're still
dealing with this issue of who then gets this one
housing voucher.

Who then gets this one housing unit.

So how to do that even once we've decided who is
really
option
vulnerable, who is really disadvantaged and what
might be best for somebody, we still have more people
than there are options, and so then we still have to
figure out then who among these people gets it.
What we suggest in our paper is we believe the fairest
way is first come first served.

It's not ideal and we may have a conversation about
that

at the end of this, but I don't know about you.

I would have a very hard time deciding which of two people in extremely difficult situations deserved a housing unit more than the other one.

Is the teenager who has been sexually assaulted by her father since she was 4 years old and now has PTSD and maybe doesn't speak English more or less in need of

that

housing unit than the woman who has been beaten by her husband for years and has a child with severe disabilities.

16

This is a really difficult situation that we're all in trying to really prioritize people, so we really want to talk about move away from a scoring system and think more in terms of a decision tree.

to

in

So in this paper, and I believe you're going to have a link to it at the end.

It's on the DVHTAC consortium website now which also

if

beginning

you really like that amazing animation at the
of this webinar, that's all on the DVHTAC consortium
website which is called safehousingpartnerships.org.
They have amazing resources on there.

conversation

Anyway, so we have created this decision tree that
involves asking very pointed questions of people, so,
again, we're not going back to, hey, have a

and see what comes up.

We believe there are three really important areas that
we can focus on that will help us determine what might
be the best housing for each person who is coming for
help.

Safety, when it comes to victims of violence is really
important to ask about, but not just safety, safety as
it relates to housing.

I've done a lot of work in this area.

I apologize.

Actually I should have introduced myself.

I'm a professor at Michigan State University who has done work on interventions for domestic violence survivors for a little over 30 years now.

Always trying to understand what works for whom under what circumstance.

I'm the senior research advisor for the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, and I've just

been

really honored to work with people around the country who are dealing with lots of these really complicated, complex issues, and I continue to learn from the

amazing

work happening around the country.

And one thing I've learned from people who are trying

to

figure out how to prioritize people into housing is

that

some of them are using the danger assessment tool, Jackie Campbell's danger assessment tool and I want to talk about for a moment why that's problematic.

The danger assessment tool is a great tool for really understanding lethality and severity of abuse that somebody might be experiencing.

It does not tell us what somebody's housing needs are. So asking it as part of an assessment to help somebody figure out housing is not necessarily the best way to

go.

danger

So, for example, you know, if I find out from the

the

assessment tool that the abuser has weapons or that

18

doesn't

abuser has caused the individual injuries, that

tell me if the person is safe in their home or not

because I don't know where the abuser is.

help

I don't know if there are ways we might be April to

homes,

that individual stay safe in their home and a lot of

times individuals think they have to leave their

so they may not even be homeless yet.

call

They may just be fleeing domestic violence and they

and they reach out because they're unsafe, and they

think, oh, I have to get into a shelter, there's no

option.

We need to have conversations around would you want to

stay in your home if we could help you be safe there?

What would it take?

Where is the abuser now?

with?

Do you have family or friends that you might stay

Where are they?

Would that be safe?

they

It may be that somebody's safety is in jeopardy and

away,

need to get into a domestic violence shelter right

but we have to be thoughtful about asking enough of
these questions in a really respectful thoughtful way

following

that we're really hearing the answers and then

other

up to those to help us understand could this person be
safe in this situation, might they be safe in this

19

situation.

So one of our areas in the decision tree that you're
going to see is asking about safety but safety as it

relates to someone's housing.

We also think it's important to ask people about their more recent housing instability.

last

How stable or unstably housed have they been in the six to twelve months.

street

Somebody who has been homeless and living on the street for over a year is going to need very different resources likely than somebody who has just lost their home because they lost their job and couldn't pay rent.

their

But they are skilled.

get

They have an educational level that would help them get another job quickly.

So these are the kinds of things that would help us determine with the person what options might make sense for them.

Rapid rehousing, for example, I know it's different in different communities.

It's vastly different in different communities.

allows

There are some communities where rapid rehousing

18

allows you to provide rent assistance for someone for up to 18 months.

20

to

Mostly, though, communities are using rapid rehousing
give people housing financial support for only about
three months or three to six months.

up

And so in that instance you could be setting somebody
for failure if you help them get housed and pay their
rent for three months when they know and you know that
there is no way they will be able to support

themselves

after that three months is over.

Or that six months is over.

and

So it's asking people questions about their history
what they think they're able to do and why they think
that.

or

So when do they think they might be able to pay rent
how much could they contribute to rent.

Are they employed?

Is there any way for them to become employed?

help

What's their educational level?

What are the kinds of resources they need that will
them eventually pay for their own housing.

So those are very pointed questions to ask people so
that they are helping make an informed choice about
what's going to make sense for them.

Also, what are the other issues going on that could
prevent them from accessing or maintaining safe and
stable housing.

21

they

Some people are experiencing such severe PTSD that
may need more time.

They simply may need time before they're going to be
able to live completely on their own.

something

I did a study recently with colleagues on transitional
housing, and which domestic violence survivors wanted
transitional housing versus rapid rehousing or
different.

And there were some people -- so these were all people in transitional housing that were in this study.

And they were set -- they were asked at the end of the interview, if you had had the option of getting into permanent housing instead of transitional housing, if this program had given you money to be in the

community

in your own housing versus in this transitional

housing

program, would you have taken that?

And we had quite a few people who said yes, as long as

I

would still get these services, I would rather be in

my

own house.

Makes sense, right?

We would think that's what a lot of people would say.

There was actually a fairly large population in there who said no, because I would not be safe in the community.

transitional

I have to be here while these folks at this

go

housing program are helping make sure that when I do out into the community I am safe because this abusive person is still looking for me, still has friends and family looking for me or whatever the situation might be.

are

whether

might

having

the

be

with.

is

So it's important to have these conversations with people about what's the safety, what's the financial issues going on, but what are the other issues that important, whether they're mental health issues, they're social support issues, whether they're immigration issues, having a criminal record that make it difficult for them to obtain housing, not a credit record at all, all of those things can help agency member decide with the person what's going to be the best situation.

So this is the decision tree that we have come up

I'm going to now turn it over to my colleague Dr. Gaby Lopez-Zeron.

If you would turn over the controls to this and Gaby

going to explain this in a little bit more detail and

then talk about the key questions and phrases that we mention in this figure here.

>> Okay.

Thank you, Cris.

I'll take this opportunity to introduce myself.

23

Michigan

My name is Gabriela Lopez-Zeron, and I work at State University in the research consortium and gender based violence so I work with Cris on some of the projects she's talked about in terms of determining what are the services that work best and for whom and in the community when we're working with survivors of genders based violence.

this

So to pick up where Cris left off in talking about decision tree that we are proposing, I just want to reiterate the importance of having those conversations around stability and safety at the beginning, and so

first is to decide whether the survivor is stable in their housing and their safety concerns as they relate to housing.

So in determining whether housing is stable, then, you know, we are providing here two different options.

If survivor is in fact stable in their housing, then we're proposing to provide an appropriate amount of support and information and advocacy and continue to assess housing needs.

this We have added this because we know that, you know, is not a static thing, that things are in constant movement, and that can change, that stability can change.

If survivors are not housing stable, then the first

24

question that we're suggesting here is to determine whether survivors and their children are in imminent danger and if they are in imminent danger and must flee

then we're suggesting providing immediate and safe

housing whether that would be a shelter or similar or perhaps if there is no shelter available, shelter available at the time that maybe a hotel voucher or something that can help the survivor flee immediately. We're also suggesting that depending on where the survivor is at after 24 hours or 72 hours to just transition out of their home and into a more or a safer space to continue with the housing so to give a little bit of time to survivors and children can adjust to the transition.

If the survivor is not in imminent danger, then here is what we're proposing assessing housing needs. So really thinking again about the different options that a survivor might have understanding that not always all these options are available, I think it's important part of the big issue that we're having across the country is there's more need than there is availability.

So not all of these options might be available, but for the sake of illustration here and following this image,

on the first column to the left we have the situation

25

a about a survivor who might have housing be stable but
that one-time crisis jeopardizing housing so what would
look like.

employed, That would be something where the survivor is
refused safe in the home but the abuser has left and is

a to pay rent and she is not counting on that so having
moment of crisis or maybe the survivor has employment
tires and has some income but the abuser slashed all her

we and really doesn't have any way to address that, and

her know that if the survivor doesn't have the access to

car, then she might be able to make it to work.

If she doesn't make it to work, then she might not be
employed for very long.

She might lose that job and if she loses that job then

not she really is going to be housing unstable and might
be able to afford housing, and it can become a little
bit of an avalanche.
we're So if this is the case in those conversations that
having with survivors, then what might be most
flexible appropriate for the survivor and her family is
funding and brief housing advocacy to reestablish
housing stability, so this is something that a person
might need for a short period of time.
On the other hand, a survivor might have some more
housing barriers that could be addressed with three to

26

so six months of financial and advocacy assistance, and
there might be a person who momentarily lost their job
and really need some support on employment but feels
very confident about being able to get a new job and
just needs a little bit of support for a few months.

And so if that's the case, then perhaps a rapid rehousing program or housing voucher plus advocacy for three to six months might be most appropriate, or flexible funding so that somebody can stay in their current housing plus the advocacy to address some of these barriers.

Perhaps it's somebody who has lost their job so they need some advocacy to be able to gain employment or to clear some criminal background that might be recent or something along those lines.

Some barriers are far more complex and it would likely take six to 24 months of financial and advocacy assistance, so this might be a survivor who is an immigrant who doesn't have employment and doesn't have

a

credit record so it might be very hard for them to

rent,

might be somebody who also has a criminal record in their background that they would need to have get expunged.

So there might be a lot of different things happening for this person that would be complex and would need

to

be addressed so they can obtain housing stability so that would require some longer financial housing support or housing voucher plus the added advocacy services. Or if there is a possibility for this, this person might be a really good candidate for transitional supportive housing and that might be something that they prefer so that they could really get more stable during this more extended period of time. Finally we have survivors who we know need a lot of services, so housing barriers are significant, and they likely might require more than 24 months of assistance, not only financial assistance but also advocacy assistance. So a survivor who has this -- a lot of multiple and complex housing bears years ago might be better suited for permanent supported housing or housing voucher or transitional supported housing with a fair amount of advocacy services once they're stably housed so the initial transitional housing period but then also at the

to back end of that having advocacy services also added that.

So this image here is to kind of guide us as we think about all the different possibilities as we know that what is best to make these decisions with survivors,

and

that so to have conversations about what are the things

28

they might need to figure out next steps in terms of obtaining that housing stability.

And we also acknowledge that by having these brief focused conversations do require a skill on the part of

the service provider.

So we here have some key questions and phrases that might help accurately and effectively assess the needs through these targeted conversations that really do require providers to have strong communication skills, and so these are some of the skills, this is not meant

have

to be absolutely comprehensive but some suggestions about what the skills that providers might need to

to be able to have these effective conversations.

So for active listening is having these conversations with survivors in which we're able to really make sure that we're understanding what people are saying, so a lot of the times using phrases like, what I'm hearing you say, to reflect back to survivors might be

helpful,

not only on our end as we're having conversations with survivors about this, but also for them to make sure that the provider is really understanding what is it that they're needing.

So these are all key phrases that might help reflect back that information and also let the survivor know that the provider is really understanding what the

29

person is saying and what their priorities are.

And this not only is important to make sure that we're being effective communicators and really understanding

survivor what the person might need but also it lets the
know that the provider is really paying attention and
wanting to understand and hearing them out, which
creates trust, and that's also important because in
these conversations other things might arise that
haven't yet in terms of what are some of the barriers
or things that are in their background that really might
be preventing them from accessing housing and maintaining
their housing.
So in these conversations other things might come up
as well.
And so also it's important to again open up the space
when providers are having conversations with survivors
to have them express themselves openly, and so in that
to be able to offer just some validation about the
experiences that the survivor might be having would be
very important, so phrases like I'm sorry so sorry
that this is happening to you, I know this is extremely
difficult for you.
Or saying something a little bit more elaborate, for
instance, you know, we know that everybody is
different and everybody has different issues and concerns.

30

Some people have criminal records or something people are dealing with drugs or alcohol or have family issues that might impact their safety and housing, and I'd like you to feel that you are able to talk to me about what's going on for you. I'm committed to help you get safely and stably housed. So in these different ways of phrasing really depends on what our personal styles are and the way that we communicate, but part of it is demonstrating empathy and opening up the space so that survivors can share all the different things that they might be struggling with that might really be preventing them from obtaining safe and stable housing or maintaining it. Another important skill that we thought it was key for

us to highlight is that sometimes we might need to
redirect the conversation, and that is done when a
survivor might really need to talk about things that
are
not related to -- that are important to them but might
not be related to housing, obtain and maintaining
housing, so being tactful in that conversation if this
you
is something that you've already talked about, that
of
can feel that the person might need just a little bit
like
guidance through the conversation to say something
I know this is a really important concern of yours and
I'd like to come back to it but right now I'd like to

31

make sure we're focused on getting you house.
Is it okay if we go back to this.
and
Maybe the person has been talking about some issues
something
concerns that she's having with her sister and

to that might not be directly related to her being able
obtain housing but you know that we really need to get
her into housing into some sort of stability for
or whatever reason she needs to move into either a hotel
a shelter or something like that and you're trying to
figure out what the best way to be, this would be a
good way to phrase that.
Also it could be if it's something you've already
heard multiple times so just acknowledge the comment and ask
for permission in a way to change and redirect the
conversation by saying, oh, okay, is it okay if I now
ask you about whatever thing around housing you needed
to ask.
As we've already mentioned today, it's really key to
be able to make these decisions together with survivors.
We know that that is the best way of going about it
and so sharing the options that might be there and, you
know, acknowledging them.
Not all of these different options are available and
so being pretty frank about that is also important and
let something that we're trying to propose here, so say

me tell you about the different options we may have to
choose from and we can figure out together what might
be
best and then you can go into the different options.
And sometimes somebody might really want an option
that's not available.
So, you know, we can talk about how to address that,
but
especially at the beginning when you're assessing
whether somebody is safe to stay in their own home
saying that many people assume they have to leave
their
homes in order to be safe but we may be able to help
pay
for some things that would allow you to stay in your
home if you'd like to consider that.
In these conversations this is a good time to really
assess safety concerns related to housing because we
know that there is true for some individuals.
There are instances where survivors could stay in
their

own home if certain precautions were put into place. So if the abuser is no longer there, has moved, no longer presents a threat, then putting some security cameras or having the locks changed, that could help a person and a survivor's family stay in their own home safely.

And then negotiating some options.

As Cris mentioned not all housing options might be available to really be honest and have a conversation

33

with survivors about that.

For instance, I really wish we had a housing voucher to

give you, but since we don't, what do you think about these different options?

What are your concerns about them to be able to make decisions together as to what would be the best option for this particular survivor.

What if the shelter is full.

If the shelter is full right now, but I might be able to

locate a hotel voucher.

right
Do you think that would be a good immediate option
would
now or do you have a family member or friend that
be a better option for you?
Let's discuss what are some things we can do
especially
if there's imminent danger and the survivor needs to
leave their home right away.
So those are some of our suggested language about
this.
Again, this is not meant to be exhaustive, but just
suggesting
framing some of the conversations that we are
might be really important to have to determine what is
the -- to determine what the best options for housing
for survivors might be.
I can see that there's a lot of --
>> Yeah.
>> -- questions on the chat, so yeah.

Kathy, if you want to --

>> Yeah, I'm happy to chime in.

Thanks, Gaby and thanks Cris.

That's such helpful information.

I'm going to invite Heidi, I think you wanted to say something before I dive into the questions.

for >> Thank you so much, Kathy, and thanks to everyone

your comments, your questions.

I see a lot of energy around this topic, and it makes me -- gives me a lot of hope and I'm excited about the possibilities.

and I just wanted to say based on what I've seen so far

excellent points that many of you have made, as always this is an approach that doesn't have all the answers

to every single thing so I'm we're asking you all in your

specific communities to ask those that know your contacts best so actually utilize this framework as

you. opposed to a scoring tool and see where that takes

everyone We're not saying that this is a fix recipe for

to utilize exactly as a checklist, right?

So I think we're wanting communities to move away from that approach and try something different.

Try to assess needs based on understanding the entire context that could surround a survivor's life and experience around violence.

35

There was a great point made by Rita Olson about what can the consortium do in terms of making this approach widely utilized and that sort of thing.

I would say that we understand that there's going to be some necessary technical assistance following this, and many of you have tons of questions and you're going to have questions around implementation possibly to please reach out to us.

And I also would like to highlight as Cris said earlier that HUD wasn't requiring everyone to utilize the VI-SPDAT. That is what happened because there was nothing else. So this is an invitation to try something different as we said earlier.

here. So those are my points I just wanted to highlight

Please reach out.

We're going to continue to present other facts around intentional trying something different in a mindful and way.

We understand that what we're asking is a shift in practice and it could have implications for communities

so we want to do it intentionally and responsibly.

Kathy.

>> Great.

Thank you, Heidi, for reminding everybody about that.

36

I'm going to try to tackle several of your questions, and I'll start at the top and if I can, I'll try to merge a few of them together as I hear them.

But to begin with one of the early questions for Cris and Gaby are wondering if there are any COCs that are allowing this in place of a scoring system and what's

the sense of how acceptable will this decision tree be as a method for prioritizing, how -- trying to get at how receptive you envision or how receptive you think COCs will be.

>> Well, that's certainly one of the most important questions out there, isn't it, is this something that people would adopt.

So as we've said, HUD is actually open.

They want a tool, they want to make sure that you're using a tool and not just being subjective, which I think is fair.

brought

I will say that when we went down this road, we

in the federal partners who were funding this project, so we brought in a federal partner from HUD as well as from the FIPSA office as well as from DOJ to say this

is

where we're going with this and we don't want to waste our time coming up with something that then is going

to

get shot down, and we were basically told that, no, there was interest in this.

Now, having said that, I am not positive that our contacts at HUD have seen this final paper, so I am not going to endorse it on anyone's behalf at HUD. I don't think they are on this call but it's something that we will need to go back with them, but I will say that there was interest and there was support in going down this road and in the initial ideas around this paper and this decision tree.

So I think it is important, you know, as far as will some COCs do it, you know, it's a political question in ways because we have to be fighting for what is right. We've got COCs around the country saying that it's mandated to use the VI-SPDAT when it is not.

We have different COCs saying other things that are not true, which we know.

So will we just have to make sure that we have the information with us and stands up for these things and push for what's going to make the most sense.

As Heidi said, this is not being presented as the be all and ends all but it hasn't been piloted yet in this exact way.

I will say I did not come up with this just out of my own mind.

This is something that I created and Gaby helped with based on lots of conversations with people around the

38

country for a number of years, and I know that some agencies are already doing something like this.

They just haven't written it down.

So we really were trying to come up with something that

people was bringing up the best from the field and what

were saying is already working fairly well.

But this is -- it's a process.

>> Thank you.

And yeah, this is Kathy again.

Just to contextualize this, this is just the start of rolling out a series of suggestions and guidance and framework and to recognize we're talking about systems change here, whether we're talking about it on a

national level or state level or in local communities, and we all have a role to play in that kind of systems change, so thank you for that.

I'm going to move on to another question.

And this is around instances where survivors are being assessed for mainstream housing services, not necessarily DV-specific services.

So do you have a sense of how this decision tree could be utilized in those kind of scenarios?

>> Yeah, another great question.

I've been so busy having such fun watching these chats going on to stay focused.

39

I really like how much people are chatting with each other because, again, we don't have all the answers.

brilliant

This was a forum for us to facilitate lots of minds.

--

I'm happy to get started on that question, which was and I've seen other questions about this in the chat

is

was this clearly just created for domestic violence survivors.

been

Well, this is a project of the DVHTAC which is focused on domestic and sexual violence and housing so this particular paper and tool is about assessing housing needs for domestic violence survivors, but as we've doing it, we keep talking about similarities and differences across different homeless populations, and how this could be modified.

to

We didn't want to go any further without bringing it all of you and getting feedback on is there even an openness to this type of a thing.

Is this something that would be useful.

And getting back to Kathy's issue about this being a political issue as well, I would love to hear what people think about this but I really think it's problematic that we have one pot of money that we're supposed to use to prioritize people from such very different situations, so, you know, veterans, domestic

violence survivors, homeless youth.

Why is there one pot of money where you're trying to decide which person is more deserving of that one use nature that's open.

to
a
of
with

We know when the government several years ago decided end veteran homelessness, they put a lot of money into ending veteran homelessness, and they had vouchers and a system of prioritization that was just for veterans. I tend to think that we need to do this across a lot of these groups so that you're not comparing a veteran a sexual assault survivor or a runaway youth with a chronically homeless person.

of

I think we need different pots of money because some of these questions are specific to different populations. I have no idea if that's a reasonable request, if that might be something that happens in 2021, but that strikes me as something that would make a lot of -- a lot more sense.

tree

But right now to answer the question, this decision was really focused on understand housing needs of

domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.

to

That may or may not be useful to COCs that are trying

open

come up with one tool for everybody but I'd love to

it up and see what other people have to say.

>> Great.

41

100

on

Yeah, we're engaging in a dialogue and there's over

of us on this webinar, so we're putting Cris and Gaby

the spot to try to respond.

responding

I won't even say answer questions but respond to questions, and it's lovely to also see people

to one another in the chat.

Let's keep going just to see where the conversation goes.

to

There are a number of questions that are still trying

wrap their heads around the scoring and the VI-SPDAT

think

chance

come

scoring and how might the decision tree model be translated or used with the VI-SPDAT scoring and I

you spoke to this but I want to give you another

to address that a little more directly because it's

up a few more times.

>> Yeah, I just don't think you can put a number on somebody's experience that will then tell you what housing option makes sense for them based on that one number, and I think anyone who has been trying to do that would agree, but certainly jump into the chat if you disagree with that.

So -- and this is where we brought up also the first come first served is there are wait lists, you know. I wish there weren't.

There are whether you're using a scoring tool or this

42

tool.

wait

In a lot of communities there's still going to be a

not

list but when you're trying to figure out who gets that -- the next rapid rehousing money that we have available, who gets the shelter bed, who gets the transitional housing opening, these are the kinds of questions that at least can help us make sure we're putting somebody where they don't need to be, right? I can tell you from doing this work for a long time we have a lot of people in domestic violence shelters who do not need to be there.

And anyone I know who works in a DV program will tell you that, that they're there because there isn't other housing available to them.

they

They're not there because their safety issues mean have to be there anymore.

It's just there isn't anywhere for them to go.

That's extremely expensive and no one wants to be in a shelter if they don't need to be in a shelter.

And if those people are in a shelter who don't need to be but they're there because there's nowhere safe to send them and the shelter staff don't want to put them out on the street, that means we have people in our communities who desperately need that shelter bed.

help

So we have to be doing something that is trying to

43

figure out, you know, especially the -- if somebody is still housed, you know, we talk about homeless but when we talk about domestic violence survivors you've got the fleeing domestic violence thing they have a home and in a lot of communities especially very expensive communities like just about all of California, Washington, D.C., areas that may have rent control, that you do not want that person to lose their housing if there is any way to help them keep that housing, and they may just not know that you can help them. This comes down to resources. I did see a couple of people in the chat say, what is this about flexible funding? I've never heard of this. We don't have this. And that's a problem because we are finding and research

prevent

is showing that if you have a pot of money, we call it flexible funding, a pot of money that you can use in whatever way a survivor needs, that can actually homelessness.

So it might mean that the person needs new tires on their truck.

It might mean that they need to update their licensing for the type of job that they have.

but

These things may only cost a couple hundred dollars,

44

to

if we don't have that flexible funding to give people take care of that immediate need, they will lose their jobs, they will lose their housing, and now all of a sudden they're in incredible a very expensive crisis. So it's really cost effective for communities to have this flexible funding, and we think that that really needs to come from the private sector.

of

There are some organizations that have a combination

public and private.

Some of your public funding allows for some level of flexible funding.

I tend to call that semi flexible because they're not going to let you spend it on the kinds of things that private funding will.

So that's a whole other conversation and there are resources and information on the safe housing partnerships website on flexible funding, but it's an example of resources that need to be available in our communities to prevent homelessness, to prevent things from becoming more dire and more expensive and to make sure that we've got a variety of options available for people.

>> Thanks for that plug around resources is he safe housing partnerships website.

We do have quite a bit information on flex I will

funding and we can follow up with folks about that if

you're curious.

Here's a different question for Gaby and Cris.

Someone is curious or a couple folks are curious about how this model addresses obstacles that come through immigration status or human trafficking.

How might those challenges relate to and impact a conversation and the decision tree around housing.

>> I'm just waiting to see if Gaby wants to jump in on this before I jump in again.

Gaby, did you --

>> Yes, I was finding the unmute button.

No, this is -- these are great questions, and I think when we talk about the immigration challenges that

might

influence conversations around, I think it's really important to understand what those challenges are especially in the current context in which everything around immigration services taking so long, so that really needs to be something that providers need to

have

a clear understanding because it might mean that that particular survivor especially immigrant survivor or survivor of human trafficking might need one of those longer options for services to really be able to

obtain

housing and then maintain that stability.

So I'd say that for the most part if somebody is

46

then
time
probably

undocumented and is working towards documentation,
it really would require some additional support and
and understand what the circumstances are, and so then
this decision tree and the conversations might
lean you to consider the far two on the right options
for longer term support might be needed.

>> Okay.

doing

This might be -- well, this is several questions.
There are some folks who are curious about consistency
and compliance and making sure that folks who are
this series of conversations, having conversations and
using this decision tree are doing it in a way that is
ensuring fairness.

Are there thoughts or guidance around that?

>> I don't think I have anything additional to add to
that other than it is very important, and I think

with
that
be
needs

depending on your community and who you're working
and what resources are available in the community,
all needs to be modified within this decision tree to
help make sure that this just doesn't become a way to
completely subjective about who gets what, like it
to be documented what you asked, what people said, and
then why there was a match for a particular resource.
>> Great.

Yeah, I think you did a really nice job outlining

47

that
bias

earlier why the VI-SPDAT has been popular in the sense
there's been a perception of object activity to it.
So I think it's been helpful to point out the ways
it isn't objective and that this process is an
alternative to that.
Somebody also asked about the potential for racial
and how the decision tree might be implemented.

be

What thoughts might you have about where there might potential for that and how you might mitigate against it?

>> Yeah, I mean there's always that risk with anything we're doing, right?

And we know how common it is.

Again, the more that we're documenting, possibly even having teams of people making these decisions.

into

I also think that it's important that the staff of agencies and COCs are representative of their communities because that alone regardless of what tool you're using can minimize the risk of racism coming play.

so

We know that so many people in the housing world are White people and that's going to continue to be a problem because we know, you know, of implicit biases,

those are the kinds of immediate things that I would think can help us but it's something we always need to

be safeguarding against and being watchful of and I think having teams of people and watch guards that regardless of what we're doing is important.

>> Thank you.

bringing I think I've been trying to capture all the questions and blends similar ones together and I feel like we've covered most of the territory you all have been up.

imagine So if there are some final questions, as you can it's a little hard to track everything, it's coming in fast and furious.

So if you have any remaining questions, I would invite you to add those and I'm going to open it up to see if Heidi and Gaby and Cris and Brittany want to add anything else to this conversation right now.

papers >> I just want to -- this is Cris, and while I believe you're now going to hear about some of the other that are coming up in a little bit more about this series, while that's happening if you have ideas for next steps, that would be incredibly helpful for us. I mean if you think there is promise in this tool that could say, here's what I would need from you next for

this to be useful, please jump in and provide that information for us.

>> Okay.

49

in Yeah, there's one recent question here that just came around how this kind of conversation would be documented

with an HMIS data system.

that I don't know if you all have immediate thoughts on

resources. but again we can track that question with all the rest of these to try to provide some more ongoing

Do you have any immediate thoughts on how this would translate to HMIS?

Homelessness management information systems I should say.

We'll get back to you on that question.

So thank you all.

been Again, we really appreciate all the dialogue that's

happening both with Cris and Gaby and Heidi as well as
in chat box.

had We know several of you requested some follow up and
great ideas on additional resources on more
conversations, more webinars.

consortium Yes, several of us who are involved with the
are participating in this call and tracking questions
and we will debrief and see what sorts of next steps

we can pull together to give you some resources and
information that's responsive to these questions.
Give you a sense of what's coming, we -- scrolling
-- through my list -- we have another paper that will be

50

it's actually on our website right now,
safehousingpartnerships.org, and we'll be put up
assessing resources around that and that paper is called
of vulnerability and prioritizing risk, the limitations

all

VI-SPDAT for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and the hope with that paper and other papers is you

and

can be taking these to your communities to your COCs

housing partners and so on and be equipped with the tools and information I think is being a strong advocate.

We'll be having a podcast to talk through some of that content so stay tuned.

Again, I would encourage you to keep your eyes on the safehousingpartnerships.org website and also if you go to that website ask scroll down you'll see information about our newsletter and I think a few people have already indicated in the chat box they want to get

added

to that so you can click on a link there and make sure you subscribe to our newsletter which will be coming

out

again.

Some of the next papers coming down a little down the pike one is around the pitfalls of prioritization and really thinking about the power and culture that's involved around how we prioritize.

Again I think Cris and Gaby alluded to some of these.

some
and

Hard prioritization challenges where we're pitting really compelling stories and competing kind of vulnerabilities together and how problematic that is how it can be biased and when power and control and culture is involved.

We'll be having another paper that speaks to the importance of a real robust consolation of housing options for survivors.

Again Cris teed this up by saying there aren't enough housing available.

And then another paper that we're looking at is around understanding the cycle of housing insecurity for survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are marginalized, and there's some really exciting

research

research

there that's been community-based participatory hearing directly from survivors who have experienced some forms of oppression and what that housing insecurity looks like for them as well.

So that's some of what we're teasing up but to really echo what Heidi had indicated we're starting to roll this out and we do expect this to be a bit of an iterative process so we will continue to listen to you all in the field.

We're going to continue to adjust and adapt the resources and the recommendations and the policy

52

advocacy that we're doing based on what you're telling us what you're experiencing.

I think something that came through loud and clear in the chat is the sense of, okay, we like this and how we complement it.

How do we convince our partners and COCs to do this. And I want to acknowledge that some of the COCs are right there with us.

We certainly know in of these folks are dissatisfied with the VI-SPDAT and they're looking for alternatives.

So we're hearing from some communities that have

started

down this path in different ways and we want to make
to sure we're lifting them up and making them accessible

will all of you so as we proceed in the coming months we

hear be putting together subsequent webinars so you can

from and dialogue with folks who are trying some
alternative and novel sort of approaches around
coordinated entry and prioritization this their
communities.

work So please stay tuned if you are doing some of this

and you're start to go apply some of this in your
communities let us know.

and Be in touch with us and communicate because we want to
make sure that we're really spreading the knowledge

the innovation and helping people to learn from one

53

another.

You see on the screen we have Cris and Gaby's contact information.

the
And I have not been able to keep up with the chat in
last few minutes.

Is there anything else that I'm missing?

I'm asking my partners.

>> No, I think you're good, Kathy.

I think you're good.

copy
I think folks keep asking whether they're getting a
of this or recording.

You will.

the
We will share the recording of this presentation and
materials with everyone.

>> Excellent.

who
>> And for all those folks know who are curious and
want to know more there's a ton of information on the
safe housing partnerships website not only on this
conversation around coordinated entry and how to do

this
but there's also a ton of information on the
intersections that a lot of folks surfaced in terms of
equity, immigration and so on and so forth.

>> And one last point I would like to make, this is
Heidi again.

Some of you ask us.

54

We advocate for the use of this framework and I would say you have our word that we would do our part, but we need you in this as well, so those of you that are ready to start implementing and need follow-up technical assistance, please reach out.

You can reach out to us through the Safe Housing Partnerships website, and we can continue this dialogue.

Thanks again.

>> And with that I guess we'll wrap early and give everybody an 11 extra minutes to your day.

Go breathe, be outside, pause, and thank you again.

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