

CT Outreach (OR) Training

Best Practices in Outreach to Homeless People

Session #3: Transition to Housing and Tools and Supports for Practice

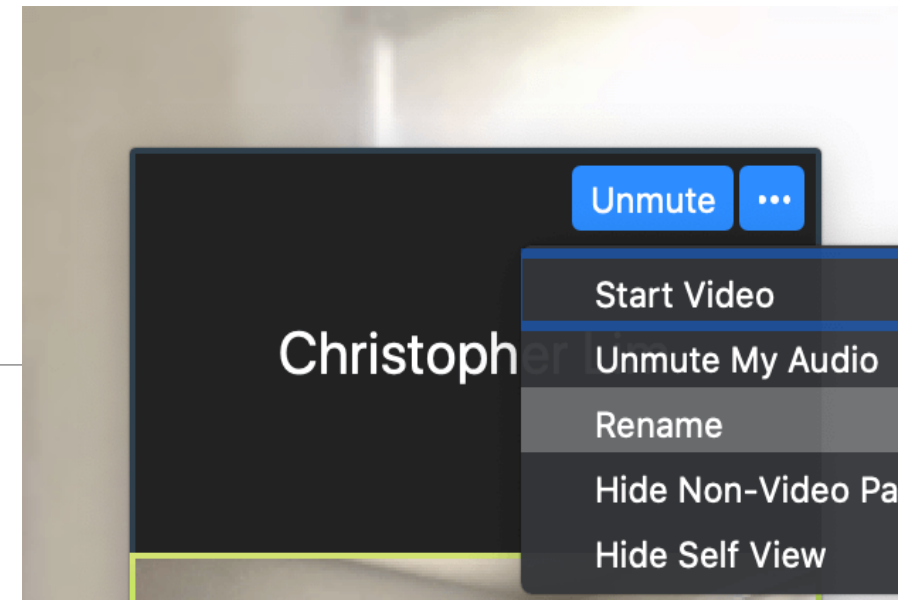
1/14/2025

Suzanne Wagner & Andrea White, Housing Innovations



Welcome

- Introduce Facilitators
- Goals for the Session
- Housekeeping
 - PLEASE TURN YOUR CAMERAS ON AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.
 - Please put your name as you would like to be addressed as your screen name.
 - We will upload the slides to the chat box momentarily.
 - We love interaction – please raise hand, use emojis, type comments in the chat box or just unmute and talk!
 - The session is being recorded and will be posted to the web.
 - Today's session is 2 hours- some slides are for reference.



A group of people are seated around a long table in a meeting room, engaged in discussion. The room is filled with people, some looking towards the camera and others looking at each other. There are water bottles, papers, and a tablet on the table. The background shows more people and a yellow wall.

We Love Interaction

If you don't have a microphone, participate in discussions by joining via phone:

- Phone: 646-876-9923
- Meeting ID: 829 2163 0874
- Passcode: 266724

Who is with us today?

Please put in the chat box:

- Your agency and role/title
- Your location
- Best movie or show you recently watched



Recap of Sessions 1 & 2

- CT Statewide Outreach Standards
- Outreach values, vision and goals
- Housing First
- Trauma-Informed and Client-Centered Practices
- Housing Focused Case Management
 - Assertive Engagement
 - Assessment of Housing Needs and Preferences
 - Goal-setting and Housing Planning
 - Accessing Housing
- Polls (anonymous):
 - Poll #1:
 - Did you attend any of the two previous Best Practices in Street Outreach training sessions (December 2 and December 9, 2024)?
 - Poll #2
 - Have you used or reviewed the CT Statewide Street Outreach Standards since this training began in early December?



AGENDA

- Supporting the Transition to Housing
- Maximizing Safety, Reducing Harm and De-escalation Strategies
- Documentation & Data
- Client Rights
- Closing Comments
- Additional Resources

Support During Housing Application & Move-In Process

- Participate in CAN Case Conferencing and Matching meetings
- Prepare and support clients for success:
 - Teach tenancy rights and responsibilities.
 - Anticipate housing stability risks and help clients establish plans to mitigate risks.
 - Assist to set up the apartment to feel like home.
 - Help plan how client will structure their initial days in housing.
 - Offer support post move-in for 90 days post lease date – may keep enrollments open



Warm Hand-offs and Aftercare



- Leverage outreach workers' deep ties.
- Accompany clients to appointments with new service providers whenever possible.
- Provide follow-up support on a gradually declining basis to both new staff and the client.
- **Standard:** monthly attempts to visit or contact clients after move-in to assess on-going service needs and connect clients to appropriate services **for at least 3 months after move-in**

Safety During Street Outreach

- Be sure someone at the office knows your field schedule, including locations and times – check in on a predictable schedule.
- Follow your agency's safety protocols.
- Remember you are in the clients' space.
- Schedule outreach in pairs whenever possible & always in high-risk situations.
- Know when not to attempt to engage and when to walk away, including when sex/drugs are being sold.
- Leave non-essential valuables behind.
- Dress comfortably in shoes that you can easily walk/jog in.
- Get help if a crisis emerges – know how long it will take help to arrive and plan accordingly.



Safety During Street Outreach



Plan Ahead:

- Always have charged phone accessible.
- Maintain a clear exit path – don't go places without a viable exit.
- Negotiate visits in advance if possible - be clear about conditions (e.g., intoxication, firearms, aggressive pets).
- Consider scheduling in early a.m. when intoxication is less likely.
- Learn about any history of dangerous behavior.
- Build a partnership with local police.

Look Back:

- Follow your agency's incident reporting policies and use incidents as an opportunity to learn.

Use the Safety Checklist in the Standards

Checklist¹:

Maintaining Safety for Clients and Staff

****Frontline staff must complete required safety trainings before conducting outreach****

For a full version of the checklist

See: [CT Statewide Street Outreach Standards](#)

General Ways To Create Safe Spaces:

- Listen
- Be reliable and supportive
- Explain your role
- Work together on something
- Provide some comfort and/or relief
- Provide support for whatever feelings someone is having

Before Going Out in the Field:

- Am I following the coordinated outreach plan? (*Ok to not follow only if responding to an emergency*)
- Is my cell phone charged?
- Do I have business/contact cards and my ID?

Harm Reduction

Harms can take many forms when people are unsheltered – Drugs, Alcohol, Predators, Violence, Extreme Weather, etc.

Accept clients' priorities and choices as a matter of fact without judgment.

Help client to identify personal goals and preferred paths to achieve.

Raise awareness of options, choices, risks and strategies to reduce harm.

Intervene, as necessary, when someone presents an imminent risk of danger to self or others.

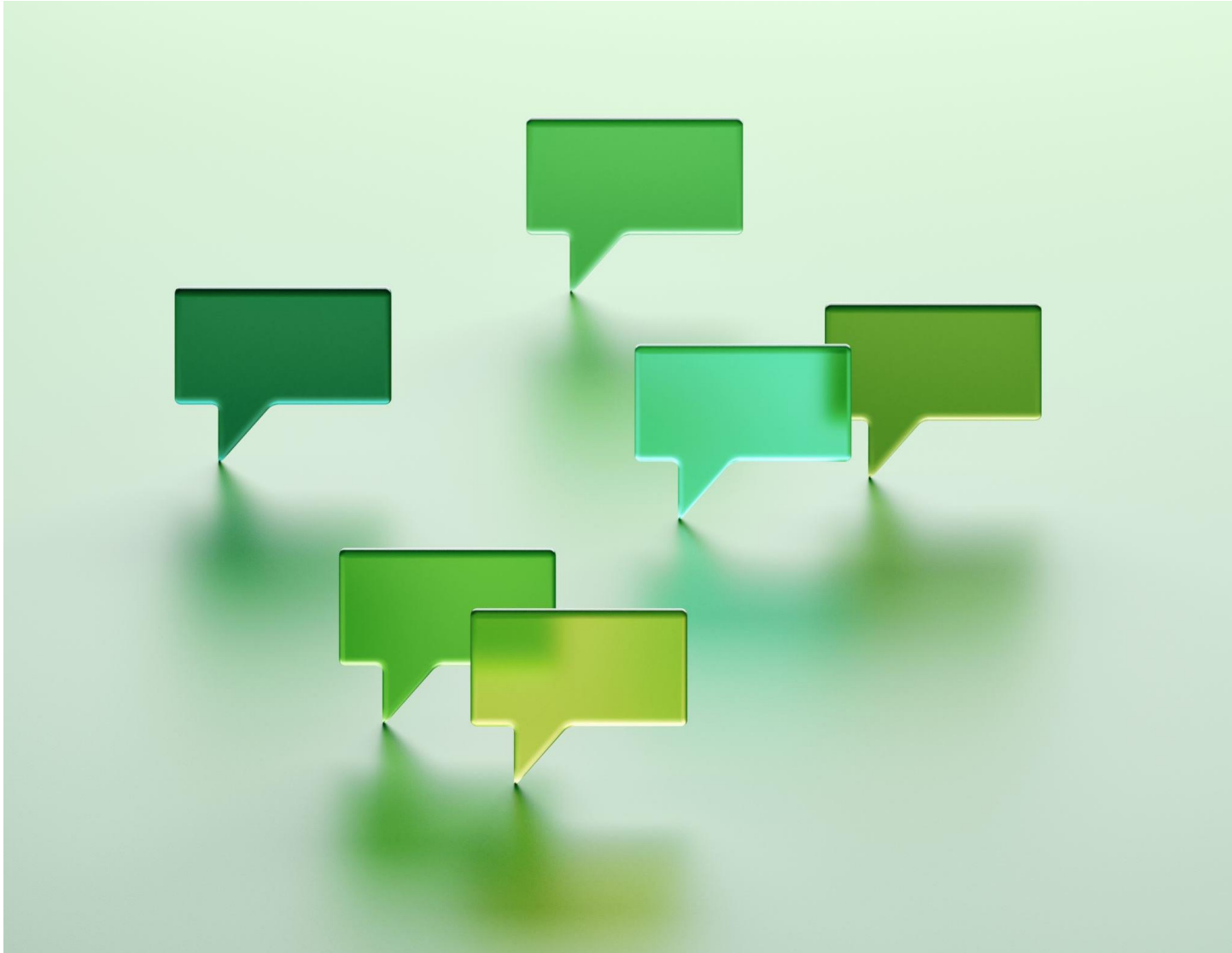
[Harm Reduction Plan - PDF](#)



Risk	Risk Reduction Options	Factors in Favor	Factors Against	Non-negotiable
Sleeping in the park where I got beat up.	Go to shelter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm & Dry • Safer • Showers • Food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't drink • Lots of rules • Far from where I collect cans 	I'm not going to quit booze.
	Sleep near a buddy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can drink. • No one tells me what to do • Convenient location • My buddy shares his booze. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police wake me up • Hard to stay warm and dry • More work to take care of myself 	

Small Group Discussions

- WHAT DO YOU DO TO STAY SAFE DURING OUTREACH?
- HOW ARE YOU HELPING CLIENTS TO REDUCE RISKS?



Promoting Safety in Outreach Webinar

Check out this 60 minute webinar

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top left is the logo for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council. The video title is "Promoting Safety in Street Outreach: Link Between Psychological and Physical Safety". In the top right corner, there are icons for "Watch later" and "Share", and a small video thumbnail of a person named Brett Feldman. The main video area is split into two panels. The left panel shows a person in a wheelchair being attended to on a city street. The right panel shows a white van with "SEA Community Health Care" branding, with two people standing next to it. A large red play button is centered over the split-screen. At the bottom left, there is a "Watch on YouTube" button with the YouTube logo. The text "Keck School of Medicine of U" is partially visible at the bottom left of the video frame.

De-escalation Tips

- **Assess your emotions.**
 - Take 30 seconds to assess how you feel and breathe before you intervene.
 - If you find yourself getting upset, hand-off to your partner and take a break to regain your calm.
- **Respect personal space.**
 - If possible, stand three feet away from a person who's escalating.
 - Allowing personal space tends to decrease a person's anxiety.
- **Use nonthreatening, nonverbal cues.**
 - The more a person loses control, the less they hear your words—and the more they react to your nonverbal communication.
- Be mindful of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice.



De-escalation Tips (2)



- **Ask questions to gain understanding.**
- “I want to hear more. Can you help me to understand your concerns?”
- **Repeat back your understanding so they know you’ve heard them:**
- “It seems like you’re upset because...Did I get that right?”
- **Apologize/take responsibility.**
- “I’m really sorry that this situation is so upsetting.”
- **Ignore challenging questions.**
- Answering challenging questions can result in a power struggle. Ignore the challenge, but not the person.
 - “We may not have all of the answers right now, but I care about making sure you are heard. Can we grab a coffee together, so you can tell me more about your concerns?”

De-escalation Tips (3)

- **Say what you can do right now.**
 - I understand how frustrating it is that no one called you back.
 - “How about if I try to get someone on the phone right now?”
- **Respectfully set limits.**
 - Provide clear, simple, and enforceable limits.
 - Offer concise choices. Be clear, speak simply, and offer the positive choice first.
 - “I’m sorry, but you are not going to be able to stay here. We can walk out together and keep talking outside or I can ask security to walk out with you. Which would you prefer?”
- **Allow silence for reflection and space for decisions.**
 - When upset, someone may not be able to think clearly.
 - Give the person a few moments to think through what you’ve said.
 - Stress rises when someone feels rushed. Allowing time can bring calm.



Break Out Discussion: Peter

Peter showed up at your office to get bus tickets, and there are none available. He walked about 2 miles, and it's hot out. He's angry and has accused you of selling the tickets instead of giving them to clients. He is cursing loudly and yelling that he is calling the cops.

- How would you respond to Peter?
- What might help Peter to regain calm?
- What are you going to do to ensure safety?
- What steps are you going to take if he continues to escalate?



Learn More about De-Escalation Methods

Resources:

- Homeless Housing Resource Center: [Taking a Trauma-Informed Approach with Events of Escalation](#)
- CCEH: [Crisis Intervention and De-escalation Training](#)



Respecting Clients' Rights

Adhere to **confidentiality** requirements:

- During discussions with clients, colleagues, collateral contacts
- Obtain a signed release of information to authorize disclosures
- Obtain an HMIS release to authorize data entry
- Ensure written records are properly stored

Inform clients of the right to use your agency's **grievance** process

For more information see:

- Your agency's confidentiality policy and procedure
- Your agency's grievance policy and procedure





SNOFO Outreach Projects CT BOS Rights Notices

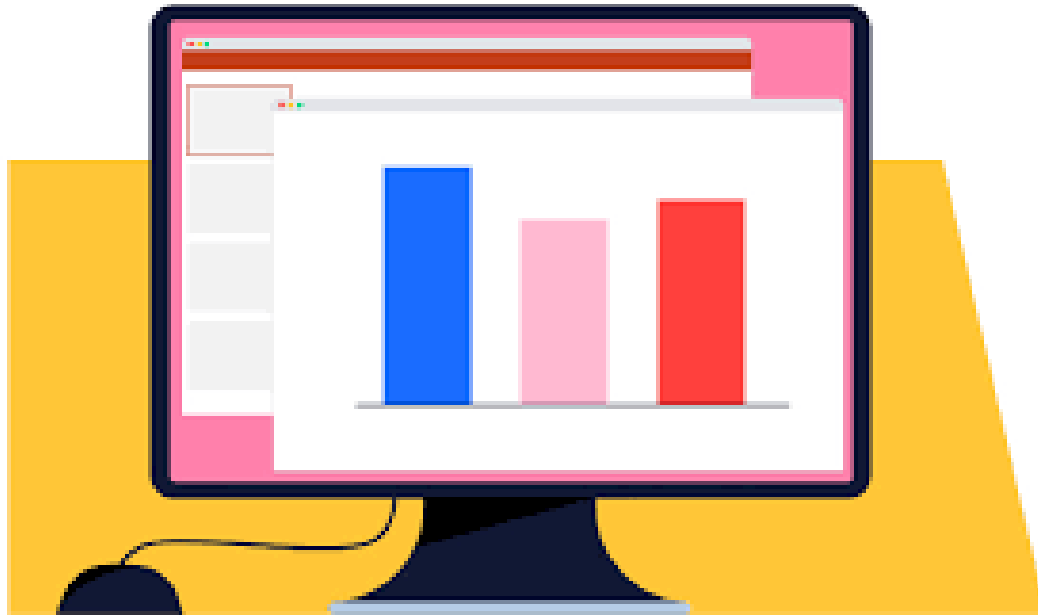
SNOFO Outreach Projects must provide participants with these CT BOS Rights Notices:

- Participant Bill of Rights ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
- Grievance Rights ([English](#), [Spanish](#))

Why is documentation important?



- To ensure no one falls through the cracks and everyone has someone checking in with them.
- To establish an agreement about what you are working on together and what you are going to do by when.
- To track what you agreed to do and ensure it's done promptly.
- To ensure every person is prioritized and connected to housing as quickly as possible and inform continuous quality improvement.
- To conserve scarce resources and avoid service duplication.
- So other people can find your clients, know something about them and what you were working on in case you cannot continue to provide services.



Zoom Poll

Which of these reasons to keep documentation current seems most important to you?

Pick up to 4

Documentation Standards



- Use HMIS to record information about all enrolled clients
- Enter information including project entry/exit dates promptly (goal: within 24 hours)
- Complete annual/exit assessments in HMIS
- Update HMIS current living assessments (at a minimum monthly)
- Case notes document ongoing services for all enrolled participants and work towards housing
- Homelessness Verification Form, Current Living Assessment and/or Letter documents homelessness
- For participants with a disability Verification of Disability or attempts to obtain are in file

Data Systems - Quick Reference – All Outreach Projects

Data System	Purpose	Who to Contact for Help
<u>HMIS-Caseworthy</u>	CT's Caseworthy database where providers enter data for every Outreach project participant	help@nutmegit.com CT HMIS Knowledge Base
<u>Learning Management System (LMS)</u>	New Users must register & take mandatory self-paced training to get HMIS access. Instructor led training also available.	LMS Support Form
<u>DDAP</u>	CT DMHAS System – Outreach data must be entered or uploaded from HMIS to DDAP	Elizabeth.Feder@ct.gov
<u>PIT Database</u>	CT data reporting system used for the Annual Point in time Count and Housing Inventory Chart	help@nutmegit.com

Point-In-Time (PIT) Count – 1/28/25

- Outreach projects are required to participate in the annual PIT count of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- [PIT Home Page](#)
- PIT Unsheltered Count Training: [Slides](#) & [Recording](#)
- PIT Count [Info for Outreach Teams](#)
- PIT Data Due: 2/4/25



Core Components of Effective Outreach

- Trauma Informed and Client-Centered Care
- Harm Reduction
- Housing First
- Assertive Engagement
- Motivation Building
- Housing Needs and Preferences Assessment
- Housing Planning and Navigation
- Income and Resources Assistance
- Warm-Hand-Offs
- Aftercare Post Housing Move-In



Zoom Poll: Which core components are you using? Which could use more attention?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

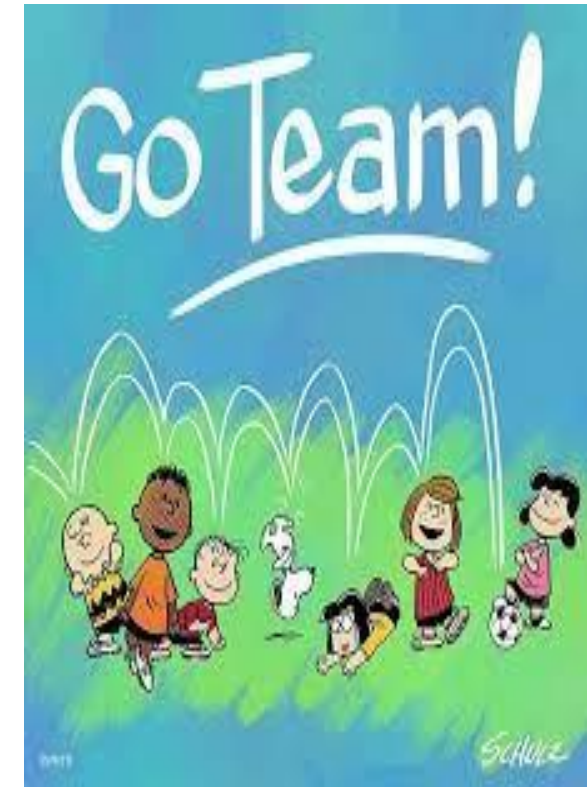




Closing Comments

Closing

- Outreach workers are critical in helping people obtain housing and provide support through the transition.
- Meet clients where they are and help them to reduce risks using Harm Reduction strategies.
- Respect clients' rights.
- Pay attention to everyone's safety.
- Use the *Safety Checklist* in the standards and de-escalation techniques.
- Use data and documentation to ensure continuity of care, collaborate and improve services.
- Attend PIT training & make sure everyone experiencing unsheltered homelessness is known and gets counted.
- We look forward to continuing to support your teams in this work!





Additional Resources

Best Practices in Street Outreach

Session 1: Values, Goals & Engagement - Slides: [Best Practices in Street Outreach, Session 1](#); Recording: <https://youtu.be/vnNca8imTxE>

Session 2: Housing First & Housing-Focused Case Management - [Slides](#)

Recording: <https://youtu.be/9b3luR929i4>



Upcoming Outreach Webinars:

- Working with People & their Pets – January 28, 2025 from 1:30-3:30
- Supervisors Sessions: Supervising Street Outreach Staff & Programs
 - February 5 and 12, 2025 from 1:30-3:30
- Agency Session: Requirements for Agencies Receiving Street Outreach Funding
 - TBD





Quarterly Outreach Meetings

Next Meeting: 3/19 at 1pm

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Passcode: YRSRpB

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075](#)

Phone Conference ID: 636
766997#

Street Outreach Training Inventory

Web-based training available on topics including:

- Best Practices and Engagement Strategies
- Homeless Response System Overview
- Housing Options
- Housing Assessment & Planning
- Mental Health
- Crisis Intervention & De-escalation
- Harm Reduction
- Encampments
- Trauma-Informed Outreach
- Self-Care, Vicarious Trauma & Staff Resiliency
- Working with Special Populations (Youth, Older Adults, LGBTQIA, DV)
- Racial Trauma & Equity
- Disaster Response Planning



Other Resources



- [Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration \(SAMHSA\) Harm Reduction Resources](#)
- [National Harm Reduction Coalition](#)
- [Unite Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner - Homelessness and Human Rights](#)
- [National Coalition for the Homeless – Civil Rights and Homelessness](#)
- [Housing & Urban Development \(HUD\) & Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) - Evidence for Housing-Based Encampment Strategies](#)

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Questions?
