

Behavioral Health is Essential To Health



Prevention Works



Treatment is Effective



People Recover



Effective Outreach: Why it is important for you and your community

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Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Identify principles of effective outreach;
- Identify effective outreach strategies;
- Identify effective best practices for outreach;
- Identify safety practices for outreach work; and
- Identify steps in building trust with clients.

Question 1

The statement that best describes my agency's street outreach services is:

- a. My agency provides street outreach services.
- b. My agency does not provide street outreach services, but we collaborate with other local service programs that do provide street outreach.
- c. My agency does not provide street outreach services, and I am not aware of any local efforts to provide street outreach.
- d. Other (please feel free to enter additional information in the chat box)

Question 2

My agency's street outreach services are effective.

- a. True
- b. False
- c. Don't know
- d. My agency does not provide street outreach.

Question 3

Our outreach workers are trained in best practices for providing outreach services.

- a. True
- b. False
- c. I don't know.
- d. My agency does not have outreach workers.

Question 4

Our outreach workers are trained in safety practices and feel safe when providing outreach services.

- a. True
- b. False
- c. I don't know.
- d. My agency does not have outreach workers.

Purpose of Outreach

To meet basic needs, build trust and rapport with individuals who do not access traditional services, and connect people with housing, services, and supports (Kraybill, 2002; Tsemberis & Efenbein, 1999; Erickson & Page, 1999).



Outreach Defined

Outreach is face-to-face interaction with people experiencing homelessness. Outreach takes place on the streets, in camps, under bridges, in temporary motels, shelters, meal sites, and wherever else people might be located.

In active outreach, workers seek out and connect with individuals and families who are homeless (Bassuk, 1994).

Outreach vs. In-reach

In-reach assists individuals who are *already connected* to some kind of services.

The PATH program is intended to reach people who are not connected to services.

Outreach is the most effective way to engage people not currently receiving services.

Impact of Outreach for Consumers/Clients

Research over the past two decades has documented numerous positive outcomes associated with outreach, including:

- Decreased number of days homeless
- Improved housing status
- Decreased psychiatric hospitalization
- Reduced drug use
- Improved health and mental health

(Olivet et al., 2010; Buhrich & Teesson, 1996; Bybee et al., 1994; Fisk, 2006; Goering et al., 1997; Rosenblum et al., 2002; Tommasello et al., 1999)

Community Impact of Outreach

Effective outreach lays the groundwork for two important events that impact the community's infrastructure and resources, including:

- The annual Point in Time Count of people experiencing homelessness, and
- The U.S. Census, which occurs every 10 years.

These events require effort and organization, as well as effective outreach.

How an Accurate Census Helps the Community

- Many federal programs are designed to benefit low-income populations and persons experiencing homelessness and utilize census data to determine community funding.
- Many of these programs are designed to foster local collaborations and encourage best utilization of resources to benefit SAMHSA's target populations.

Process of Outreach in SAMHSA Programs

1. **Locate** those who would otherwise not being served.
2. **Engage** into a trusting relationship.
3. **Screen** for housing and other service needs.
4. **Assess** health and behavioral health needs.
5. **Provide** direct care and services as able.
6. **Refer** to housing, health, and behavioral health treatment resources.

Outreach Principles

- Meet people where they are—geographically, emotionally, and physically.
- Meet basic needs.
- Be respectful and treat everyone with dignity.
- Recognize that the relationship is central to outreach and engagement.
- Create a safe, open, friendly space, regardless of the setting.

(Olivet et al., 2010)

Effective Outreach Workers

- Person-centered
- Trauma-informed
- Grounded in Motivational Interviewing
- Collaborative—Able to build bridges
- Informed about community resources

Characteristics of Effective Outreach Workers

- Flexible
- Non-judgmental
- Relaxed
- Resourceful
- Patient
- Calm and clear
- Assertive
- Independent
- Team player
- Tactful
- Cautious and alert
- Assertive (takes initiative)
- Centered
- Focused

(Kraybill, 2002; Olivet et al., 2010)

The “Dos” of Effective Outreach

- Be yourself!
- Listen.
- Use Motivational Interviewing.
- Respond, don't react.
- Dress for the street.
- Be culturally competent.



The “Don'ts” of Effective Outreach

- Don't “space invade”.
- Don't promise what can't be delivered.
- Don't “case manage.”
- Don't go alone.
- Don't preach, pry, and prod.
- Don't go at 4 a.m.
- Don't ever give up.

Tips For Staying Safe

- Always let your supervisor know your location.
- Go in pairs whenever possible.
- Don't approach people who are "giving signs" that they don't want to be approached.
- Don't interrupt sales of drugs or sex—trust your gut.
- Introduce yourself and inform people what you're doing and why.

Three Homes: A Framework for Ending Homelessness

Self Housing Community



A Brief History of Outreach

Version 1.0 Engagement-Focused

Version 2.0 Service-Focused

Version 3.0 Housing-Focused

A Shift in Emphasis

Homeless services are experiencing a shift away from providing shelter and transitional housing to focusing on prevention and permanent housing.

Community collaboration is essential to create connections among outreach, housing, and services.

Strategies for Rural and Urban Settings

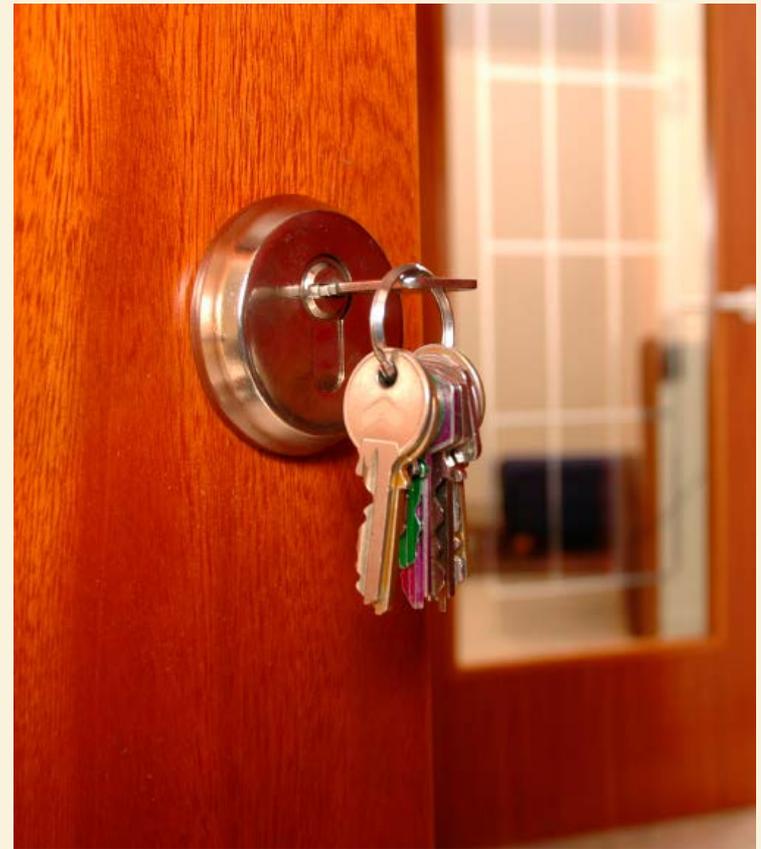
- Expand your “eyes and ears.”
- Make connections.
- Inform others of your services.
- Stay in touch frequently.

A View From the Streets

- Food
- Transportation
- Restrooms
- Sleep cover
- Protection from elements



What is the Connection Between Outreach and Housing?



Consistent Findings:

Housing + Services Make a Difference

- Over 80 percent of supportive housing tenants are able to maintain housing for at least 12 months.
- Most supportive housing tenants engage in services, even when participation is not a condition of tenancy.
- The use of costly (and restrictive) services declines in homeless, health care, and criminal justice systems.

Consistent Findings:

Housing + Services Make a Difference

- Nearly any combination of housing and services is more effective than services alone.
- “Housing First” models with adequate support services can be effective for people who don’t meet conventional criteria for “housing readiness.”

Corporation for Supportive Housing, www.csh.org

Remember . . . the Relationship Still Matters

- Be curious; seek to understand.
- Practice reflective listening skills.
- Avoid negatives (e.g., can't, don't, won't).
- Avoid confrontation, work collaboratively.
- Be reliable.
- Be concise and concrete.
- Be willing to acknowledge your own errors.

Final Thoughts

“We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.”

Francis of Assisi, outreach worker, circa 1200

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Resources

- PATH: <http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Channel/Outreach-129.aspx>
- Street Outreach for Homeless Persons with SMI: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10493468>
- Best Practices for Providers: <http://homeless.samhsa.gov/channel/outreach-35.aspx>
- PATH Outreach videos: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWKsgl9h5N8>
- Outreach to People Experiencing Homelessness: <http://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/OutreachCurriculum2005.pdf>

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