

Choice of Setting:

How to Have Fuller Conversations and Move
Through the Transition Process

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Learning Objectives

- 1) Participants increase their knowledge of DD service settings and become better able to explain differences among settings.
- 2) Participants are able to explain the transition process to individuals and use planning tools to implement their choices.
- 3) Participants gain skills to have fruitful choice of setting conversations in the context of Oregon's housing crisis.

Senate Bill 20

- The choice of setting provisions do the following:
- Direct case managers to present individuals they serve three settings to choose from. One of these settings must be the person's own home, where they can receive in-home supports.
- Direct case managers to have choice-of-setting conversations annually
- Remove an exception for case managers to decide that giving people three options is not feasible

Common Questions about Settings

What does the care like and who provides it?

Who would I be living with?

Do I get to live my life according to my needs and wants?

What if I have a problem with the provider?

What if I have an emergency?

Service Settings

- 24-hour settings
 - Adult foster home
 - Group home
 - Supported living
- Community-based settings
 - Assisted living/CHSP
 - An individual's own home

24-Hour Settings

Adult Foster Home

- Foster homes are described by DHS as a “home-like” environment
- Typically have a resident manager who resides at least four days weekly at the location.
- Historically the foster home owner was also the operator who provided the majority of the care themselves
- Some providers hire their own resident manager and support staff to provide care.

Group Home

- Group homes are managed by organizations. All of the staff providing care are doing shift-work and DSP's provide the hands-on support day to day
- Often administrative tasks are outsourced to staff members/managers who are based out of central offices

Supported Living

- Supported Living can be a 24-hour care model, although many individuals aren't needing or receiving that level of support.
- Supported Living is described as a support option for individuals who live in a residence of their choice within the community.
- Sometimes the individuals pay their own rent or own their home, sometimes they rent from the provider of their support services,

Similarities among 24-hour Settings

- Individuals pay room and board or rent from their own funds (i.e., Social Security, work)
 - 2019: \$599/month (Transmittal Number:APD-AR-18-068)

Similarities among 24-hour Settings

- Services include:
 - Assistance with daily activities
 - Medication management
 - Meals
 - Housekeeping and laundry service
 - Arranging transportation to appointments
 - Support for other needs identified in the ISP

Community-Based Settings

Assisted Living/CHSP

- Supports seniors and adults with disabilities to live independently in their own apartments
- It provides services and assistance including meals, housekeeping, and personal care
- Some have a nursing home feel
- Staff are available round the clock. Individuals sign up or request when providers will work with them

In-Home Supports

- With help from SCs or PAs, individuals hire and manage workers to provide services in their own home
- Individuals can hire and manage in-home workers directly or contract with an in-home care agency
- Care is available only during workers shifts
- Task lists and supporting individuals to hold expectations for workers is important. Emphasize that help is available for this.

Common Questions about Settings

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Care and Providers

- Across settings, wages are low and turnover is high. Group home settings experience 90 percent annual turnover
- Short staffing occurs and can spread providers thin. Staff cannot always respond immediately to individuals' care needs most often in group settings, assisted living facilities, and in-home care agencies
- In group settings, ALFs, and in-home care agencies, the provider makes decisions about staff.
- In supported living, care is individualized and directed by the person receiving services

Housemates

- Group homes and foster homes can serve up to five individuals. Residents typically don't know each other beforehand and are typically not involved in choosing roommates
- Clients of supported living may have live-in caregivers

My Needs and Wants

- Programs receiving Medicaid funding must comply with Home and Community Based Services regulations
- These regulations are meant to ensure that individuals access services in the least restrictive environment
- Additionally, individuals have rights under the law which providers must respect
- See handout summarizing rights in Oregon

Problems with a provider

- CMEs are equipped to respond to potential abuse, harassment, or curtailing of rights
- Group homes and foster homes have an oversight body, the Residential Facilities Ombudsman
- Other settings have internal procedures and the DHS complaint form
- SCs and PAs are responsible for ensuring quality service
- Real Choice Initiative advocates with individuals

Emergencies

- Solid planning with the ISP should limit the occurrence of emergencies
- Some individuals find comfort in having 24-hour access to care that group settings and ALFs provide

Questions?

Learning Objective #2

Participants are able to explain the transition process to individuals and use planning tools to implement their choices.

Transition Process to Group Homes and Foster Homes

- Providers list information about vacancies via Provider Profile Forms
- Case managers may search a sort-able database to find appropriate placements
- Additionally, your CME's Designated Referral Contact likely has a good sense of possible placements.

Common Questions about Transition

What are my options?

How can I pay for it?

How long will it take?

Who will help me get where I want to be?

What are my options?

Choice counseling

- Give an overview of the settings. Framing it around common questions discussed earlier may provide focus
- While you may be completing the annual ISP, understand that transition may be a multi-year process with goals across life domains
- Identify different approaches to meeting a goal and write the goal to pursue them simultaneously
 - Ex.: Apply to waitlists, join Facebook housing groups, and regularly search property management org websites

What are my options?

Resources to start the housing search

- Affordable housing exists across the state
- Oregon Housing and Community Services hosts a dataset of 2,095 properties with affordable units
- The data is sort-able by city, county, or zip code and by population served
- DHS hosts a searchable dataset of ALFs/RCFs and APD foster homes

What are my options?

The process of searching

- Gather specifics about where the individual wants to live to write into their ISP
 - Location
 - Important features of a room/apartment/setting
 - Cost
- This provides a basis for accountability when asking providers to support the individual to find the option they want
 - Did the provider develop a plan to support the ISP goal and follow through?

How can I pay for it?

- Medicaid will pay for care in group home and foster. Individuals pay \$599 in room and board
- Similarly, Medicaid pays for ALF/RCF care and individuals pay a portion of their income to the provider
- When people choose to live in their own home, finding housing is dependent on:
 - Income – Social Security, work, other support
 - Availability of vouchers/affordable units

How can I pay for it?, cont'd.

- Subsidized housing is available, mostly at 60% AMI
 - In Portland, rents for 60% AMI studio units run about \$750
 - To afford \$750 in rent, we recommend individuals have at least \$1100 in income, which likely means maintaining employment.

How can I pay for it?, cont'd.

- Housing authorities were recently awarded Mainstream vouchers, specifically to support individuals to transition from group settings to their own homes
- HAs are implementing or have awarded vouchers
- Individuals may apply for these vouchers
- [Check here](#) if your HA was awarded vouchers

How long will it take?

- There are many paths for exercising choice of setting and individuals may have to figure out various parts of their lives.
- The path to foster and group homes is pretty well established. Not so much with other options

How long will it take?

- Establishing the means to make rent
- Will the individual work? Set them up with employment services
- Will the individual apply for a voucher or deeply subsidized unit? Goals would be to track emails from the local housing authority's email list and track soon-opening developments with subsidized housing

How long will it take?, cont'd

- Waitlists for existing subsidized housing can be years long, though there may be preference for people who need accessible units
- Once an individual has found a unit and a way to afford it, the qualifying process can take several weeks. This is a great time for individuals to interview HCWs and make other preparations with support from providers

Who will help me get where I want to be?

- Acting on an individual's choice of setting is a shared responsibility among the individual, providers, and case managers
- Your role is oversight of implementation of the individual's plan and providing resources
- Providers are tasked with providing support with disability specific needs. This includes researching, visiting, and evaluating settings, as well as preparing for transition

Who will help me get where I want to be?, cont'd

- You can make sure provider will follow through
 - Ask them to create an action plan
 - Provide support and resources for the provider's responsibilities
 - Follow up at time of billing

Learning Objective #3

Participants gain skills to have fruitful choice of setting conversations in the context of Oregon's housing crisis.

Fruitful Conversations

- Meaningful choice = follow through + accountability
- The point of the choice of setting conversation is to ensure proper fit and make corrections as necessary

Fruitful Conversations

- Why do individuals transition?
 - Support needs change
 - The setting is not supporting their self-determination
 - Individuals want more or less responsibility and decision making power over who's in their home and who's caring for them

Fruitful Conversations

- Who can transition?

Convenience and liability should not restrict individual choice

Start from “yes.” The ISP is a means of making the path toward the person's choice

Fruitful Conversations

- Give context: Oregon's housing crisis means more people are competing for fewer resources
 - Applicants have to find units and apply for them very soon after they come available. This can be extra difficult for people with disabilities
 - Accessible units are especially hard to find

Fruitful Conversations

- Give confidence: The ISP is going to lay out the steps for implementing the individual's choice and they will have the support they need
- Let individuals know this is not a one-time conversation

Questions?

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