
Critical Time Intervention

Transitions from Shelters and the Pre-CTI Phase

Vermont CoC

Session 1

April 22, 2026

Suzanne Wagner

swagner@housinginnovations.us

Andrea White

awhite@housinginnovations.us



Welcome and Introductions

- Housing & Homelessness Alliance of VT
 - Molly Shimko
- Housing Innovations
 - Andrea White
 - Suzanne Wagner
- Goals for the Training Series
- 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!



Introductions

- Please type in the chat:
 - Name
 - Role
 - Agency - Program
 - Location – Town/County
 - Put in the Chat if you have a favorite sweet treat.
- Polls: Who is in the Zoom Room?



Agenda



Overview of the CTI Model

CTI in the Shelter – Program Design

Pre-CTI Tasks

Engagement

Housing/Homeless Assessment

Housing Preferences

What is CTI?

Evidence-based practice designed to:

- Support people through TRANSITIONS
- Build skills and networks of support
- Pre-CTI is the intervention designed for the front end

Helps people with high needs live successfully in the community and reduce returns to homelessness, use of institutions

Incorporates “Supporting EBP’s”

- Harm Reduction and Problem Solving, Housing Stabilization Services, Person Centered Planning, Family Psychoeducation, Motivational Interviewing, Stages of Change



Evidence for CTI



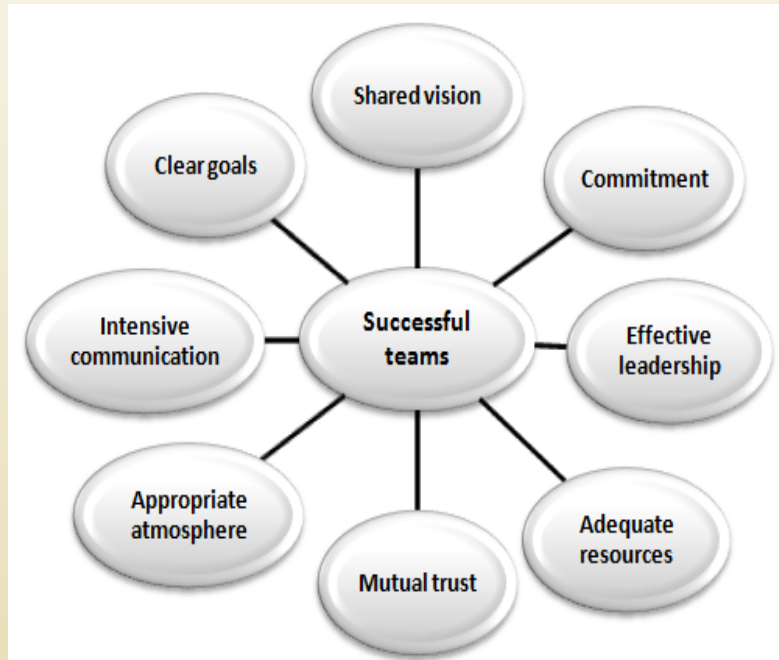
Original research at Columbia University on work with homeless single adults with serious mental illness in a large shelter in NYC. Based on housing focused clinical case management approach. Developed from the “ground up”.

Applied and researched in a variety of settings with different populations. Reduces returns to homelessness, use of emergency interventions and institutions. See www.criticaltime.org

Research on families and young adults has shown that these populations may need longer than the original model of nine months. More skill and resource development needed

- <http://www.criticaltime.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Samuels-Young-Families.pdf>

CTI Key Model Characteristics



- Client Goal focus – not symptom based
- Build skills, motivation and opportunities for success for participants
- Time-limited manualized intervention focused on TRANSITION
 - Last no more than 9 -12 months after transition/move in
- Four structured phases of decreasing intensity of contact
 - step back
- Highly focused assessment and service plans (limit to 3 goals)
- Home and community-based service
- Focuses on working the resources for sustainable supports (includes landlords/property management)
- Uses weighted caseload for Standard Caseload Equivalents (SCE's)
- Team approach with weekly team supervision
- Needs organizational supports
- Has a Fidelity Scale and Self-Assessment Tool

CTI Measures of Success

Maintaining a base in the community

Increase in income

Network of supports

Less emergency interventions

Structure, purpose and valued role(s)



Phases of CTI



- Pre-CTI: Planning and Preparation for the Transition
 - Phase 1: Transition to the Community
 - Phase 2: Try-out/Practicing
 - Phase 3: Termination/Step Down
-
- Pre-CTI is the work done by shelters to prepare people for the transition to housing stability
 - Phase 1 begins when person moves into housing/starts transition
 - Phases 1 to 3 last approximately 3-4 months each depending on the program model implementing CTI

Core Components of CTI

Focused on stability and achieving life goals

- Person-centered recovery orientation to successfully managing the transition

Pre-CTI Phase

- Planning and preparing for the transition
- Important phase before move-in

Three phases of decreasing intensity starting at move in

- Phase 1: Transition to the community
- Phase 2: Try out
- Phase 3: Transfer of care or termination

Time-limited (96-12 months post transition)

- Although other services may continue post CTI intervention





Core Components of CTI – 2

Limited Focus

- 1-3 goals in identified assessment domains
- Limited assessment domains

Interventions focused on preventing and addressing threats to stability and achieving personal goals

- Meeting obligations such as rent and bill payment and maintaining housing
- Following standard community norms and expectations
- Having sufficient money for basic needs
- Relief from pain/discomfort and connecting to effective services

Establishes Linkages to Community Resources

- Develop network of supports/linkages and adjust
- Connect to natural supports

Discussion



- Introduce yourselves to one another
- Discuss:
 - Questions/Reflections/Reactions to the CTI Model?
 - What aspects of CTI are you already implementing in your program?

CTI in the Shelter

The shelter has a key role in helping people to transition from being unhoused to being housed

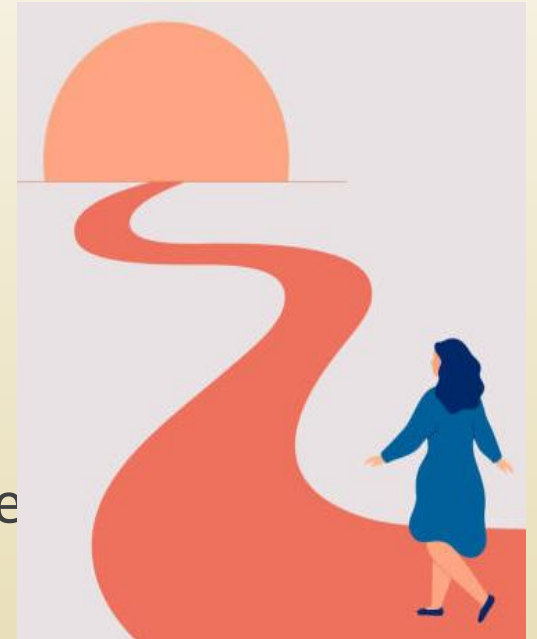
There is evidence that shows the pre-housing (Pre-CTI) work is critical to people stabilizing in the community

Pre-CTI focuses on tasks and strategies that set people on the path to stabilization in the community

Pre-CTI does not have a time limit. Lasts as long as people are in shelter

Shelter Program Design

- CTI is a practice approach that helps structure the program.
- The focus is on connecting people to resources and building skills so they can be successful in housing.
- Ideally the shelter is set up so that every interaction supports the purpose of the program, stable housing
- “Environmentalize” housing – signage, information, celebrations
- The shelters are both structured and welcoming, it is a place of opportunity
- Shelter processes and rules should mimic the structure of a lease so that guests get a chance to practice skills and understand the expectations



Tasks for Pre-CTI Phase

This phase occurs before moving into housing and would usually be done by shelter or outreach program working with the person to apply to housing.

- Educate on housing options and expectations of each.
- Identify goals and preferences and develop a housing plan
- Assess housing and homelessness history
- Assist to connect to income
- Gather documents for the application process.
- Assist with housing search and negotiations
- Connect to resources that support community stabilization-treatment and supports
- Teach tenancy skills



Poll: Pre-CTI Housing Preparation

Developing Relationships



- The first step is to engage and establish a working relationship
- Key to this is to identify what each person/family wants and tune into what they are feeling
- Once even small goals are established, engagement and the work begins
- As people achieve small things, confidence and trust grows and they can take on bigger things
- Building motivation for a home and connecting it to each person's goals is the worker's focus during engagement

Engagement

Engagement begins the first time you meet a person / family

It begins wherever they enter the system

Engagement is a way of being with people, it sets the tone for all future interactions

We listen to each persons story, why they came to us, what their concerns are, what they want.

We evaluate each person / family, assessing what they tell us, where they live, how they interact with their surroundings

We seek information from HMIS and other providers that have had interactions with each person or family



Engagement Tips

Be
consistent
reliable,
supportive

Explain
and re-
explain
(and re-
explain)
your role

LISTEN for
what each
person is
interested in,
wants and
needs

Find
something to
work on
together

Present
housing as a
way to get
wants,
needs and
goals met

Help find
some
comfort
and/or
relief

Keep
showing
up

Talk Housing



What will it take?

What are the options?

What are the requirements?

What are the rights?

What are the responsibilities?

How does it connect to what each person wants?

What is each person's plan to end their homelessness.

Understand Housing and Homeless History and **Goals**

Housing History –

- Places lived, with whom (last 5 years)
- Experience as a leaseholder
- Roles and responsibilities
- What worked/what didn't
- Satisfaction with current housing
- Housing goal(s)



Homelessness History -

- Cause of initial episode
- Length of time homeless
- Places stayed
- Routine
- Supports

Discussions

- Introduce yourselves to one another
- Discussion questions:
 - What kind of housing histories are you seeing?
 - What kind of homelessness histories are you seeing?
 - What behaviors (not conditions) have caused people to lose housing in the past?
 - What skills do people bring that will help them to maintain housing?
 - What roles did people have when homeless?



Defining Housing Goals



- Goal Setting is the next stage of work.
- Unless people see something they want and can relate to at the end of the process they will not be motivated to pursue it.
- We want to educate people on what the options are and the expectations of each
- As people start to reach for housing – however that is (for instance I want a voucher)
- Ask them the “so that” question – you want a voucher so that what happens?

Structure the Conversation

- Define what the person cares most about in housing
- Prioritize within the list
- Ask for three most important preferences
- Think about what can be postponed for once people establish a rental history and address current barriers
- Evaluate housing options
- Work with the group to share experiences in different types of housing
- [Housing Preferences Worksheet](#)



Understand Housing Needs and Preferences

Location

Access to Transportation

Proximity to Significant Others

Proximity to Services

Unit Size and Housing Density

Pets

Ideal v. Acceptable, Negotiable/Non-Negotiable



Housing Planning Discussion Framework

Housing Features	STATUS	IDEAL	NEGOTIABLE/NON
	<i>Where I am now</i>	<i>What I would love – my dream</i>	<i>What I would accept</i>
Location/neighborhood			
Unit type – apartment, house, etc.			
Housing Program Type – PH, PSH, Board and Care, Shared etc.			
Access to transportation			
Proximity to significant others			
Proximity to services			
Services availability on site			
Elevator			
Cooking facilities			
Shared amenities – kitchen, bath, living space			
Pets			
Wheel chair accessibility			
Disposable income			
Meal service			
Other amenities – outdoor space, laundry on site, near shopping, common space etc.			
Reasonable adaptations/accommodations needed			

Motivation: Connecting Aspirations

- Think about which housing options are available and which priorities they meet E.g., This option meets three of your priorities and this one meets two but also has three of your lesser priorities
 - Connect available options to long-term aspirations
 - Talk about how they can build equity in their first option to build towards the second
 - Builds skill for housing stability
- This is the first step not the last. These aspirations will give people a reason to follow the lease and get a reference. Increasing the motivation to stabilize in housing



Staff Roles in the Pre-CTI Phase



- Each program will examine their resources and skills to see what can be accomplished.
- Tenancy courses are provided before housing so that people may prepare, however the materials will be repeated after housing.
- Begin by assembling documents everyone will need such as birth certificate, ID, benefit award letters etc.
- Connections to resources and supports is a critical task
- Increasing income is a priority.
 - Some programs recommend that people are connected to benefits and employment resources in the first month of contact.
- With your support, people can be housed!

Wrap up and questions

Thank You!



Next Sessions in the Series:

- Thursday, April 30th from 9:30 – 11:30
 - Session 2 - Assessment, Goal-Setting, Service Planning - Process and tools
- Wednesday, May 6th from 9:30 – 11:30
 - Session 3 - Teaching tenancy skills, connections to resources, finding housing and relationships with landlords

Resources for CTI

- Center for the Advancement of CTI: www.criticaltime.org
- CTI Global Network: <https://www.criticaltime.org/global-network/join/>
- [CTI Implementation Manual](#)
- Facebook : Critical Time Intervention (CTI) Global Network

