

# Applicable Best and Emerging Practices for Community Action Programs

**Best and Emerging Practices** are generally considered to be practices, approaches or processes to rendering housing and/or supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness that are proven to work in producing greater than average results. There are several ways that Best Practices may come to gain notoriety and their labels suggest the method; "time-tested" meaning the strategy has not necessarily been studied academically, rather a long history of success is the indicator; "emerging" meaning that all indications look promising, yet the results are not in; and the strongest form, "evidence-based" meaning backed up by peer-reviewed academic studies clearly indicating statistical significant results.

**a) Consumer Involvement/Peer Support and/or Mentorship**

Integrating people with experiences of homelessness, mental health issues, substance use, and trauma into mentorship, staff and leadership roles in homeless service agencies. ([SAMHSA Homelessness Resource Center \(HRC\)](#))

**b) Trauma Informed Care**

Research has shown that individuals who are homeless are likely to have experienced some form of previous trauma; homelessness itself can be viewed as a traumatic experience, and that being homeless increases the risk of further victimization and re-traumatization. "Trauma Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma...that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors...and, that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment." (Hopper, Bassuk & Olivet, 2010, pg. 82)

Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) is one of many trauma informed care models. ([SAMHSA HRC Resources](#))

**c) Positive Youth Development**

Developmental model that provides ongoing and intentional opportunities for young people to participate in meaningful activities. ([RHYIssues](#), 2012)

**d) Community Based Support/Case Management**

A process to plan, seek, advocate for, and monitor services on behalf of a client enabling social/case managers in an organization, or in different organizations, to coordinate their efforts to serve a given client through professional teamwork, thus expanding the range of needed services offered. ([NASW, Standards for Social Work Case Management](#), 2013).

**e) Strengths-Based Practice**

Strength-based service delivery is an approach to providing support and resources to individuals that focuses on identifying and building their assets and skills, to help them create needed change. Strengths approaches are scientifically grounded, ecological (taking into account the person in her/his environment), and attentive to diversity. ([NPC Research, Strength-based Service Delivery](#))

**f) Inclusion**

Inclusion is a state of being valued, respected and supported. Inclusion is the engagement of those who are being assisted through the agency and other diverse populations in the sharing of ideas at all levels. This may include, but is not limited to opportunities for feedback/input, volunteer or mentorship opportunities, targeted hiring practices, board membership and incorporation of inclusion into the agency mission, vision, values. Inclusion should be reflected in an organization's culture, practices and relationships. ([National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#))

**g) Motivational Interviewing**

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, person-centered approach to elicit and strengthen motivation to change. It offers providers a useful framework for being with and interacting with people who are experiencing homelessness or struggling with substance use, mental illness, and traumatic experiences. Motivational Interviewing is rooted in an understanding of how hard it is to change learned behaviors, many of which have been essential to survival on the streets. This practice is recommended for broad application across programs. ([SAMHSA HRC Resources](#))

**h) Service Integration (Wrap Around Services)**

Formally collaborating with medical care, oral care, behavioral care, employment support, and/or other resources in a household's life to provide wraparound client-centered services and meet the needs of each individual in the household wherever they may be in their life.

**i) Formal Connections with Mainstream Resources**

Targeted programs alone cannot meet the needs of all families living in poverty and/or homelessness. These families need access to mainstream programs that offer a wide range of supports to meet basic needs such as housing, employment, income, child care, food, health, and mental health. Making these connections can be difficult. Providers creating formal connections with other mainstream resources are paramount to the success of these families becoming self-sufficient. ([The National Center on Family Homelessness, Improving Access to Mainstream Programs](#))

**j) Supported Employment**

An approach to helping people with disabilities find and keep competitive employment within their communities. Supported employment occurs within the most integrated and competitive setting that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible. ([SAMHSA](#))