



## **First Draft 3-2021**

### **The Importance of Having Multiple Housing Options In Mental Health Recovery**

Housing is one of the most frequent areas that comes up for consumers in what they continually report at CCSM forums and local councils. Without multiple pathways to obtaining safe and affordable housing, a person is really living in survival mode and not able to focus on his/her own recovery. Many individuals need this foundation to move forward to be self-sufficient and independent.

There are many different pathways to achieving this. Housing and supports should be tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Some people may need a higher level of structure, some need less. Others may need appropriate resources to find safe and affordable housing.

We in the peer community don't want to be dependent for the rest of our lives. We want to learn and use the tools and skills provided to be the most independent we possibly can be. We believe in encouraging people to keep moving forward in their growth in recovery.

#### Recommendations:

1. We want to state that we fully support the Housing First Model for Maine. What does that mean? It reminds us that housing is the first thing we should focus on if someone is homeless or lacks housing and we do not have to wait for treatment to occur. By housing individuals, everything else can come together after someone has been housed. Housing has to be the first priority.
2. We want to see more options in the community. There are two ends of the spectrum. For example, living in your own apartment versus the other end which are in PNMI's (group homes). There are also choices in between for example such as transitional and supported housing programs that we should be investing in.
3. We should be continually assess these levels continually moving towards increased independence over time.



4. People should also be able to find housing in the community of their choosing that contains safe and affordable.
5. People should receive the supports necessary to help them be successful at all these levels. With appropriate supports our peers will have the best chances at life in recovery.
6. We recommend that OBH and CCSM work on developing a guide that every consumer would get that would describe every type of housing option available and what it would look like so that people were fully informed and could work towards the next level(s) of housing independence. This guide would also list all the skills needed to move towards the desired housing choice for the peer.
7. Once the guide is completed, we want to see this document as a requirement to be put in rule or contracts to be reviewed with all parties concerned on a yearly basis.

#### Expected Outcomes:

All mental health consumers/peers should be living in the level of housing that is appropriate to their needs and skills. Not only will people be moving forward in their recovery, but it would also save Maine taxpayers money by supporting individuals in accessing appropriate levels of housing. PNMI's are costly and not always the most appropriate place for many individuals. This should always remain the consumer's choice of where they want to live and thrive!

#### **We would like to hear from you:**

**To submit feedback, ideas or a personal story relating to this issue statement, please send to the CCSM either by mail at: 219 Capitol St. Suite 7 Augusta, ME 04330 or email at [vmccarty@maineccsm.org](mailto:vmccarty@maineccsm.org)**

**DEADLINE TO RESPOND: April 12, 2021**