



Virginia Department of  
Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

# What Is Supportive Housing and Will It Work for Me?

Administrative Community Operations  
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and  
Developmental Services  
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# Purpose of This Presentation

You will learn about...

- what supportive housing is
- the characteristics of supportive housing
- Three different supportive housing approaches
  - How they work
  - Key considerations
  - Pros and cons

# What Is Supportive Housing?

*Supportive housing combines affordable housing with services to help people who face complex challenges live with stability, autonomy and dignity.*



*Stability = I can stay as long as I want*

*Autonomy = I have control*

*Dignity = I get respect*

# Supportive Housing Characteristics

## Supportive Housing...

1. Is aimed at households who need services to maintain their housing
2. Is affordable
3. Provides renters with leases
4. Engages renters in voluntary services  
(participation in services is not required to live in housing)
5. Coordinates among key partners
6. Connects renters with the community



# Three Supportive Housing Approaches

- My Home with Individual Supports
- Individual Supportive Housing
- Clustered Supportive Housing

*These options separate housing from services.*



# My Home with Individual Supports

- What is it?
  - Individual (or their family, guardian or microboard) rents from a landlord on the private market
  - Individual chooses service provider



# My Home with Individual Supports

- Things to Consider: you must...
  - have a rent subsidy\* if you receive SSI/DI or minimum wage
  - budget and pay for more expenses than in “package” options (e.g., group homes)
  - find your own housemate, if you want/need one
  - find a place to live and a landlord who will rent to you (hard if you have poor/no credit)
  - follow the lease rules, including doing basic housework
  - call the landlord to repair things that break in your home
  - find service providers who will come to your house when you need them
  - arrange “back up” if service provider cannot come
  - arrange your own transportation (for shopping, work, play)

\* A rent subsidy is financial assistance to help you pay the monthly rent. Ask your support coordinator about rent subsidies that you can apply for.

# My Home with Individual Supports

## PROS

- *You can choose...*
  - the neighborhood where you want to live
  - the kind of house you want to live in
  - how to decorate
  - your housemates (if you want/need any)
  - your support providers. You can also change them and stay in the same home.
  - when to sleep, eat, lounge around, do chores, etc.
  - who can visit you and when
  - how to spend your money (instead of paying most income toward a residential fee)

## CONS

- Hard to find
  - affordable apartment for one person on limited budget (SSI/DI), even with rent subsidy
  - landlords who will approve applicants with limited income/poor or no credit
  - service providers if you need episodic assistance during the day
- It can get lonely without friends or family around all the time
- It can be hard to get into a daily “routine”



# Individual Supportive Housing

- What is it?
  - Housing provider selects apartment or house and location
  - Housing provider either
    - owns unit and leases to individual
    - leases unit and subleases to individual
  - Individual chooses service provider



# Individual Supportive Housing

- Things to Consider... you must:
  - have a rent subsidy if you receive SSI/DI or minimum wage
  - budget and pay for more expenses than in “package” options
  - follow rules of the lease or sublease, including doing basic housework
  - call landlord to repair things that break at home
  - find service providers who will come to your house when you need them
  - arrange “back up” if service provider cannot come
  - arrange your own transportation (for shopping, work, play)
  - ask about separate leases or subleases if you have housemate, so you are not held “jointly and severally liable” for unpaid rent/lease violations.

# Individual Supportive Housing

## PROS

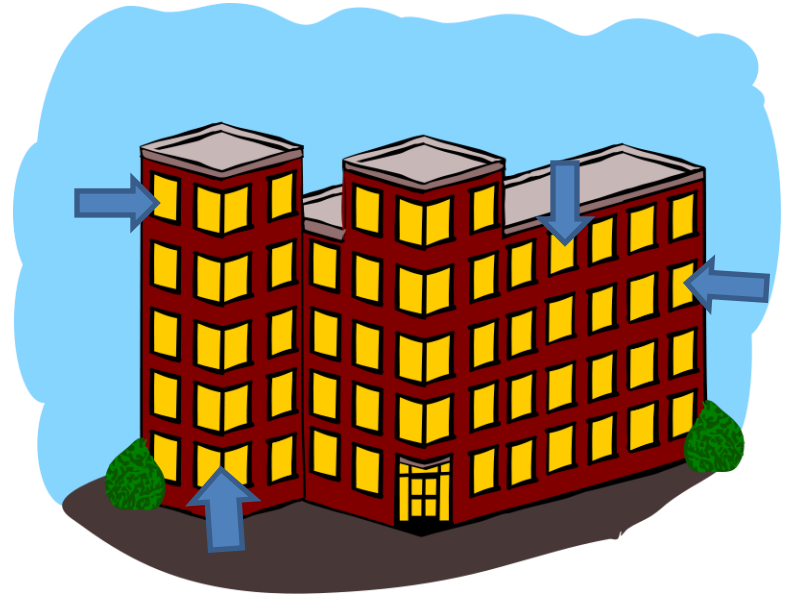
- *You can choose...*
  - how to decorate
  - your support providers. You can also change them and stay in the same home.
  - when to sleep, eat, lounge around, do chores, etc.
  - who can visit you and when
  - how to spend your money (instead of paying most income toward a residential fee)
- Housing provider may
  - have friendlier application process than private rental market
  - be more open to tenant accommodations/modifications

## CONS

- Choice of neighborhoods/properties limited to where housing providers own/lease units
- Input on choice of housemates may depend on situation
- Hard to find service providers if you need episodic assistance throughout the day
- It can get lonely without friends or family around all the time
- It can be hard to get into a daily “routine”

# Clustered Supportive Housing

- What is it?
  - Service provider identifies several units in same property & partners with housing provider to use as supportive housing.
  - Housing provider either
    - leases or subleases units to individuals
    - leases units to service provider, which subleases to individuals
      - Service provider has separate housing and supportive services divisions
      - Housing division is responsible for sublease
  - Housing provider often gets project based rent subsidies in clustered units
  - Service provider offers and coordinates supports (individuals are not required to remain with this service provider)
  - If tenant leaves, housing provider may ask service provider for referral to fill unit.



# Clustered Supportive Housing

- Things to Consider... you must
  - have a rent subsidy if you receive SSI/DI or minimum wage
  - budget and pay for more expenses than in traditional options
  - follow the rules of the lease or sublease, including doing basic housework
  - call landlord to make repairs
  - arrange your own transportation for many things (shopping, work, play)
  - initially choose the service provider for the supportive housing units at the property to be eligible for the housing
  - work with support staff's schedule (they assist multiple people at the property)
  - be prepared for the level of service to change if you switch service providers
  - ask about separate leases or subleases if you have housemate, so you are not “jointly and severally liable” for unpaid rent/lease violations

# Clustered Supportive Housing

## PROS

- *You can choose...*
  - how to decorate
  - when to sleep, eat, lounge around, do chores, etc.
  - who can visit you and when
  - how to spend your money (instead of spending most income on a residential fee)
- Housing provider may
  - have friendlier application process than private rental market
  - be more open to tenant accommodations/modifications
- Service provider may
  - offer episodic assistance more easily when serving multiple people at one property
  - have better “back-up” available if supporting multiple people at one property
  - offer more opportunities for socialization
  - be able to help individuals reduce household expenses through bulk purchases

## CONS

- Choice of neighborhoods and properties limited to where housing providers own/lease units
- Input on choice of housemates may depend on housing or service provider
- Initial eligibility for housing assistance driven by selection of specific service provider
- Daily routine may be shaped by availability of service provider (who is visiting multiple units)
- It can get lonely without friends or family around all the time
- If you change service providers, you may lose some “benefits” of this approach

# Questions?

Contact your Regional Housing Specialist!

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Please click [here](#) to view the DBHDS Health Planning Region Map