



Harm Reduction in Housing: Outcome Worksheet Team Activity

Intended Audience: For Interim and Permanent Housing Programs

Focus: Trauma-Informed, Housing-First, Harm Reduction, Equity-Driven

Purpose

To define, prioritize, and reflect on outcomes that support healing, safety, autonomy, and housing stability — while meeting essential system and funder expectations. This worksheet supports both program design and continuous learning.

Community Agreements for Facilitation:

1. **Modify or Stop the Plan if Necessary**
Be flexible. Listen to what people need and adapt.
2. **Practice Transparency**
Clearly explain the session's goals, what will happen, and what comes next.
3. **Offer Choice**
Let participants choose how to engage, what to prioritize, and what to release.
4. **Hold Space**
Emotions and disagreement may happen. If emotions or disagreement emerge, make space, listen to understand and remain focused on a collective solution.

Part 1: Draft Outcomes

Categories:

- **Mindsets** — How we think, what we believe, and what we value
- **Actions** — What we do, how we work together
- **Conditions** — System-level infrastructure and supports
- **System Metrics + Equity Indicators** — Performance indicators/outcomes aligned with funding and equity

EXAMPLE

INTERIM HOUSING PROGRAMS

(Focus: stabilization, safety, choice, smooth transitions)

Mindsets

- We meet people where they are, without leaving them there.
- We believe healing and change is non-linear and individualized.
- Survival strategies are valid responses to past and ongoing harm.
- The mistrust of programs and institutions is understandable and respected.
- Peer wisdom and lived experience guide our work.

Actions

- Staff and participants co-create guidelines (rules), schedules, and programming.
- Staff use harm reduction and trauma-informed practices.
- Access to services (medical, behavioral, housing) is optional and barrier-free (or reduced).
- Feedback processes are visible, simple, and respected.
- De-escalation, not punishment, is the “go to” response.

Conditions

- Clear, consistent, co-created rules.
- Flexible length of stay based on individual goals.
- Private, safe space for each participant.
- Community partners provide nonjudgmental wraparound support.
- Environments are inclusive, culturally affirming, and physically safe.

System Metrics + Equity Indicators

- Avg. Length of Stay in Shelter (by race, gender, age, etc.)
- % Positive Exits to Permanent Housing (by referral source, subpopulation)
- % of Returns to Shelter (by housing type, services offered)
- **Equity:** Who exits faster or slower — and why?
- **Quality:** % of participants who report feeling respected, safe, and heard

EXAMPLE

PERMANENT HOUSING PROGRAMS

(Focus: autonomy, healing, long-term connection)

Mindsets

- Housing is a right, not a reward.
- We respect participants' autonomy in all aspects of life.
- People define their own wellness, purpose, and identity.
- Cultural identity, resistance, and survival are strengths.
- We believe in growth without conditions.

Actions

- Residents shape policies, community norms, and hiring processes.
- Staff practice nonjudgmental support aligned with harm reduction.
- Eviction prevention centers on support, not surveillance.
- Residents lead or co-lead peer programs, advisory councils.
- Community integration is supported but not forced.

Conditions

- Rent tied to income, with clear protections.
- Optional, on-site, trauma-informed and harm reduction services.
- Appeals and grievance processes are transparent and accessible.
- Buildings are welcoming, not institutional.
- Policies explicitly address racism, equity and belonging.

System Metrics + Equity Indicators

- % of participants maintaining housing at 6/12/24 months
- % of returns to homelessness (by demographics and services received)
- % of residents with increased self-determination or goal achievement
- **Equity:** Are outcomes consistent across subpopulations?
- **Quality:** % of participants who feel in control of their housing journey

Part 2: Co-Creation Conversation

Invite participants (participants and staff) to reflect:

- What's missing from these indicators/outcomes?
- What language better reflects our values or community?
- What outcomes do not work for us anymore?
- Who else needs to be part of this conversation?

Part 3: Prioritization Activity

- Choose your top 2–3 outcomes per category.
- Discuss in pairs or small groups.
- Use stickers, dots, or a collaborative board or flip chart paper to visualize top priorities.

Part 4: Reflection & Iteration

Use these prompts to review outcomes over time:

- **Individual Change:** How are your beliefs or practices shifting?
- **Program Change:** What change are you noticing in this space? In staff? In participants?
- **System Change:** What is our data telling us? What equity gaps persist? How will we respond?

Optional Program Metrics to Consider:

- % of participants involved in decision-making
- % of participants reporting dignity and respect from staff
- % of participants accessing harm reduction supports without barriers

Next Steps

Collect input → Revise outcomes → Finalize priorities → Revisit quarterly or bi-annually

Source: Adapted from Prevention of Affordable Housing's (POAH) Trauma-Informed Housing Toolkit (<https://resilientcommunities.poah.org/>)