Hard Conversations:
Housing First Works... Just Look at Me!

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Learning Objectives

- Hear a first-hand experience of homelessness, supportive housing, and rediscovery
- Learn about challenges and opportunities, including the importance of community involvement
- Gain a better understanding of how to engage and serve clients
Homeless in Chicago:
How I Became Homeless

- Denial about alcohol and substance use
- Unable to keep a job
- Anxiety attacks
- Major depression
Supportive Housing: “My Second Chance”

- Clara’s House – Shelter for women and children
- Mandel Legal Aid
- Lakefront Supportive Housing
- Englewood Mental Health Center
Supportive Services: My Journey to Self-

- Admitted I needed help
- Began to establish a relationship with my case manager
- Made and kept appointments with recovery support, and mental health providers
- Open to advice and/or suggestions
Staying Busy:
Time to Make Donuts

- Volunteered for voters registration, social service committee
- Community involvement- CAPS
- Leadership training
- Community organizing
Going Back to Work: I am Ready

- Considerations that were important to me
- Job should meet me where I am
- Respond to interest and needs
- Using in-house job
- Support, Support, Support
Self Marketing: I Am Special

- What you have to offer: what makes you unique
- What are you looking for: type of company you want to work for
- Speak confidently about your skills
Barriers: My Inner Voice

- Addiction: remember I am not in recovery meeting
- Appearance: body language
- Attitude: disability causes attitude problem
- Fear: emotional disability includes fear of failure, rejection, and/or responsibility
Think Positive:
You Are Already a Winner

- Don’t become a victim: “You are not powerless”
- Don’t become a rebel: Angry at the world
- Don’t look for prejudice in every decision
20 + Years Later

- Homeowner
- Married
- Self employed
- National speaker and supportive housing advocate
- Renewed sense of self-esteem
“If there is no struggle there is no progress.”

–Frederick Douglass
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