



Community
Care Alliance



empowering people
to build better lives

Building a Safe Haven: Supporting Individuals Who Are Unhoused



**From 'No Budget' to Serving
1,000+ Annually**

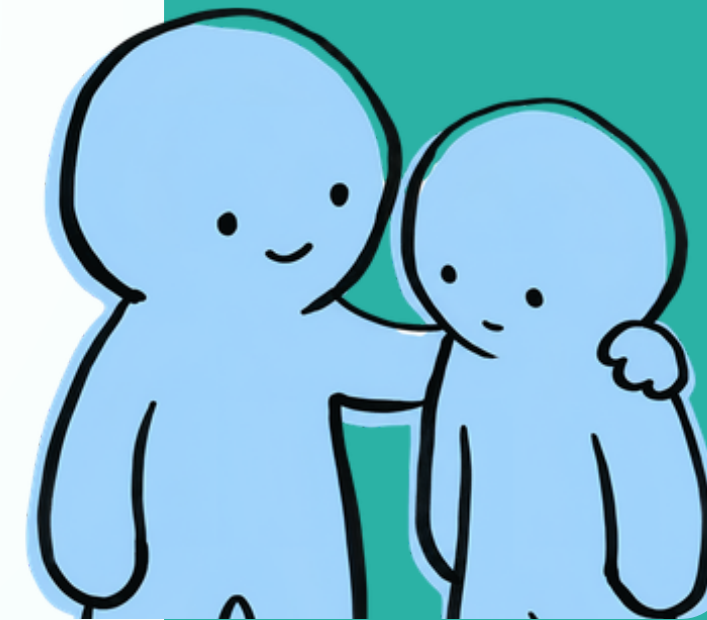
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Community Care Alliance, Rhode Island**



What is Safe Haven?

Safe Haven is:

- a welcome drop-in center for unhoused neighbors that provides a place for individuals to rest, have a meal, and access harm reduction supplies and basic necessities
- a place of understanding, a judgment-free area
- a connection to a wide variety of resources, treatment and services

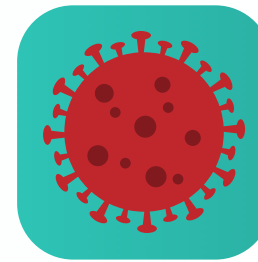


Understanding the Safe Haven Population:

What makes unhoused individuals unique?



Higher risk of chronic health conditions (ex: diabetes, hypertension, & heart disease)



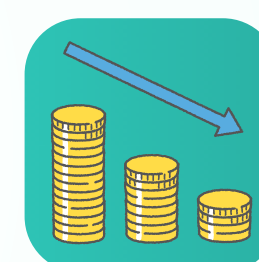
Increased rates of infectious disease



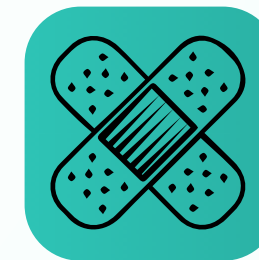
Limited access to preventative healthcare, medications and routine medical treatment



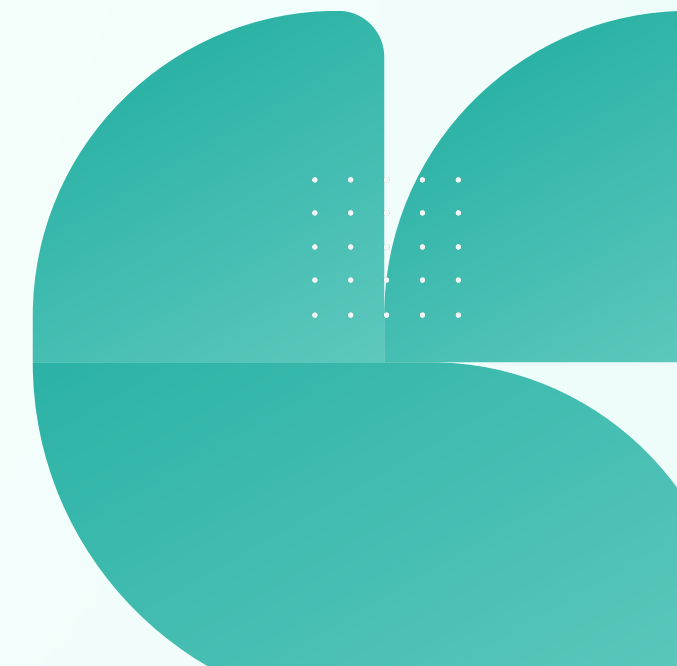
Higher prevalence of mental health disorders and substance use disorders



Difficulty obtaining & maintaining employment, resulting in further financial instability



Greater exposure to violence, assault and theft



Why might these individuals struggle to trust those offering them care?



Past Trauma

A history of abuse & repeated trauma can make it difficult for an individual to trust



Negative Experiences

Negative experiences working with similar agencies or providers may cause the individual to perceive *all* agencies/organizations of this type to be the same



Stigma & Discrimination

Experiencing stereotypes, rejection or disrespect can cause individuals to be weary of accepting help



Frequent Moving / Transitions

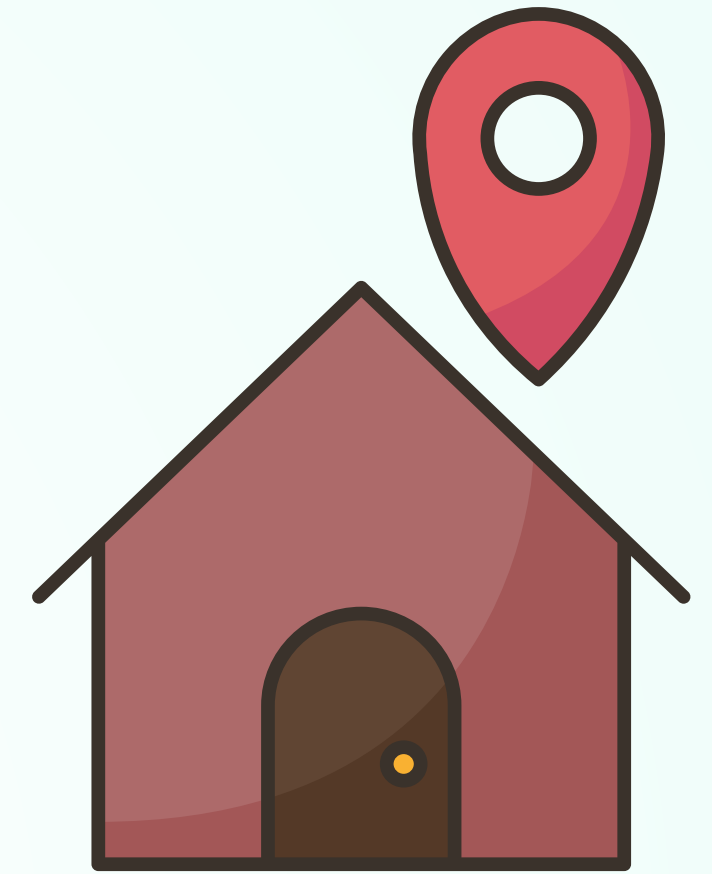
For individuals who move between shelters or temporary housing frequently, it can be difficult to build relationships with support staff



Mental Health & Substance Use Challenges

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders can often cause individuals to struggle with trusting those around them, even those attempting to provide support

What are the key components of CCA's Safe Haven Model?



1 Low Barrier Entry: Individuals are not required to be sober, participate in treatment or meet extensive eligibility requirements before entering

2 Trauma-Informed Care: Staff understand the impact of trauma on behavior and decision-making & provide services that prioritize both physical and emotional safety

3 Safety First: places focus on reducing the negative consequences associated with substance use or other risk behaviors vs. requiring immediate abstinence

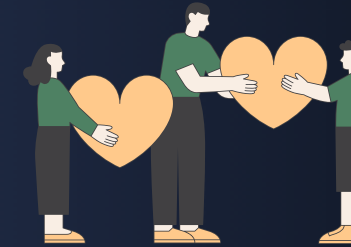
4 Person-centered Approach: services are tailored to each individual's strengths, needs, goals, and preferences

Starting from 0 –and with no budget:

How did we get to this point?



Partnering with existing
organizations



Seeking sustainable
funding



Using Existing /
Donated Resources



Establish Consistent
Outreach

What Drove Growth?

Safe Haven is now serving 1,000+ individuals annually

Lack of housing:

- affordable
 - permanent supportive housing
 - specialty: persons with severe and persistent mental illness, addiction, legal history
- Encampment Ban
 - Aggressive “Move on” strategies
 - Hostile Architecture
 - Hostile Community Leadership





Grants

Includes Local, State, Federal Grants.



Philanthropy & Donors

Individual, Major, Corporate, Foundation & Faith-Based Donors or Support.



Partnerships

Multiple organizations come together to share the financial and resource contributions.



Braided Funding Approach

Uses each funding source for specific program components according to its requirements.

Funding Strategies:



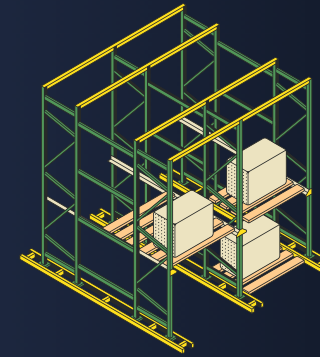
Facilities & Space Considerations:

What considerations need to be made when looking for the location of your Safe Haven?



Location &
Accessibility

- Healthcare (onsite & within walking distance)
- Public transportation/bus routes, etc.
- Meal sites/clothing/basic needs



Safety & Design

- Bathrooms
- Neighbors
- Cameras
- Locked storage



Creating Welcome
Environments

Space should be designed for staff to monitor the facility while also allowing for a continued welcoming atmosphere



Ensure Client Privacy
and Dignity

- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Unconditional positive regard.

How do you staff a Safe Haven?

What roles are most important?
Who should fill these roles?



Program Manager

- oversees the program's daily operations
- supervises additional staff
- manages partnerships, compliance & reporting



Case Managers

- conduct assessments
- develop service plans
- connect clients with services & resources
 - ex: housing, food, benefits
- coordinate care among other providers



Outreach

- go into community & build relationships with those who may be reluctant to engage in services
- conduct street outreach



Clinicians

- provide counseling & crisis intervention
- assess behavioral health needs
- coordinate mental health treatment referrals



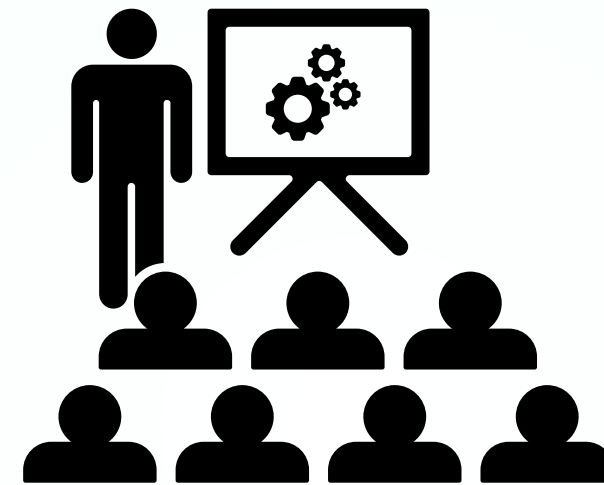
Peer-Support Specialists

- individuals with lived experience of homelessness, mental illness or substance use recovery
- work to build trust & engagement
- offer mentorship & support

What trainings are essential for staff within the Safe Haven?

Trauma-Informed Care:

all staff need to understand the impact of trauma on behavior & how to avoid retraumatization



De-escalation & Crisis Intervention:

All client-facing staff should receive training on how to recognize signs of escalating behaviors, as well as verbal de-escalation techniques and non-violent crisis response

Safety First Principles:

Staff working with substance use clients should receive training on how to safely engage with and reduce the associated risks for these individuals

Anti-Oppression

all staff should receive training on cultural competency and how to best work with individuals from all backgrounds, while working to reduce bias & stigma

Maintaining Safety within the Safe Haven:

What aspects do you need to focus on?

- **Facility Safety:**

- ensuring that you maintain a safe, hazard-free, and welcoming environment

- **Staff Safety:**

- ensure that staff have access to any training that is necessary for them to complete their jobs safely
- a proper incident response procedure should be implemented to report, manage, and document any crises that occur within the facility
 - provide post-incident debriefings and supervision and support for staff surrounding these incidents to reduce the occurrence of staff burnout

- **Client Safety:**

- create safety plans for clients experiencing mental health or substance use challenges
 - communicate these plans with all client-facing staff
- Implement harm-reduction practices to help decrease negative risks associated with substance use and other dangerous behaviors

- **Create & Adhere to a set of Facility Policies & Procedures**



Safety in Practice:

What are the core safety practices?



Meet people where they are

It is important to accept individuals where they are, regardless of their readiness to change. Instead, focus on immediate needs



Safer Use Education

Provide safe-use education with factual information on reducing risks, instead of just automatically trying to aim for abstinence right away.



Build trust over time, before demanding change

Build meaningful, consistent & respectful relationships with clients before asking anything of them. Allow clients to set their own goals, maintaining a sense of autonomy.



Reduce Barriers

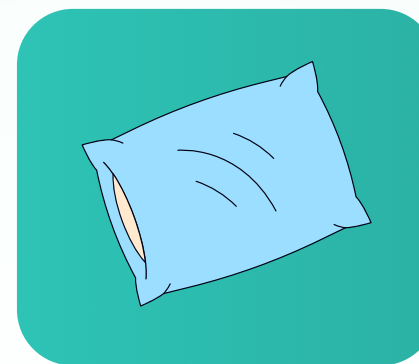
Simplify enrollment requirements wherever possible, minimizing paperwork if possible. Work to allow individuals access to services without extensive documentation.

Meeting Basic Needs:



Food & Nutrition

- Provide regular access to nutritious meals & snacks
- connect individuals with community food resources & benefits programs
- ensure access to drinking water at all times



Shelter & Physical Comfort

- a calm, welcoming environment where clients can come to decompress
- connect individuals with housing assistance programs
- access to pillows, blankets, seasonal clothing & outdoor living supplies



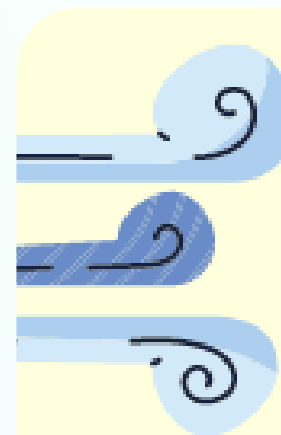
Hygiene & Personal Care

- shower & bathing supplies
- personal hygiene supplies
 - soap
 - shampoo
 - toothbrush/toothpaste
 - feminine hygiene products
 - deoderent



Health & Wellness

- basic first aid supplies
- health screenings or referrals to medical providers
- assistance obtaining medications
- connection to behavioral health and substance use services
- access to harm-reduction resources and supplies



Air



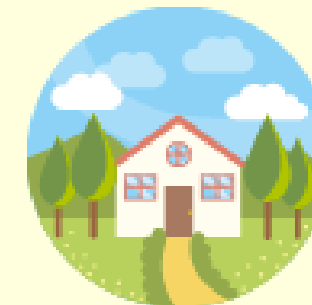
Water



Sleep



Food



Shelter

Pathways to Housing:

Within Safe Haven, it is important to move forward with the “housing is healthcare” approach, viewing housing as a basic need vs. something that needs to be earned. Staff must instead help individuals access housing as soon as possible, while offering ongoing continued supports to help them maintain their housing.



Housing Pathway Process



Engagement & Relationship Building

- conduct outreach to individuals who may be reluctant to services
- learn about the individuals housing history, goals, strengths & barriers
- establish trust through consistent and respectful interactions



Assessment & Housing Planning

- complete housing assessment to identify needs
- develop an individualized housing plan



Documentation Assistance

- Help individuals obtain important documents & identification needed for housing applications



Benefits & Income Supports

- assist with applications for various benefits and insurances



Housing Navigation

- connect individuals with housing options which are realistic given their circumstances
- assist with applications when needed
- provide move-in support if possible
- provide housing stabilization services to help individual maintain this new housing



Behavioral Health Connections

Who are you connecting clients with?



**Mental Health
Services & Providers**



**Substance Use
Treatment**



24/7 Crisis Support



Peer Support

Thank You.

Any Questions?



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