

The Permanent Supportive Housing Learning Exchange:

Supporting Staff Through Engagement

CSH Summit 2025

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THOMAS SAFRAN
& ASSOCIATES

OBJECTIVES

To:

1. **Learn** about a Los Angeles-based property management company's experience hosting Learning Exchanges for their Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) management staff.
2. **Explore** how Learning Exchanges might be used by other property management companies to support staff and protect against burnout.



LEARNING EXCHANGE (LE) DEFINED

- An in-person mutual exchange of information among two or more professionals interested in learning from each other's successes and failures. LE's are flexible and have evolving learning aims that can change over time.
- NOT** a didactic practice where "experts" talk at "learners"; LE's are collaborative, adaptive, participatory, and reflective.



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& ASSOCIATES

A G E N D A

Where we
Work:
Los Angeles

1

Our Company:
Thomas Safran &
Associates (TSA)

2

Common PSH
Property
Management
Staff Challenges

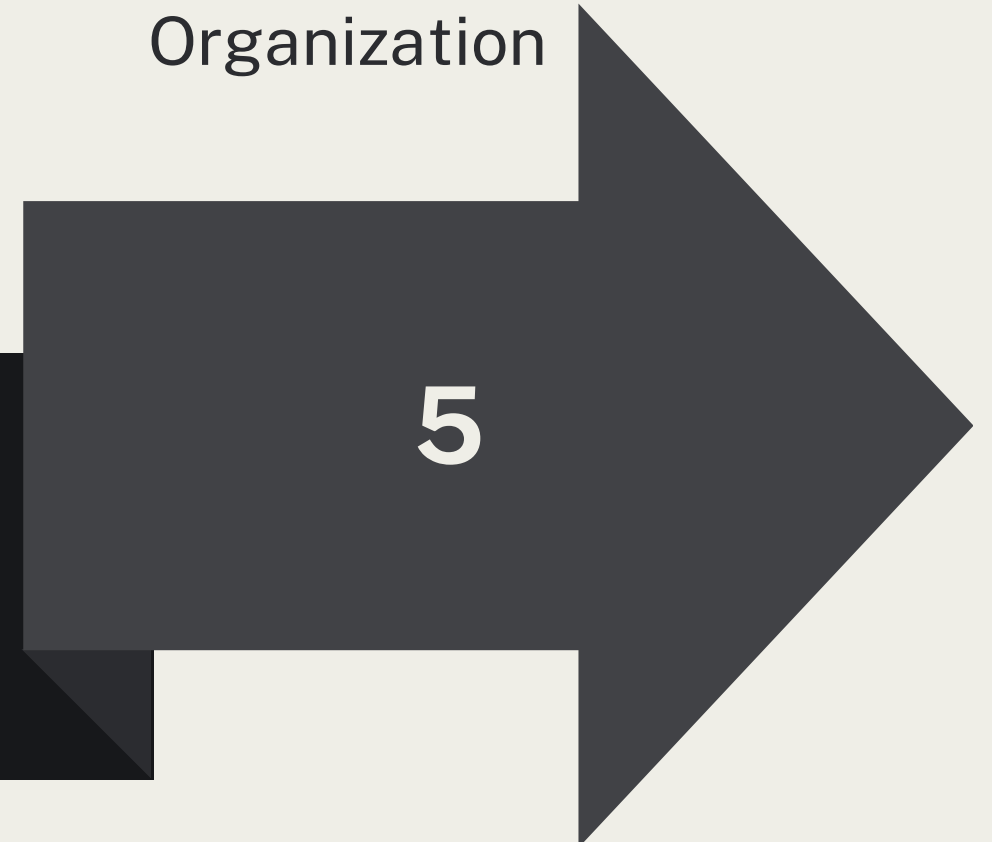
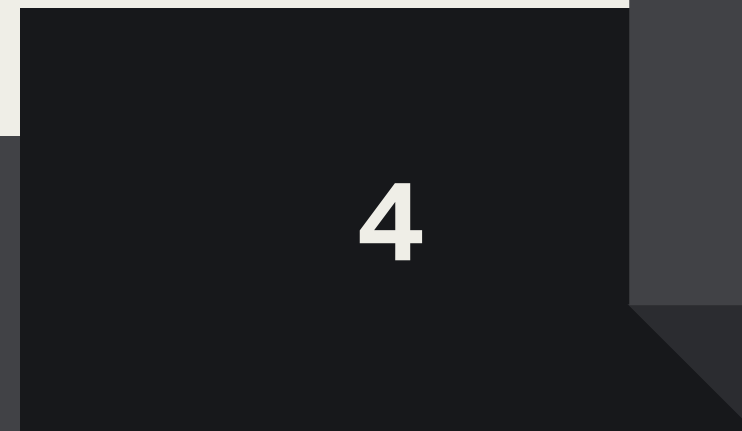
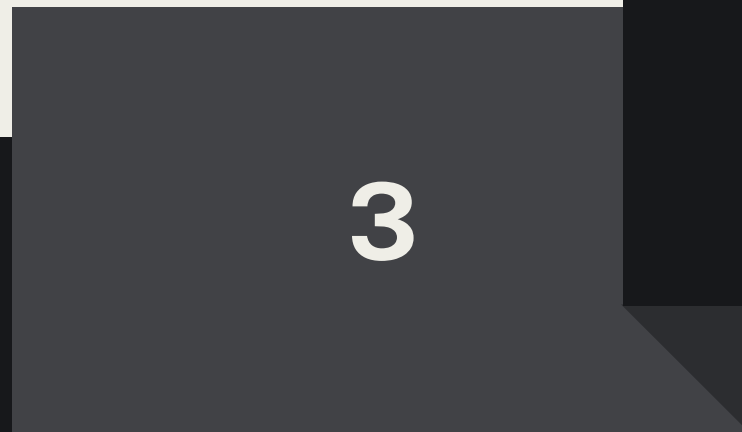
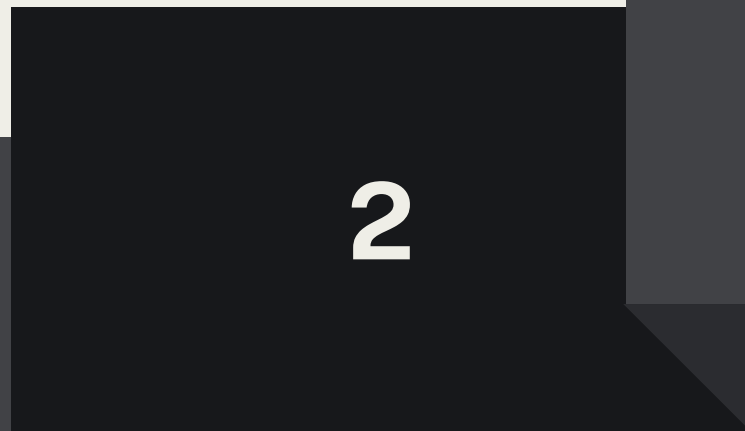
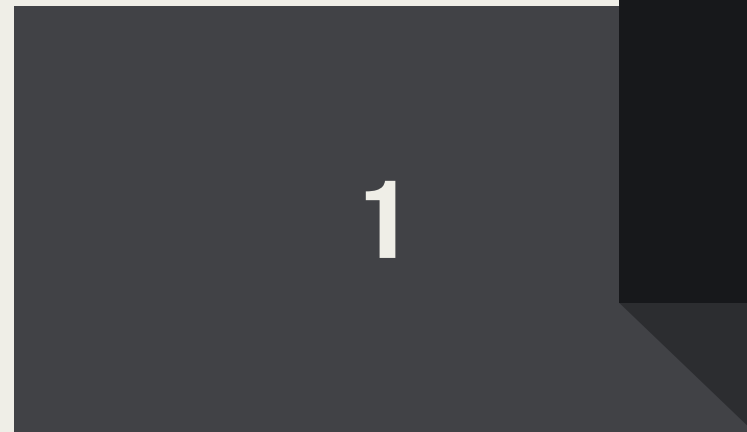
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Implementation
& Reception of
the LE

4

Adapting an
LE in your own
Organization

5



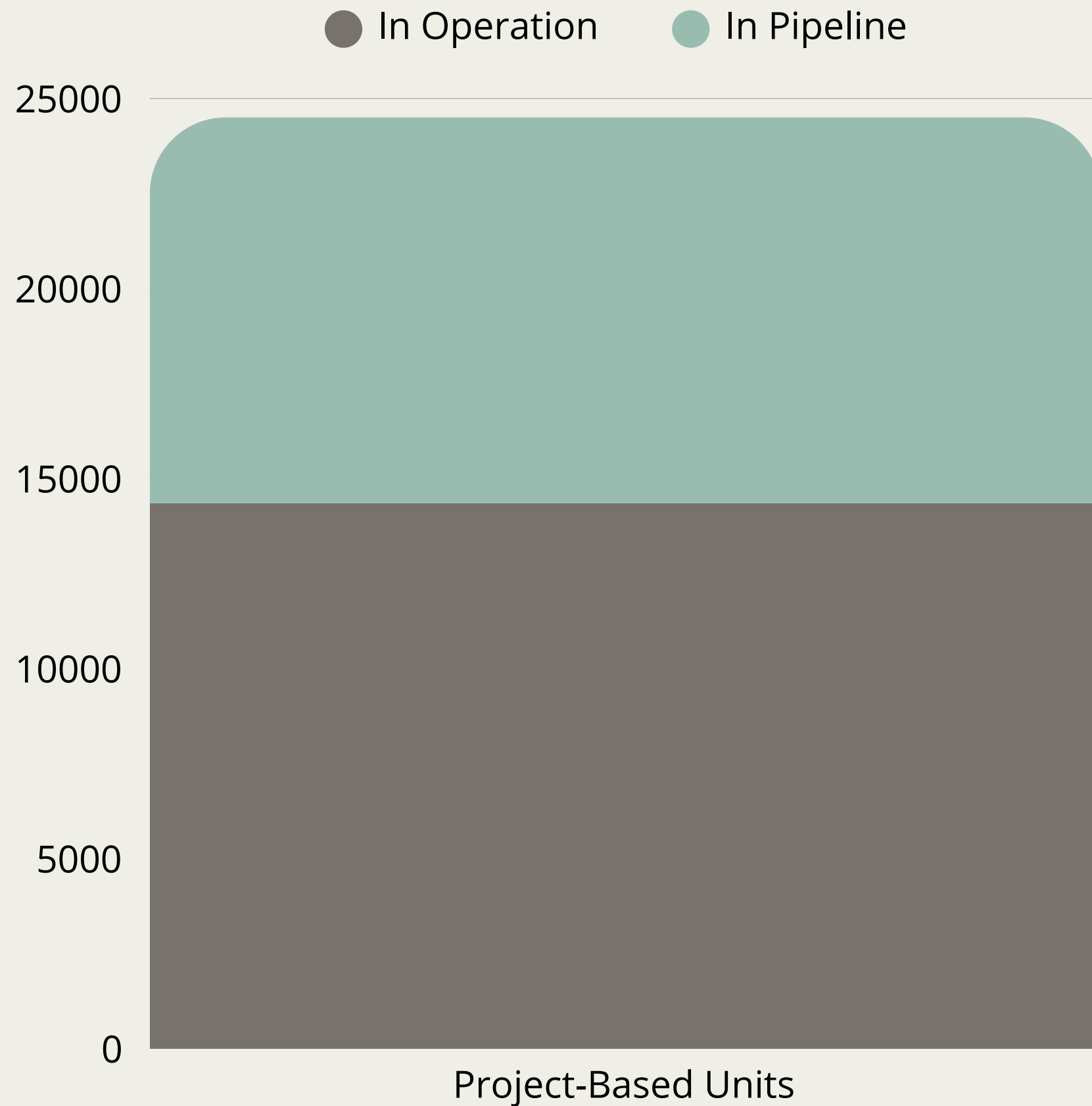
LOS ANGELES OVERVIEW

L.A. County is a big place.

- Home to 9.7 million people
 - 88 cities and 140 unincorporated communities
- 75,000 are experiencing homelessness on any given night (Point in Time, 2024)
- Governing body only made up of 5 elected officials (County Supervisors), who have broad authority over the Departments of:
 - Mental Health
 - Public Health
 - Health Services
 - Social Services
 - Aging & Disabilities, among others



L.A. County is a big place.



Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) manages nearly all homeless services and housing navigation across the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC).

Neither property management nor case management typically have any relationships with residents prior to move in; reverse matching is discouraged.

As of June 2024, 24,499 project-based units were online or in development.

In total, this represents 569 project-based housing sites across the County.

PROPERTY MANAGERS HAVE TO COME IN CONTACT WITH MANY DIFFERENT AGENCIES

Department of Health Services

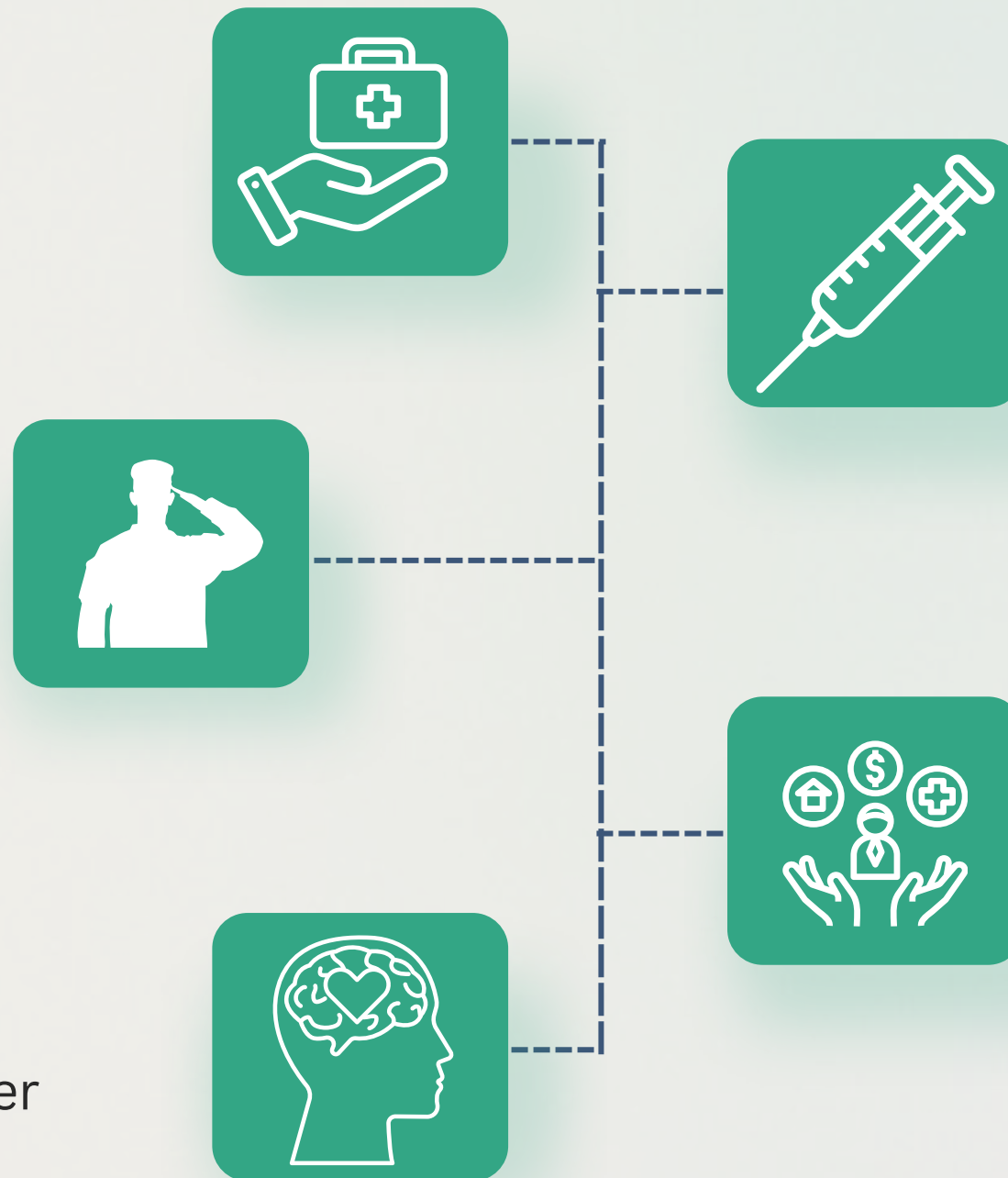
Predominantly funds all contract agencies that provide Intensive Case Management to PSH properties

Department of Veterans Affairs and other Veteran agencies (VPAN, SSVF, the Salvation Army)

For Veteran specific benefits, including rental assistance, healthcare, transport, and case management

Department of Mental Health

Oversees No Place Like Home funding at some properties, acting as an active partner and signing off on SMI verifications; also provides mental health services via the HSSP program and runs the Regional Centers



Department of Public Health

Runs the SAPC program for onsite substance abuse counseling; provides guidance on health in congregate living facilities

Department of Public Social Services

Runs In-Home Supportive Services, some cash assistance programs, and the CBEST program - which helps individuals navigate all benefits.

+ Aging & Disabilities, DCFS, Public Housing Authority, LAHSA, the Housing Department, Office of the Public Guardian

TSA OVERVIEW

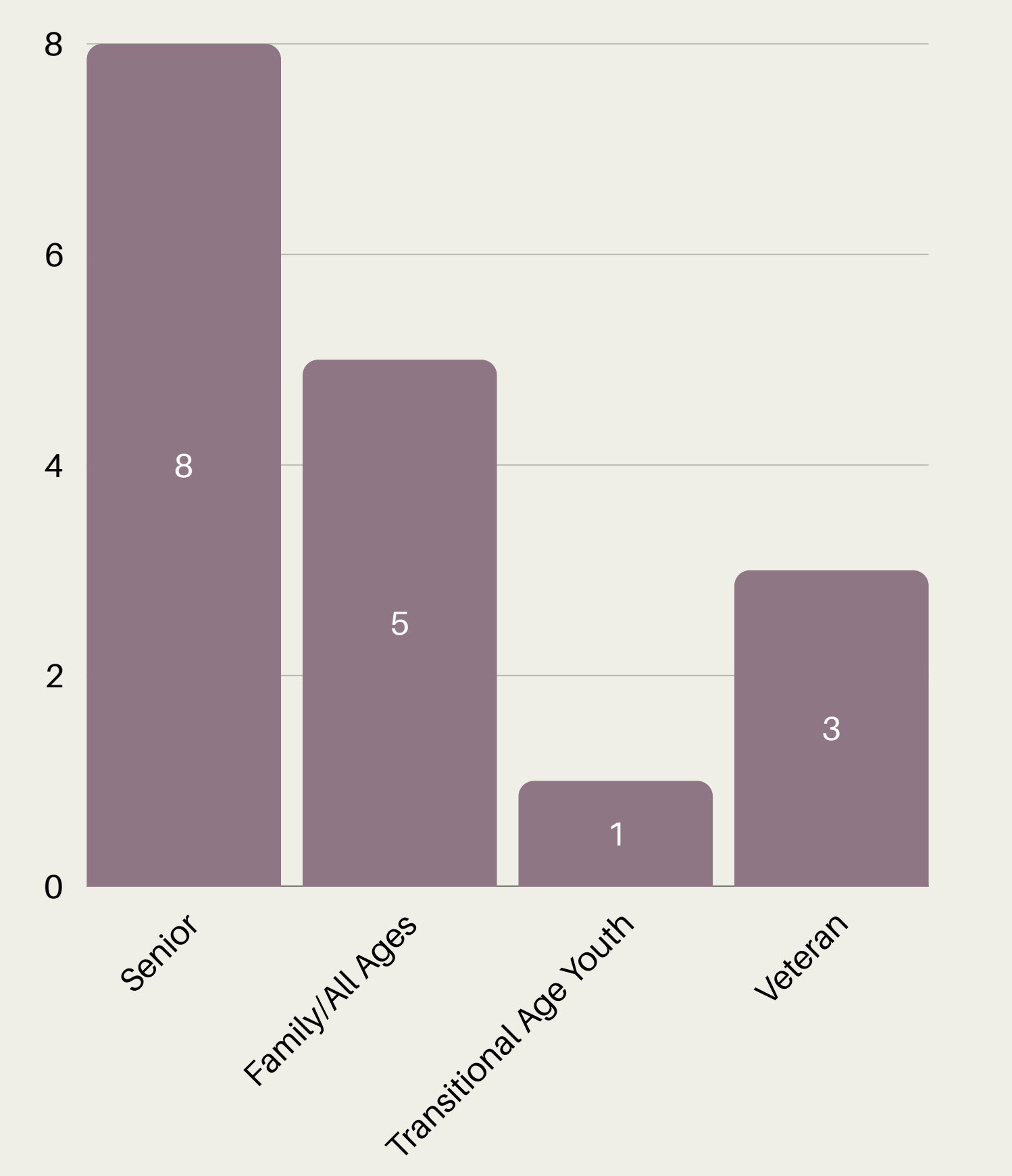
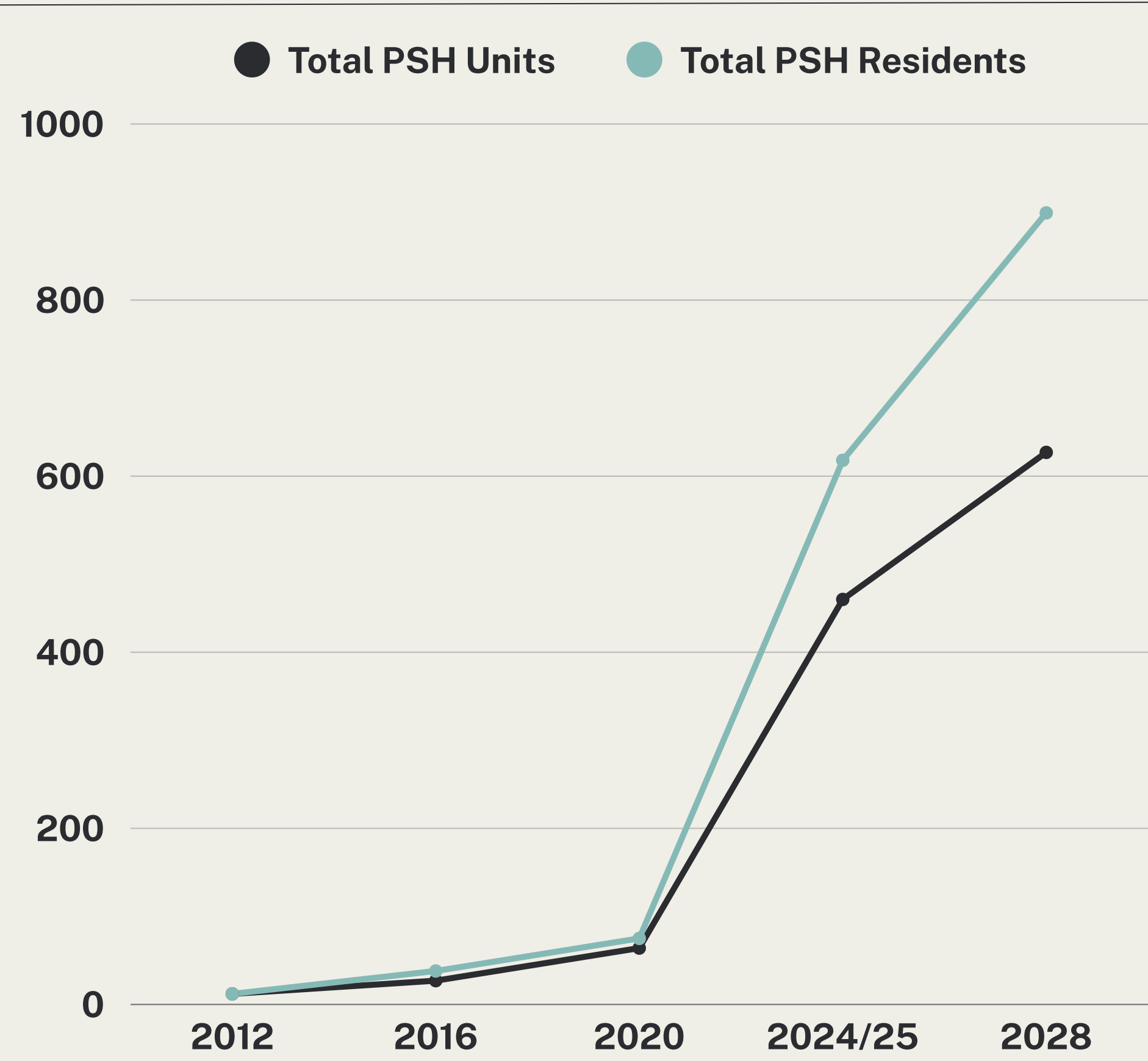


**TO ENHANCE THE
WORLD IN WHICH WE
LIVE AND ENRICH
THE LIVES OF THE
PEOPLE WHO RESIDE
IN OUR BUILDINGS.**

Thomas Safran & Associates

- Founded in 1974
- Portfolio of approx. 80 affordable housing properties (predominantly L.A. area)
- Thirteen (13) properties have a PSH component

PSH @ TSA



**Tom Safran,
Chairman**

Senior Leadership

**Senior Director of
Operations**

**Regional Property
Supervisor**

**Compliance &
Lease-Up**

**Property
Manager**

**Assistant Property
Manager**

**Maintenance
Technician**

**TSA MANAGEMENT DIVISION:
THE PSH SERVICES TEAM**



**Hanna Mark
Director of
PSH Services**



**Yadi Gallegos
Zamora
PSH Services
Coordinator**

Director of RCI

**Resident
Services Lead**

Resident & Community Impact (RCI) Team

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE PSH SERVICES TEAM



Equip PSH Staff

with the tools, knowledge and support needed to work with formerly homeless residents and service providers



Support the Service Partnership

Establish, maintain, and supervise the relationship between property and case management



Advocate

For TSA's PSH needs with outside agencies



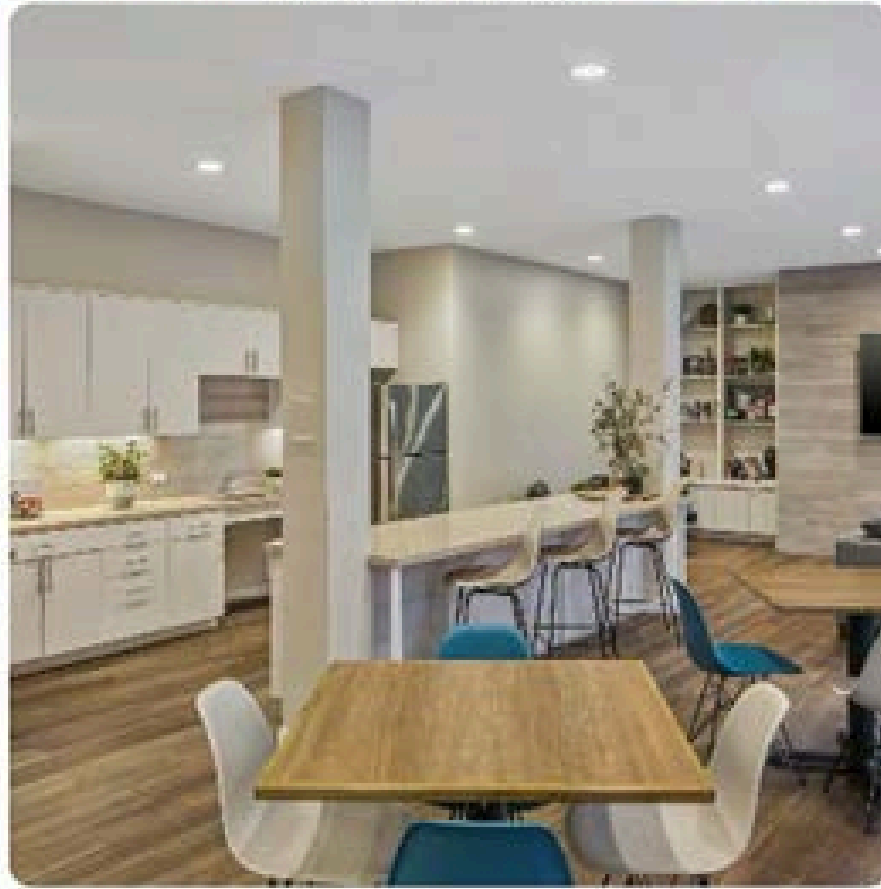
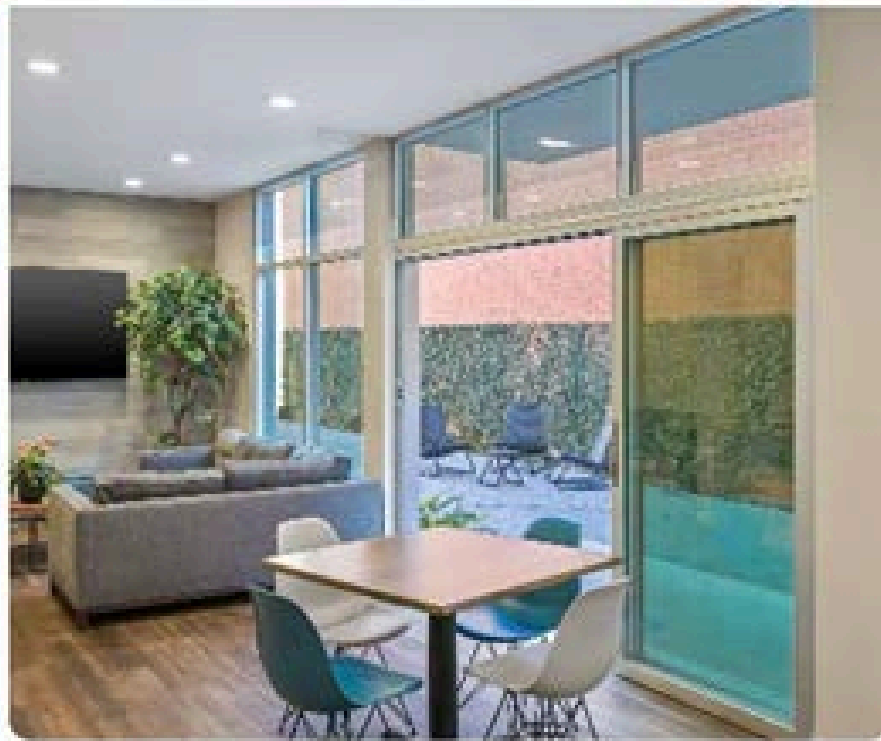
Provide Direct Services

Ensure that non-PSH residents in PSH buildings also have access to basic linkages and referrals as needed



Let's Hear from You!

THE CHALLENGES
OF PSH PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT



“McCadden Youth”

Michaeljohn Horne &
Thomas E. Jones Youth Housing

-
- 26 Unit Transitional-Age Youth (TAY) property
 - Live-in manager
 - LA LGBT+ Center (Hollywood)
 - Opened March 2021
 - TSA’s first exclusively PSH property

PSH STAFF CHALLENGES

What are the biggest challenges property management staff face?

Resident Crises
& Conflicts

Navigating the
Service Provider
Relationship

Balancing
Administrative
Tasks &
Resident Needs

Longstanding
Vacancies

Living
On-Site

Isolation &
Risk of
Burnout



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& ASSOCIATES

THE PSH LEARNING EXCHANGE (LE)

PSH LE

Began Spring 2023 (office staff) and
Fall 2024 (maintenance techs)

Bimonthly, two-hour commitment

In-person, off-site

Mandatory

Typically 10-12 people/LE



Goals:

Ensure staff have the tools,
knowledge, and support needed to
work effectively at PSH sites

Decrease sense of isolation

Reduce risk for burnout

Typical “Agenda”

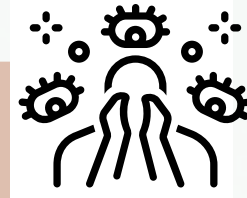


Sample LE Topics

**Conflicting Resident
Interests**



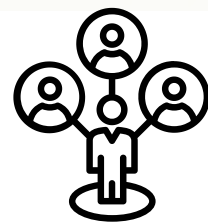
**Navigating Paranoia
& Delusions**



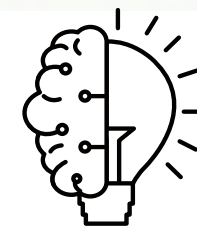
**Substance & Alcohol
Abuse**



**Working with
Service Providers**



**Building Emotional
Intelligence**



**Mindfulness/
Self Care**

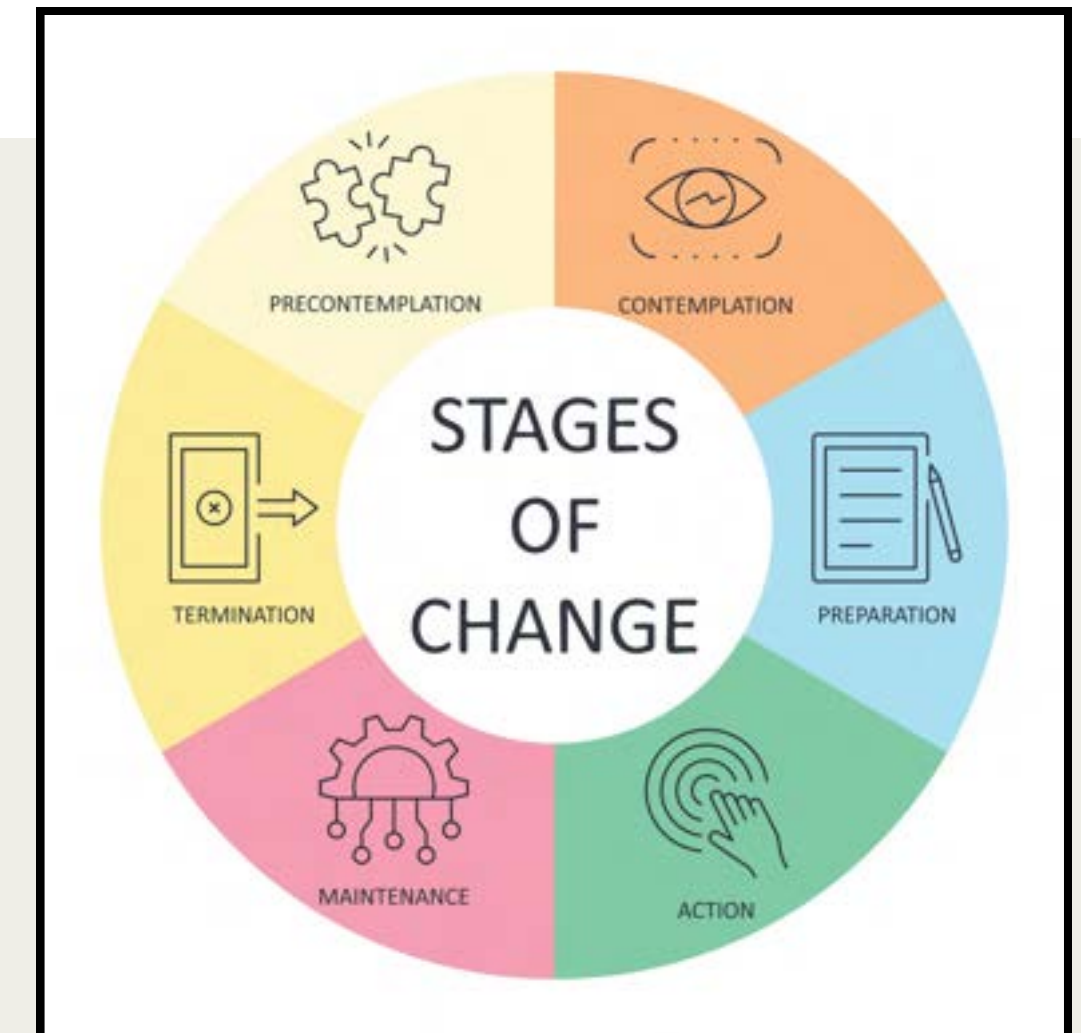


Now think about your residents. Don't just stop at the obvious negative evaluations (e.g., "My clients are good at lying"), but find the strength that might underlie this behavior. Once you've made an exhaustive list, consider how you might communicate this awareness in a manner that builds momentum for positive change.

- Make a list of their strengths.
- Write an affirmation using a "you" statement.

Describe a situation where you had a difficult conversation with a resident that you think could have gone better:

Example Practice: Identifying Resident Strengths



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING EXERCISES AND SKILLS TO SHARE WITH STAFF

1. Experience the Difference: Telling vs. Motivational Interviewing

Think of a behavior that you want to change. Find a partner. Take turns in both roles.

Exercise 1: Convince your partner to make a change.

- Explain why s/he should make this change
- Give 3 specific benefits of making this change
- Tell him/her HOW to change it
- Emphasize the importance of the change

Debrief: What was it like to be the speaker?
What was it like to be the helper?
Did it increase your motivation?

Exercise 2: Goal is to understand your partner's dilemma?

Same partner. Same behavior.

1. Ask these four questions:

- Why would you want to make this change?
- What are the three best reasons for you to do it?
- On a scale from 1-10, how important would you say it is to make this change (where 1 is not imp and 10 is extremely imp)? And why are you a ___ and not lower?
- If you did decide to do it, how might you go about it to succeed?

2. Give a short summary of the speaker's motivation (any desire, ability, reasons, and/or need for change), then ask:

- So what do you think you'll do? (Listen with interest and affirm.)

Example Practice: Working with Behavior Change

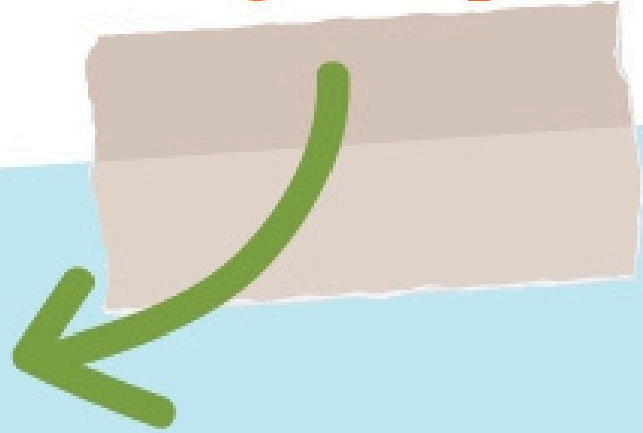
Example Practice: Working with your Service Provider During Crises

WHAT TO DO in a mental health crisis

IF YOU ARE WORRIED that you or your loved one is in crisis or nearing a crisis, seek help. Make sure to assess the immediacy of the situation to help determine where to start or who to call.

- ◆ **Is the person in danger** of hurting themselves, others or property?
- ◆ **Do you have time** to start with a phone call for guidance and support from a mental health professional?
- ◆ **Do you need emergency assistance?**

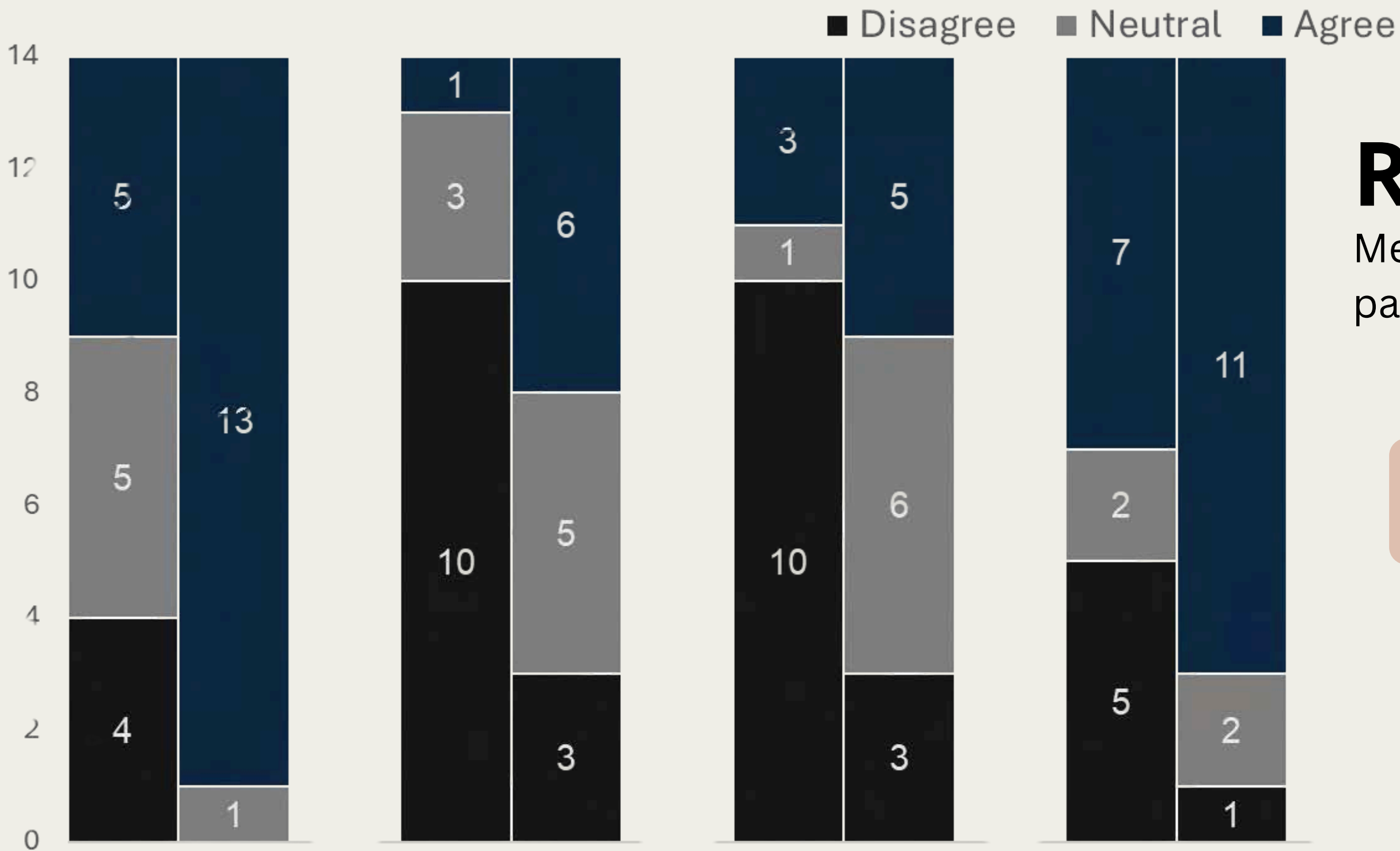
TECHNIQUES that May Help De-escalate a Crisis:

- 
- ✓ Keep your voice calm
 - ✓ Avoid overreacting
 - ✓ Listen to the person
 - ✓ Express support and concern
 - ✓ Avoid continuous eye contact
 - ✓ Ask how you can help
 - ✓ Keep stimulation level low
 - ✓ Move slowly
 - ✓ Offer options instead of trying to take control
 - ✓ Avoid touching the person unless you ask permission
 - ✓ Be patient



How's it going?

February 2025: Google doc survey sent out to the 24 property managers and assistant property managers who have ever attended a TSA PSH LE



Results (n=14)

Measured experiences before & after participating

On average, respondents had worked in property management for 4 years total and attended 5 PSH LE's.

I feel prepared to manage difficult interactions with residents.

I rarely feel exhausted from my work.

I am able to balance admin tasks and resident needs.

I am confident in my ability to work effectively with my on-site provider.

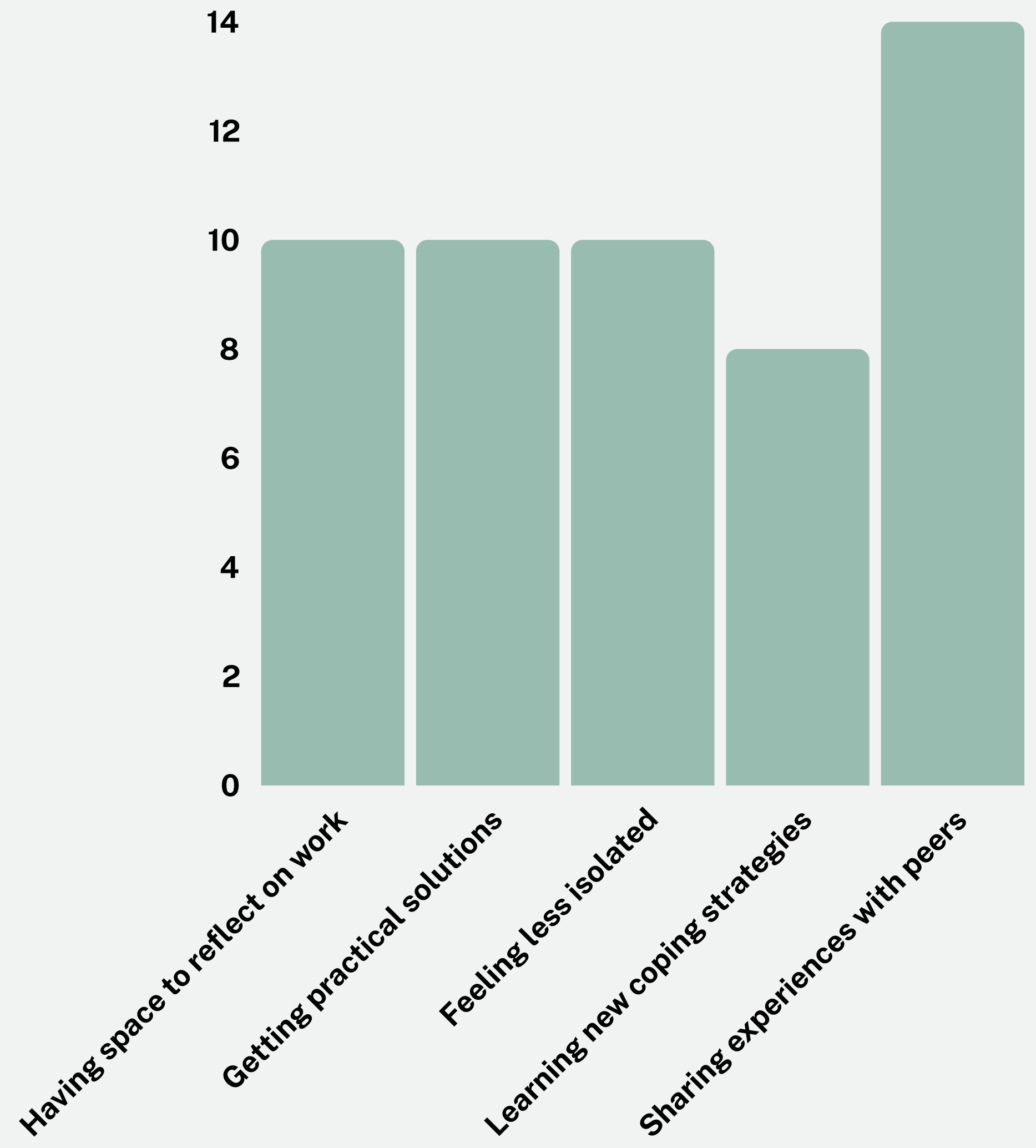
Results (n=14)

**100% agreed that the PSH
LE has helped them feel
more connected to their
coworkers**

**86% agreed that the PSH
LE has helped them feel
more supported in their role**

100% said they would recommend the PSH LE to a colleague

**What
aspects of
the PSH LE
have been
most
helpful to
you?**



Participant Suggestions

1. Extend the invitation

Include other managers (i.e., not only PSH) who may struggle with challenging residents

2. Diversify the learning approaches

Use hands-on activities that stimulate cognitive functions to enhance information retention

3. Spotlight the positive

Dedicate time to positive resident interactions so the focus is not only on negative ones

4. Include supervisors

Bringing in regional supervisors occasionally can help them better understand what on-site staff deal with

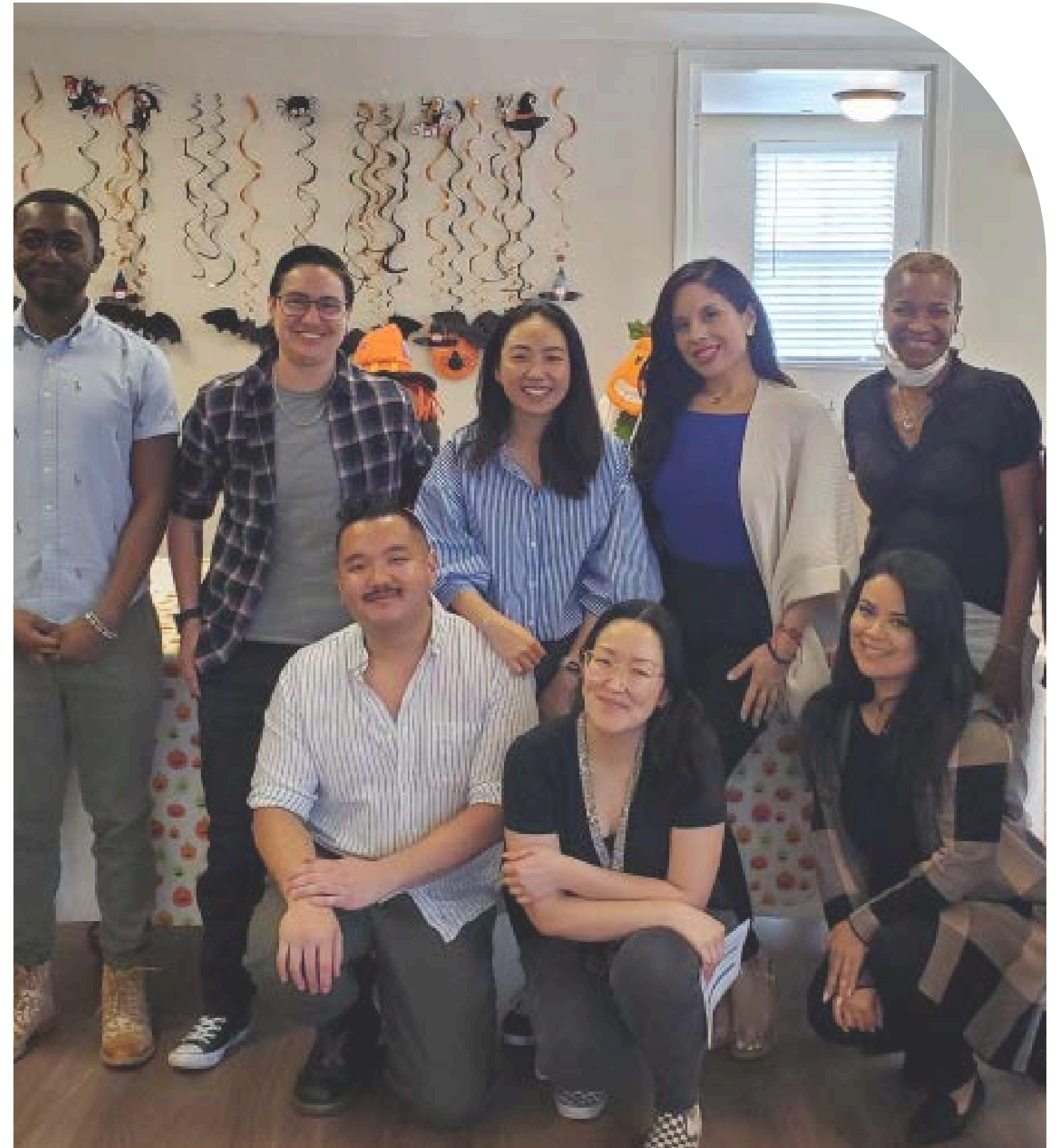
REFLECTIONS

What We're Still Grappling With

- Are there topics or approaches we are missing?
- Should participation be mandatory?
- What else can we do for staff when residents require a higher level of care?
- Is this actually improving staff retention?
- Is this actually improving housing stability for residents?
- Will maintenance techs benefit in the same way or need something different?

Would this work in your company?

Are you already doing it?
What's the same or different?





Thanks, everyone.

Please stay in touch.

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