# Housing First Toolkit

What are the levels of implementation?

Implementation with fidelity to the Housing First model happens when a coordinated, multi-faceted strategy (or "implementation support system") "drives" implementation forward. Implementation can be thought of as occurring at a number of levels.
The levels include:

- individual practitioners (e.g., case managers) and landlords
- individual teams (e.g., Assertive Community Treatment [ACT] or Intensive Case Management [ICM])
- the Housing First program as a whole
- the service delivery systems related to mental health and addictions, and housing and homelessness
- the surrounding policy and funding environment (e.g., employment and income assistance)

Fig. 1 Implementation Model

INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS

INDIVIDUAL TEAMS

THE HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

THE SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

THE SURROUNDING POLICY & FUNDING ENVIRONMENT
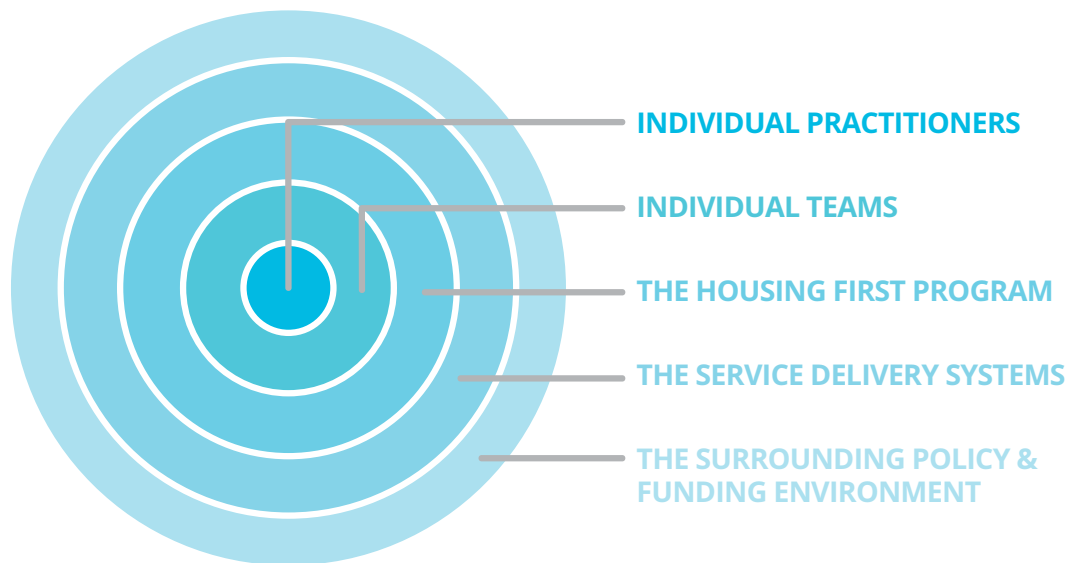
Note: This document has been adapted from articles by Durlak and DuPre (2008) and Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, & Wallace (2009).

Read the articles:

1. Durlak & Dupre (2008)

2. Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, Wallace (2009)

What strategies or resources promote implementation goals at the staff and team levels?

- *Careful selection of staff*, who possess the necessary skills or aptitudes, and whose values are philosophically congruent with the Housing First model (link to planning module).

- *Initial training of practitioners and teams*, focused on introducing team practices, basic role competencies and rationales, acquiring and trying out relevant skills, and receiving initial feedback on performance

- *Coaching-oriented supervision (from team leaders),* which helps staff put skills and team working relationships into place. Supervision also helps staff develop confidence, expertise and judgment about specific circumstances, and identify further training and technical assistance needs, including around complex clinical situations.

- *Fidelity measurement and implementation evaluation,* for ensuring the basic program principles and components are in place and identifying implementation barriers.

- *Ongoing Training and Technical assistance,* including consultation from outside Housing First experts, supporting team leaders to put coaching systems in place, to build advanced skills and expertise, and for solving complex clinical problems (which could also include networking).

Additional resources:

1. Planning Module
2. Evaluation Module

What strategies or resources promote implementation at the organizational or system levels?

- *Supportive administration* from agency leaders, aimed at ensuring that program specific resources and policies are in place (e.g., having housing and clinical teams working together and under a common accountability structure) and ensuring that the organizational culture reflects Housing First principles.

- *Systems interventions*, aimed at creating supportive policies and protocols in relation to those aspects of the program that are beyond the direct control of the Housing First program (e.g., establishing linkages with referral agencies, and advocating for facilitative policies with relevant agencies and governmental departments, such as Disability, Housing, Employment and Income Assistance). Find champions within agencies and government departments that can facilitate these changes, and consider developing a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a clear understanding of how to be flexible when working with participants.

- *System-level performance monitoring*

- *Entrepreneurship* from leaders in relation to surrounding policy climate (e.g., able to pick up on opportunities with regional or provincial reforms)

For more go to:

Evaluation Module

Who coordinates an implementation strategy?

- *Team Leader or coordinator*, who is a visionary and guides/oversees the strategy.

- *Champions and entrepreneurs* that move implementation forward, especially in the beginning stages.

- *Designated Implementation Team* of three to five people, together with the coordinator to makes the strategy happen. Collectively the team should have credibility with the multiple sectors involved in homelessness service delivery and expertise in:

  ◊ Housing First critical ingredients

  ◊ Training and technical assistance strategies

  ◊ Organizational change and performance measurement

Collectively, the implementation team is responsible for working with external trainers and Housing First experts to develop the training and technical assistance strategy and adapt it as needed. The team helps ensure that each of the drivers — related to practitioner competencies, organizational change, and performance measurement — is put into place. Finally, the team is also responsible for ensuring that drivers work tightly as a coordinated whole towards implementing the Housing First service components with fidelity and continuing to assure quality support going forward.

Implementation Framework: Summary Table

Level of Implementation	Implementation Goals	Strategies to Promote Implementation	Relevant Resources
Practitioner	• Housing First values • Housing First competencies • Related evidence-based practices (illness management and recovery, dual diagnosis, supported employment; trauma-informed care) • Cultural competency/safety	• Staff selection • Training • Coaching (supervision, consultation) • Communities of Practice	• Partnerships for Health System Improvement/Mental Health Commission of Canada Training, Technical Assisstance and Networking • Online training resources • Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding can be used for training
Team	• Effective witihin-team practices and protocols, including related evidence-based practices	• Training • Coaching • Supportive administration/ leadership	• Partnerships for Health System Improvement Mental Health Commission of Canada Training, Technical Assisstance • Housing First toolkits
Program	• Effective working relationships among teams • Clear program logic model • Framework of accountability • Supportive organizational culture	• Supportive administration / leadership • Performance measurement	• Partnerships for Health System Improvement/Mental Health Commission of Canada Training, Technical Assisstance • Fidelity visits • Fidelity self-assessments via Partnerships for Health System Impreovement and Homelessness Partnering Strategy • Tollkit evaluation module
System	• Effective inter-agency partnerships with referring agencies and complementary programs	• Systems Interventions	• Housing First toolkits • Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and Alberta system planning resources • Mental Health Commission of Canada engagements at regional/provincial levels
Policy	• Congruent policay and funding environment	• Systems interventions • Policy entrepreneurship	• Partnerships for Health System Improvement policy level initiative • Mental Health Commission of Canada