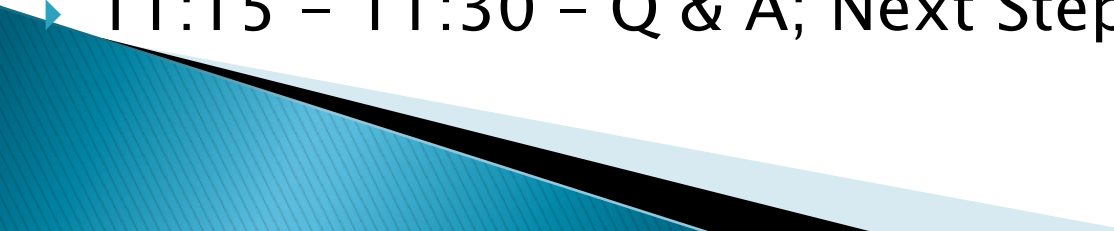


Housing People with Sex Offense Histories: Using Facts Instead of Fear to Drive Public Policy

Laurie L. Guidry, Psy.D.

Presentation for the WMass Network to End Homelessness:
Sub-Committee on Homeless Sex Offenders
04.30.20

Agenda

- ▶ 10:00– 10:10 – Welcome and Introduction
Pamela Schwartz, Director, Western
MA Network to End Homelessness
 - ▶ 10:10 – 10:30 – ‘Sex Offender’: What's in a Name?
What are the Facts?
Dr. Laurie Guidry, Psy.D, Chair,
MATSA Public Policy Committee
 - ▶ 10:30 – 10:40 – Q & A
 - ▶ 10:40 – 10:55 – The Housing Dilemma
 - ▶ 10: 55 – 11:15 – The Network's Proposal and
Alternative Models
 - ▶ 11:15 – 11:30 – Q & A; Next Steps
- 

WMass Network to End Homelessness

Sub-Committee Housing Individuals with Sexual Offense Histories

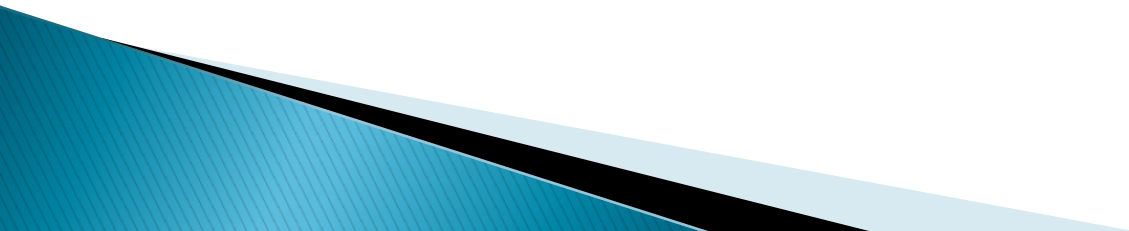
Mission Statement

to maximize the safety of the community by minimizing the potential for re-offense through the identification and development of stable, supportive housing options for registered sex offenders who are committed to an offense-free life.

What's in A NAME?

What's in a name...

'SEX OFFENDER'

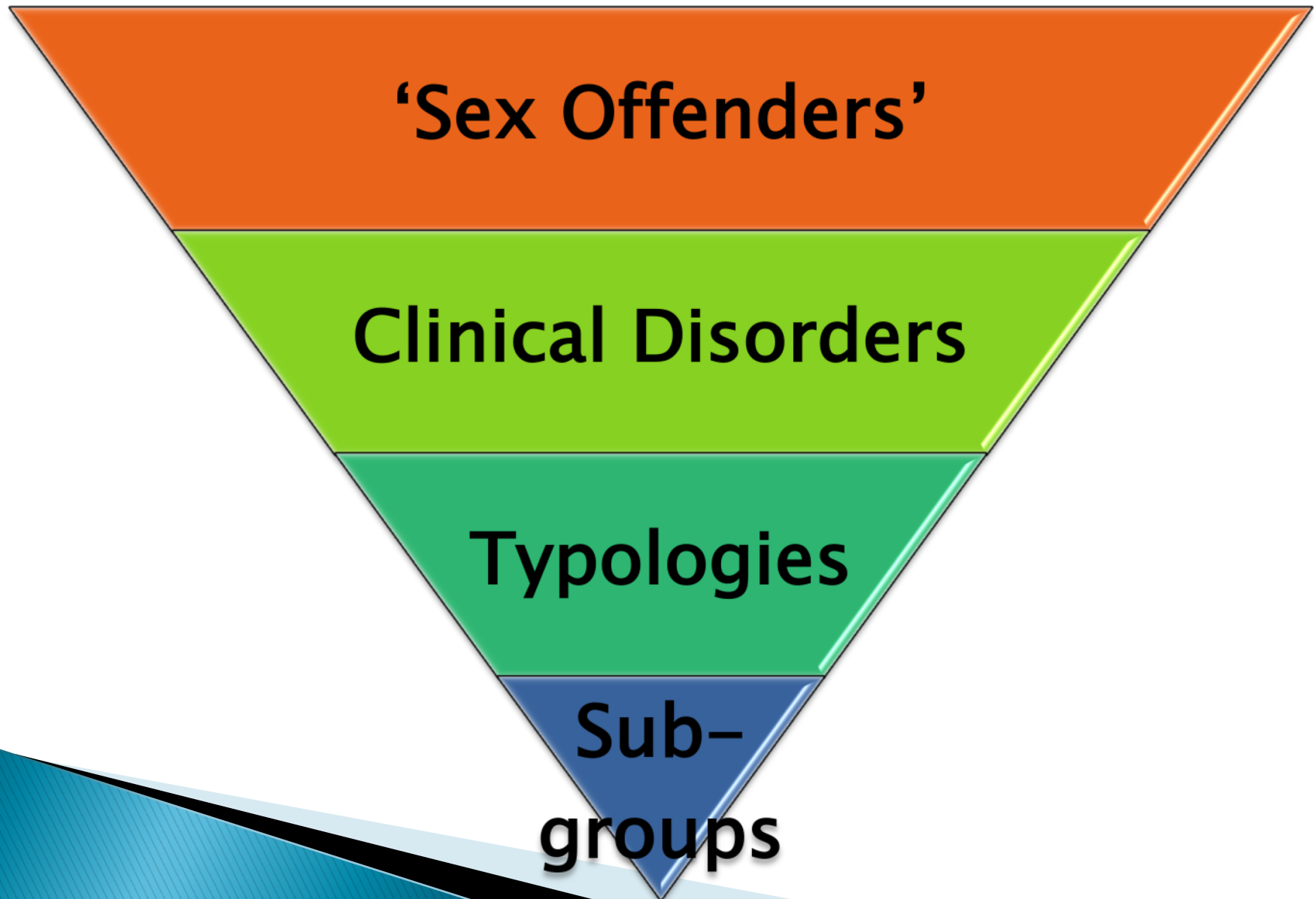


UNFORGIVABLE
'THE OTHER'
DESPICABLE
DIDDLER
FEAR
INTOLERABLE
SOCIAL PARTISAN
SICK
LOATHING
CASTRATION
ANGER
DEVIANT
CRAZY
VIOLATION
PUNISHABLE
UNTREATABLE
INVERT
PRIEST
PEN RISK
RAPIST
'Lock 'em all up'
MALE
DISGUST
'NIMBY'
CHILD MOLESTER
CHILD
HEAVY
VIOLENT
CHIEF

SEX OFFENDER

Why?

Deconstructing a heterogeneous population:



What are the facts:

- ▶ Sex Offenders are at HIGH risk to re-offend...
- ▶ Most convicted SOs are not rearrested for new sex crimes:

13.5%

100 incidents of sexual abuse

The diagram is a funnel chart with four horizontal sections of decreasing width from top to bottom. The top section is orange, the second is light green, the third is teal, and the bottom is dark blue. Each section contains text describing the number of incidents at that stage and the percentage of the previous stage. The funnel tapers to a point at the bottom, with a decorative blue and black graphic element at the very bottom left.

15 incidents reported (15%)

6–7 incidents
prosecuted
(40% reported)

3–5 convicted
(50–80% of all
prosecuted)

Fiction vs FACT...

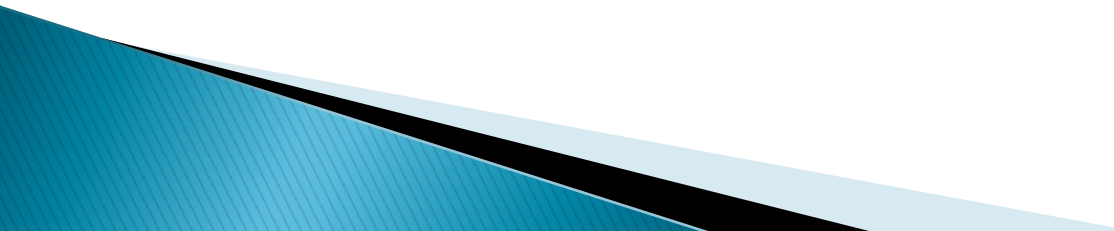
- ▶ Sex Offenders cannot be treated...

Meta-analysis of 23 recidivism outcome studies:

Tx=10.9% (n=3,121) v unTx=19.2% n=3,625)

Interventions that “meaningfully engage higher risk offenders in the process of changing their criminogenic needs” are proving most effective... (Hanson, 2009)


Current issue:

- ▶ Ongoing concern regarding the number of homeless and transient sex offenders which can contribute to a decrease in public safety
 - ▶ Ongoing concern regarding the statutory exclusion of registered sex offenders from appropriate housing opportunities in spite of their indicated level of care needs
 - ▶ Absence of public policy or concrete action to address these concerns
- 

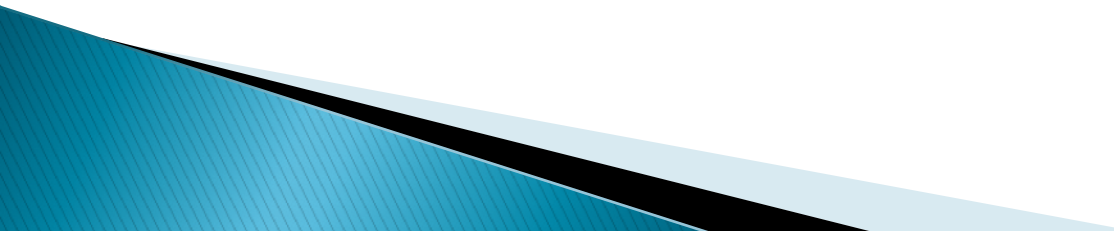
Housing Individuals with Sex Offense Histories: Dilemma



Homelessness concerns:

- ▶ Correlations between housing and crime and housing and criminal offender transitions
 - ▶ Social disintegration conducive to crime and therefore recidivism
 - ▶ Particular difficulties SO face upon release
 - ▶ SOs “without positive social support systems and stable employment recidivate at higher rates than those with jobs or ties to the community” (Levenson, 2008)
- 

SO risk for recidivism research

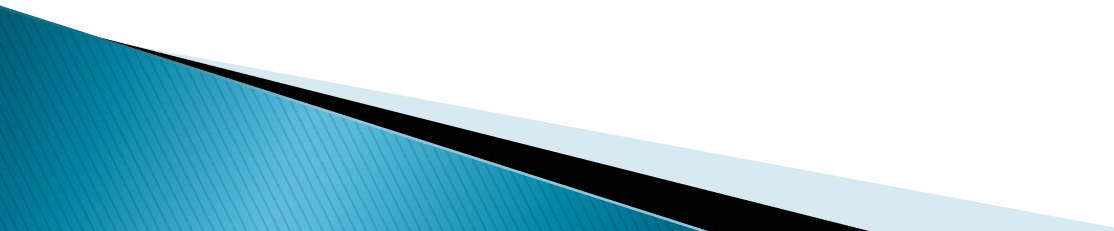
- ▶ SO DYNAMIC RISK FACTORS:
 - Lack of social support
 - Negative moods
 - Lifestyle instability
 - Anger, hostility, resentment
- 

Collateral Consequences of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions

J. Levenson
Criminal Justice Studies
2008

A decorative graphic element in the bottom-left corner of the slide, consisting of overlapping blue and black geometric shapes.

Psychosocial consequences:

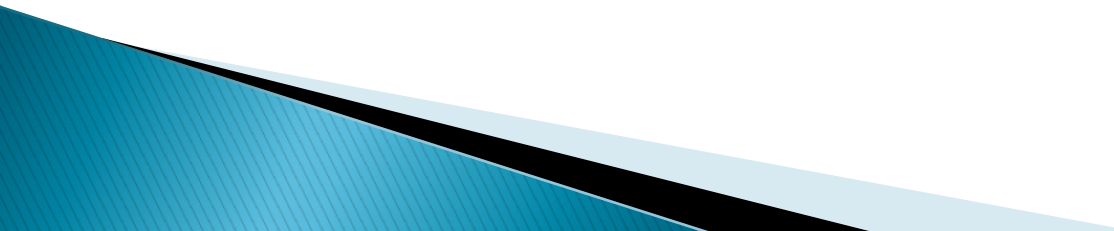
- ▶ 66% financial hardship
 - ▶ 73% emotional distress
 - ▶ 57% live farther away from employment opportunities
 - ▶ 41% live farther away from social services and mental health treatment
 - ▶ 27% live farther away from public trans
 - ▶ 63% live farther away from family support
 - ▶ 87% worry if I ever move I will be unable to find a place to live
- 

Take Home→

Current laws and restrictions:

- ▶ Push SO away from:
 - Social services
 - Employment
 - Public transportation
- ▶ Increase transience and homelessness
- ▶ Create:
 - Lifestyle instability
 - Lack of social support
 - Unemployment
- ▶ all of which is associated with recidivism in general and SO recidivism specifically

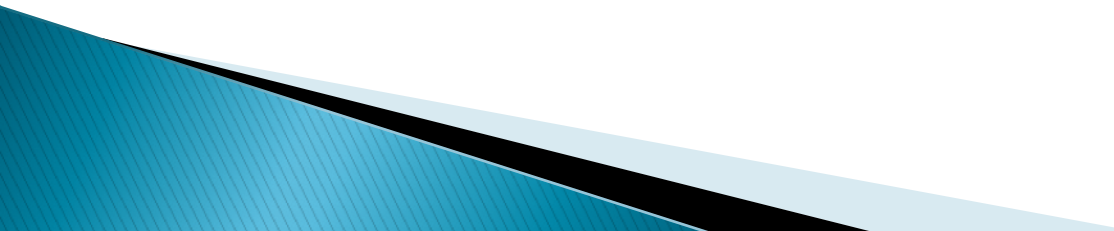
Summary conclusions:

- ▶ Well intended SO laws contribute to homelessness and can interfere with social support and stability of most registered SOs
 - ▶ Especially detrimental for younger offenders:
 - Experienced more transience, homelessness
 - Unable to live with families
 - Youth is risk factor for gen and sex recid and lifestyle instability increases risk further
 - ▶ Low risk offenders as well as high risk offenders impacted
- 

What we know...

A growing body of literature indicates that these laws destabilize SOs, increase transience, interfere with the efficacy of registration thereby increasing rather than reducing threat of SOs.

“Virtually no evidence exists...to support the effectiveness of these laws.” (Levenson,2008)



The Network's Proposal and Alternative Models



Current Law

- ▶ Federal public housing: Mandatory


Any offender who is subject to lifetime sex offender registration in the state in which he resides is ineligible for admission to federal public housing
42 U.S.C.S. Section 13663

- ▶ State public housing: Discretionary

Disqualified if the “applicant or the household member in the past has engaged in other criminal activity...which if repeated...would interfere with or threaten the rights of other tenants to be secure in their persons or their property or with the rights of other tenants to their peaceful enjoyment...” *G.L.C. 121B Section 32*


Network Response:

2015 MA Commission on SO Recidivism

- ▶ Supported evidence-based best practice in SO management
 - ▶ Adopt laws/regulations that require HA to consider SOs case-by-case
 - ▶ Fund pilot projects for Level III SOs
 - ▶ Direct state agencies to explicitly incorporate best-practice language (i.e., housing=safety)
 - ▶ Amend MA SORB website to explicitly state positive outcomes and individual reintegration through provision of appropriate housing
- 

Network Proposed Criteria for Housing Sex Offenders

Available only to single adults seeking individual (non-family) housing:

- ▶ On probation or parole
 - ▶ Attached to services such as sex offend-specific treatment, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment as deemed necessary
 - ▶ Designated community or agency contact person for communications regarding tenancy
 - ▶ Committed to living an offense-free life
- 

NY State Adopts SO Housing Regulations

All social service districts are required by statute, regulation and directive to arrange temporary housing assistance for eligible homeless individuals, including those who are sex offenders.

Chapter III, Part 365 of Title 9 NYCRR
2009

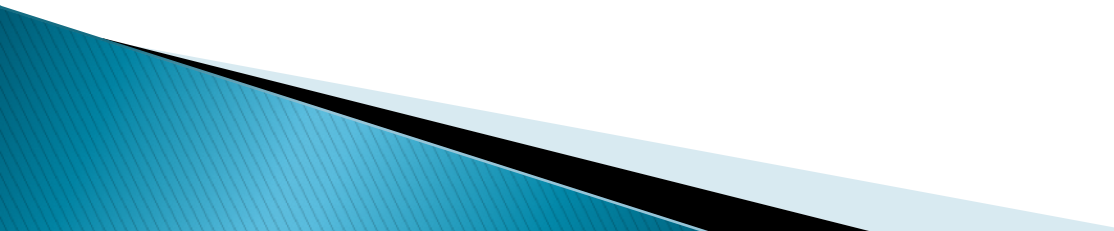
Full text: <https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/opca/pdfs/365.pdf>

Promising practices:

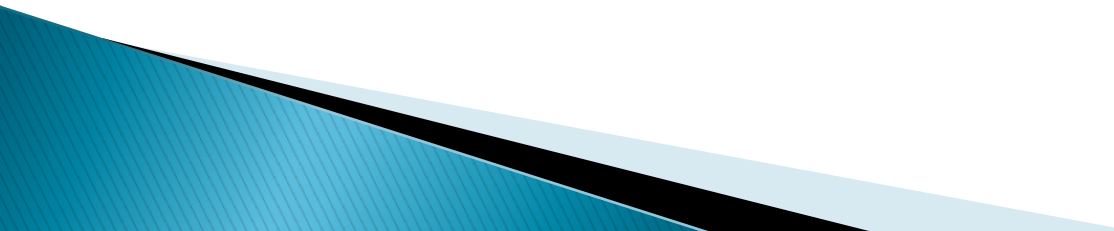
- ▶ A increasing number of national and local models exist that seek to address the complex problem of housing sex offenders in the community while maximizing public safety.
- ▶ Many transitioning offenders are sheltered by non-profit organizations
 - Prisoner aid organizations
 - Special needs providers
 - Community-based housing developers and managers

Local Model

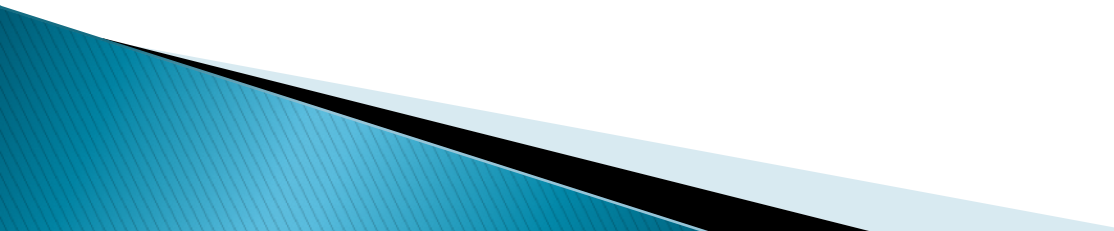
Rosa's, Springfield MA

- ▶ The Majestic Apartment Building, Springfield:
 - ▶ Managed for 38 years by Rosa
 - ▶ support from probation, law enforcement and community service providers
 - ▶ 42 housing units, over 25 tenants are sex offenders;
 - ▶ tenant behavior is excellent and only 1 tenant may have re-offended in 38 years.
- 

DMH MIPSB: Stanniford House


- ▶ Boston Area
 - ▶ Residential placement for DMH clients with Mental Illness (MI) and Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB) including those with criminal convictions & SORB status
 - ▶ Transitional, mental health services and supports
- 

St. Francis House, Boston MA

- ▶ Core services
 - ▶ Day Center
 - ▶ Next Step Housing Program
 - ▶ Medical Clinic
 - ▶ First Step (employment)
 - ▶ Moving Ahead Program (MAP)
 - ▶ “Hire Power”
- 

NATIONAL MODELS

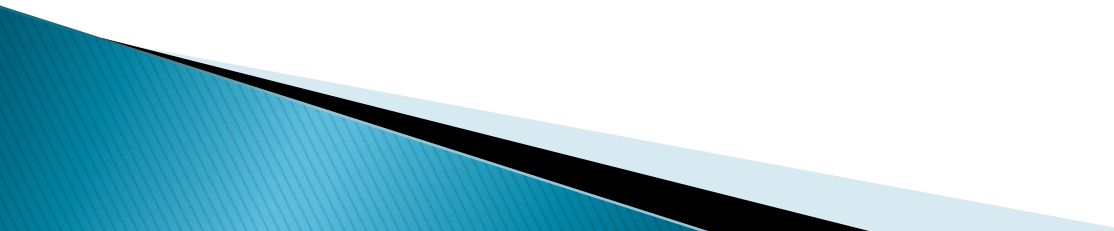
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- ▶ Coalition of educated, informed and invested stakeholders who have ability to make decisions that impact policy/practice
 - ▶ Plans integrated with best practice re: treatment and risk management of SOs
 - ▶ Community educated and invested re: prevention
 - ▶ Track outcomes to demonstrate efficacy, success and low recidivism rates
- 

Shared Living Arrangements

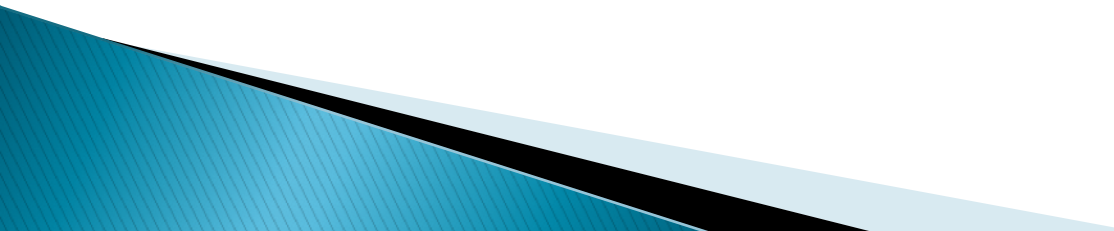
- ▶ Based on the Therapeutic Community Treatment Model (CO, 2004)
- ▶ Shared living arrangements
- ▶ Peer influence used to promote change and social norms
- ▶ 2–3 SO reside together
- ▶ Residence approved by PO and treatment provider
- ▶ Residents hold each other accountable
- ▶ Outcomes: fewer violations, detected more quickly, effective containment of model for SO

Mobile trailers as transition housing NY

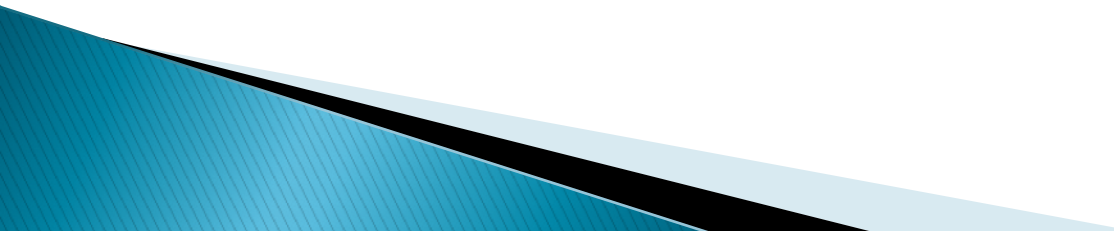
- ▶ Each trailer house 8 SOs
 - ▶ Parked on county land
 - ▶ Residential curfew
 - ▶ Relocated every few weeks
 - ▶ Not a permanent residence
 - ▶ Transport to work provided
 - ▶ Reduces fear in neighborhood, not recidivism
- 

Leased Unit Model

Washington State

- ▶ Pilot Project
 - ▶ Government enters contact with private landlords to lease to Sosts
 - ▶ Housing structured and supervised by PO
 - ▶ SOST treatment
 - ▶ Employment assistance
 - ▶ Housing and supportive social network
 - ▶ Rent subsidized
- 

Other examples:

- ▶ Re-entry
 - ▶ Specialized supervision programs
 - ▶ Circles of Support & Accountability
 - ▶ Community policing
- 

Q & A

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