

Building Effective Partnerships to
End Homelessness Among Veterans:
A VA Perspective

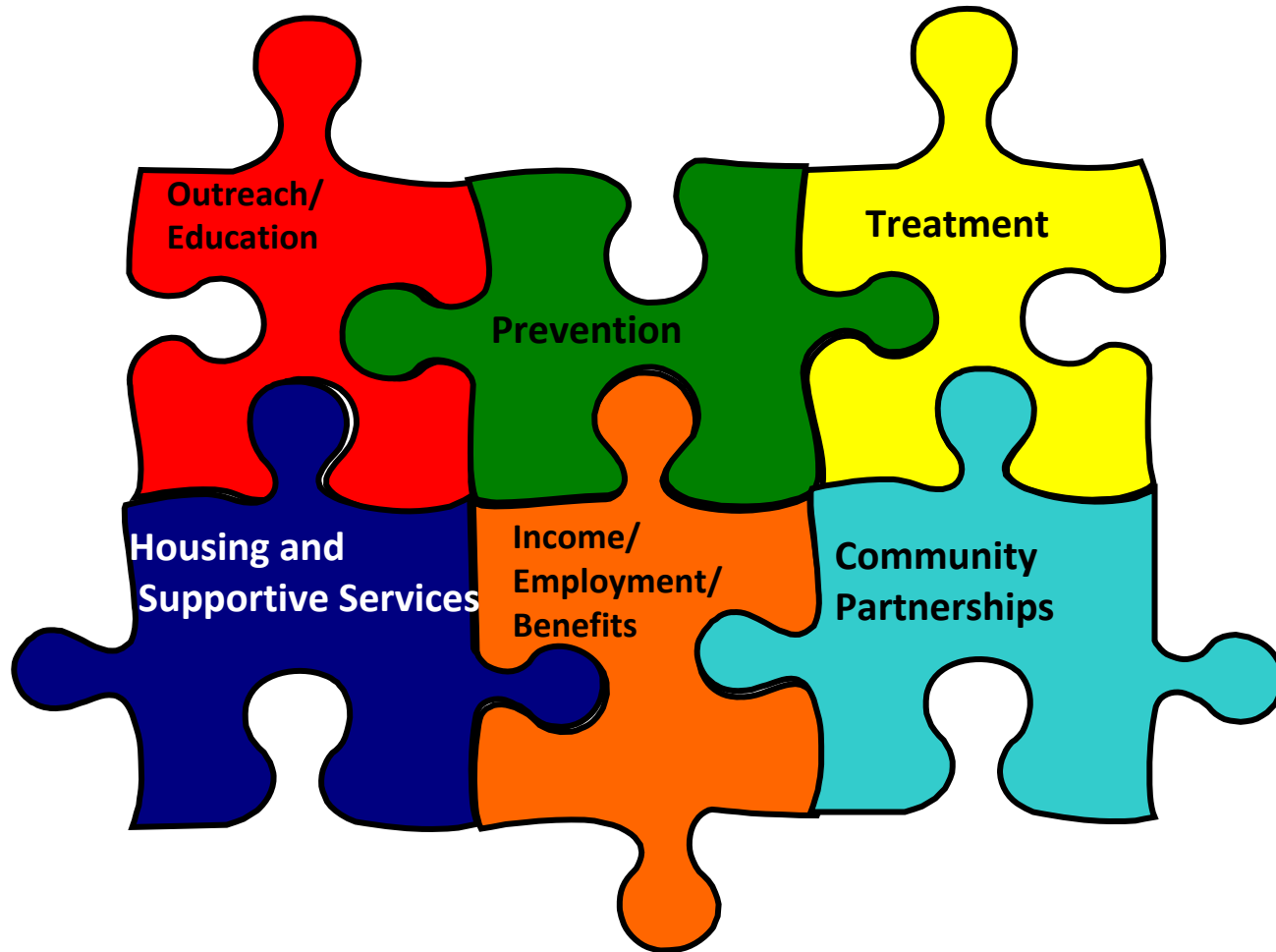
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Strategy to End Homelessness Among Veterans

- In late 2009, Secretary Shinseki announced a Five Year Plan to End Homelessness among Veterans
- Foundation of the plan is a “No Wrong Door” approach to serving homeless Veterans
- Six strategic pillars to ending Veteran homelessness

Strategy to End Homelessness Among Veterans



An Alphabet Soup of Old & New Programs

- HCHV – outreach and case management
- DCHV – residential treatment
- GPD – transitional housing
- HUD-VASH – permanent housing
- SSVF – homelessness prevention
- HVDI – dental care
- CWT – work readiness
- HVSEP – supported employment
- VHA-VBA – benefits assistance
- VJO & HCRV – justice and re-entry outreach
- CHALENG – community networking & needs assessment
- CRRC – “one-stop” integrated homeless services
- H-PACT – medical care teams for homeless Veterans
- HOMES – data management and evaluation
- Stand Downs and Homeless Summits – outreach and community partnerships
- NCCHV – national hotline

Strategy to End Homelessness Among Veterans

- Now termed “Synchronized Plan”
- Core philosophy is “Housing First”
- Emphasis on community partnerships
- VA cannot do it alone

Building Effective Partnerships: *STRENGTHS*

- Shared commitment to process
- Shared values
- History of positive relationships
- Goal-directed work, with deadlines and deliverables

Building Effective Partnerships: CHALLENGES

- Different definitions of “veteran”
- Different definitions of “homeless”
- Similar goals; different objectives
- Developing trust
- Bureaucratic obstacles and levels of decision-making

Building Effective Partnerships:

11 Lessons Learned (So Far)

1. Patience and persistence are basic tools for creating change. **Never give up!**
2. Relationships are built on mutual trust and respect. This takes time and good listening skills. **Focus on understanding your partners and their worlds.**
3. Trying to “own” the process won’t work and will alienate others from becoming part of a successful team approach. **Leave ego and control at the door.**
4. In working with different systems, look for the “match” in values and goals to build a solid working relationship. Be aware of the possible areas for conflict (generally policies and procedures). **Focus on “win / win” problem solving techniques.**

Building Effective Partnerships:

11 Lessons Learned (So Far)

5. Consensus isn't always going to be possible. **Look for ways to minimize barriers as they occur.**
6. Ensure that your top management know the issues and have input into the planning process at every step along the way. **Don't ever go it alone.**
7. Always have "Plan B" and "Plan C" as possible options when "Plan A" doesn't work. Review these plans with key players prior to coming to the table to obtain their support and/or recommendations. **Never make promises that you can't keep.**

Building Effective Partnerships:

11 Lessons Learned (So Far)

9. Alliances formed in the government infrastructure through the years are essential to establishing credibility and developing relationships with new staff in key positions. All parties must do what they say they are going to do, even when the players change. **Maintain your linkages and your integrity.**
10. Communication an ongoing process that must be continually nurtured, monitored and improved. Be open minded and flexible about what works and what doesn't work. **Keep in good, regular contact.**
11. Being able to laugh at oneself is a plus. **Don't forget humor is a highly valuable attribute!**