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INTRODUCTION

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) is a growing rights-based intervention in Europe and beyond to combat youth homelessness by targeting the youth specific needs. The significance of Housing First for youth is highlighted by the increase of youth homelessness across Europe. Despite ongoing efforts, more young individuals are facing unstable living conditions due to factors like economic instability and family breakdowns. Housing First emerges not only as a preventative strategy but also as a critical response to the urgent need for reversing the upward trend in youth homelessness and offering essential support to vulnerable individuals in society. The HF4Y approach not only promotes positive development, mental well-being, and educational and employment prospects for young individuals but also disrupts the recurring cycles of homelessness

In order to better combat youth homelessness through the HF4Y paradigm, it is essential to raise awareness among government and organisations. In order to succeed in supporting vulnerable youth and fighting youth homelessness with HF4Y, it is also essential to train managers and support workers on how to implement HF4Y programme and support.

This Housing First for Youth Training guide aims to support the continuous learning, growth and capacity of organisations and individuals within the growing HF4Y community in Europe, Canada, Australia and beyond. You'll find here a reminder on what Housing First for Youth is with resources to learn more about Housing First for Youth and a second part on how to train on Housing First for Youth and spread training possibilities among Europe by training trainers on Housing First for Youth.

This guide is based on the HF4Y experiences of the Housing First Europe Hub and its community. By gathering the material, insights and feedback from trainers, as well as attendees of the Housing First Europe Hub's HF4Y training sessions, this guide continues the spirit of HF4Y training provided by the Housing First Europe Hub, including learning outcomes and key exemples. The first Housing First for Youth Train-the-Trainer session of the Housing First Europe Hub delivered in Lyon in March 2023 and the 'How to deliver Housing First for Youth trainings' workshop of the Housing First Europe Hub's Trainers' Symposium have been crucial to gather training material on how to train on Housing First and create this guide, a piece that has been developed from the knowledge of a group of specialist trainers in the field of Housing First for Youth. Their contributions are based on extensive training experience, which has enabled us to distil practical knowledge and expertise into this comprehensive resource. The shared expertise of these trainers has not only shaped the content of this guide but has also helped to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Their direct experiences in the field of Housing First for Youth bring a depth of understanding that adds significant value to this guide.

THE HOUSING FIRST EUROPE HUB

The Housing First Europe Hub was established in 2016 by the Y-Foundation (Finland) and FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People) along with more than 15 partners. Since then, the Hub has grown to include more than 45 organisations, cities, government ministries, housing providers and researchers from across Europe and beyond.

The Housing First Europe Hub works in partnership with core and associate partners to promote Housing First as the first and central response to homelessness and to encourage the scaling up of Housing First as a key component of an effective systemic approach to end homelessness across Europe.

The Hub's activities aim to advocate for Housing First, to train on Housing First, to develop Housing First practices, Support research on Housing First, build capacity for Housing First stakeholders and to support and communicate about Housing First across Europe to a variety of audiences.

Taking part in a Housing First for Youth community

Housing First for Youth is one of the central topics of the Housing First Europe Hub.

The Hub helps practitioners to implementHF4Y in their organisations, encouraging them to be trained and train themselves on this new Housing First stream, and to create a community and a network to support, inspire and exchange on their experiences.

The Housing First Europe Hub support Housing First for Youth among our members and interested organisation with:

- **1. Research:** as Housing First is strongly evidence-based, ongoing research and pilot testing are crucial to developing and improving the delivery of the approach.
- 2. Community of practice: A work group where practitioners can exchange knowledge and experiences with one another to help improve outcomes for service users. The Hub established a Housing First for Youth Community of Practice in 2022 that allows professionals and front line staff to have a space where they can share experiences and knowledge, and confront each other on the practice of Housing First for Youth. These monthly meetings gather on a regular basis practitioners across Europe, Canada and Australia on various topics related to HF4Y.

During year 2023 the following topics have been discussed:

- When and how to say goodbye to young people through the lens of "non time limited supports";
- Implementing peer mentoring and youth participation in H4FY in practice;

- Housing in HF4Y (types, access, changing needs and change housing, engaging with housing providers);
- Advocating for HF4Y services;
- Well being of HF4Y staff members;
- Who can access a HF4Y service Prioritisation and targeting different groups/specific of young people;
- What differences exist between HF for care leavers and Housing First for Youth.



Geographical distribution of organisations participating in the Housing First Europe Hub's HF4Y Community of Practice in 2023

Housing First for Youth practitioners of 12 countries in Europe and from Canada have regularly met in 2023 to discuss topics on HF4Y, explain how they implement HF4Y core principles on the field and discuss their issues together.

- **3. Membership network:** The Hubworks with Founding and Associate partner organisations to advocate for and support the implementation of Housing First across Europe. The Hub also supports national and regional Housing First networks as they share practice and knowledge for scaling up Housing First.
- **4. Training:** for Housing First service providers, governments, housing providers, etc. Such as the Housing First for Youth Train the Trainer session organised in March 2023 in Lyon that gathered 26 people from various organisations across Europe and trainers from Europe and Canada.

WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH?

Adapted from the successful Housing First approach, Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) is a rights-based intervention for young people (aged 13-24) who are experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of becoming homeless. It's designed to address the needs of developing adolescents and young adults by providing them with rapid access to housing that's safe, affordable, appropriate and without pre-conditions, combining this with necessary and age-appropriate supports that focus on health, well-being, life skills, engagement in education and employment, as well as social inclusion.

The goal of HF4Y is to support young people through their adolescence and facilitate a healthy transition to adulthood, all while having a safe and stable place to call home.

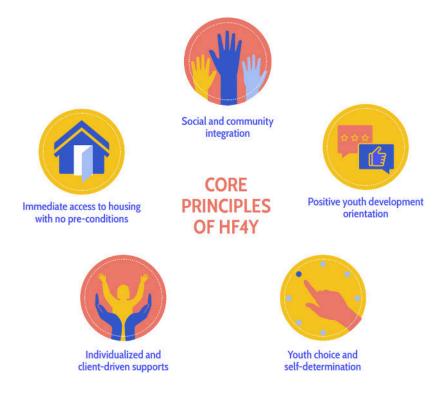
Except for pilot programmes, the aim of HF4Y is to secure sustainable funding with no strict timelines to support interventions toward young people.

The core principles of Housing First for Youth

A core tenet of Housing First is that housing is a basic human right, as outlined by the United Nations (article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in article 11.1 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

The HF4Y model extends this right to young people, acknowledges that young people have specific needs related to their age, and adapts the Housing First principles accordingly.

Youth specific needs have led to the following 5 core principles of Housing First for Youth:



Differences between 'classic' Housing First and Housing First for Youth

HF4Y is designed to provide support and access to housing for young people with high support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Typical homelessness and Housing First services, which may include tenants as young as 18 years old, are not necessarily equipped to best support young people. This is because a 'junior' version of adult services does not usually take into account the different kinds of support that young people need, while age matters when it comes to psychological, social, physical and emotional development.

HF4Y differs from typical homeless and Housing First services because it builds on the core principles of Housing First but goes further in adapting them to better serve the specific needs of adolescents and young adults. Evidence¹ from Canada (A way Home Canada) and Europe (Rock Trust, Scotland and Focus Ireland) has proven that adapting the service for young people in this way leads to better outcomes in term of rates of the youth successfully maintained in their tenancies, youth's improvement of physical and mental health, and access to education or training².

Why provide Housing First for Youth Training?

In the European context, previous work on youth homelessness has shown that young people are generally ignored and failed by the existing policy landscape which does not take account of the specific needs of young people experiencing homelessness. International research and insights from frontline services indicates that young people experiencing homelessness have a different pathway into homelessness and distinct needs while homeless which require specific youth-oriented solutions to exit homelessness³.

Housing First services provides housing to homeless people as soon as possible, without attaching conditions. People in Housing First programmes have a high degree of control over the support and treatment they receive, including whether to use different support services. Housing First is an evidence-based key solution to help end homelessness.

Housing First for Youth can often be misunderstood as a regular Housing First programme, which young people participate in. But this is not the case. Various factors related to youth experiences, such as undergoing social, cognitive, physical, psychological and emotional development, early history of failure by social services, transitioning to adulthood and independent living, as well as systemic discrimination in policies, collectively contribute to make youth homelessness distinct from adult

¹ Gaetz, S., Walter, H., & Story, C. (2021). *This is Housing First for Youth—Part 1 – Program Model Guide.* Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. and Gaetz, S., Walter, H., & Borato, M. (2021). *This is Housing First for Youth—Part 2 – Operations Manual.* Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

² Blood, I., Alden, S., & Quilgars, D. (2020). *Rock Trust Housing First for Youth pilot—Evaluation Report.* Rock Trust and Housing First Europe Hub.

³ FEANTSA, (2020). European Framework for Defining Youth Homelessness.

homelessness.⁴ Because pathways into homelessness and experiences while homeless are different for young people, exits out of homelessness must also be adapted to their specific age and needs⁵. A way to adapt homelessness exits services is to make Housing First for Youth services, following principles made for youth support.

Existing Housing First for Youth projects which have been evaluated prove the model works to support vulnerable and marginalised youth. The development of these services in the last five years demonstrates that not only do these work, but the organisations can share how they've built their services.

There is a growing interest in Housing First for Youth in Europe, and as a result, a growing demand for high quality training for service providers, housing providers, youth workers, funders and local governments.



Picture from the HF4Y Train-the-Trainer session, Lyon, 2023

Training for trainers on Housing First for Youth first allows trainers to think about facilitating learning on HF4Y. Offering training for trainers on HF4Y also allows trainers to promote awareness of the HF4Y model, allowing them to deliver training tailored for organisations within various contexts. Lastly, training trainers on HF4Y allow them to advocate for HF4Y, for systems change and for ending youth homelessness.

⁴ FEANTSA, (2020). European Framework for Defining Youth Homelessness.

⁵ Study Session organised within the Youth for Democracy programme in cooperation with FEANTSA Youth & Housing First Europe Hub "Youth Work to Make Housing First for Youth...WORK!", 2022

HOW TO TRAIN ON HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH?

The first session of the Housing First Europe Hub's Train-the-Trainer programme for HF4Y occurred against the backdrop of approximately ten earlier HF4Y training sessions conducted by the Housing First Europe Hub, on the request of partner and associates organisations of the Housing First Europe Hub.

A study Session organised in 2022 within the Youth for Democracy programme in cooperation with FEANTSA Youth & Housing First Europe Hub on "Youth Work to Make Housing First for Youth...WORK!" was the first step in shaping the needs for a HF4T Train-the-Trainer session.

With four years of organising the Train-the-Trainer programme, by the start of 2023, four cohorts had received training, resulting in the certification of 88 Housing First trainers.

With this 'Train-the-Trainer' programme specifically on HF4Y, the idea was to establish a pool of trainers specifically on the topic of Housing First for Youth. The first session of Housing First for Youth Train-the-Trainer took place in Lyon in March 2023. The experiences and feedbacks gathered after this training session are really useful to understand what training brings in the matter of HF4Y, to deliver HF4Y, to train and advocate for HF4Y and to improve upcoming training on HF4Y.



Picture from the HF4Y Train-the-Trainer session, Lyon, 2023

After this first session the trainers were able to use the skills, knowledge and network of colleagues they have gained to design and develop training courses on Housing First for Youth and commit to the training pool after completion of the session. This course was designed for people who, upon completion of the session, will be able and willing to design and deliver training on Housing First for Youth to a variety of audiences including colleagues within their organisations across Europe, stakeholders in other organisations, funders, civil servants, housing providers and landlords...



Geographical repartition of the 26 HF4Y training session participants from across Europe

This HF4Y Train-the-Trainer session was designed for both people with an understanding of Housing First for Youth model and its core principle and HF4Y newcomers by offering an optional intensive introduction to Housing First for Youth one day before the Train-the-Trainer session.

The following programme of the HF4Y TtT that took place in Lyon in March 2023 show how the two days of the session were manage to train on HF4Y training and reach the objectives of using their skills, knowledges and network to design trainings on HF4Y to various audiences.

DAY 1

1. Introductions and icebreakers

For example - all participants introduce themselves and their organisation. This can include a question about why they are attending the session.

Icebreaker examples:

- Name games (for longer training sessions)
- Informal icebreakers like 'what did you want to be when you grew up'

2. 'Your lived experience' exercise The objective of this activity is to help participants think from a young person's perspective⁶.

3. Introduction to facilitation skills

- how do you set your objectives as a trainer
- how do you refine your objectives if you've been given them by another organisation
- programme design key aspects: team building, ice breakers, energisers, evaluation...

4. Reflections on - how would you deliver a training session on each principle?

- The participants should come away with session plans and ideas for their own training courses.
- Each group present an outline of the session they created back to plenary their training plan

5. Group dynamics

- Discussion on how to create a good dynamic
- Trouble shoot ideas on how you respond in difficult situations?

6. Panel discussion with trainers

7. Final Session

Revisit the fears, hopes and dreams and Q&A

DAY 2

1. Welcome and team building exercise

Team building ideas: Swamp Exercise⁷ - the group has to navigate a set of squares (tapped out on the floor) WITHOUT talking to each other. Giants, Witches and Wizards - a more movement-oriented game that works well as an energizer.

2. Facilitation skills - recap: Choosing your methods for training

Becoming an advocate/champion for HF4Y

- articulating the differences between Housing First and Housing First for Youth
- advocating for HF4Y to various audiences (frontline workers, managers, funders, housing providers, etc.)

4. Presenting pitches

- Groups prepare HF4Y advocacy pitches (various audiences)
- Presentation of pitches

Planning and delivering information and training session

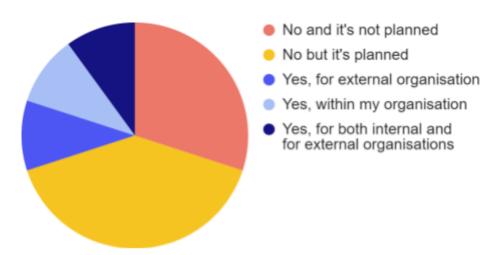
- matching your content to your audience (colleagues, local authorities, housing providers, funders, other stakeholders)
- sketching out plans/sessions
- Evaluation / Wrap up8

⁶ More details on this activity are available in annexes

⁷ More details on this exercice are available in annexes

⁸ More details on Evaluation/Wrap up activities are available in annexes

This two day programme and the intensive session on HF4Y principles were designed to make trainees able and willing to design and deliver training on Housing First for Youth to a variety of audiences. In a 8-months follow-up survey, a third of the participants of the H4Y Train-the-Trainers explain that they have trained internally in their organisations or for external organisations on HF4Y, a third of the participants do not have deliver trainings but have HF4Y training sessions planned in the future, and a third of the participants have not deliver any trainings on HF4Y and do not have any sessions planned.



States of the participants in delivering HF4Y trainings, 8 months after their HF4Y Train-the-Trainers session

This 8-months follow-up survey shows us that, even after being trained a first time, trainings on HF4Y takes time to be delivered and the possibility for trainers to train is highly dependent on the willingness of their organisations.



Picture from the HF4Y Train-the-Trainer session, Lyon, 2023

Despite this time for delivering trainings that has to be taken into consideration, participants of HF4Y trainings are satisfied from the training delivery. In the 'nexts-week' follow up survey of the training, Particiantes grade have an average satisfaction of 4,5 out of 5 for the training and of 4,3 for the training sessions content.

To what extent training can be useful?

Feedbacks from trainers:

The trainers trained in March 2023 in Lyon have indicated that having been trained on Housing First for Youth has been useful for them on various levels.

Firstly, after having been trained, HF4Y Train-the-Trainers participants have reconnected to the Housing First for Youth principles in their daily work and in the work of their teams, that allow them to stick more to the principles and make them effective in their organisations, in order to improve fidelity to HF4Y, improve youth wellbeing and stepping forward achieving to end youth homelessness.

On a second level, this training, by strengthening participants' knowledges on Housing First for Youth and on how HF4Y participate to achieve a systems change toward achieving to end homelessness, has allowed trainers to be able to advocate for Housing First for Youth within their organisations, for board staff and for other organisations such as stakeholders and potential partners, in delivering, training and advocating for Housing First for Youth.

On the last level, this training provides trainers an opportunity to connect with others Housing First for Youth practitioners and managers and then allow them to share their experiences and knowledge based on informal education and peer to peer learning.

Training design skills on HF4Y

Participants of the Trainers' Symposium, that gathered some members of the Housing First for Youth Train-the-Trainer cohort of Lyon trained in March 2023, have shown how trainings provided made them ready to design and deliver trainings themselves on Housing First for Youth, adapting content, exercises and answer for various audiences.

In a very limited time, participants were asked to prepare a Housing First for Youth training skeleton, identifying the topic of the session, their audience, the content of the session, the objectives of their training and giving an outline of their activities.

Using their trainers' skills participants were able to present four different training session skeletons for various audiences with activities inspiring to make trainees understand Housing First for Youth principles and how to deliver HF4Y services, and be prepared for potential questions.

This four advanced skeletons for trainings, showcasing how to deliver Housing First for Youth trainings are the following:

- Session: Positive Youth development orientation
- Audience: new colleagues at work
- Content: positive youth development orientation
- Objective: motivate new workers to see the strengths in youth
- Outline of activity:

Opener:

- To understand the biases/understanding of new workers about the youth they will be working with.
- Questions and open responses are used with Kahoot to understand where people are coming from and to then open up a discussion.

For example:

What kind of drugs do youth use; Ask the worker what are her ideas about work with youth, how do you think they are.

What kind of worker do you think you are? A policeman? A friend?

- Discussion about the answers

Overview about the principle of positive youth development orientation (presentation).

Offer strength based approach tools to use with youth.

Strengths based card game;

Conclusión or wrap-up / next steps and where to find support as a support worker to do this principle;

- Possible questions:
- What if I can't follow the principles/agreement? for example paying the rent;
- What if your client does not show up for the weekly meetings? The worker tries to stay positive and offer different solutions

- Session: Individualised client-driven support
- Audience: New youth/social workers
- Objective: Raise awareness/capacities about the impact of individualised client-driven support
- Outline of the activity:

Privilege walk (front loading activity) - adjusted statements to show the impact of different solutions and approaches, including HFfY;

Debriefing on participants experiences from the privilege walk;

Debriefing on the (non)adaptable services and their impact on the youth.

Reflect why is it important to have the individualised client-driven support

Types of questions and sample answers that might come up:

- What tools can help us implement it tomorrow?

WRAP Strength-based model Solution-focused model

...

- How do we do no-time limit when we have limited finances?

- Session: Housing Provider with little or no awareness of HF4Y or HF
- Audience: Social & Community integration the principle
- Objective: Become a housing partner for HF4Y (18 26 yrs)
- Outline of the activity:
- 10 minute activity in a schedule of a whole information day.
 Other principles would be given similar time and approach
- Divide audience into small groups
 Reflect on belonging to a community, a club, team, community.

 Explore the value of belonging to yourself individually. What sort of person might you be without this community?
- Do the 3 post-it activity:

Write 3 things of personal value on each post-it. Remove one. ->Have another member of the group remove one. How does this feel, what emotions does it evoke?

- Explain connection to principle;

or

Ask audience to reflect their learning on the connection to the principle

• Possible questions:

- Audience might understand principle, might not be willing to risk young people living in their housing;
- Concerns about visitors.

Presenters can provide extra information and reassurance by describing support on offer to young person and provide link to housing provider

- Session: Difference between Housing First and Housing First for Youth
- Audience: Workers of 5 years and established Housing First team
- Objective: Make people think and lower threshold to start with for HF4Y
- Outline of the activity:
- Frontloading: Timeline of the Ups and downs of the team
- Black Hat exercise:

Legitimising pessimism

Housing provider

Worker

Neighbour

Parents

Youngster

•••

- Small groups on principles HF4Y:

Attacking the black hat things

From thinking about the principles

Sharing which solutions were found in the principles

Bringing in Slide three differences

Discuss the slide: not written in stone

- Back to timeline:

If we would do this, what would be next steps, different trajectories

What does Housing First for Youth Train-the-Trainer change in your organisation?

In the 8-months follow-up survey, Housing First for Youth Train-the-Trainers participants' highlight that having been trained on HF4Y and on how to train about Housing First for Youth change things in their organisations.

Trainers came back in their organisations, with a renewed willingness to prioritise Housing First for Youth and deliver high fidelity to the HF4Y principles services and the capacity to share about their knowledge.

Having been trained on trainings others on Housing First for Youth and strengthen their knowledges on systems change through Housing First and Housing First for Youth, allow trainers to speak about HF4Y and to advocate for it within their organisations and with external partners, making them part of a wider movement of HousingFirst for Youth awareness.

Confronting the diversity of other people's contexts during the training enabled them to take a step back from their own context, to learn and to draw inspiration from others in order to improve the way HF4Y is delivered in their services.

What are the limits of Housing First for Youth Train-the-Trainers?

Despite the satisfaction of participants of training on Housing First for Youth, one shot training cannot solve all participants' difficulties and some frustrating barriers remain on achieving systems change with Housing First for Youth in participants' organisations.

Some participants explain, 8 months after having been trained, that difficulties to get fundings and finding housing to make their Housing First for Youth services grow and that sector's system transformation still needs to be pursued to deliver high-fidelity to Housing First for Youth core principles. These barriers do ot only depend on HF4Y training participants nor on their organisations, but we think that training more on Housing First for Youth will help to spread awareness of Housing First for Youth and its principles and contribute to make systems change.

Some participants also highlight that training on Housing First for Youth in context within HF4Y emerging can be complicated because of the lack of partners and local practical experiences. We think that while being trained on training, training participants also took part in a HF4Y community that can help and support them on delivering training in emerging HF4Y contexts.

We can also note that, for trainers, delivering training is highly dependent on their organisations' willingness which is independent of the trainers and of the quality of the training.

How to improve such training?



Picture from the HF4Y Train-the-Trainer session, Lyon, 2023

Trainings are meant to evolve and improve to fit better trainers needs, contexts to reach the goal of strengthening trainers capacity to design and deliver training and participate to achieve systems change through Housing First and Housing First for Youth.

Staying in contact with the community of HF4Y trainers and conducting surveys 8-months after training helps us to draw lines to improve HF4Y trainings and how to train in HF4Y trainings.

Here are keys to improve Housing First for Youth trainings for trainers based on trainers experiences:

- Prior to the training, attendees should be asked to give information about their Housing First for Youth programmes. During the proper training session, presenting an overview of current HF4Y programmes and services would be an asset to allow trainers to better understand each participant's context and to do networking after the training with participants in their cohort. The overview on each participant's HF4Y programmes should include an explanation about the programme, about the context in which the programme is implemented, which partners and stakeholders are involved, how they make the model workable, how they retain houses and exemples of the services they provide.
- If the audience is trained to train for the first time, the training programme should be separated into two parts. A first part on Housing First for Youth core principles and concept, on systems change and could include a strategic planning work around building evidence to help trainees to advocate on HF4Y in their contexts. The second part of the training should focus more on how to deliver training, knowledge for HF4Y and how to deliver methodology and didactic inputs during a training session. This part should also focus on how to deliver for different audiences such as HF4Y services and support workers and HF4Y managers.
- An advanced level session on how to train trainers on Housing First for Youth is an asset for trainers and allows them to be more confident in delivering training, to improve their training skills and keep updated on informal education. The training material used during the training session should be flexible enough to be adapted by trainers to help them deliver their own training in their home context, with different language. Providing a skeleton for a training example could help trainers to start delivering their training.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

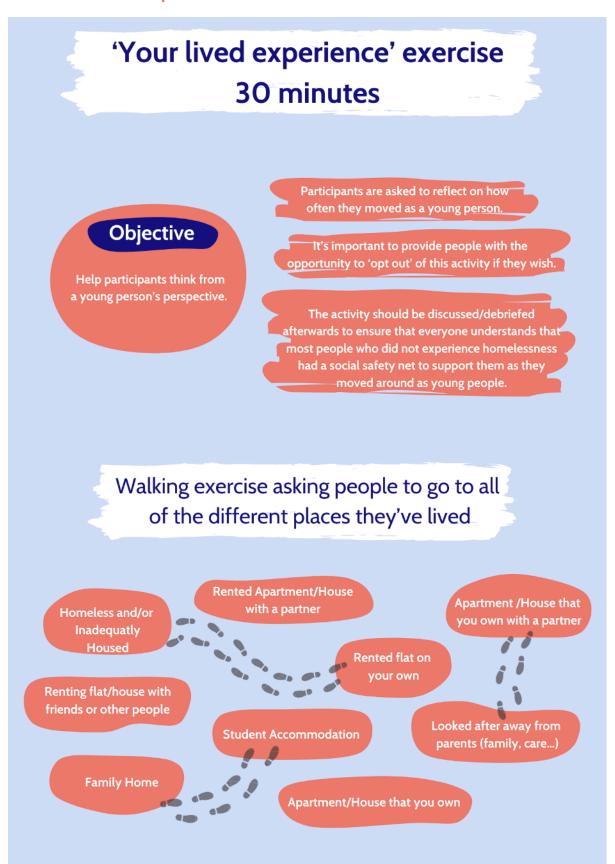
Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to all those who played a pivotal role in the success of this training guide, including the dedicated attendees, insightful feedback contributors, and the invaluable leadership provided during the training session. Your collective efforts have been crucial in shaping this comprehensive resource, and we look forward to its meaningful impact.



Picture from the HF4Y Train-the-Trainer session, Lyon, 2023

Annexes

Annex I- 'Your lived experience' exercice



Annex II- Team Building exercise

Swamp Team Building Exercise

15 min to plan, 30 minutes to cross and debrief

Material needed: a map of the swamp, squares on the floor to represent the swamp

Objective

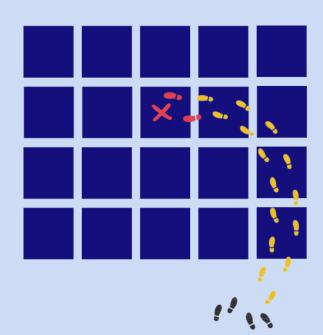
How to work as a team, to cooperate, to adapt startegy to the field and communicate non-verbally

After 15 minutes of setting up a stratgey, participants must cross the swamp one by one without speaking and without skip a square, i if the step is incorrect, the facilitator will make a noise and the entire group must restart the process of crossing

Debrief: How do you feel? How was the process?
What happen from the strategy design, who took initiative, who took responsibility, was there any cooperation, what roles were there who was/were the leaders (all in different moments)? what agreements to work together can we extract from this experience

Map of the swamp





Evaluation / Wrap Up activity 30 minutes Objective Ask the group to look at the statements/questions and reflect on whether they have been addressed Review the objectives and/or expectations from Day 1 with the group Discuss any outstanding questions/issues Mentimeter Mentimeter provides the group the chance to comment (anonymously) on aspects of the session. Do you feel you have a better Do you understand the core What 1 or 2 words would you use to understanding of Housing First for principles better than before this describe how you feel now? Youth? course? Ready to train In HF4Y community Not really Not really Yes

Write a letter to your future self

This is an excellent tool to help participants reflect on what they are taking away from the training session and to set themselves some goals for the future. These letters can be taken by the participants, or the trainers can agree to send them later.





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