

HELPING YOUTH IN A HOUSING CRISIS

Unaccompanied unstably housed, runaway, or homeless youth



1. CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Homelessness is a crisis and people who are experiencing it need to feel safe. Find a quiet place they feel safe to speak with you. Keep in mind they may have recently experienced trauma such as domestic abuse or sexual violence.



2. ACTIVELY LISTEN

Actively listen to their story by giving your full attention without judgement for their situation. Practice empathy and validate their challenging experiences. While listening, reflect back their strengths and other resources they might have in their lives to help them in this time of crisis.



3. UNDERSTAND

Don't assume what the young person needs - empower them to articulate their needs and share their ideas about solving their housing crisis. Guide them through thinking through their situation by asking open-ended questions.

Question Examples:

- Where did you stay this past week and why are you no longer able to stay there?
- Have you been in this situation before? If so, how did you get out of it?
- Do you have family or friends you can stay with?



4. HELP DEVELOP PLAN

Help them develop a plan to get housed. The plan needs to work for the youth - NOT for us. Be creative in problem solving and explore resources in the community that could help.

THE GOAL: To get them safely housed and connected to services they need.



If you are unable to identify a permanent and safe housing solution with the youth, then proceed to step 5.

5. Dial 2-1-1

Dial 2-1-1. Choose option #3, then option #1.

United Way's 2-1-1 is a one-stop connection to the local services; housing, utility assistance, food, child care, after school programs, elder care, crisis intervention and much more. Anyone seeking shelter in Connecticut should connect directly with 2-1-1 as this is the entry point into the state's homelessness response system.



This guide should be used to assist people who are encountering unaccompanied young people under 24 years old in a housing crisis. These partners to end youth homelessness include health centers, law enforcement, libraries, city and town offices, educational institutions, etc.

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