Connecting the Dots: Innovative Collaborations to Address Homelessness in Monterey County

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Learning Objectives

• Gain an understanding of the vision, development, and structure of the MDOT team.

• Learn ways to enhance the relationship between law enforcement and APS, ultimately resulting in better outcomes for both housed and homeless seniors and dependent adults.

• Learn about the vision, development and structure of Monterey County’s Navigator University, in order to implement similar collaborative efforts in their communities.

• Identify lessons learned and next steps for the MDOT model, as well as Navigator University
MISSION:
To empower and serve the aging population and persons living with disabilities to live safely and with dignity.
“Silver Tsunami”–The number of Americans over the age of 80 is expected to double in the next 20 years.

Adults born in the second half of the “baby boom” (1955–1965) have a “sustained elevation” in their risk of experiencing homelessness. As this population ages, so does the average age of the homeless population.

The number of homeless people over the age of 65 is forecast to increase by 2.5 to 3 times from 2017 to 2030.

Medical Age–Older homeless adults experience geriatric medical conditions (like cognitive decline and decreased mobility) at rates equal to housed adults who are 20 years older.

“Older Homeless Adults: Can We Do More?” Kushel; Journal of General Internal Medicine, 2011.

Challenges facing homeless adults

- Inability to control or alter environment
- Lack of reliable information about or access to benefits
- Increased medical problems, mental health concerns and substance abuse
- Limited access to health care
- Lack of transportation
- Communication challenges
- Increased risk of abuse
- Increased legal issues
Before MDOT: Problems/Needs

- Frequent police contact with homeless individuals with ineffective or only punitive means to respond
- Limited knowledge of services for homeless by PD
- “Silo-ing” and lack of coordination between service providers and other agencies
- Encountered increasing issues of homelessness, along with substance abuse, mental illness and other concerns
Mission/Objectives

History and Development
- Leadership – Monterey PD Asst. Chief Bill Clark
- Homeless Exchange formed
- CAT (Community Action Team) Officers role evolved
- City Liaison Meeting
- Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team (MDOT) formed
MDOT Structure

MDOT Members
- Monterey PD CAT Officers
- Adult Protective Services Social Worker
- Monterey County Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Psychiatric Social Worker
- Montage Health/Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula (CHOMP) Community Outreach Social Worker
- YWCA Domestic Violence Advocate
Adult Protective Services Role

- History and Development of APS Role
  - Participated in Homeless Exchange meetings
  - Outreach with Officers after Homeless Exchange meetings
  - Monterey PD Co-Location Pilot
  - Built on Co-Location Model with MDOT Creation
What Does MDOT Do?

- Homeless Outreach
  - Homeless Camps and Other Locations
- Team response to urgent needs of homeless clients
- Service Coordination
  - Between MDOT Members
  - With Other Social Service Agencies
- Community Meetings
- Inform Law Enforcement Response
What Does MDOT Do?

- What Does This Look Like Day to Day?
  - APS Perspective
  - Law Enforcement Perspective
- What Makes MDOT Work?
  - Leadership
  - Developing Inter-Agency Relationships
  - Building Collaboration
  - Culture of the Team
Monterey County APS Reports 2010–2018
323% Increase
Monterey County Homeless APS Reports 2010–2018
3,750% Increase

Homeless Adult Protective Services Reports
Calendar Years
2010-2018
APS Statistics

During an almost 2-year period from May 2017–April 2019:
• 360 visits completed with individuals who were homeless and/or who met APS criteria
  • 59 new APS referrals generated
  • 119 visits with clients with open APS cases
• 380 hours total at PD, an average of 5 hours/week of active collaboration.

Analysis of visits completed May 2017–July 2018:
• 22% were homeless APS clients
• 43% were homeless individuals who did not meet APS criteria, provided with resource information and referrals as appropriate
• 35% were APS clients with housing
Benefits of MDOT

For Adult Protective Services:

• Improved outreach to homeless clients
• Increased collaboration with law enforcement and other agencies to address needs of homeless and housed APS clients
• Stronger inter-agency working relationships (MDT)
• Better understanding of APS role and limitations by agency partners
Benefits of MDOT

For Monterey Police Department:

• Tools to address the needs of homeless individuals and causes of homelessness
• Increased collaboration and coordination with homeless service providers and other agencies
• Better understanding of agency partner’s roles and limitations
• More positive relationships and interactions with the homeless community
Benefits of MDOT

For the Community:

• Compassionate Community Policing
• More resources and focus brought to addressing the needs of the homeless community
• Increased collaboration results in better outcomes for homeless individuals, resulting in cost savings in areas such as healthcare, law enforcement, etc.
• Generates positive word of mouth in the homeless community and makes it more likely for people to seek services
Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Law enforcement/service agencies must be able to respond quickly and in a coordinated way when an individual is willing/ready to accept help.
- Services may need to be offered many times before they are accepted, if at all.
- Consistency builds trust in the homeless community and positive word of mouth that leads to others being willing to accept or request help.
Challenges and Lessons Learned

Important Factors

• Culture of the Police Department
  • Leadership
  • Willingness to devote resources to address homelessness
• Culture of APS
  • Leadership/Management
  • Proactive Outreach
  • Understanding that homeless clients require additional work and time
• Skills of the APS Worker
  • Interest/experience working with homeless
  • Ability to work independently and build positive inter-agency relationships
  • Creativity and willingness to go the extra mile to assist clients
History

○ Fawn saw a growing need for development of a means for sharing updated resources for homeless service providers

○ September 2017 Elder Justice Summit on Homelessness among Elders and Disabled Adults
  • Breakout Workgroup – Fawn proposed Navigator University

○ Planning committee (APS and Gathering for Women) met and organized a pilot within a few months

Purpose

○ Provide training and resources for “navigators” to assist homeless clients to move from homeless to housed
Navigator University

- **Pilot**
  - First Navigator University launched in April 2018
  - 6–10 trainees attended each session
  - 6 weekly sessions, 2 hours each
  - Fawn created brief assessment forms for trainees
  - Collected pre- and post-surveys

- **Response**
  - Pre- and post-surveys showed an 89% increase in skills and knowledge amongst trainees
  - Trainees’ feedback was very positive and suggested expanding the pilot to be held every year
Navigator University

Expansion
- Led by APS Intern Clara Vargas
- March 2019 Navigator University
- 4 weekly sessions of 4 hours each
- Increased class size and fully enrolled 30 trainees from several different agencies/disciplines, including law enforcement

Response
- Positive feedback from attendees
- Law enforcement officer stated that every officer should attend the training and that he planned to bring more officers the following year
Next Steps

MDOT

- Expand the MDOT team to include other agencies and services
- Expand MDOT model to other Monterey County law enforcement jurisdictions
  - Salinas PD has created a Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) based on the Monterey PD model that has begun meeting to address needs of homeless individuals in the Chinatown neighborhood, which has a high prevalence of homelessness, substance abuse, and other issues.
  - Other Monterey Peninsula jurisdictions have expressed interest in developing an MDOT model.

Navigator University

- Continue refining and offering Navigator University on an annual basis to increase the skills and resources of those serving the homeless
Ways to Build Your Own MDOT

- Build/Strengthen Relationships with Law Enforcement
  - Share the success of MDOT with your local law enforcement
  - Contact us/refer law enforcement to Monterey PD to discuss MDOT
  - Connect face to face with law enforcement
    - Request a meeting with leadership
    - Use cross reports as an entry point
    - Ask to go on a ride-along
  - Work closely with and follow up with officers on shared cases, provide feedback and assistance
  - Open communication/responsiveness – provide your direct work contact information for questions/consultation
  - Offer to provide social services outreach to homeless individuals regularly encountered by officers
  - Attend a Citizen’s Academy or similar program to learn the culture of the agency and get to know officers and leadership
QUESTIONS?