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Guest Editor: Christine Helfrich, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

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|-------------|--|
| Mon 11/16 | OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: The Medically Complex Client
Simone Gill, PhD, OTR/L, Christine Helfrich, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Danny Shin, OTR/L |
| Tues 11/17 | OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Adolescents in Group Homes
Joanna Stumper, MS, OTR/L |
| Wed 11/18 | OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Promoting School Participation, A Trauma-Informed Approach
Amanda M. Rodriguez, OTD, MOT, OTR/L |
| Thurs 11/19 | OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Persons Experiencing Homelessness
Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH |
| Fri 11/20 | OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Older Adults
Elizabeth Alicea Torres, MS, OTR/L |

OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L BCMH
Thursday November 19, 2020

Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH

Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L is an occupational therapist with clinical experience in working with adults experiencing homelessness to improve quality of life and engagement in their preferred communities. She has completed clinical research to address the intersection of homelessness, poverty, traumatic brain injury, mental health, and chronic conditions, and their impact on health and community living. Caitlin's experience also includes program development for collaborative and interdisciplinary care, as well as clinical education and training for occupational therapy practitioners, health care and direct service providers. Most recently, she has joined the National Health Care for the Homeless Council as the program manager for Medical Respite to support expansion and best practices in medical respite care.



Presenter Disclosure

- Financial: Caitlin Synovec has received an honorarium for presenting this course. Non-financial: Caitlin Synovec has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.
- Content Disclosure: This learning event does not focus exclusively on any specific product or service.
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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- 1 Identify the impact of Covid-19 on persons experiencing homelessness.
- 2 Identify roles of occupational therapy in addressing the impact of Covid-19 on occupational performance in persons experiencing homelessness.
- 3 Identify strategies and/or resources to address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness in response to Covid-19.

Introduction



Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH

Program Manager - National Institute for Medical Respite Care

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L is an occupational therapist with clinical experience in working with adults experiencing homelessness to improve quality of life and engagement in their preferred communities. She has completed clinical research to address the intersection of homelessness, poverty, traumatic brain injury, mental health, and chronic conditions, and their impact on health and community living. Caitlin's experience also includes program development for collaborative and interdisciplinary care, as well as clinical education and training for occupational therapy practitioners, health care and direct service providers. Most recently, she has joined the National Health Care for the Homeless Council as the program manager for Medical Respite to support expansion and best practices in medical respite care.

Introduction



Shams DaBaron

“Da Homeless Hero”

- “I’m an advocate for the invisible, vulnerable, and voiceless population that is housing insecure.”
- Resident of men’s congregate shelter in New York City and client of Project Renewal.

Facebook: Da HomelessHero

Instagram and Twitter: @DaHomelessHero

Covid-19 and Impact on Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Congregate and shelter facilities limit ability to follow social distancing guidelines

Persons experiencing homelessness may need to more frequently occupy public spaces

Persons experiencing homelessness have complex co-morbidities that increase health and mortality risks associated with Covid-19

Persons experiencing homelessness have limited access to preventative and regular health services

Limited access to supplies

*“We have
no place to
quarantine”*



Covid-19 Occupational Deprivation and Marginalization & Homelessness

Occupational deprivation is a 'state in which people are precluded from opportunities to engage in [activities] of meaning due to factors outside their control'

Occupational marginalization is the injustice seen when everyday options or choices are not available to every member of the society or community.

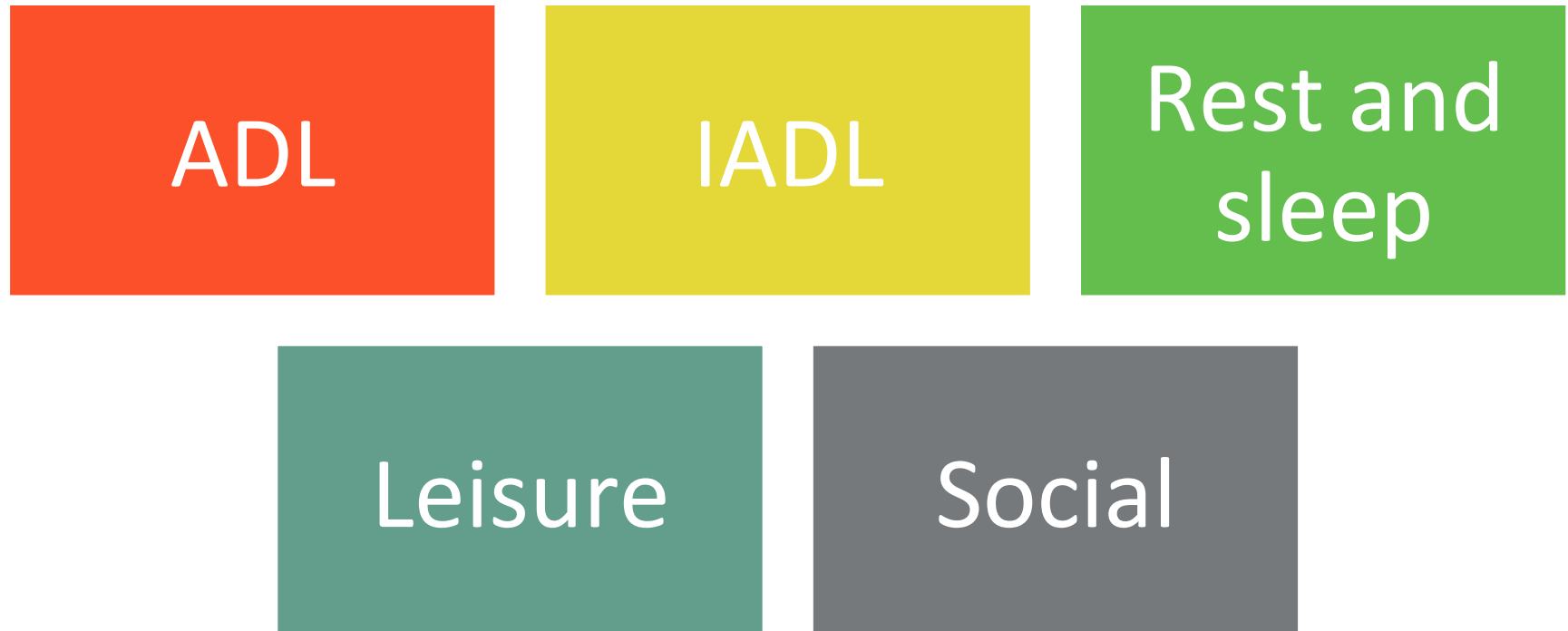
(Whiteford 2000, p.200)

Persons experiencing homelessness face occupational deprivation and marginalization at baseline –

Now exacerbated by risk of Covid-19 and required lock-downs

(Marshall et al., 2017; Schultz-Krohn & Tyminski, 2018)

Occupational Deprivation through the Lens of the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework v. 4

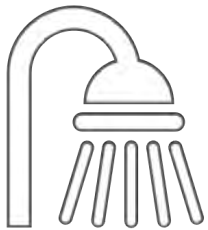


*“We don’t
even have
soap in
there.”*



Occupational Deprivation

Activities of Daily Living (ADL)



Closure of day and drop-in centers resulted in having no space to complete ADLs



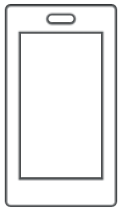
No public restroom access restricts toileting and ability to wash hands

Occupational Deprivation

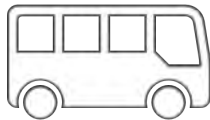
Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)



Inability to access meals



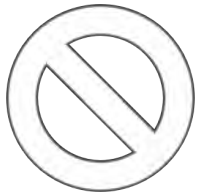
Communication requiring resources
(phone & data, internet services)



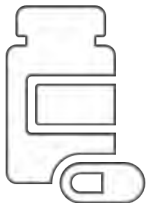
Less access to public resources
(WiFi at local libraries; transportation)

Occupational Deprivation

IADL: Health



Clinic closures, limited hours



Pharmacy limited hours and running out of supplies



May have lost storage space/location for medication and health supplies

Occupational Deprivation

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living



Limited ability to respond effectively to safety guidelines (e.g. isolation with symptoms)



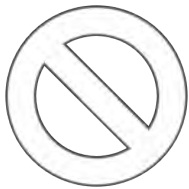
Delays and difficulty in processing paperwork for benefits and income



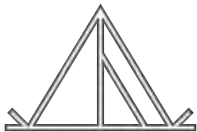
Unemployment and decreased work opportunities

Occupational Deprivation

Rest and Sleep



Limited access to day centers and day shelters



Closure of shelters and sleeping locations



Chronic stress impacting ability to sleep

Occupational Deprivation

Leisure



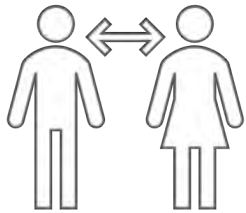
Limited access to leisure to engage in during isolation



Lack of access to community resources for leisure engagement

Occupational Deprivation

Social Participation



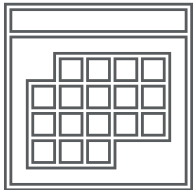
Limited social interaction



Community isolation and discrimination

Occupational Deprivation

Routines



No longer able to follow reliable or predictable routines



Unable to complete even routine daily activities

Occupational Therapy Intervention and Advocacy to Address Occupational Deprivation & Marginalization

Client-centered
Client priorities



What do
you want
OTs to
know?



Creating a Safe Space

Physically Safe

- Implementation of strategies for safety and following precautions
- Providing education on resources
- Educating on how to find information

Emotionally safe

- Check-in with clients in how they're feeling and what they need
- Able to process feelings associated with anxiety, stress, and trauma

Address own trauma and anxiety from situation

Validating the Covid Experience

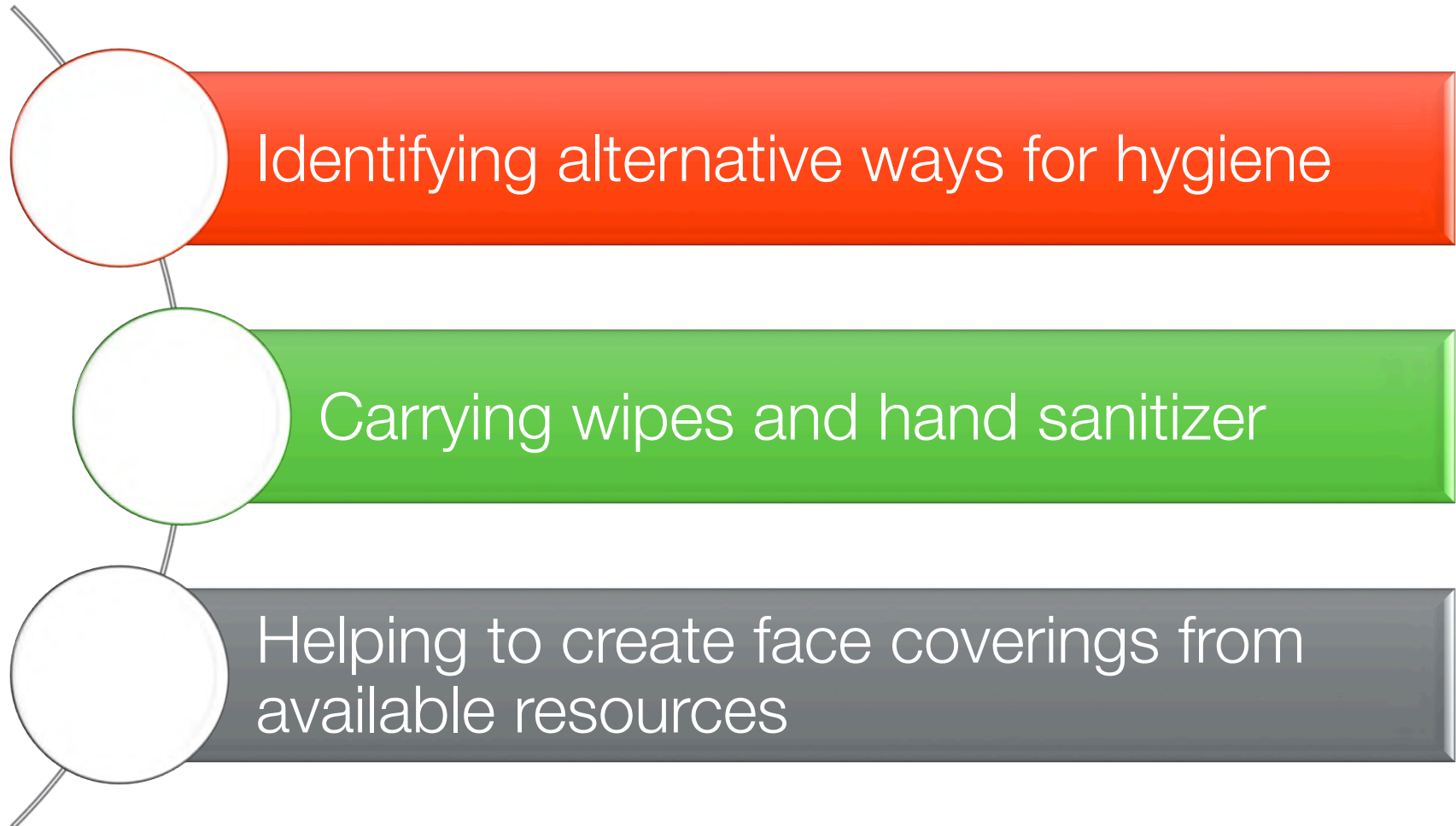
Validation of loss:

- Loss of resources
- Loss of activities
- Loss of social relationships and supports

Validation of fears:

- Risk of Covid-19
- Social and political upheaval and re-traumatization

ADLs: Compensatory Strategies



Identifying Resources



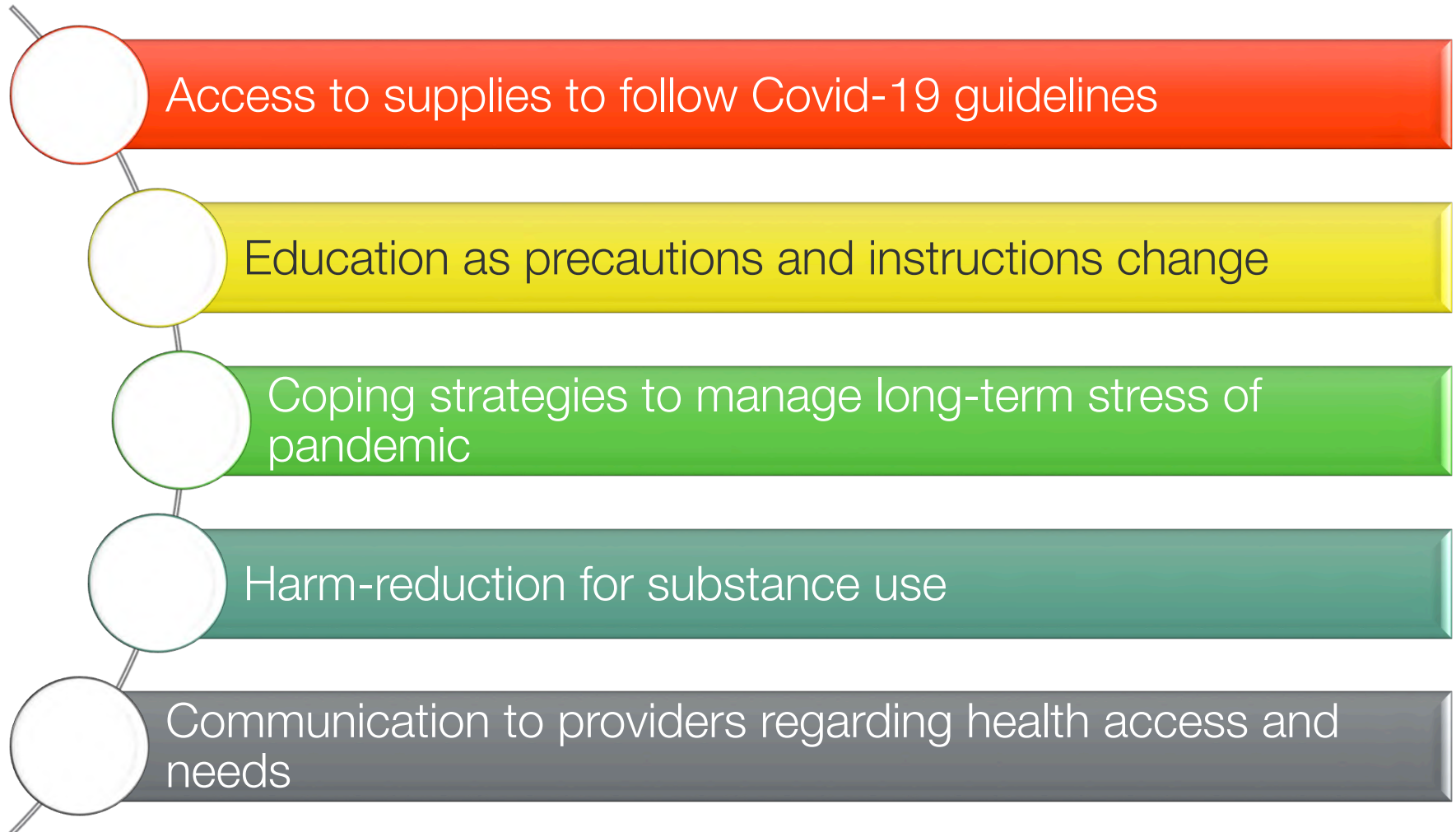
Establishing New Routines



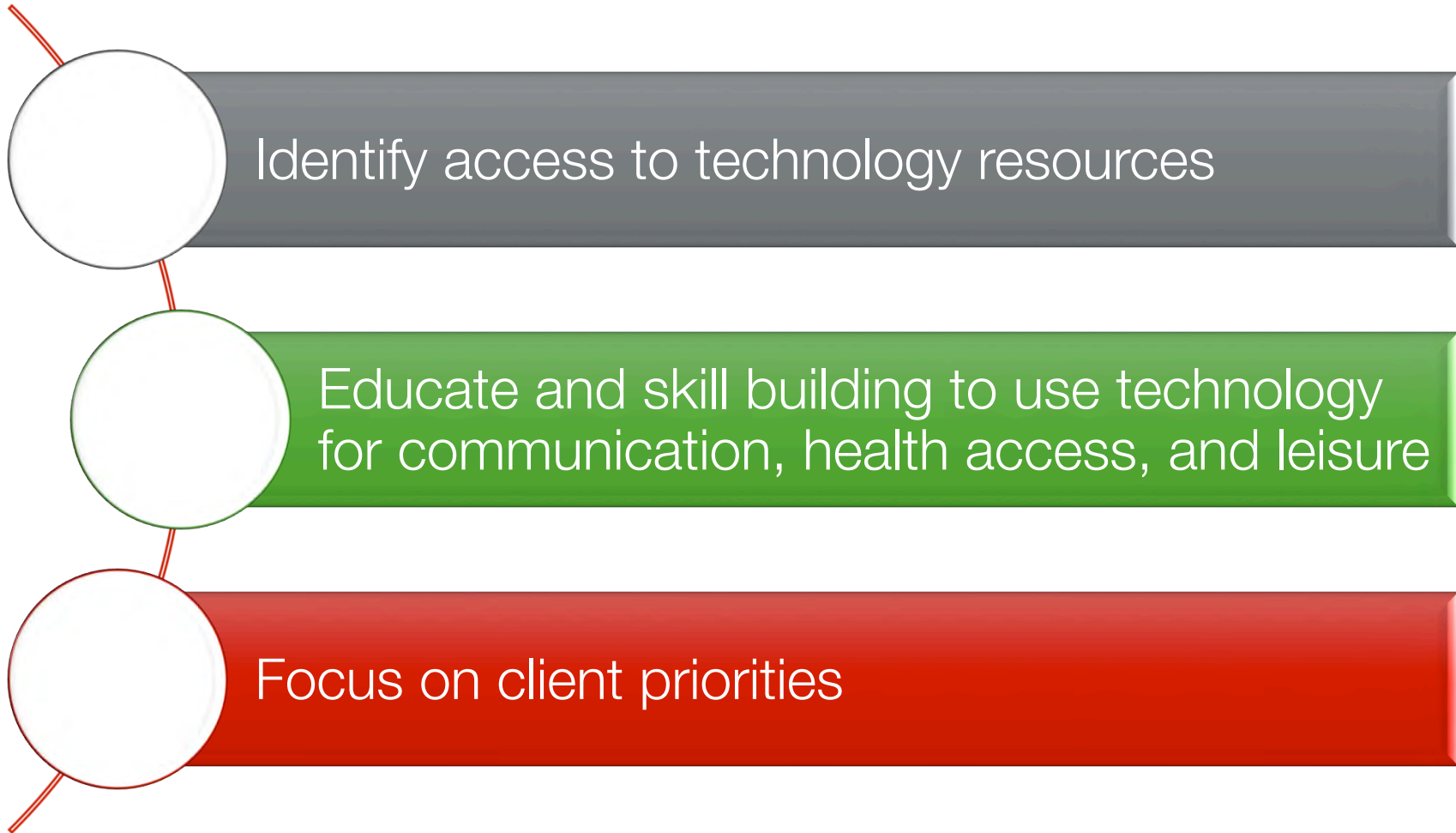
“I do have
the support
systems”



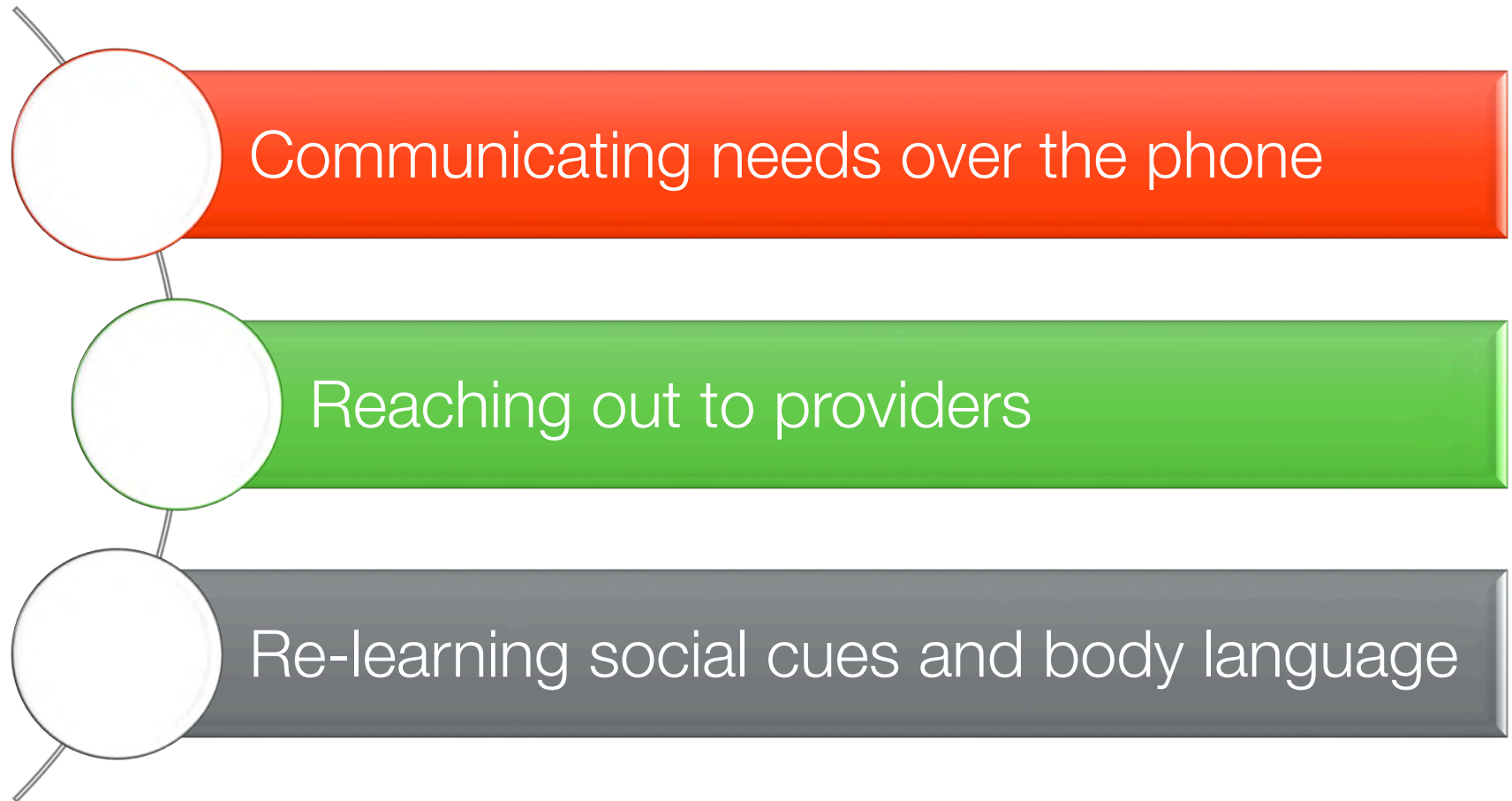
Health Management



Technology Use



Communication



Leisure

Activity packets – client centered

Provision of supplies to engage in activities

Education on safe activities (e.g. walks outside)

Activities while waiting transition and Covid-19 testing

Social



Self-Advocacy



Recovery from Covid



Shams' Covid-19 Experience

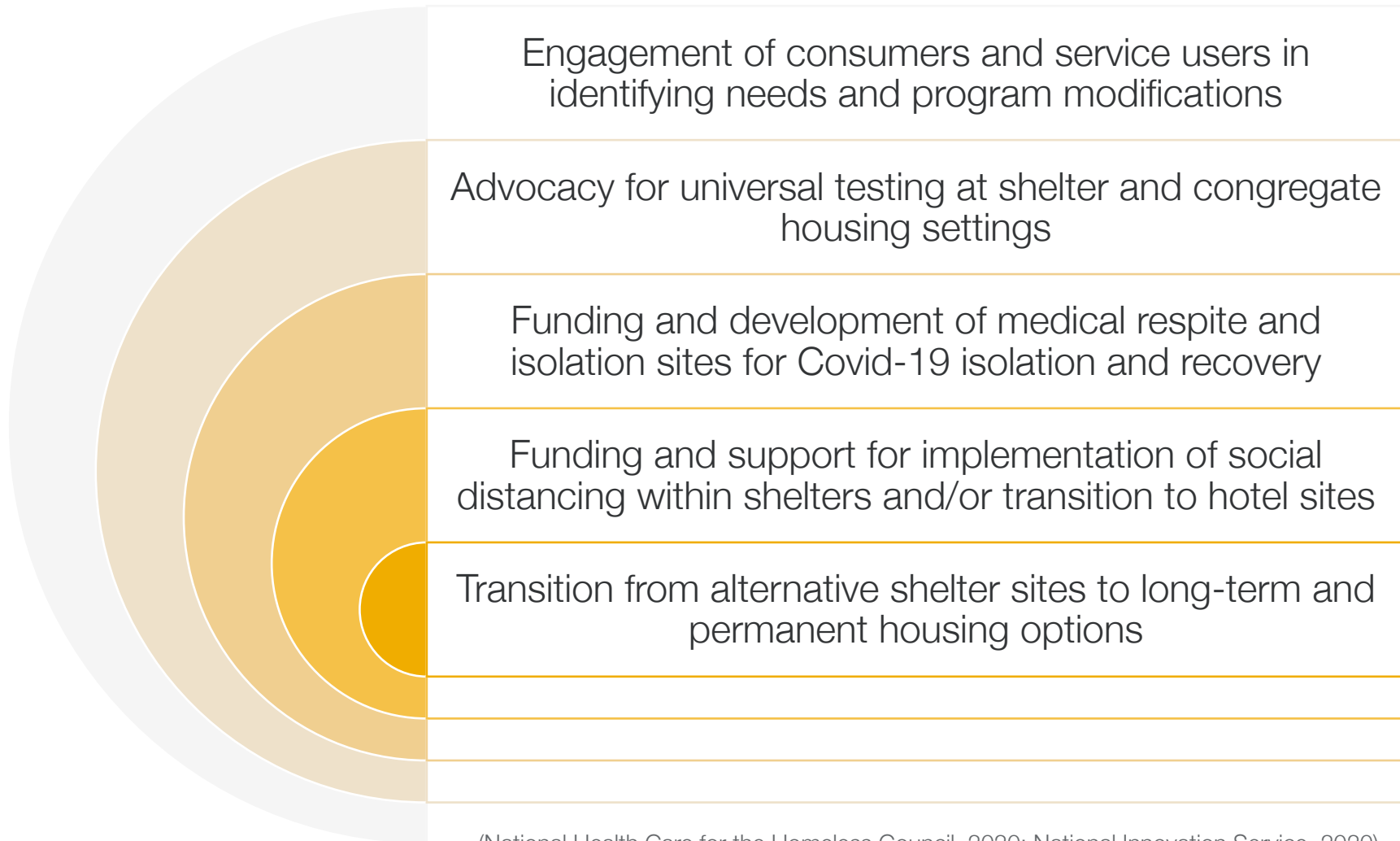


and recovery

death experience

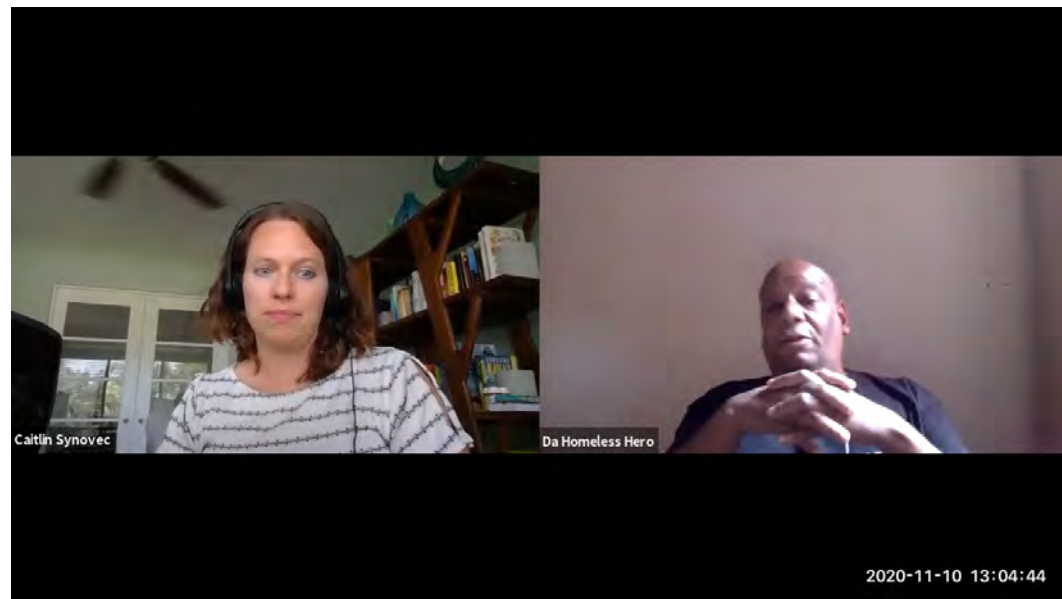
in 21 day stay due to
symptoms

Occupational Therapy Advocacy

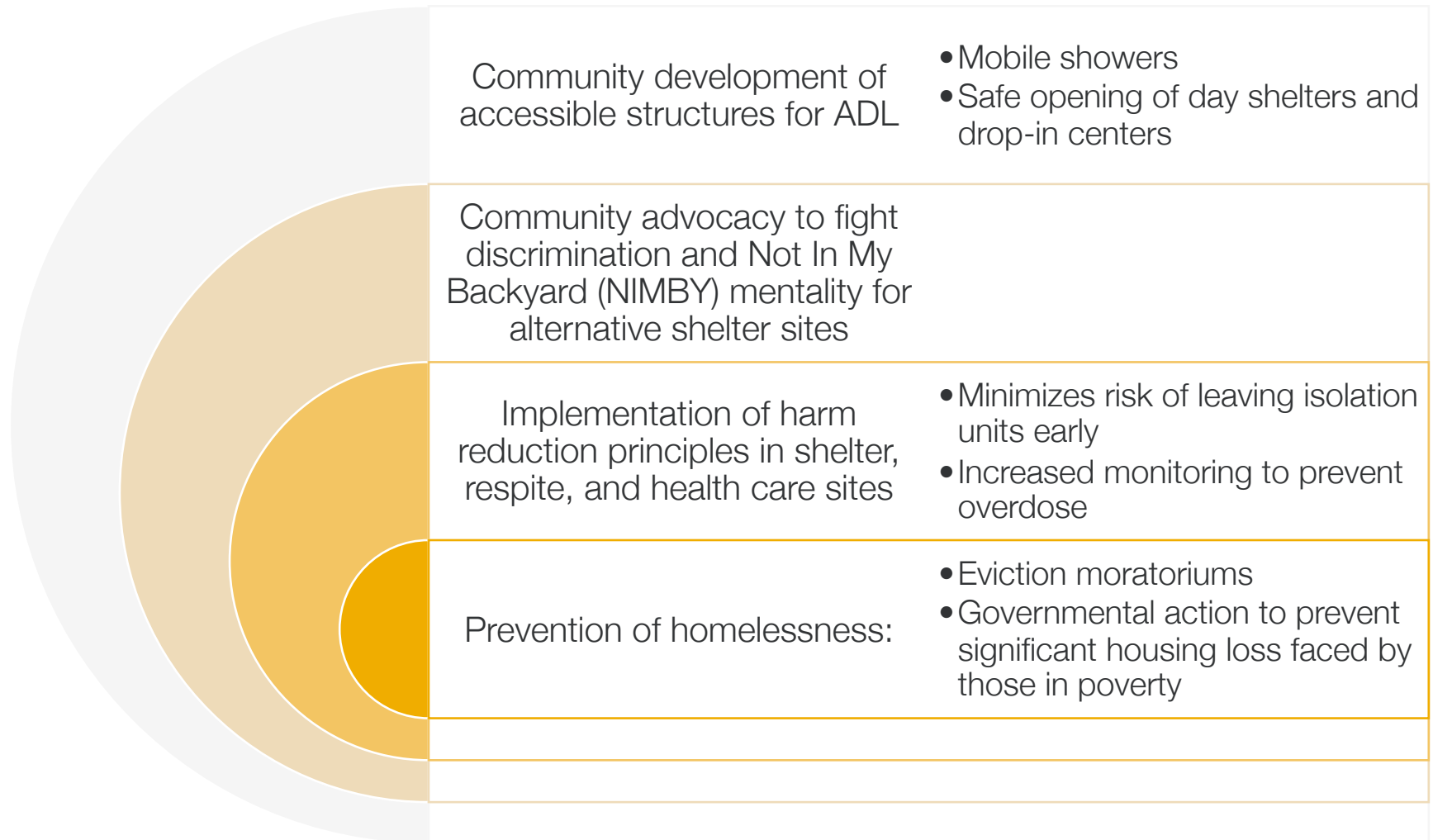


(National Health Care for the Homeless Council, 2020; National Innovation Service, 2020)

Harm reduction



Occupational Therapy Advocacy



“Continue
to do
what
you’re
doing”

2020-11-10 13:35:16

Resources

National Health Care for the Homeless Council Covid-19 Webpage:
<https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/>

American Psychological Association – Coping with Isolation and Covid-19
<https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/social-distancing>

AOTA Covid-19 FAQs for Working with Clients:
<https://www.aota.org/Practice/Health-Wellness/COVID19/clients-faq.aspx>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):
www.nami.org/covid-19

Resources

Racial Equity Tools – Racial Equity and Social Justice Resources:

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/resource-lists/resources-addressing-covid-19-with-racial-equity-lens>

National Innovation Service –
The Framework for an Equitable Covid Response

<https://www.nis.us/covid-19-response-introduction>

Learn more about the experience of the men at the Lucerne:

- What Happened When Homeless Men Moved into a Liberal Neighborhood:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/nyregion/uws-homeless-hotels-nyc.html>
- Project Renewal and Lucerne Hotel:
<https://www.projectrenewal.org/lucerne>
- Follow Da Homeless Hero on social media

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Questions?

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