# Chosen Family Hosting

Investing in the Adults Already in Young People's Lives

Mallory VanMeeter | University of Wisconsin-Madison

Jacqueline White | CloseKnit

What words come to mind when you think of couch hopping or doubling up?

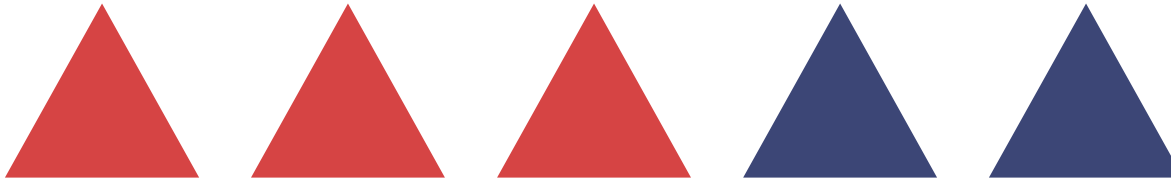If you needed a place to stay, where would you have gone?

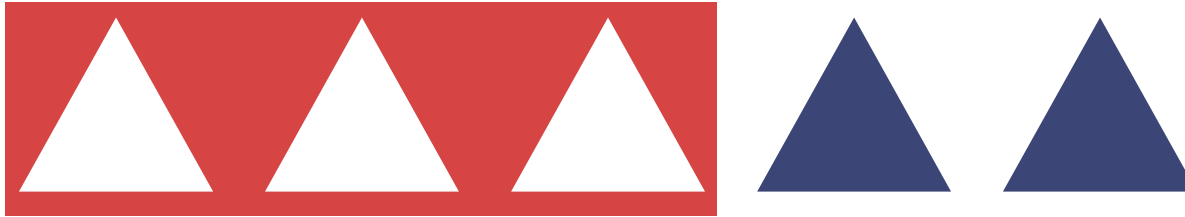# Reframing informal shared housing

# What do we know about informal shared housing?



Over three in five young adults ages 18 to 25 facing homelessness reported couch surfing over the course of a year

From the Voices of Youth Count U.S. national estimates (Curry et al., 2017)

# What do we know about informal shared housing?



At least some of these youth stay with a trusted adult or chosen family.

From a Midwest U.S. study of youth in informal shared housing and their hosts (Curry et al., 2021)

"I think the big thing was, like—I get goose bumps just thinking about it—including me in family, like, I had a family."

*Annie, youth participant*

From a Midwest U.S. study of youth in informal shared housing and their hosts (Curry et al., 2021)

# What do we know about informal shared housing?
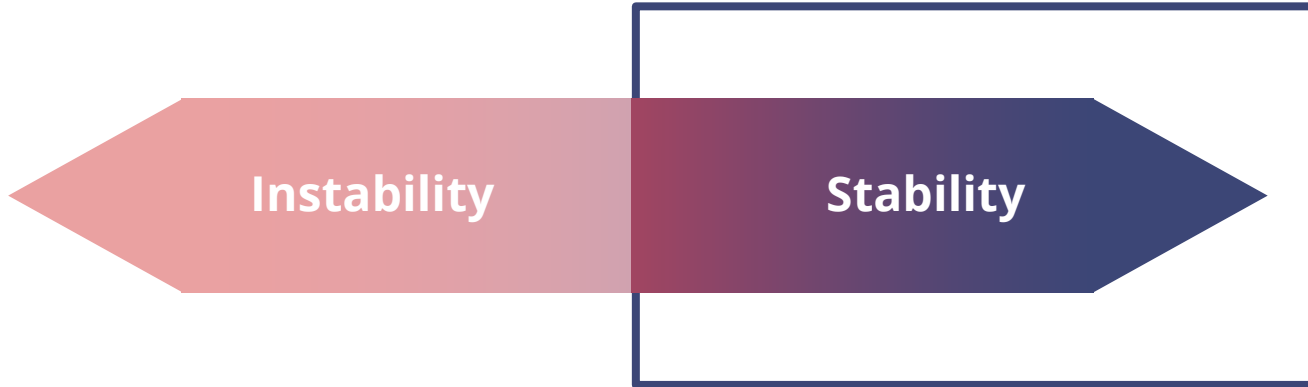


Instability ← → Stability

# What do we know about informal shared housing?

# What do we know about informal shared housing?

# What are the barriers to stability in informal hosting arrangements?

# What are the barriers to stability in informal hosting arrangements?

Material and interpersonal challenges

From a Midwest U.S. study of youth in informal shared housing and their hosts (VanMeeter et al., 2022)

# What are the barriers to stability in informal hosting arrangements?

Material and interpersonal challenges

Structural barriers

From a Midwest U.S. study of youth in informal shared housing and their hosts (VanMeeter et al., 2022)

# The chosen family hosting model

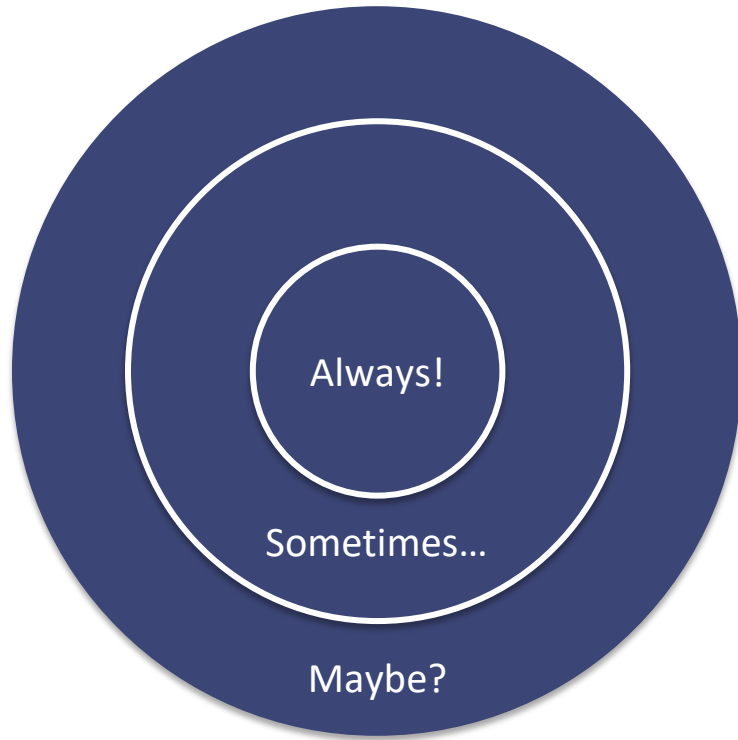Consider the story of one informal host, "Geralyn," and her nephew.

# How can we help support and stabilize chosen family hosting?

Identify and strengthen
permanent connections

# Who's there for me?

# Who's not in my circle?

Always!

Sometimes...

Maybe?

CLOSEKNIT

# How can we help support and stabilize chosen family hosting?

Identify and strengthen
permanent connections

# How can we help support and stabilize chosen family hosting?

Identify and strengthen permanent connections

Resource and support informal hosting arrangements

Monthly stipend

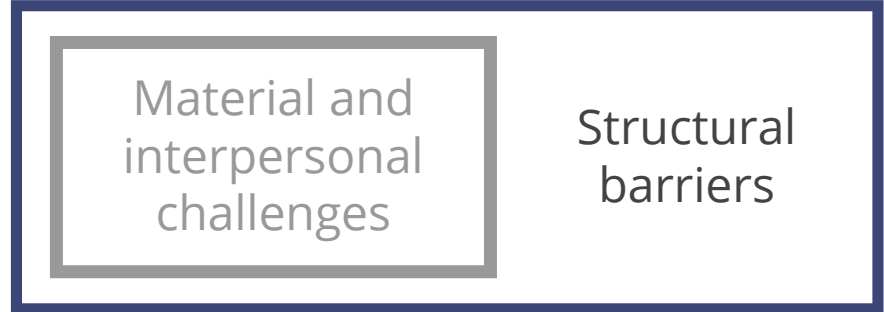Shared housing agreement

Case coaching

# How can we help support and stabilize chosen family hosting?

Identify and strengthen permanent connections

Resource and support informal hosting arrangements

**Advocacy for policy and systems change**

Material and interpersonal challenges

Structural barriers

We need to redesign policy and public systems to strengthen, rather than destabilize, chosen family hosting.

**Resources**

WHEN A RENTER IS HOSTING A YOUTH UNDER THE RADAR…
**How to Decide to
Continue Under the Radar?
Or Come Above Board?**

**Policy Proposals**
"Good Neighbor" Pre-Eviction Grace Period

https://closeknit.us**/chosen-family-justice/**

# Reach out!

Mallory VanMeeter  |  vanmeeter@wisc.edu

Jacqueline White  |  jw@closeknit.us