



A Functional Whole-person Care Approach in Homeless Women's Post-Shelter Transitions

By

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Myrna Rose, ex-Logifem resident, Woman with Lived Experience

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Learning objectives and what's to come

Audience members will be able to explain the functional whole-person care approach and its benefits for women in their post-shelter transition.

Specifically:

1. Identifying the **gap** in post-shelter services.
2. Describing the **functional whole-person care approach** provided by occupational therapists, as well as why we would use it.
3. Detailing the role of the **occupational therapist** in the community setting.
4. **Applying the concepts** described to a real situation with Myrna.

My Background

- Clinical occupational therapist who worked at Logifem, a shelter for women and their children in situations of homelessness.
- PhD student at McGill University looking to improve supports for women having left a shelter.

Programs offered at Logifem

1 year: shelter for women and their children



3 years: Transitional apartments

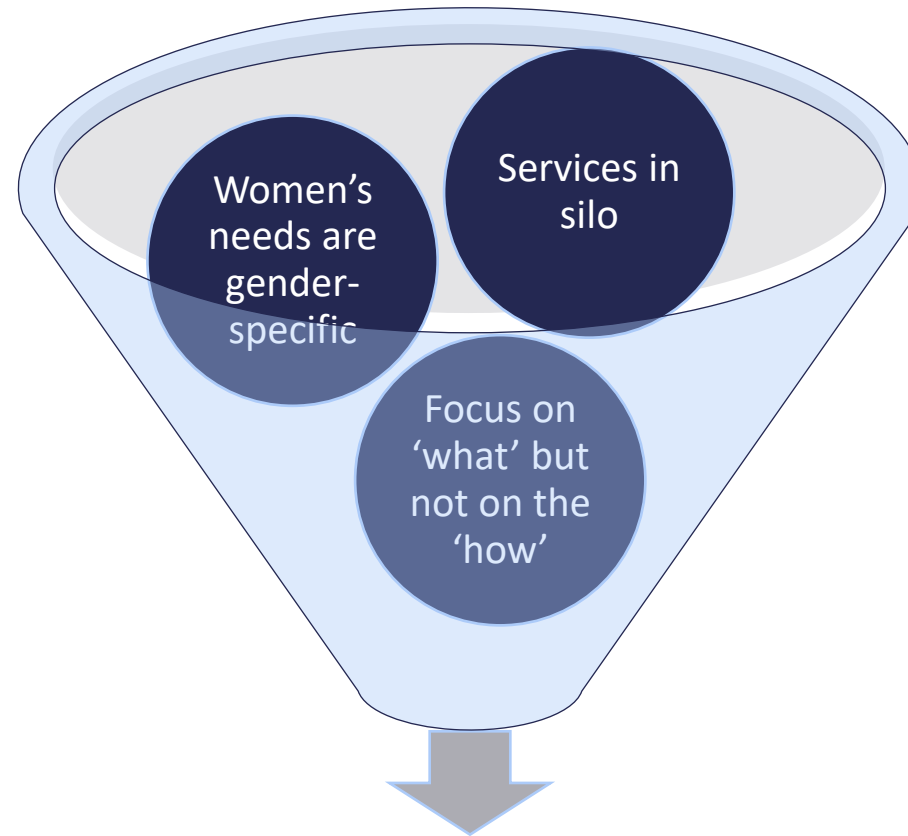


1.5 years: Post-shelter support program

Let's Meet Myrna



The Post-shelter Service Gap for Women



Loss of function in everyday living can lead to housing instability and cyclical homelessness

The Post-
shelter Service
Gap for
Women

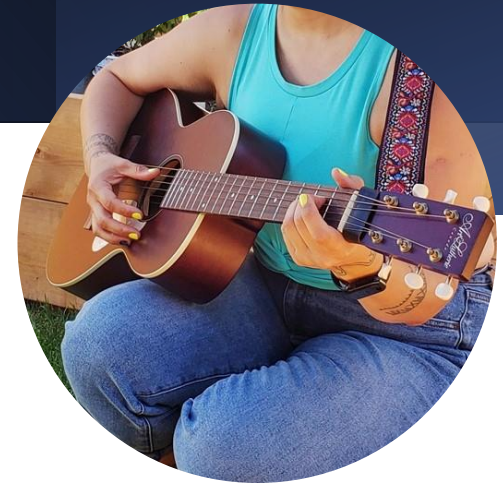
Tools given to women are
inadequate to overcome
functional difficulties
encountered.

“Women arrive into homelessness with their trust broken”

“Not taking the time to really understand women’s
difficulties, experiences, and feelings, and how it can affect
everything they do can lead to intervention that isn’t right
for them.”

-Myrna

The Functional Whole Person-Care Approach Used in Occupational Therapy



Goal-focused, top-
down from activity
approach



Meaningful activities
Functional living

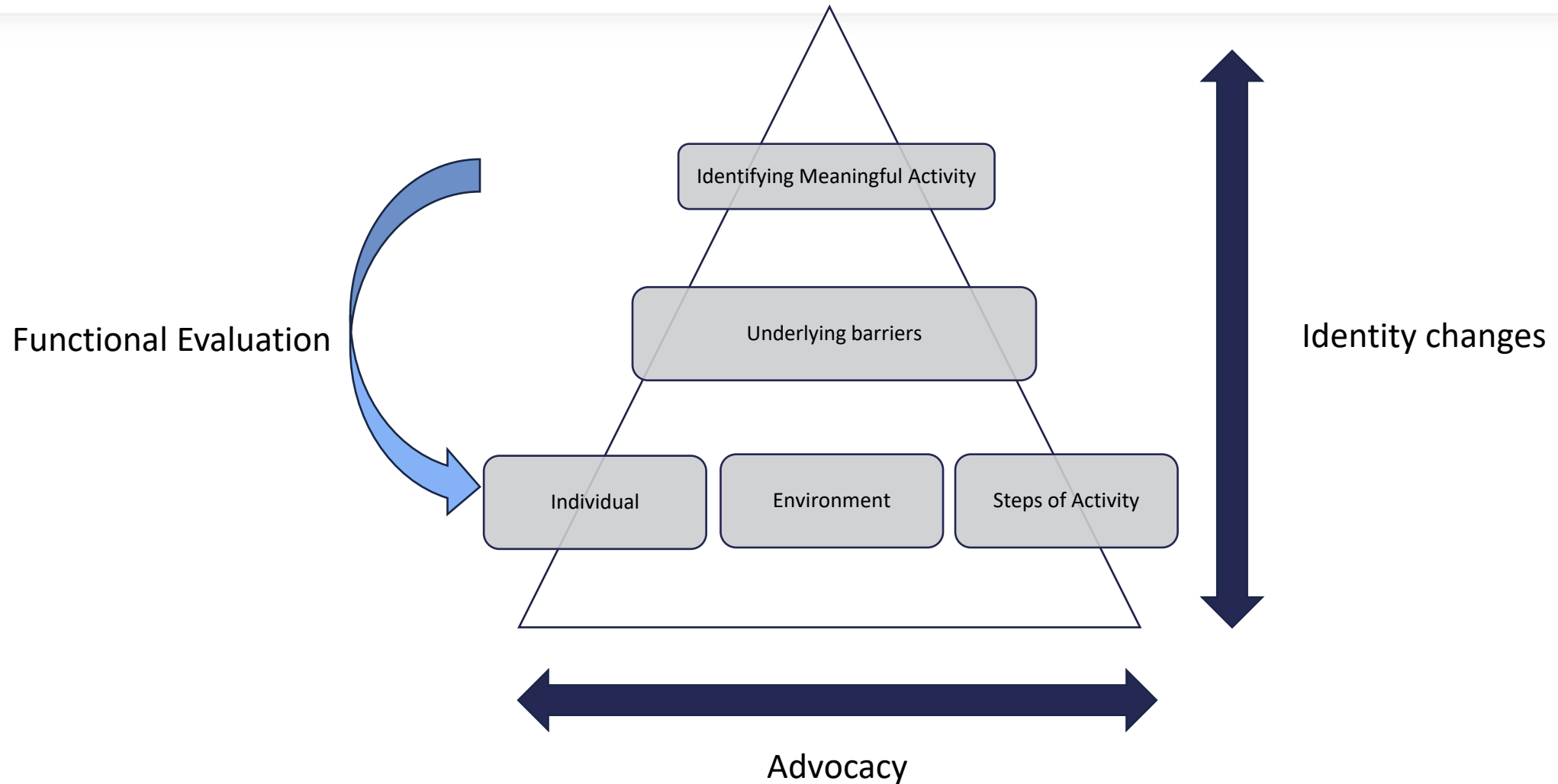
The Functional Whole Person-Care Approach Used in Occupational Therapy

Improving function by:

1. Identifying meaningful activity
2. Identifying underlying barriers
3. Changing identities to promote engagement and sense of purpose
4. Advocacy beyond the individual using functional evaluation

The Functional Whole Person-Care Approach

Breaking Down the Activity



Benefits of the Functional Whole-Person Care Approach

“Occupational therapy can identify difficulties that other workers cannot see to help a person get better faster to then training the skills and tools for everyday life, which makes a person feel more understood.” - Myrna



Myrna's experience





Continuum of care



Shelter



Transitional
Apartment



Autonomous
living

At The Shelter

Meaningful activity: Living with others, connecting with self again, shelter tasks

Task breakdown:

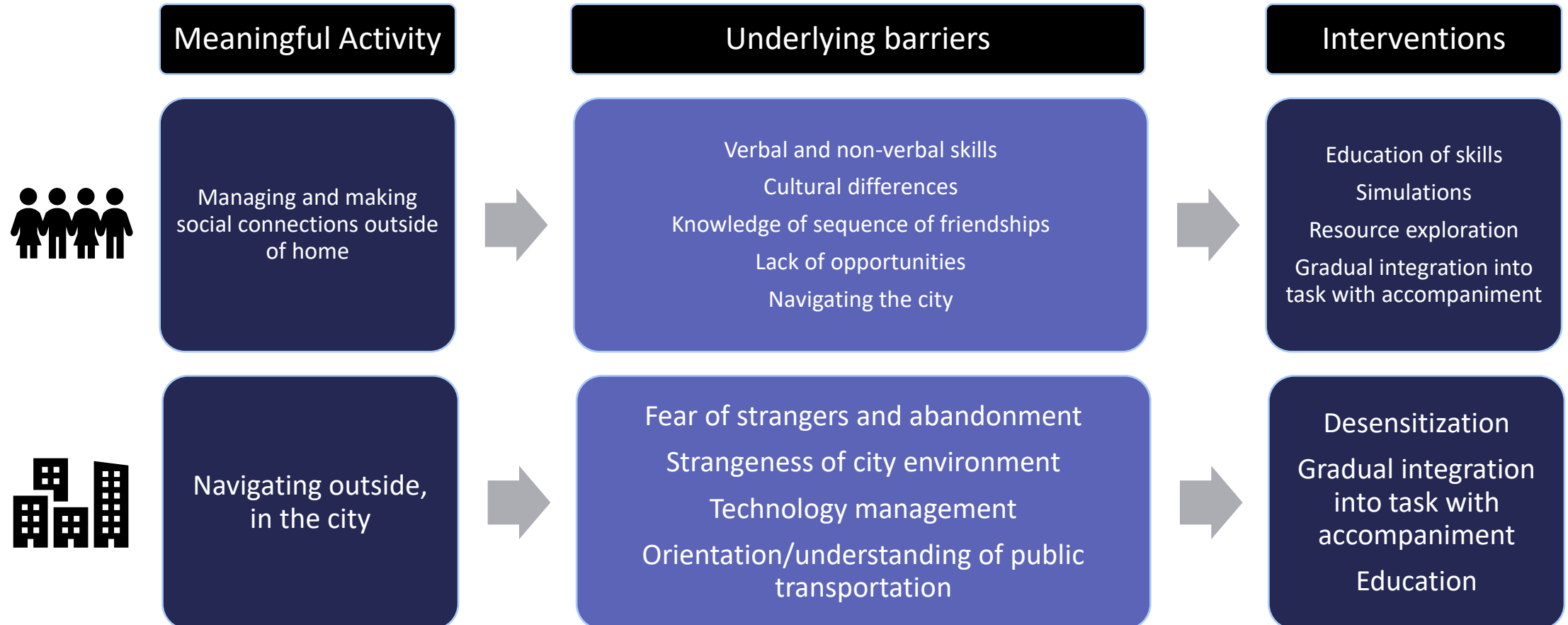
- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Emotional management
- Contributing nature of activities

Intervention:

- Grading collaborative activities
- Grading identity exploring activities
- Grading stress managing activities



Transitional Apartments/Autonomous Living





Transitional Apartments/Autonomous Living

Meaningful Activity

Managing and keeping home (home activities and employment)



Underlying barriers

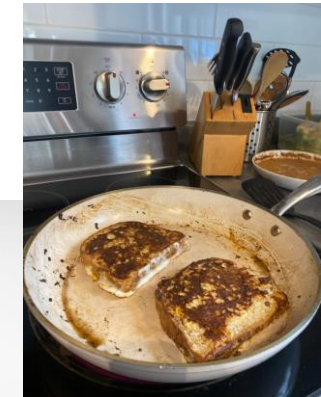
Work instability
Diabetes mismanagement
Lack of finance, meal preparation, and grocery shopping skills



CNESST

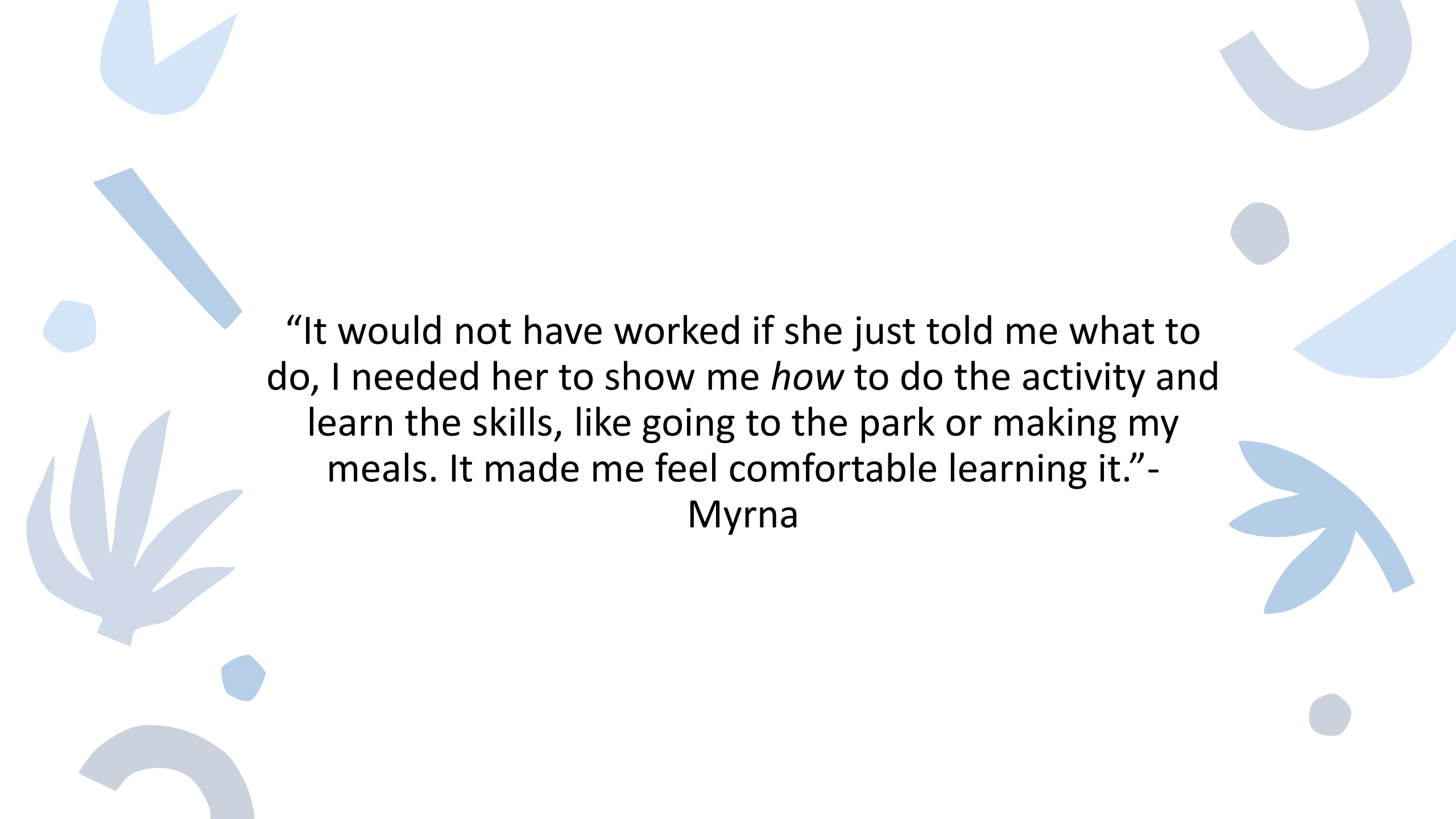
Interventions

Pain management program
Work task adaptations
Advocacy and navigation of health systems
Advocacy and navigation of workers' rights
Simulations
Task accompaniment



How does Myrna feel now after all the work we did together?





“It would not have worked if she just told me what to do, I needed her to show me *how* to do the activity and learn the skills, like going to the park or making my meals. It made me feel comfortable learning it.”-

Myrna

The Functional Whole-Person Care Approach in post-shelter care



“ KEY TAKEAWAYS ”

- Barrier identification: Through **functional evaluations**, occupational therapists **identify barriers to function** that are **not apparent** in our system, using a trauma-informed approach.
- Teaches ‘How-To’: This approach **teaches everyday activity skills and uses advocacy** to help prevent loss of housing.
- Benefits: **Empowers** and gives precariously housed women the opportunity to **grow their identities** through activity.

Special thanks to:



Myrna Rose



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Sally, Anne, Imene, and the team at
Logifem

Credit: Photos of OT interventions and shelter
environments