Screening for *Housing First*

For Communities

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CONFÉRENCE NATIONALE POUR METTRE FIN À L'ITINÉRANCE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS

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PART 1
What is an assessment?

The Screening Process can Serve Several Purposes

- Allows for initial engagement

- Determines if individuals meet program eligibility requirements.

- A system of prioritization can be developed in order to place individuals with the highest needs into Housing First services quickly.
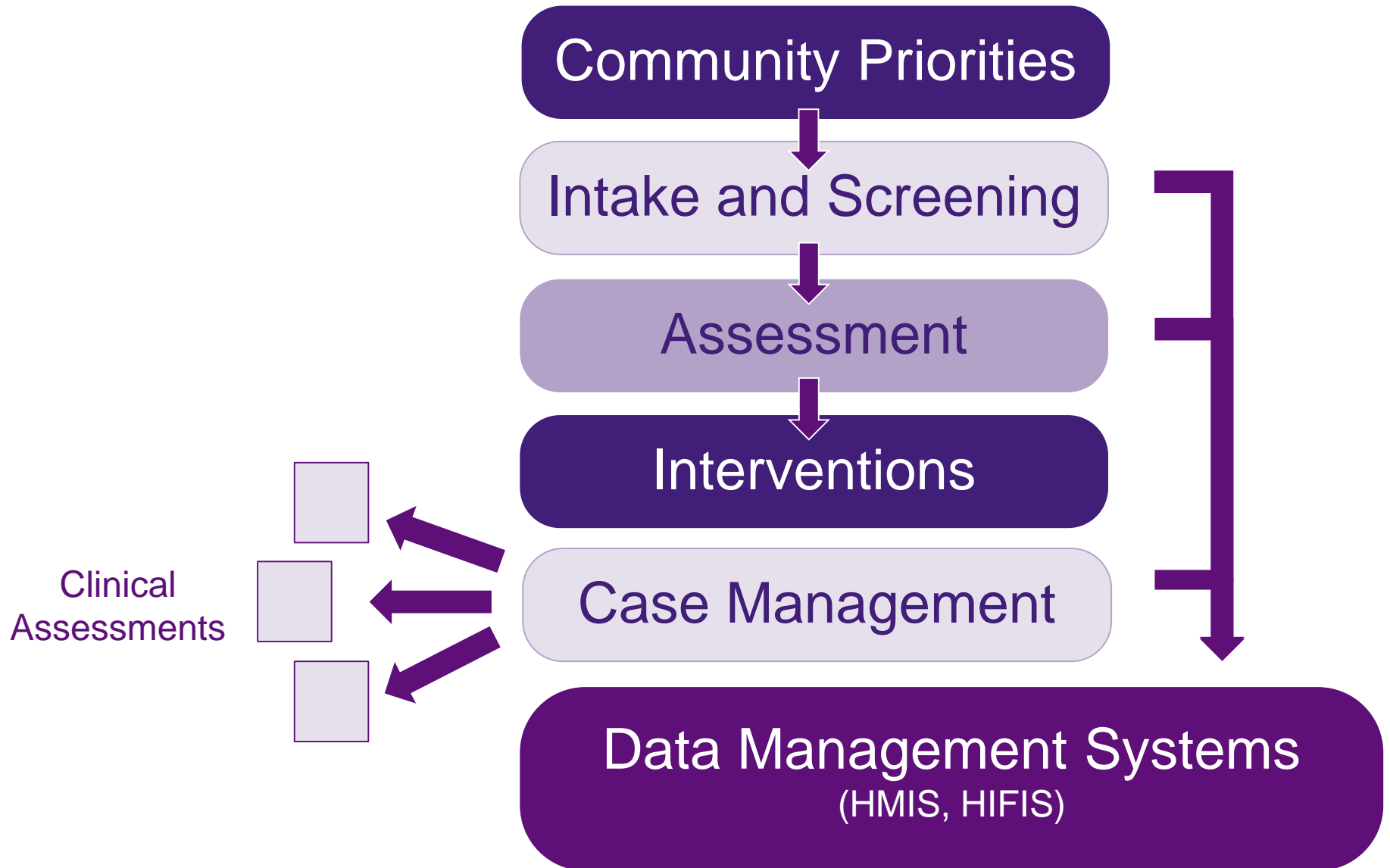
Assessment Roadmap

1. Screening

2. Service/Support planning

3. Service/Support provision

Where does SCREENING fit in?

1. SCREENING

PURPOSE
Initial engagement/priority setting/eligibility determination

QUESTIONS
- Is person homeless? Chronically so?
- Are they high user of service?
- Are they at risk of harm to self or other? How vulnerable?
- What is severity of need?
- Whether and where to refer for further assessment/assistance?

SAMPLE TOOLS   VI, VAT, VI-SPDAT, Denver Acuity

2. SERVICE/SUPPORT PLANNING

PURPOSE
Level of support and care planning with client

QUESTIONS
- What is nature and extent of problems/strengths?
- What is history of actions and response?
- What are goals and preferences of individual re housing and supports?
- What is appropriate living situation and intensity of support?

SAMPLE TOOLS STAR, Locus, MCAS, Camberwell, GainsSS, VI-SPDAT, Strengths Assessment and Recovery Plan Tools (University of Kansas)

COH Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
the homeless hub

Mental Health Commission of Canada   Commission de la santé mentale du Canada

3. SERVICE/SUPPORT PROVISION

PURPOSE
Monitoringprocess and outcomes

QUESTIONS
- What is being provided?
- How satisfied is resident/user?
- What outcomes are achieved?

SAMPLE TOOLS   HONOS, STAR, MCAS

Assessment is but one part

of a broader community strategy in
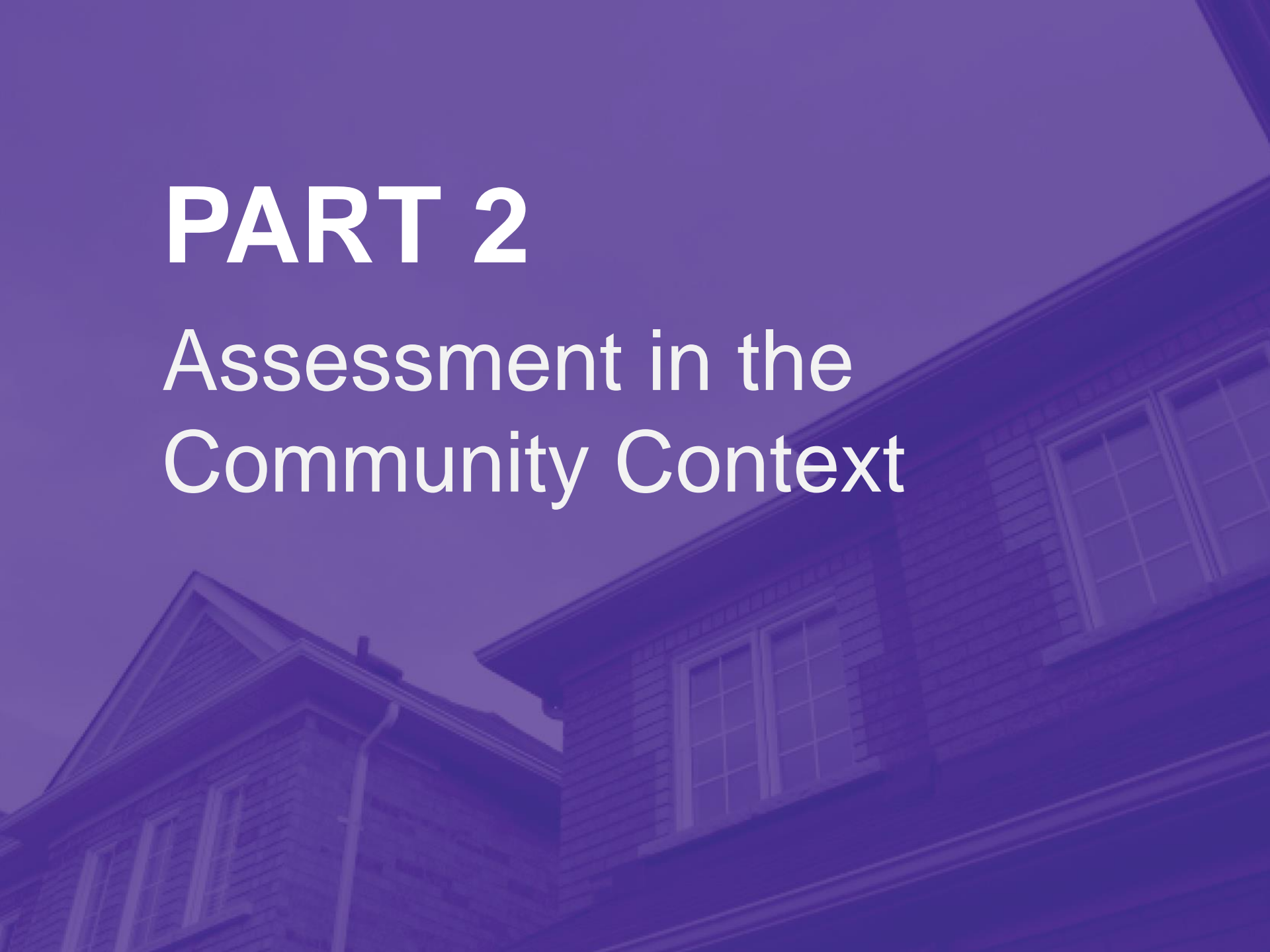working with people who are homeless.

A word of CAUTION!

AVOID *SCIENTISM!*

Assessment tools are one source of information to guide decision making. They are not magic, and they cannot make decisions for you. Trust your own knowledge as well.

PART 2

Assessment in the Community Context

What is your community context?

- **Community priorities?** (Chronic? High acuity mental health and addictions? Youth?)

- **Community assets?** (Can you assemble an ACT team? Do you have permanent supportive housing?)

- **Data management** and alignment with other data being collected

Certain Domains Should be Assessed

HOUSING STATUS:

Is the person homeless? Chronically? Episodically?

VULNERABILITY STATUS:

What is their level of vulnerability (physical health, mental health, substance use)? Is the person at risk of harm to him/herself or others?

SERVICE USE:

Is the individual a high service user?

SEVERITY OF NEED:

What is the individual's severity of need (low, moderate, high)?

FURTHER ASSESSMENT:

Does the individual require further assessment or assistance?

Critical Steps to Implementing a Screening and Prioritization Tool

1. Understanding ecology of homelessness in your community

2. Consensus on priority population(s) – i.e. chronic shelter users? High system users?

4. System Mapping – what resources does your community have and how may this impact the screening and prioritization?

5. Be open to adaption in order to meet your local needs!

6. Use the tool as a mechanism to facilitate collaboration and shared planning across the homeless serving sector (e.g. placement committees)

7. Engage in ongoing consultation and feedback with those using the tool

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Next!