

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

MISSION MADE POSSIBLE:
**HOW COLLABORATION
BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS TO
HOUSING WOMEN AND
WOMEN-HEADED
HOUSEHOLDS**

YOLISA DE JAGER AND NICOLE CORTESE, *GOOD SHEPHERD CENTRES*

IN THE BEGINNING

SOS/RRH

- The Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) Housing First program
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) program for women with mid-acuity
- Program decision to separate housing supports from program supports → Housing Manager and a Program Manager

Landlord Liaison

- The Housing Manager networks and builds strong relationships with landlords in our community
- Education around homelessness, trauma, mental health, gender-based violence, child welfare and addictions
- To keep lines of communication open and respond to landlords' concerns/needs in real time
- Coordination and negotiation of payment for damages, unit turnovers, eviction prevention plans that avoid tribunal and court costs

The Landlords

- Landlords appreciated the business, responsiveness to their needs and in return provided benefits to our clients : wave last month's rent, references and/or credit checks
- Regular communication with landlords to ensure problems resolved early ie. Non-payment of rent or noise complaints
- Positive relationship with LL lead to offers of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom units!

CONSIDERATIONS OF TAKING THOSE UNITS

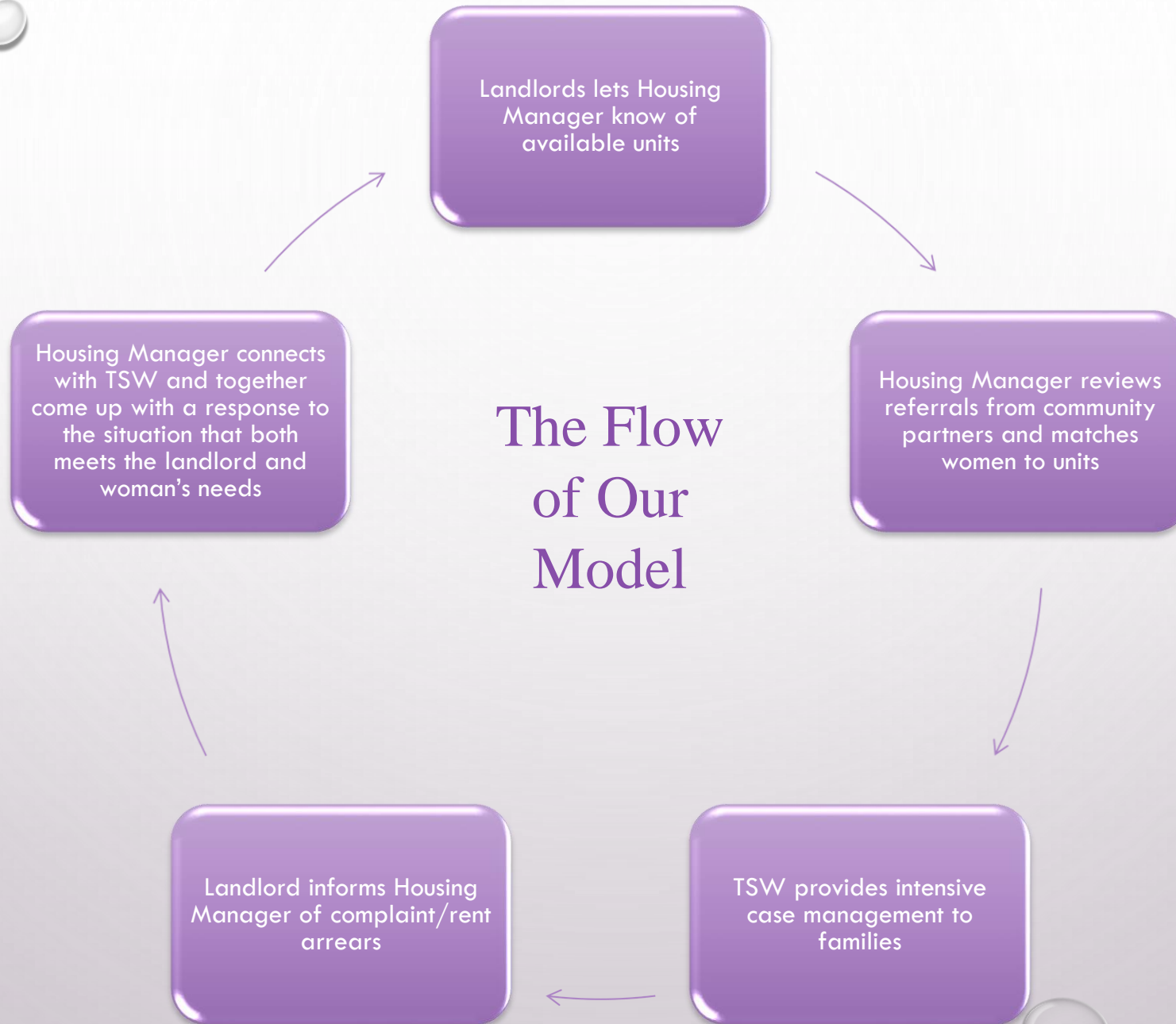
- The offer of 2-4 bedroom units with our Housing First LL was a great opportunity for families in shelter and transitional housing programs throughout Hamilton.
- We knew that there needed to be program support alongside housing to ensure success.
- Opportunity to collaborate with community agencies for good of community:
 - Agencies with Transitional Housing and Support Workers
 - Survivors Advisory Committee, Women's Housing Planning Collaborative Advisory committee
 - VAW Shelter Agencies
 - Emergency Shelters
- We worked together to create a model of support that would benefit both the landlord and clients. We need to balance women's choice, landlord obligations, predictable level of intervention as issues may arise

THE PROGRAM

At the table we created and agreed to a program outline which included:

- A shared consent, intake and assessment forms among agencies at the table
- Housing manager would match women to units/landlords based on budget, unit size, safety considerations and housing history.
- A standard level of intervention from transitional housing and support workers (TSW):
 - TSWs connected to client for first year of tenancy
 - Intense supports within the first 6 months, including being in a woman's unit once a week for the first 3-6 months providing trauma informed case management support
- When LL complain, TSW and housing manager would devise intervention plans and respond quickly
- On call support to both LL and tenants: LL call housing team, and tenants call designated a shelter

The Flow of Our Model



SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – PORTABLE HOUSING BENEFIT (SDV_PHB)

- Ontario government put out a call for proposals for the SDV-PHB pilot to municipalities. Our established working group partnered with policy analysts at the City of Hamilton (Tammy Morasse and Kirsten Maxwell) to provide consultation on proposal design and program development.
- The pilot program aims to reduce the Special Priority Social Housing waitlist through offering housing benefits. Special Priority Policy is for individuals and families experiencing violence + cohabitation
- Hamilton is one of 22 municipalities selected
- We proposed :
 - housing allowance amounts based on family size, current market rent rates, accessibility needs
 - Offer of program supports to recipients of the benefit
 - Enable survivors of domestic violence to access affordable housing while maintaining active status on social housing waitlist
- Pilot a ‘made-in-Hamilton’ approach to the SDV-PHB portable housing allowance program.

HOW OUR PROGRAM IS UNIQUE

- Hamilton was the only municipality to take a community partnership approach to the project

Good Shepherd entered into an agreement with The City of Hamilton

Good Shepherd Women's Services Role:

- To provide housing support, to create transition plans, safety plans, and to liaise with landlords in the community to obtain more safe affordable housing units.

The City of Hamilton's Role:

- Program administration including SDV-PHB eligibility assessment, housing allowance supervision to ensure payments are made direct to landlord on household's behalf, reporting and program oversight.
- January 1, 2017 the program launched

OUTCOMES AND NARRATIVES

77 applicants
have accessed
the housing
allowance

12 women who were living with
an abusive partner, were able
to transition to safe affordable
housing

129
applicants
have been
offered and
accepted RGI

A significant
amount of women
afford VAW
supports for the
first time

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

- “ THANK YOU. THIS HOUSING MONEY IS A MAJOR HELP WITH RENT. IT HELPS ME WORRY A LITTLE LESS AND A FOCUS ON GETTING MY LIFE ON TRACK.”
- “YOU GIVE ME HOPE... HOPE IS A POWERFUL FEELING. THANK YOU.”
- “MORE PEOPLE GET SAFE, BARRIER-FREE, BUG-FREE PERMANENT HOUSING.”
- “KEEP IT SO THAT THE HOUSING ALLOWANCE GOES TO THE LANDLORD, IT IS GOOD. ONE LAST THING TO WORRY ABOUT.”
- “I USED TO THINK THAT MAYBE ONE DAY MY LANDLORD WOULD THROW ME OUT AND SOMETIMES HAVE NO FOOD IN THE HOUSE BECAUSE I KEEP ALL THE MONEY FOR RENT. BUT NOW, I HAVE NO WORRIES AND I EAT EVERY DAY. I THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE SUPPORT YOU GIVE ME.”

WHAT WE LEARNED.....

Mission Made Possible

Hidden homelessness is real

Housing moves fast- sometimes within minutes- stay ahead of the game

Innovation happens with everyone around the table

Saying there is NO option for a woman is NEVER an option

Value the relationships throughout the process

Leverage what you have