

Same Door, Different Outcome
See the System From Every
Chair



Built For Zero.



Who we are



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BFZ Housing Equity Strategists



**Jianna
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Rachael Parker



James Lee



Tyra Thomas



Anderson Curtis



Icebreaker: which chair do you sit in most days?

The front door

Outreach, intake, case management, navigation



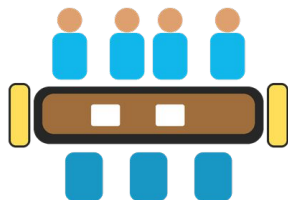
The back office

Data, HMIS, operations, compliance, funding



The leadership table

CAN and CoC leads, funders, agency and elected leaders



Lived expertise

People who have been on the other side of the desk

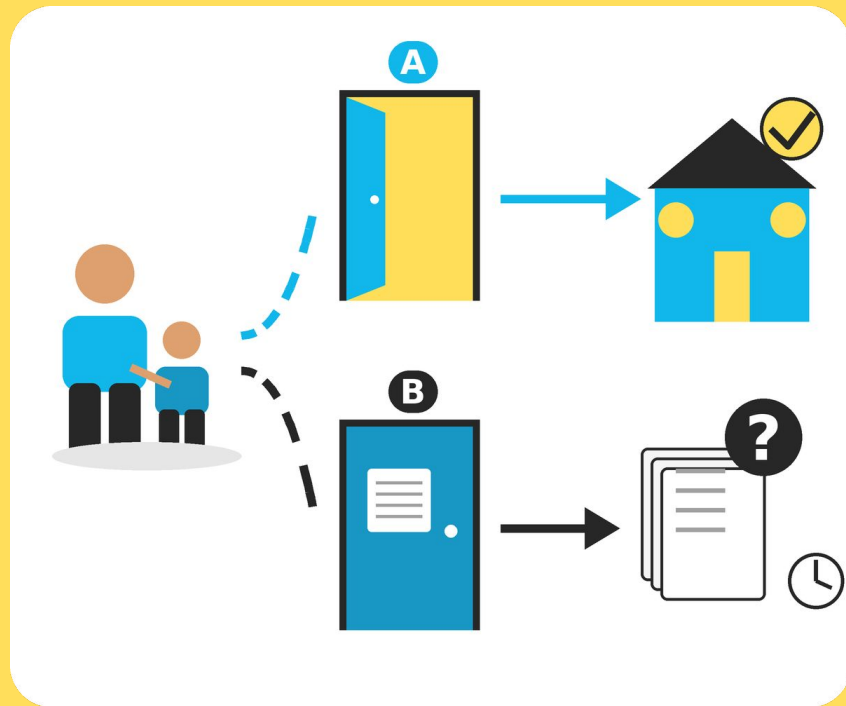


At your table, go around. Say which chair you sit in most days and one idea from this Learning Session you are carrying into this room. 90 seconds, no one moves.



Same family. Different door. Different outcome.

The family stays constant. The variable is the professional they meet: their biases, and the choices they can justify in the moment. Today you step into those chairs and feel where personal viewpoint quietly shapes service delivery in your own housing network.





Today's journey

1

Thirty days at the door

Whole-room simulation, 23 min

2

One door, two outcomes

Animated scenario, 28 min

3

Levers to pull

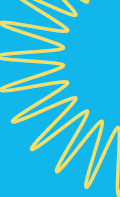
Levers and actions, 17 min

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What you will leave with

- Identify specific points where perspective, not policy, determines outcomes in your system
- Develop language to raise systemic issues without assigning blame
- Recognize how reasonable people with partial views create unintended system outcomes
- Build feedback loops that keep every perspective in the same conversation
- Gain tools to fix structural patterns

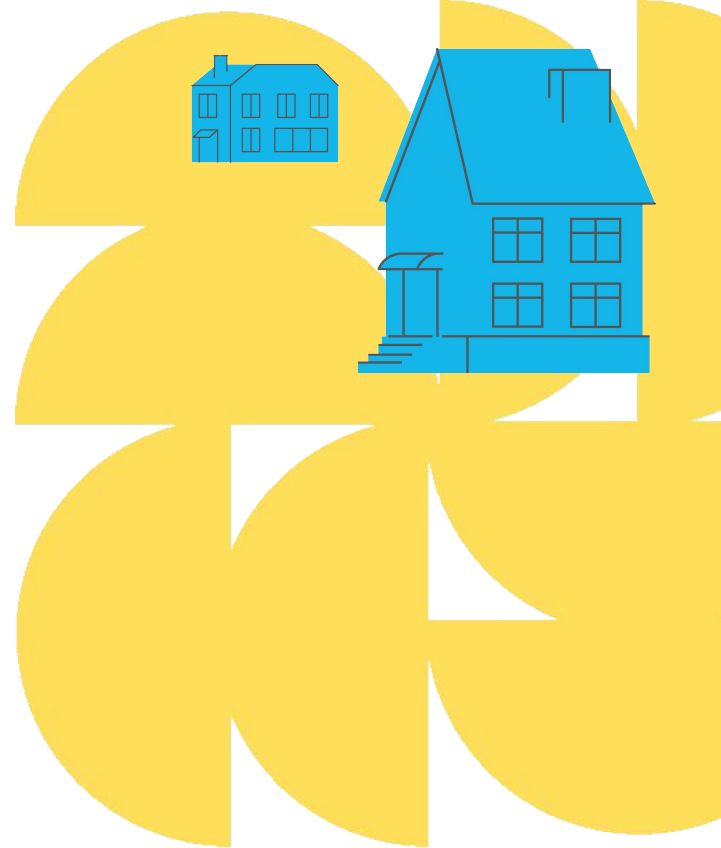


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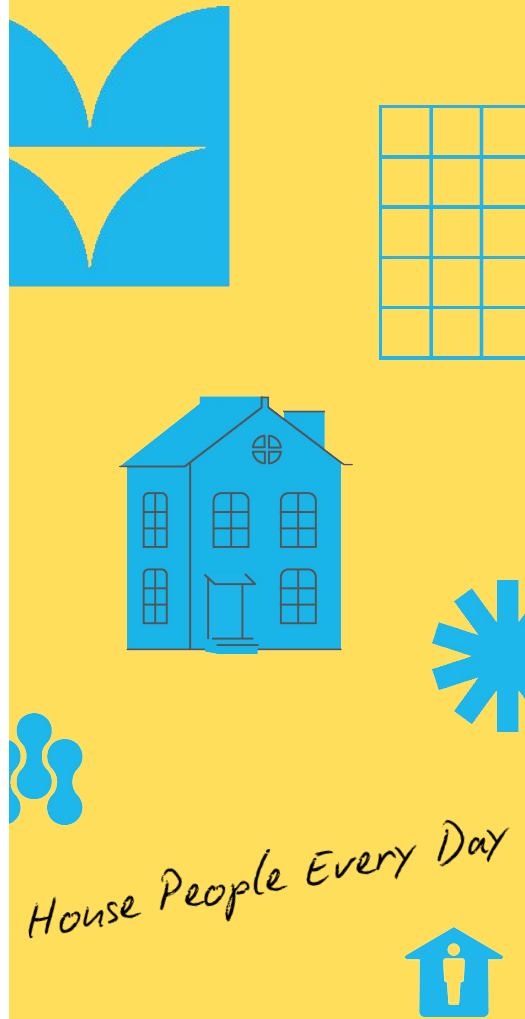
Four ideas anchor the session

- **The Divergent Door:** first contact is a determinative event. One intake exchange can secure a pathway or block it.
- **The View From Each Chair:** leaders, front line and people seeking help each hold a coherent but partial view.
- **Presentation and the Gatekeeper:** how someone presents, and is read, changes what they are offered.
- **Dignity as a Design Choice:** respect is a structural outcome we can design and measure, not a staff attitude.



Brave space, not safe space

- Brave, not safe: real learning involves risk.
- Honest dialogue about power, race and who decides.
- Discomfort is expected; personal attacks are not.
- Go to the edge of your comfort zone to learn.
- **Chairs are roles, not people:** we critique the system, never the person in the room.

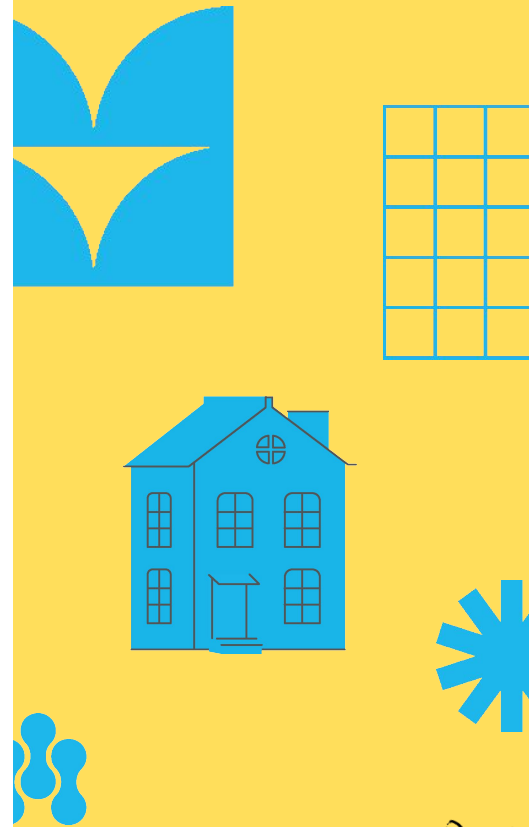


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Our norms for this session

- **Controversy with civility:** disagree with the idea, not the person.
- **Own your impact:** good intent does not cancel harm.
- **Challenge by choice:** engage at the level you choose; you may pass or step out.
- **Chairs are roles, not people:** speak from the seat you were given, not as a verdict on a person.
- **Expect non-closure:** not everything resolves today.
- **Make space:** notice who has not spoken yet.

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Part 1: Thirty days at the door

A whole-room simulation. No boards:
volunteers, voices and a clock.

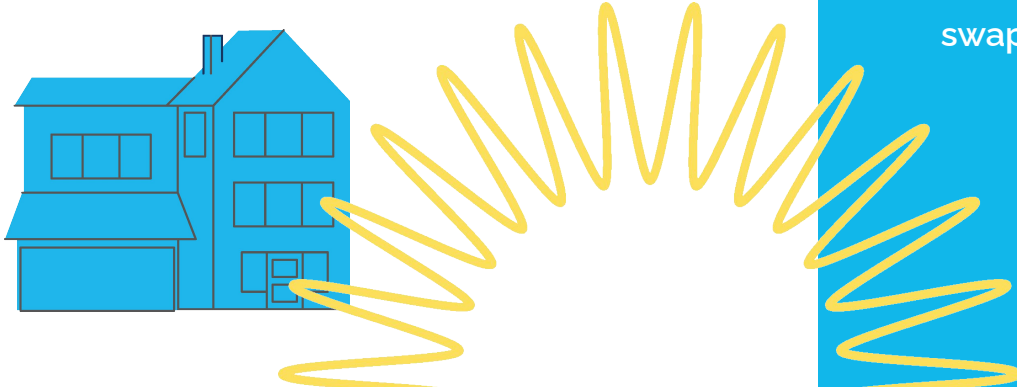
Three couches. One duffel bag. 30 days.

Dana: 30 days				
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30



How the simulation works

Three rounds. About 23 minutes. Everyone takes part.



Round 1: Count your month. Everyone holds up ten fingers and spends a month of money as the costs are called. 4 min

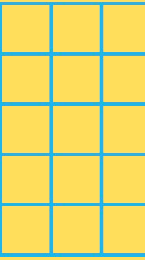
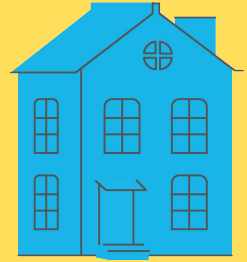
Round 2: The paper loop. Volunteers sit at the desks Dana must visit. The room is the line and the clock. 11 min

Round 3: Solve it from another chair. Compare, swap chairs, name the levers. 6 min



Round 1: Count your month

- **Hold up ten fingers.** Each finger is \$50. That is Dana's month: \$500.
- **Fold fingers as each cost is called:** food for two, \$150. A bus pass, \$50. A phone, \$50. Your share for the couch, \$200.
- **Now the fees:** a birth certificate and an ID, \$55. Can you pay?
- **Last call:** your shifts are cut by a week. Hands down if you have nothing left.

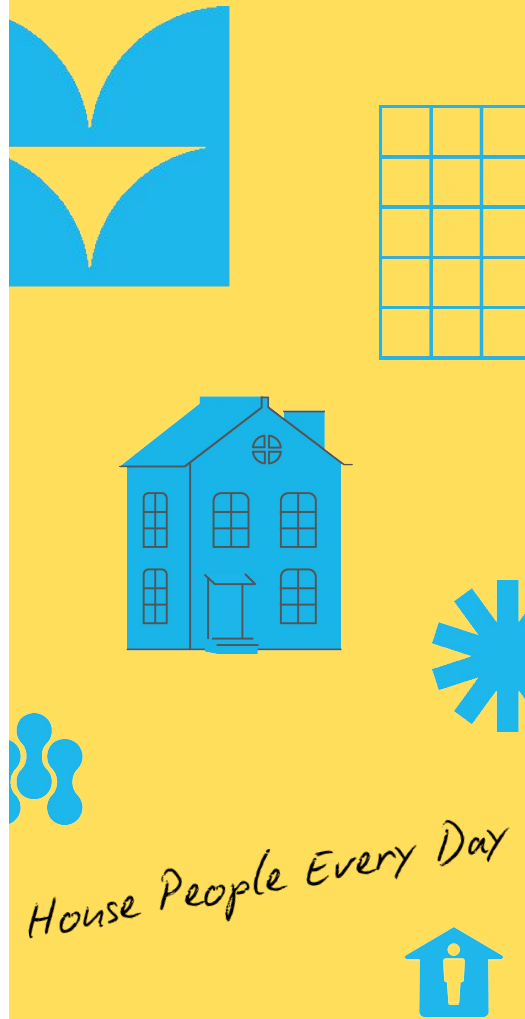


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Round 2: The paper loop

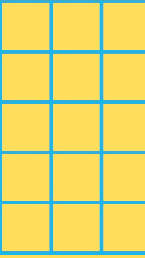
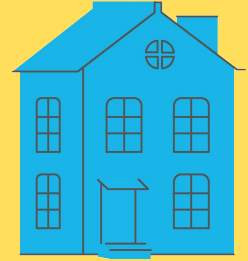
- **Five volunteers come to the front.** One plays Dana and carries the bag. Four play desks and hold a sign.
- **The room is the line and the clock.** Count down out loud. Each trip to a new desk costs one minute.
- **Dana needs three things:** a photo ID, a proof of address, and a file opened at intake. She can visit the desks in any order.
- **Run 1, three minutes:** desks may only read their sign. They may not talk to each other.
- **Run 2, two minutes:** desks may talk, share what they know and choose one fix.



Round 2: The four desks

- **Records window:** “I can print a birth certificate when I see a photo ID and a mailing address.”
- **ID office:** “I can issue a photo ID when I see a birth certificate and proof of address.”
- **Landlord or host:** “I can sign proof of address when I see your photo ID.”
- **Intake:** “I can open your file when I have an ID, a birth certificate and proof of address.”
- Dana may visit the desks in any order.

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Round 3: Solve it from another chair

Compare

Look at Run 1 and Run 2. What changed, and how quickly?

Switch

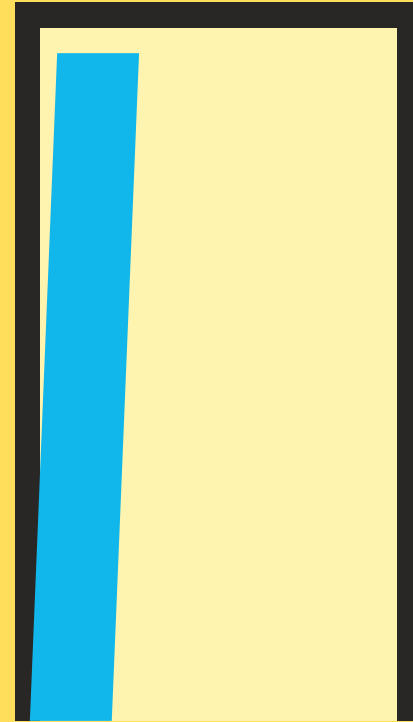
Volunteers: which desk felt the most stuck?
Tables: how would that chair have solved it?

Lever

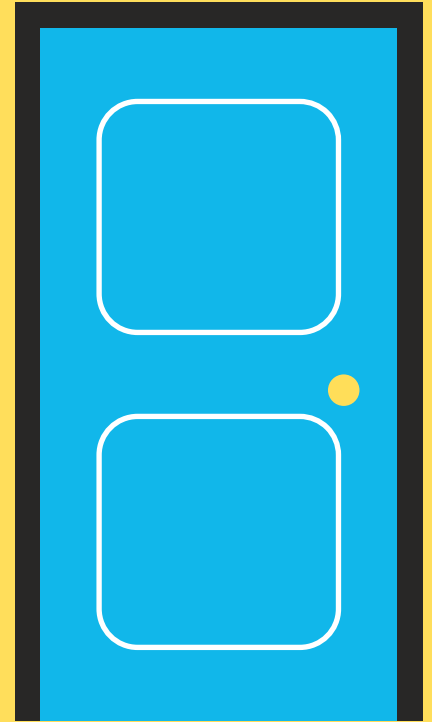
Which lever could someone pull: local, state or system?

Part 2: One door, different outcomes

A silent, hand-drawn AI-animated scenario.
Five participant-actors read scripted
questions aloud.



Door A



Door B



Meet Dana

Single mother, one child, 30
days of couch-surfing



Dana is 32 and works hourly shifts. Her daughter is six.

Two years ago her hours were cut and the rent went up. She fell behind and was evicted. It is still on her record.

Thirty days ago the lease ended. Since then they have slept on three couches, with one duffel bag and a folder of papers.

Her ID and her daughter's birth certificate were lost in the move. No one will write a note for a couch.



Four types of power



Power Over

Fear based. Control and domination: one side gains, the other loses. Think of the voucher, the deposit, the fee.



Power To

Change based. The ability to act, decide and make something different happen.



Power With

Collaboration based. Power multiplied by acting together, with shared decisions.



Power Within

Recognition of self-worth. Confidence, dignity and the belief that your voice counts.



As you watch, ask which type of power is at work at each desk.



Where power comes from: five aspects



Personal

How you show up: energy, vision, communication and emotional intelligence.

Expert

Wisdom, knowledge, experience and skills.

Positional

Authority, hierarchy and status; includes the power to reward or punish.

Relational

Connections to others: who you know and who will vouch for you.

Cultural

Norms, language, values and history; perceived power shaped by bias around age, race, gender identity and class.

These layer: power begets power. Dana can hold some and be denied others in the same minute.



Who has power?

Targets of oppression

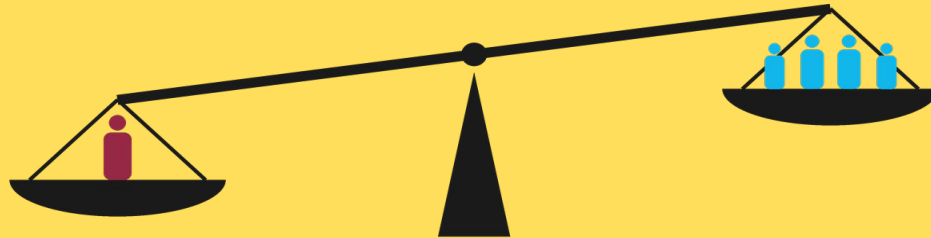
Members of social identity groups that are disenfranchised, exploited and victimized by agents of oppression and the systems they run.

Fewer “life chances” because of the group they belong to.

Agents of oppression

Members of the dominant social groups in the United States, privileged by birth or acquisition, who knowingly or unknowingly gain unfair advantage over targets of oppression.

They define the “norm” for what is reality.



Both roles are shaped by the system. They describe positions in a system, not verdicts on a person, and the same person can be a target in one place and an agent in another.



Name the power before we press play

Information and credibility

Who knows the
real rules?

Whose word is
believed
without proof?

Money and time

Who controls
the voucher,
the deposit, the
fee? Whose
hour is lost?

Authority and discretion

Who can say
yes, and who
can only refer?
Where can
someone
choose
differently than
policy?



How each scene runs

1

Play the clip

Short, silent, hand-drawn anime scene

2

Pause and ask

Participant-actors read scripted questions aloud

3

Tables answer

Each table speaks from its chair

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Our participant-actors



**Jianna
Hopkins-Israel**

Cafe owner and
department responder



Kelly Nelson

Door A worker and
records clerk



Marco Castro

Door B worker and
landlord



Lakecia Owens

Dana's chair and Room
Captain



Paulette Martin

Leadership chair

After each scene they step forward, read their question aloud, and your table answers from the chair you were given.



Scene 1: Downtown

- **The clip:** Dana and her daughter stand on a downtown sidewalk with a duffel bag, outside a vacant building. A nearby cafe owner decides whether to ask them to move along.
- **Layer:** how she is read in public space: dress, race and housing status
- **Ask the owner:** what are you protecting?
- **Ask Dana:** what are you trying not to draw attention to, and what is keeping you going?
- **Ask leadership:** whose call is this?
- **Ask the room:** what could change, and how?



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Scene 1: The chairs in the room



**Jianna
Hopkins-Israel**
Cafe owner



Lakecia Owens
Dana



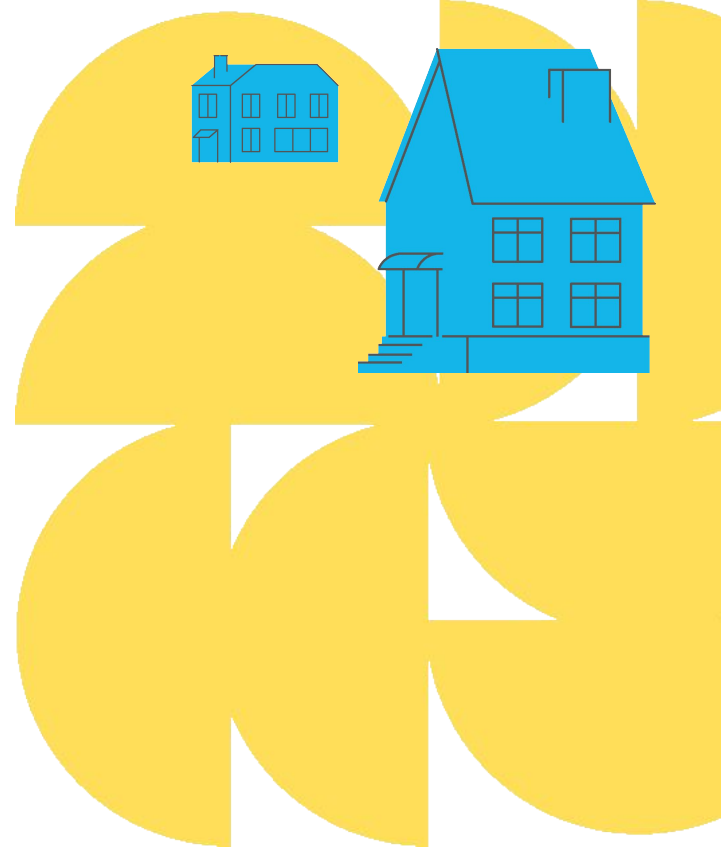
Paulette Martin
Leadership



Scene 2, Door A

- Same Dana, same need. The first intake worker.
- **The clip:** Door A leans in, asks what she needs and fixes the documents together.
- **Outcome:** a plan and a name.
- **Layer:** how she presents: dress, accent and whose word is believed. Door A asks about her layers instead of reading them off her presentation.

Ask: what does this worker see, and what are they measured on?





Scene 2, Door A: The chair in the room



Kelly Nelson

Door A intake worker



Scene 2, Door B

- Same Dana, same need. The second intake worker.
 - **The clip:** Door B raises a hand to stop her and slides forms across the desk.
 - **Requirement:** a note from where she stayed for the last 30 days before a voucher. This is deliberately not a real policy. Read it aloud: the clip is silent.
 - **Outcome:** a task, no voucher.
- Ask: where did the “policy” come from? What changed besides the person behind the desk?





Scene 2, Door B: The chairs in the room



Marco Castro

Door B intake worker



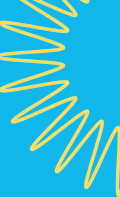
Paulette Martin

Leadership



Scene 3: The records window

- **The clip:** Dana holds a folder at a glass window while a long line waits behind her. A clock shows late afternoon and her daughter tugs her sleeve.
- **The rules:** an ID to get an ID, a mailing address and a fee.
- **Layer:** income and documents
- **Ask the clerk:** what here is policy, what is process, and what could be elevated to change to support her?
- **Ask Dana:** what would have to be true for you to make it to the front before closing?



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Scene 3: The chairs in the room



Kelly Nelson

Records clerk



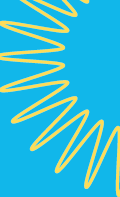
Lakecia Owens

Dana



Scene 4: The landlord

- **The clip:** Dana climbs two flights of stairs with her duffel while her daughter waits below. The landlord waits at the top with a clipboard.
- **What the clip cannot show:** an old eviction on her record.
- **Layer:** disability and a record, and parenthood with no sitter
- **Ask the landlord:** what risk are you managing, and who pays if you get it wrong?
- **Ask Dana:** what is the stairway telling you about who this home was built for?



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Scene 4: The chairs in the room



Marco Castro

Landlord



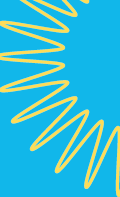
Lakecia Owens

Dana



Scene 5: The department visit

- **The clip:** a responder with a lanyard sits across from Dana in the living room where she and her daughter sleep on the couch. A few option cards lie on the table.
- **Layer:** health and parenthood, including what a visit could mean for her child
- **Ask the responder:** which options can you actually offer, and who set that list?
- **Ask Dana:** whose voice was missing when these options were chosen?
- **Ask leadership:** which lever could you pull: local, state or system?



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Scene 5: The chairs in the room



Jianna

Hopkins-Israel

Department responder



Lakecia Owens

Dana



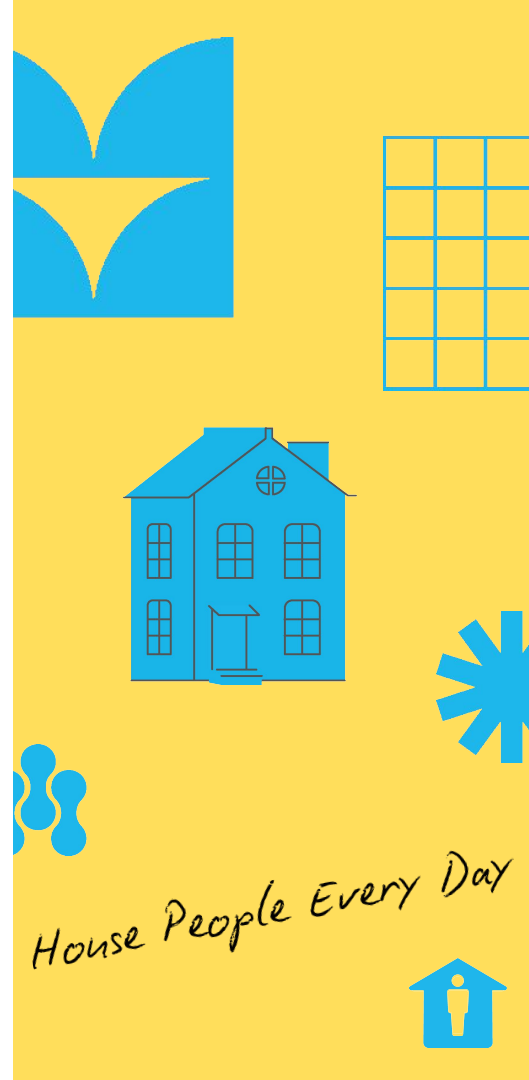
Paulette Martin

Leadership



Our relatives at every desk

- **Who is at the other desk:** the intake worker, the records clerk, the landlord and the responder. They are our relatives, each doing a job inside a system.
- **What are they carrying?** What do they fear losing, and what pressure are they under?
- **What are they measured on?** What do their funding, caseload and liability reward?
- **What is their behavior telling us?** Behavior is information: a guarded, rushed or rigid response may speak of stress, past harm or too little support.
- **Who taught them this, and who asked what they need?**
- **When did someone last have power over them?** How might that shape how they use theirs?



House People Every Day

Intersectionality: what it means and how it

hinders
Next, the data: what was hiding in the frame.

What it means

Kimberle Crenshaw named it in 1989. Race, disability, gender, family status, income and a record overlap, and together they shape what a person meets at every door.

How it can hinder

Each layer can close a door the others left open. A rule built for the average person misses the person at the intersection, and a worker who sees one layer solves the wrong problem.

Ask your table

Which layers of Dana did each worker see, which stayed hidden, and how did that change what they offered?

What was hiding in the frame: the layers in the data

57.5%

of adults in
adult-only
households
using shelter
were disabled
(HUD, 2022)

1881 to 2024

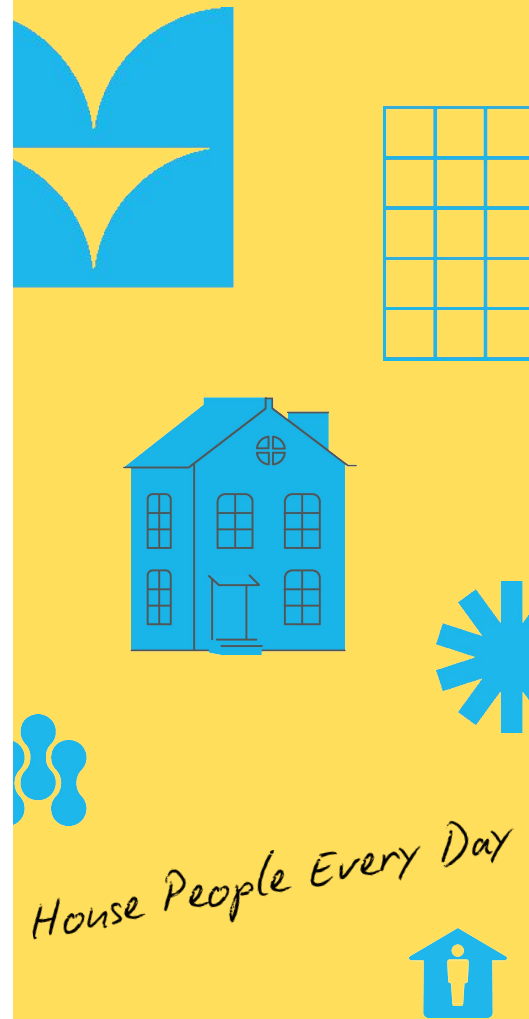
From Chicago's
“ugly law” to
Grants Pass v.
Johnson: public
space, policed

2025

Executive
Order 14321
encourages
civil
commitment
and
institutional
treatment

Presentation and the gatekeeper

- **Labels set the track.** How Dana presented, and how that was read, changed what each worker offered, before anyone checked eligibility.
- **Words like “compliant” and “difficult”** move people onto different material tracks.
- **Where do labels live in your system?** Case notes, intake forms, huddles, hallway shorthand.
- **Ask your table:** What label did Door A put on Dana, and Door B? Who saw it, and could she ever correct it?



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Perspective or policy?

Where did the door swing?



Which choices were policy, and
which only sounded like it?

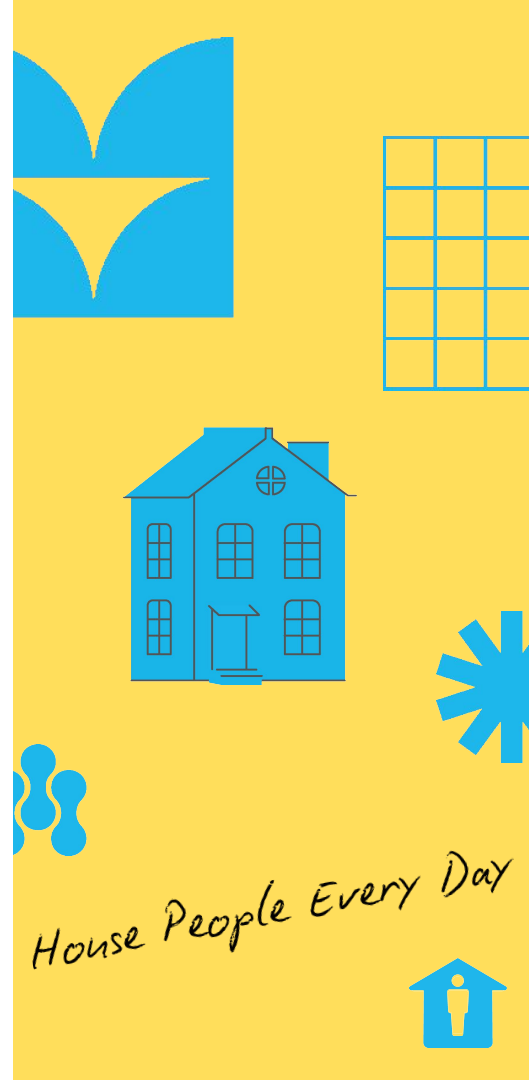
Who never saw what happened
next?

Which chair held information
another chair needed?



Dignity as a design choice

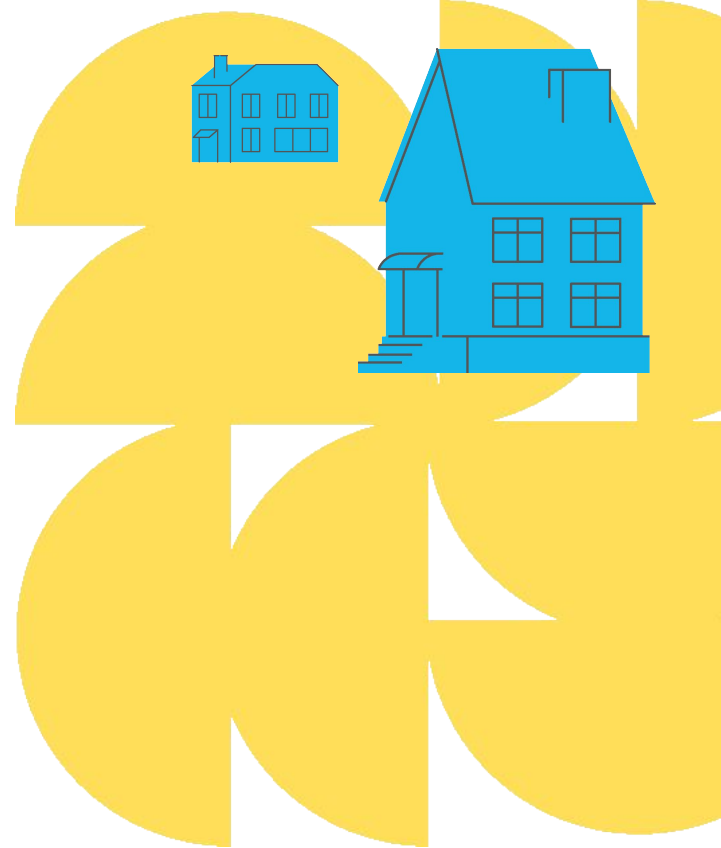
- **Respect is built, not just spoken.** It is a structural outcome of how a system is designed, not the mood of the person at the desk.
- **What could we measure?** Time to a first useful answer. How many times someone retells their story. Documents asked for before help is offered. Whether a navigator is offered at every door.
- **Ask your table:** Which one would you add to your own intake this week?





Levers to pull

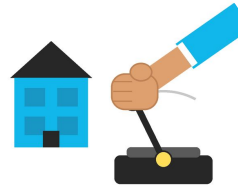
- **Documents:** records help at the access point; state fee waivers and mail forwarding
- **The door:** write down or retire unwritten rules like “the note”
- **Information:** one shared intake record across chairs and departments
- **Feedback:** front line, leaders and lived experience in one loop



Reflect: what power can you wield to pull a lever?



Anyone can pull a lever



- **Raise it without blame.** You do not need a title to pull a lever: anyone, from any chair, can move one this way.
- **Say what you noticed:** “I noticed that at this step, two reasonable views collide.” Describe the moment, not the person.
- **Name the chair:** “From the intake chair it looks like this. From leadership, like that.”
- **Ask for the rule:** “What would it take to write this rule down, or retire it?”
- **Widen the table:** “Who is not in this conversation yet, and how do we bring them in?”

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Practice it: with your table partner

1. Pick (1 min)

Choose one real moment in your system: a rule, form or handoff that works badly.

2. Say it (2 min)

Partner A says it using questions 1 and 2.
Partner B answers with question 3 or 4.

3. Switch (2 min)

Swap roles with a new moment. Then one table shares the question that landed.

Your four questions

1

What I noticed

"I noticed that at this step, two reasonable views collide."

2

From this chair

"From the intake chair it looks like this. From leadership, like that."

3

What would it take

"What would it take to write this rule down, or retire it?"

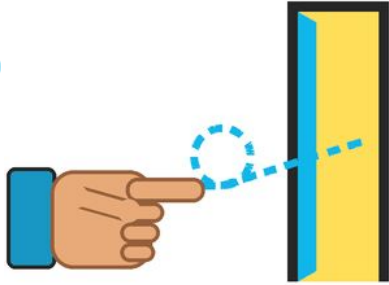
4

Who is missing

"Who is not in this conversation yet, and how do we bring them in?"

Whose chair will you sit in on Monday?

1



Trace one door

Pick one door in your system and follow one person through it.

2



Sit in a new chair

Ask someone in a chair you have never sat in what the door looks like to them.

3



Raise it without blame

Bring one question to one meeting this week.

Same family. Different door. Different outcome.

Survey

Please take a few minutes to take the survey. Your feedback is very important to us.



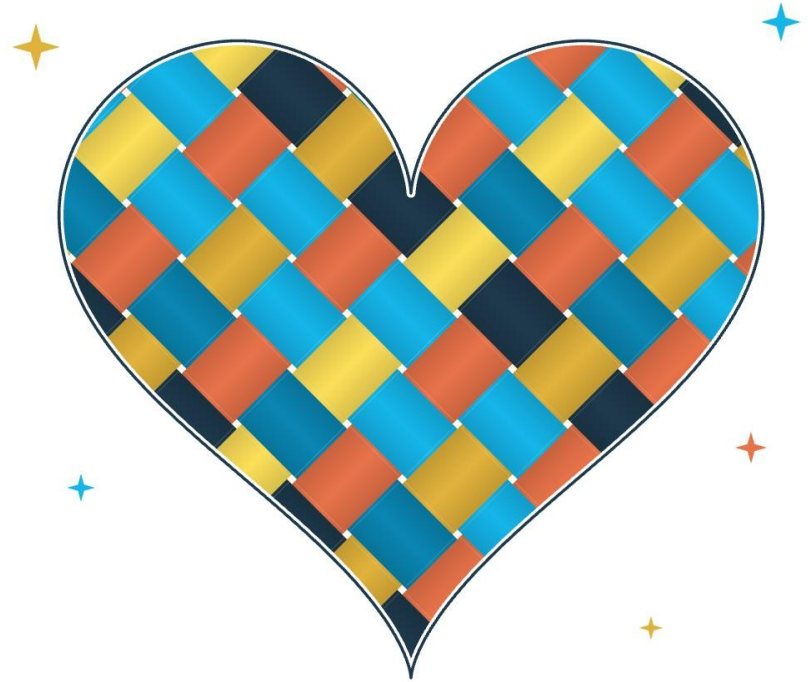
<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/9042138/2026-BFZ-Learning-Session-Workshop-Session-Feedback>



Thank you!

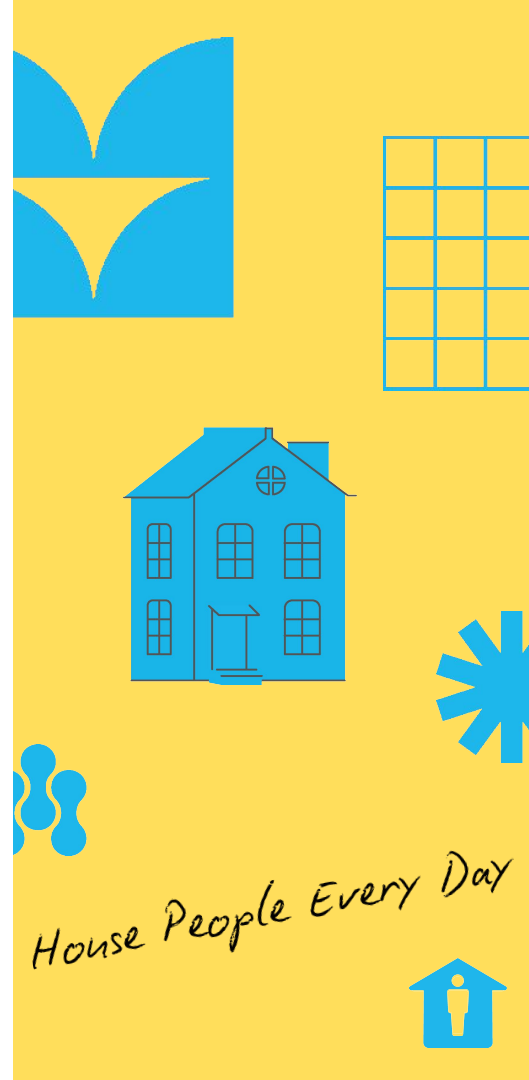
We thank you for your interest and appreciate your time to participate in today's learning circle workshop.

Please direct any and all questions to:
pwleh@community.solutions



Appendix: producing the video

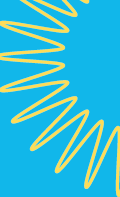
- Six silent clips: about 10 seconds for Scene 1 and about 5 for each of the rest
- Runway Gen-4.5, or Veo 3.1 / Kling 3.0 with the audio muted
- Look: hand-drawn anime, muted palette, dignified characters
- Captions and audio description on every clip
- Label as AI-generated; review with lived experience



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Appendix: an accessible room

- Captions and audio description on every clip
- Plain-language, large-print handouts
- Clear paths and seating for mobility aids
- Power outlets within reach of every table
- A content note and permission to step out
- A quiet, low-stimulus space nearby



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