

**SMART 1: Housing Transition**  
**Facilitator Manual for Module 3: Being a Good Tenant and Neighbor**

- This facilitator manual provides the narration text of each module along with facilitator notes indicating when discussions and activities should be carried out.
- **Facilitator notes are highlighted in red font.**
- Facilitators are encouraged to pause the module, especially where indicated **(PAUSE)** to facilitate discussion and/or activity.
- Ideas for activities and role play scenarios are included in the Appendix.

***Slide 1: Supporting Many to Achieve Residential Transition (SMART)***

- The Supporting Many to Achieve Residential Transition (SMART) Program has been designed to provide you with the skills needed to successfully achieve and maintain independent housing. This program consists of six 1-hour modules covering the following topics: Preparing for the Housing Interview; Apartment Living, Being a Good Tenant and Neighbor, Community Living, Managing Money, and Maintaining Health and Wellbeing. Each module has been designed to be interactive through the use of group discussions, role plays, and other exercises. Active participation in all modules will better prepare you for transition to residential housing.

***Slide 2: Welcome to Module 3***

- Welcome to Module 3 of the SMART-1 Program. It's important to remember that when you move into your new housing, you must consider the well-being of others as well as your own well-being. During this module, we'll discuss what it means to be a good tenant and neighbor.

***Slide 3: Being a Good Tenant and Neighbor***

- Why is it important to discuss being a good tenant and neighbor? **(PAUSE for participation)**  
Answers include that it's important to respect other tenants and their space; foster positive relationships with neighbors, supers, and landlords; and ensure safety in your building.
- The topics of being a good tenant and neighbor that we'll discuss are:
  - Forming relationships
  - Conflict resolution
  - Respect
  - and Safety

***Slide 4: Forming Relationships***

- Think about meeting someone new. Is it difficult for you to meet new people? Sometimes we forget how difficult it is to make a new friend or to even introduce yourself to someone you don't know. Think about meeting people for the first time at

the shelter? What helped you feel comfortable about meeting people here? What made it difficult to meet people at the shelter?

- What can make meeting new people difficult in general? *(PAUSE for participation)*  
Answers include insecurity, or feeling that others may not like you, and anxiety—maybe you haven't made new friends in a while. Perhaps you're unsure of what to say or how to introduce yourself, what questions to ask, how to end a conversation, and how to let others know that you'd like to see them again socially.

#### ***Slide 5: Forming Relationships***

- When you're ready, it's a good idea to get to know your neighbors to learn who's living in the building with you. You might meet people in the lobby, in the hallways, in elevators, or outside the building. Will you like everyone you meet? Probably not. But that's perfectly okay. You don't have to be friends with everyone, but you also don't have to be enemies. The in-between means simply coexisting together – just living in the same building, maybe saying “Hi” when you pass by and that's it. When it feels right, make friendships.

#### ***Slide 6: First Impressions***

- You've probably heard before that first impressions are extremely important and they are. So let's discuss some ways to make the best first impression.
- How much time do you think you have to make a first impression?  
*(PAUSE for group participation)*  
(Answer:) Experts have different opinions about the answer to this question. Some say 7 seconds, some say 17. But what's important is that first impressions are made quickly. With that in mind, let's consider the following list.

#### ***Slide 7: First Impressions (cont'd)***

- Confidence: Remember, you know what it takes to make a good first impression and if you don't, you'll learn very soon! Be confident in your abilities.

#### ***Slide 8: First Impressions (cont'd)***

- Relaxation: Don't let anxiety get the best of you. Take a few deep breaths if you feel yourself getting nervous.

#### ***Slide 9: First Impressions (cont'd)***

- Language: Use language appropriate for the situation.

#### ***Slide 10: First Impressions (cont'd)***

- Body language: Be aware of your facial expressions and body language – what are you communicating through your body language?

**Slide 11: First Impressions (cont'd)**

- Eye contact: Maintaining eye contact shows that you're engaged and listening. If you're sensing awkwardness and you need to take some moments to look away, that's definitely acceptable. Then resume eye contact.

**Slide 12: First Impressions (cont'd)**

- Hygiene: Bathing regularly is important for your own health but also affects how you're perceived and accepted by others.

**Slide 13: First Impressions (cont'd)**

- Clothing and appearance: When you appear dirty or messy, others tend to pass judgment quickly without really getting to know you. Always try to maintain a clean and neat appearance.

**Slide 14: First Impressions (cont'd)**

- Posture: This goes along with body language and confidence. Shoulders hunched and head down says, "I'm not confident in what I'm saying." Stand tall.

**Slide 15: First Impressions (cont'd)**

- Listen and respond: We all want to be heard. Show that you're listening and respond appropriately.

**Slide 16: First Impressions (cont'd)**

- Conveying friendliness: Don't forget to smile! Don't get bogged down in all the "rules." Try to relax and smile.

**Slide 17: Group Activity: Role Play 1**

- Now that we've reviewed forming relationships, let's try some role-plays to practice applying what we've discussed. (*see Role Play Activities, pp. 10-11*)

**Slide 18: Overcoming Prejudice Against Previously Homeless**

- Let's move on to something you've probably heard about before: stigma. Not all, but many people hold prejudices against those who were previously homeless—which means they may hold some prejudice against you. They may think that just because you've had a difficult past and faced significant challenges, you're not as worthy of a job or housing, or that you can't grow and acquire skills.
- This is stigma and there are ways that you can overcome being the victim of unfair stigma.

**Slide 19: Strategies for Coping with Stigma**

- Coping with stigma may not be easy but let's review some strategies that can help.
- First, pause, breathe and *then* react. Sometimes you may feel that walking away is the best response. But if you feel that you need to respond, take a deep breath first. The

last thing you want to do is let your anger get the best of you and respond in a way that startles the other person and makes the stigma worse.

**Slide 20: Strategies for Coping with Stigma (cont'd)**

- Second, remember your strengths. Don't let stigma cloud your judgment of yourself.
- Third, actions speak louder than words. Sometimes people are not open to your opinion even if you're making great points. So show them that you're capable. Show them you've recovered from a difficult past. Maintain your home, respect your neighbors, and pay your bills on time.

**Slide 21: Strategies for Coping with Stigma (cont'd)**

- Fourth, surround yourself with support. Whether fighting stigma or fighting relapse, surround yourself with people who understand you and encourage your success.
- And lastly, advocate! It may take some time to get to this stage, but at some point, you may be ready to calmly educate others and disprove their misperceptions.

**Slide 22: Group Activity: Role Play 2**

- Now that we've discussed coping with stigma, let's try some role-plays to practice applying what we've reviewed. *(see Role Play Activities, pp. 10-11)*

**Slide 23: Conflict Resolution**

- Next, let's move on to Part 2: Conflict Resolution. Remember, this part of the module is about being a good tenant and neighbor. Let's think about why it's important to build negotiation and conflict reduction skills when dealing with difficult neighbors. *(PAUSE for participation)*  
It's important to maintain your own happiness in your new home and the happiness of others, and make sure that problems don't escalate.

**Slide 24: Potential Conflicts**

- There's a wide variety of conflicts that could occur in your new residence, but let's look at some of the more common examples.
- Sharing of space: Sharing your own apartment and building space may cause conflict.

**Slide 25: Potential Conflicts (cont'd)**

- Conflicts about noise: Sometimes you may have a neighbor who plays the TV or music too loudly.

**Slide 26: Potential Conflicts (cont'd)**

- Money: From paying the bills to lending money to a neighbor, money can often lead to conflict.

**Slide 27: Potential Conflicts (cont'd)**

- Personality differences. Not just in your new building, but in all parts of your life, you will meet people with personalities and habits very different from your own. Such differences may cause conflict.

**Slide 28: Potential Conflicts (cont'd)**

- Recovery relapses: Sometimes people recovering from mental illness and substance use will have relapses, and you'll see changes in their behavior that are difficult to deal with.
- Living independently means that you may run into problems such as needing something fixed but not being able to immediately contact your super for assistance.

**Slide 29: Skills to Use**

- Now that we've looked at potential sources of conflict, let's discuss some general strategies to help resolve issues.
- Cool off – give yourself time to relax if you're feeling very angry.
- Negotiation – sometimes you may need to compromise or change how you do something to resolve a conflict.

**Slide 30: Skills to Use (cont'd)**

- Identify the real problem – sometimes conflicts emerge over something silly but there's really a more serious problem not being discussed.
- Validate others – you may disagree with what someone is saying, but show him or her that, regardless, you understand that they're feeling angry or hurt.

**Slide 31: Skills to Use (cont'd)**

- Communication –
  - Demonstrate through body language that you're actively listening.
  - Avoid blaming others. For example, instead of saying, "You drive me crazy when you leave your music on for hours," try, "I feel really frustrated and distracted when music is left on for hours." "I" statements are less threatening.
  - Remember, there's a difference between being assertive and making your point appropriately known, and being aggressive and attacking someone. Be assertive, not aggressive.

**Slide 32: Skills to Use (cont'd)**

- Think solution not competition – how can you solve this argument? It's not about winning or losing. It's about living together more peaceably.
- Identify changes together – work together to develop a timeline for desired changes.
- Give anyone involved in the conflict a fair opportunity to express how he or she is feeling without interruptions.
- Use a third party. A third party is someone not directly involved in the conflict who can provide a more neutral opinion—for example, a super or case manager.

- If you've tried and can't reach a resolution, contact your case manager or therapist to discuss the next best step.

**Slide 33: Conflict Resolution - Let's Review**

- There are many different skills you can use to solve problems. Let's review what we just discussed.
  - Cool off
  - Negotiate
  - Communicate
  - Validate others
  - Think solution
  - Identify changes
  - Discuss the real problem
  - Discuss with a third party

And, if necessary, contact your case manager or therapist.

**Slide 34: Group Activity: Role Play 3**

- Now that we've reviewed conflict resolution, let's try some role plays to practice applying what we've discussed. *(see Role Play Activities, pp. 10-11)*

**Slide 35: How to Interact Effectively with your Super and Landlord**

- Now that we've discussed conflict resolution and you've role played some real life scenarios, let's take it a step further and discuss interacting with your building's super or landlord.
- The key here is communication--not just what you say to your super or landlord, but *how* you say it, the manner you use to communicate, and when you decide it's time to contact him or her.

**Slide 36: What problems would require contact with your super or landlord?**

- Part of your responsibility as a tenant is deciding when it's appropriate and necessary to contact your super or landlord. Take a moment to think of some problems that may require you to communicate with your super or landlord. Look at the pictures for some hints. *(PAUSE for participation)*

Answers include fixing something that's not working, concern you won't be able to pay the month's rent, conflicts with roommates, and issues with the building.

**Slide 37: What problems would require contact with your super or landlord? (cont'd)**

- Problems that might require contact include needing something in your apartment fixed, such as a window that won't open. Or perhaps you think that you may not be able to pay the month's rent—you'll need to discuss your options with the landlord if the rent payment problem is a one-time occurrence. Otherwise, it would be good to plan ahead with your case manager so that you're better prepared for a future rent payment schedule.

**Slide 38: What is the best way to approach your super or landlord?**

- Now you know why you would contact your super or landlord, but how do you approach him or her?
- First, consider modes of communication. You may want to try calling first and then either discussing your issue on the phone or setting up a time to meet in person.
- Second, consider the components of communication. Gather and organize your thoughts before you initiate contact. Remember to state your message clearly, calmly and respectfully. If you become frustrated, try to remain calm and understand your super and landlord's perspective.

**Slide 39: What can you do if your problem is not resolved by seeing your super or landlord?**

- Unfortunately, you might find that discussing your concern with your super or landlord didn't resolve the problem. So what can you do next? *(PAUSE for participation)*
- Depending on the problem, you may need to contact your case manager or therapist to further discuss the issue and understand how to seek help and attain resolution.

**Slide 40: Role Play 4**

- Approaching your super or landlord is easier after practice. Let's try a few role plays. *(see Role Play Activities, pp. 10-11)*

**Slide 41: Respect**

- Let's move on to Part 3 of Being a Good Tenant and Neighbor: Respect. The idea of "respect" may seem obvious, but it takes some serious thought. There are often misinterpretations and miscommunications in human interactions that can be perceived as disrespectful.

**Slide 42: The Golden Rule**

- Treat others the way you want to be treated. This is probably familiar to you already. From an early age, we're taught to treat others the way we want to be treated. And even as adults, this is a good rule of thumb to remember and use in interactions with others.

**Slide 43: Respect Tenants**

- We know The Golden Rule, but how does that translate to your new residence? What other ways can we show respect towards other tenants? *(PAUSE for participation)*
- Keep noise in the apartment at a considerate level. Think about common sources of noise – television, radio, voices, and so on – and be aware of their volume especially at certain times of the day.
- If your building has a lobby, keep noise at a quiet level. Lobbies tend to be quiet and calm areas.

**Slide 44: Respect Tenants (cont'd)**

- And lastly, keep the building's hallways and lobby free of litter and trash. Being a respectful tenant and neighbor means that everyone must join in the effort to keep common areas clean. What do you think we mean by litter? *(PAUSE for participation)* Litter includes garbage bags, loose garbage, umbrellas, shoes, dirt, gum and candy wrappers, and spilled coffee.

**Slide 45: Group Activity: Role Play 5 and 6**

- Let's try some final role plays to reinforce what we've learned. *(see Role Play Activities, pp. 10-11)*

**Slide 46: Safety**

- The last part of being a good tenant and neighbor is safety. Remember, you're not just considering your own safety, but the safety of others such as your roommates and neighbors. When you get your apartment you'll become the member of a new community. You can take pride in this!

**Slide 47: Keeping Safe**

- So how exactly do you keep yourself and others safe?
- First, make sure you know where the fire extinguisher is in your apartment, how to use it, and the best way to evacuate the building if there is a fire. Ensure you have working smoke detectors and a carbon monoxide detector in your apartment; you can communicate with your super or landlord about these devices.

**Slide 48: Keeping Safe (cont'd)**

- Get to know your residence. Does the front door lock automatically or do you need to lock it when you enter or leave? Are there security cameras? Are all locations covered by these cameras?

**Slide 49: Keeping Safe (cont'd)**

- Lastly, who should you let into the building? If someone doesn't look familiar or looks suspicious, should you let him or her into the building? What are some ways you should handle non-residents and unfamiliar people? *(PAUSE for participation)* Ask the person who he or she is there to visit, confirm with neighbors, and report concerns to the building management.

**Slide 50: What Did We Learn?**

- Let's quickly review what we learned about being a good tenant and neighbor.
  - We discussed forming relationships – meeting neighbors, making first impressions, and dealing with stigma.
  - We talked about potential conflicts you may face and how to resolve them.
  - We discussed respecting others – remembering the golden rule and being aware of noise levels and litter.



- And lastly, we talked about your safety and the safety of others.
- As you prepare to live in a new environment, remember what you've learned in this module and through the role plays about being a good tenant and neighbor.

***Slide 51: Congratulations!***

- Congratulations! Now you have the foundational skills needed to be a good tenant and neighbor!

## APPENDIX

### Role Plays

#### **Directions:**

Select a scenario and perform a role play. Encourage other participants to provide input following the role play. Remember, the best way to improve these skills and ease anxiety is to practice!

#### **Role Play 1**

- Meeting a neighbor in the lobby of your building for the first time
- Greeting a neighbor who seems uninterested in conversation (i.e., he or she provides brief one-word responses and looks in another direction when you speak)
- Talking with a neighbor with whom you'd like to begin a friendship
- Inviting a new friend to your apartment

#### **Role Play 2**

- A neighbor approaches you and says, "I hear you had some problems before you came here. How are you going to take care of yourself? I don't know if you should be here."
- You hear a neighbor repeatedly make comments under his breath like, "They shouldn't let people with addictions in here."

#### **Role Play 3**

- You notice that your neighbor has been allowing many non-tenants to enter the building and spend the night at his apartment. Your neighbor and his guests are very loud at night and you have reason to suspect they are using drugs in the apartment.
- You lent your neighbor \$10 a week ago and he promised to repay the money by now. You've reminded him numerous times and he keeps responding, "I know. I'll get it to you."
- A few nights a week you and your friends hang out in your living room until around midnight watching TV and listening to music. Your roommate angrily approaches you and says, "I need to be asleep by 10:00 pm every night. You can't have people over past then."

#### **Role Play 4**

- Your bathtub drain seems to be clogged. You've tried to unclog it yourself but it hasn't made a difference. You decide to contact your super for help.
- The blinds on your bedroom window broke and you've called your super to ask him to fix them. Every time you've called he doesn't pick up. What do you do?
- You are having trouble budgeting your money and you realize that you won't be able to pay this month's rent on time. You call your landlord but she becomes angry and tells you to "figure it out on your own." What do you do?

### **Role Play 5**

- Your neighbor leaves his garbage bags outside his apartment between your door and his so that it is not clear to whom the bags belong. There is a \$50 fine for garbage bags not placed in the proper receptacles in front of the building. When you discuss this problem with your neighbor and ask him not to leave garbage in the hall, he responds, “I’ll do what I want. I don’t care about a fine.”
- You’d like to speak to your landlord about the constant noise in the lobby that is making it difficult for you to sleep.

### **Role Play 6**

- You share a cleaning schedule with your roommates. When it is your week to clean the common areas, you do so efficiently. It is now your roommate’s week to clean the common areas. Instead of cleaning, he leaves it messy, dusty, and with food crumbs everywhere. How do you handle this?

Those involved in the role play should answer the following questions:

- How did expressing yourself make you feel?
- Do you think you got your point across?
- Was this the best way to handle the situation?
- Would you change anything about what you said?