



**GOOD PRACTICE SERVICES:
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS &
RECOVERY IN MENTAL HEALTH**

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ABSTRACT FORM

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Title of the contribution/Titolo del contributo	Homelessness HOME Team		
Objectives/Obiettivi	To share best practices for engaging and forging a relationship with highly vulnerable chronically homeless individuals who remain on the streets due to severe mental illness often coupled with a substance use disorder or other health conditions		

**Contents-text/Contenuto-testo:
Max. 400 parole/words**

HOME (Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement) is a county-wide field response unit consisting of teams of professional and paraprofessional staff dedicated to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, severely mentally ill homeless individuals.

Individuals with the most severe mental illnesses are likely to be at highest risk for death and disability on the street for a variety of reasons. In addition to their elevated risk of suicide and accidental death (e.g., running in traffic), these individuals isolate themselves and avoid helpers or services due to paranoia. They may not recognize medical conditions that require medical attention, and they are often preyed upon by opportunistic others. These individuals may meet criteria for grave disability if, as a result of a mental disorder, they are unable to provide food, clothing, or shelter for themselves.

The most efficient way to minimize risk in a population is to reach the most ill first. Utilizing a triage mindset, and in close collaboration with other outreach teams, the HOME team seeks to identify the most vulnerable mentally ill individuals who will not respond to traditional outreach efforts. Then, the team pursues an approach of relentless negotiation to engage the individual to reach a safer context and, over time, a positive outcome.

Under new Los Angeles County DMH leadership, a specialized team selection and training effort has begun to equip HOME teams in this triage work. This program has four goals:

- (1) **System-Wide Learning:** providing support in learning to identify the common symptoms of severe mental illness on the streets;
- (2) **Equity:** ensuring that those with the most severe mental illnesses are served first;
- (3) **Efficiency:** allowing that the teams dedicate their energies to individuals who can most benefit from them; and
- (4) **Effectiveness:** using careful enrollment to train HOME teams to set an intention to serve every HOME client all the way through to achieving a safe home, social ties, and a meaningful community role.