



Key Training Issues for Maintenance and Janitorial Staff Working in a Supportive Housing Setting

All employees working in supportive housing settings should be trained and held accountable to be respectful to tenants and co-workers, some whom have medical and/or psychiatric disabilities and/or histories of substance use. The housing owner/employer should be sure that tenants and employees know about the laws, regulations and agency policies they must comply with by posting and/or providing information in clear, simple and comprehensive language.

All supportive housing staff, including maintenance and janitorial employees, should be trained to perform their duties with sensitivity and respect for tenants, volunteers and for other employees. All staff should be bound by strict rules of confidentiality as defined by applicable laws, rules and regulations, regarding what they observe when working in tenants' units. Specific training topics that are important for all staff working in supportive housing settings include:

- Understanding Mental Illnesses / Mental Illnesses 101
- Understanding the Impacts of Homelessness
- De-Escalation Strategies for Working with People in Crisis
- Working with People who Engage in Hoarding Behavior
- Working with People with Substance Use Issues
- Understanding Relapse and Recovery

Employees should not be expected to work in a unit in which active drug use or dangerous activities are occurring. If an employee is in a work situation where it is difficult to perform tasks and duties due to the tenant's activities, the employee should be trained to report activity and behavior that violates the rental agreement to the building manager, and all staff should have a thorough understanding of the terms and conditions of the lease and the house rules for the property. All staff should also be oriented to the range of services and supports that are available to tenants.

Most importantly, all staff, including maintenance and janitorial personnel, should be familiar with and held accountable to comply with the supportive housing owners' commitment to respect tenants, visitors, and all persons encountered on duty.

Note: This document is included within the *Housing Operations* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at www.csh.org/toolkit2. This document has been adapted from CSH's *Supportive Housing Property Management Operations Manual*, which is available at www.csh.org/publications.