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Diggin' Independence: Women Working Toward Self-Sufficiency

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Diggin' Independence: Women Working Toward Self-Sufficiency

A thesis submitted to the School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University, for the degree of Master of Design in Interaction Design

Student Name
Signature
Date

Advisor Name
Signature
Date

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Women with young children are a growing population experiencing homelessness. Transitional housing services provide shelter and educational programming aimed at fostering the development of skills necessary to attain and maintain basic needs.

Adagio Health’s transitional home, Healthy Start House (hsh) served as a case study in which to explore the intersection of design, service and social innovation. The metrics of success outlined by the county for hsh include attaining permanent housing and employment or education. Using a co-creative process, exploratory and generative research uncovered that the service had no clear route to assist the women to develop core competencies to meet the county’s metrics of success.

Rather than create a new extension of the current service, this design solution focuses on amplifying the resources and infrastructure already in place to improve the current service delivery. The solution includes an ideal plan for the hsh staff to work with the clients to comprehensively develop their core competencies, and an expanded view of how a money management system helps the clients meet the county’s metrics. We hypothesize, through this system, clients will re-enter society smoothly, armed with the skills and knowledge needed to provide for themselves and their children. While the design generated much enthusiasm from all stakeholders, the concept would benefit from further testing and iterations over a longer length of time to understand if it can, indeed, improve learning and performance outcomes and create sustained behavior change.

Keywords: service design, social innovation, homelessness, service, participatory design, co-design, non-profit, women
The dedicated involvement of many individuals made this project a success. Collaborating with such warm and dedicated people made this experience truly eye opening and at times humbling. The administration, staff and clients welcomed us into their home and allowed us to work throughout the year, sometimes without knowing what we were doing or where we would finish, and for this, we are incredibly grateful. We hope, even if in just a small part, we made a contribution to move that will contribute to the mission and success of the organization. This organization works hard to change the lives of many women and we know a bright future awaits them.

We owe a tremendous thank you to the mentorship and guidance of Kristin Hughes. Her sensitivity, positivity, insight and work ethic helped us significantly grow over the year. She leads by example and we hope that she sees her influence in our lives by the kind of designers we will be as we enter the workforce and into the future.

Stephanie would like to thank:
Mom and Dad, for their confidence and encouragement, and willingness to help us any way possible if it means I can get more sleep. And to Jonathan, for his patience, optimism, and being the brightest part of every day.

Kelly would like to thank:
Mom and Dad, for their endless cheerleading; Jamie, for knowing that I am almost always hungry and thus keeping my soul nourished, my belly fed and my heart full. And to James, my most unexpected design discovery.

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UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE
In considering this year long project, we started by choosing to work as a pair, each agreeing that professionally we would rarely find ourselves as sole practitioners. Additionally, because we believe strongly that one of the primary ways design is most effective is through the work achieved with other disciplines, we sought an organization with which to partner. We were personally interested in applying our design knowledge in an area where design is traditionally not present or to an underrepresented demographic. We are both passionate about supporting women and women’s issues around independence and equality, and we wanted to exercise our skill in an area not heavily reliant upon technology. We also hoped to work with a group of people with the intent to investigate how design could help them self-organize and create change. With all of this criteria in place, our adviser discovered Adagio Health via a proposal for another project, and thought they may be a strong candidate for a partnership. After an initial meeting with them, we agreed that they could be a great fit, and proceeded to move forward to negotiate how our partnership would develop.

Initially, Adagio Health asked for a mentorship program for their transitional home, Healthy Start House (hsh). This home is a long-term homeless shelter where women and their children can live for up to two years. Adagio Health wanted to figure out how the success rate in reintegrating women back into their communities and where the women transitioning out might need additional support. Given this framing, the intent of this project seemed to point to developing a new arm to complement their existing service. As the project unfolded it became evident that it would provide a rich learning space, threading together concepts of co-creation, evidence and environments, which appear in services, design and social innovation. Much of the work dealt with understanding the relationship and interdependence of these three different content areas and how designers could successfully work in their intersection.

Introduction

In the genetic code of design, or at least of its more thoughtful part, there has also been a strong idea [design’s] role should be one of improving the quality of life; to act as a bridge between technical and social innovation to the point of proposing artefacts able to help people to live better. Ezio Manzini
Co-Creation

Inherent in the intersection of services, human-centered design and social innovation is the co-creative development process, in all of these spaces, designers increasingly consider how to create with, not for, although the process of engagement identified as co-creation differs for these three spaces. Co-creator in services refers to the moment of production between the services and service provider and the user. The question is how to support the user via the service provider. As the user undertakes set activities mentioned above, designers provide scaffolds upon which everyday people can express their creativity (Sand 2005, 54). Ezio Manzini, creator of the co-design network, understands designers’ roles as leveraging their skills to strengthen what’s already been developed by others. Designers as a central core of people who help people execute and “enabling solutions, i.e. services, products and communication specifically oriented to conceive a new generation of democratizing, i.e. services, products and communication specifically oriented to co-create unique experiences” (Gupta and Vajic 2010, 13). Businesses with the resources to execute are thus connected to a variety of solutions that address a concern that may span globally, and everyday people have a platform to share ideas that could impact the world. Within services, design and social innovation, evidence takes on varying forms and is referenced differently, but serves a similar purpose throughout.

In the context of design, evidence appears in many forms across what Richard Buchanan calls the four orders. The manifestation can take shape in first order design as signs, symbols and images, in second order, as physical objects. Third order design includes activities, services and processes and so evidence may take the form of an interaction, a conversation, and as fourth order design creates systems, environments, ideas and values; evidence would include attitudes and practices (Buchanan 1998, 3). Businesses and organizations increasingly understand the value of cohesive and well considered evidence experienced throughout a customer journey. Designers’ skills—such as conducting research with users, making processes and thinking visible through maps and diagrams, among others—allow them to create the tools and supports that help ensure a successful customer experience.

Within the context of social innovation Project H, lead by Emily Pilotton and Matthew Miller, partnered with the Bertie County School District in North Carolina “to help improve their schools’ environments, materials, and environments for a service, but scaffolds for the service providers to support them in their roles as service facilitators. Sanders explains scaffolds as “communal spaces that support and some users’ creativity, enhancing the co-creativity of their lives. Designers will increasingly become the creators of scaffolds upon which everyday people can express their creativity” (Sand 2005, 54). Encourages all creative thinkers to participate regardless of their background, location or education about design. Co-creator believes passionately that innovation requires collaboration and that technology can facilitate teamwork across great distances.” To that end, this principle driving this platform is to be inclusive, community-centered, collaborative, optimistic and always in beta (Openideo 2010). Businesses with the resources to execute are thus connected to a variety of solutions that address a concern that may span globally, and everyday people have a platform to share ideas that could impact the world. Evidence management is a lot like advertising, except that it turns a company into a living, breathing, advertisement for itself” (Berry and Bendapudi 2003, 3). “Evidence is their own unique being, it can be difficult to choreograph just the right sequence, and providers need the appropriate supports to dynamically field changing user’s needs. Parker saw in the shift in the way services are now developed as opposed to the past, placing customers’ needs and experiences at the center of development. Indeed, the new service-model places support as the service most valued by a consumer (Parker 2008, 10), the result of acknowledging a user’s individuality. Users want the freedom to be able to shape a service according to their own desires, or at least to perceive this to be the case, thus service providers are transitioning from provider to facilitator. “The main role of the facilitators is to enable customers to learn by doing and to help them acquire the appropriate norms and procedures by participating in activities” (Gupta and Vajic 2010, 45). While still user-centered, the co-creation discussion in services is focused on the production of the service itself, between the service provider and the user, not necessarily the designer of the service and the user. However, if we move to human-centered design, co-creation distinctly refers to the role of the designer in context with his or her role. A tandem believes that design’s role is shifting. Not only are “everyday people” becom

literature review
system through design” (Project H Design 2010). Project H is working with the county to integrate creative design thinking into the high school curriculum. The root of the curriculum is to provide transferable skills and citizenship through improving community infrastructures (Project H Design 2010). Aside from developing a new approach to education, “they hope to instill design thinking in the minds of young citizens, so that they may be better equipped to take to the next generation of global issues” (Project H Design 2010).

One of Project H’s biggest achievements is “Studio H, a public high school course with a ‘design/build’ curriculum that sparks rural community development through real world, built projects” (Studio H 2011). Evidence in this case includes the curriculum for the class, the class space, the finished projects within the Bertie community, as well as the outcomes of each student. All these are tangible outcomes that prove Studio H presence within the community. Additional evidence extends to the Studio H website, providing a place to communicate and document class progress and the evolving curriculum available to anyone interested in replicating the program. Evidence of these efforts can connect with users with the result being that users feel listened to and understood. Through this relationship designers can identify patterns, and understand the perspectives and values of the stakeholders involved in each project. By working to empathize with the various stakeholders, designers can connect with users with the result being that users feel listened to and understood. Through this relationship designers can identify patterns, structures, and relationships to provide meaning and value to the stakeholders, considering the actions manifested by a user and the actions of external forces experienced by a user in a perceived relationship, creating an experience (Dewey 1934, 44). Relationships will define the nature of environment and understanding the landscape.

Environment

An environment can take many forms yet always has an emotional or attitudinal affect on its users. It could be a physical space that a user exists in, a set of relationships or the feeling/experience that unfolds over time. Through the lens of service design, an experience, at its base, can be defined as one’s journey through a series of touchpoints. The process of moving through these touchpoints alone does not create the experience as a whole. Experience also relies upon a user’s past and present state of mind. Parker argues “services need to be understood as a journey or a cycle—a series of critical encounters that take place over time and across channels” (Parker 2006, 16). In order to concieve of this journey, designers strive to understand the scope of the area within which they are working, and to learn about all the stakeholders involved. Tools such as blueprinting, journey maps and stakeholder mapping provide a holistic view and also a way to engage with the details of the service, understanding how each part effects the whole and the overall experience. This approach can shape the service organization around the experiences and expectations of the users, as opposed to the customer conforming to the service organization (Parker 2006, 8-9). It is imperative that designers spend this time to both identify and understand the perspectives and values of the stakeholders involved in each project. By working to empathize with the various stakeholders, designers can connect with users with the result being that users feel listened to and understood. Through this relationship designers can identify patterns, structures, and relationships to provide meaning and value to the stakeholders, considering the actions manifested by a user and the actions of external forces experienced by a user in a perceived relationship, creating an experience (Dewey 1934, 44). Relationships will define the nature of environment and understanding the landscape.
Problem Framing

Homelessness

Families are a growing population experiencing homelessness. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (usich) defines a family as typically “headed by a single woman who on average is in her late 20s with approximately two children, one or both under six years of age.” In 2009, “as many as 355,447 people in families were sheltered a 13 percent increase since 2005.” Additionally, public school systems reported that “over 956,000 homeless students were enrolled in the 2008-09 school year,” a 20% rise from the previous year (Opening Doors 2010, 12-13).

The reason for increased homelessness varies. Government agencies suggest factors including loss of affordable housing, wages and public assistance that have not kept up with the cost of living, job loss and rising debt. Other research has also shown that domestic or sexual violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness (Opening Doors 2010, 13). Also, through interviews with the staff of usich, we learned that other factors include substance abuse or intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (idd) which contribute to women falling into debt. Another scenario includes women aging out of foster care; these individuals spend most of their lives in the system and never develop the support they need to maintain financial independence. Homelessness is more often an outcome of other issues women are trying to manage.

In 2010, the usich, for the first time, developed a comprehensive program documenting data trends and developed a plan to end homelessness. Families experiencing homelessness often face additional barriers in maintaining basic needs which homelessness exacerbates. Unlike short-term shelters, transitional housing aims to fulfill four main goals:

- To provide a safe and secure shelter for families and individuals.
- To connect families and individuals to other public & health services.
- It allows time for an individual to gain life skills and/or a job in order to provide for him or herself and family.
- Creates a community of support from other clients and case managers throughout his or her journey to become self-sufficient.

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potential” (Opening Doors 2010, 4-5). While policy makers are working to make housing more affordable, transitional housing programs currently provide an option for those who need long term housing packaged with additional social and financial services.

Transitional Housing

Both government and non-profit provide shelter services for those experiencing homelessness. They range from a bed for the night, to a 30 day shelter, to a one to two year transitional housing options. Each type of shelter meets different end goals, for this research we focused on transitional housing. The state and federal governments, grants and philanthropic contributions provide the primary funding for most transitional housing.

As previously mentioned, families experiencing homelessness often face additional barriers in maintaining basic needs which homelessness exacerbates. Unlike short-term shelters, transitional housing aims to fulfill four main goals:

- To provide a safe and secure shelter for families and individuals.
- To connect families and individuals to other public & health services.
- It allows time for an individual to gain life skills and/or a job in order to provide for him or herself and family.
- Creates a community of support from other clients and case managers throughout his or her journey to become self-sufficient.
Healthy Start House (hsh) is a transitional housing nonprofit in Pittsburgh and the focus of our research. Operated by Adagio Health, which provides women’s health and parenting education services, hsh began as an extension of Healthy Start with the purpose being to provide a safe place for new mothers to recover from giving birth and learn basic parenting skills over the course of a few days. With their first client, hsh realized it would be something other than its original vision. They began providing shelter to women experiencing homelessness for longer durations, up to two years. Hsh’s primary mission is to assist women find appropriate permanent housing. The home can accommodate up to 6 women and their children at one time, relying on 8 staff members and two management positions.

Women experiencing homelessness that are pregnant, immediately postpartum or have children under the age of 10 are allowed to apply for residence. Women apply to live at hsh and undergo an interview process in which they are screened for substances and asked some questions. Clients are expected to cook dinner one night a week for the house and attend programming for four hours a day during the week, as well as work toward and maintain other goals, as established by the case manager. There is an established curfew, along with other rules, and clients are expected to complete a daily chore. Since the start of the research, the client handbook has undergone revision and management implemented several new systems and processes.

The Need
Adagio Health approached us to develop a mentorship program for the women as they transitioned out of care, and to help them establish metrics which they could use to measure their progress and successes to maintain and garner new funding. When beginning this process we recognized that we would work with a demographic, both in the staff and the clients, that possessed life experiences dissimilar to much of our own. It would be important to collaborate closely with each group and attempt to immerse ourselves as part of the ecosystem which is to become peers, as opposed to external evaluators (Manzini 2005, 8).

Upon entering this partnership with hsh, primary drivers included understanding how design could work with an organization that may not otherwise have exposure to design resources; experiencing a co-creative process to learn how to immerse ourselves in an environment and take on the roles of facilitators as opposed to sole creators; and to assist an organization to find its strengths in order to create a sustainable and successful future.

Healthy Start House
EXPLORATORY RESEARCH
To understand the landscape of transitional housing programs, we sought out other programs in Pittsburgh and in the mid-western region. While non-profits position themselves in a variety of ways, emphasizing areas such as faith, literary, or community, several consistent patterns arose. Most transitional housing programs own a building or a series of apartments or even an entire block of apartments and families live in the building. This means that the families do not have shared living spaces to foster community or peer support, however with the staff on-site, the families are still in a little or a lot of interaction depending on the person. Every program has at least one caseworker acting as a liaison between other service providers and the family. Last, all homes offer, if not require, programming to build and strengthen life skills (See appendix, page 34, Adagio Comparing Transitional Housing Services).

hsh is a unique organization comprised of, unlike other transitional homes, a shared living space with staff monitoring the house around the clock. Additionally, hsh provides more structure and rules to live in the home. However, even though men’s operations and structure differ from other transitional homes, all are beholden to country requirements.

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Benchmarking

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Healthy Start House Residence

Inside HSH photos

First floor
1. Foyer of HSH
2. Kitchen
3. Multi-purpose room
4. Staff office
5. Message and information boards in the hallways.

Second and third floor
6. Client’s room

Basement
7. Children’s playrooms
8. Children’s playrooms

Exploratory Research
Healthy Start House Staff
Activities & Methods

Introduction to the Service and Service Delivery

Goal:
• Get to know the staff more personally
• Understand what staff perceived their job to be and how they did it
• Understand if there were discrepancies between what they described in the job and what they did day to day

Methods:
5 participants

Activity Format:
Staff described tasks, responsibilities, feelings, challenges and rewards of their jobs.

Insights:
Most staff members work a second job and staff seem generally happy at HSH. In their five-day journals, the majority reported that they spent most of the day doing housekeeping duties or baby-sitting. They talk to clients often but it was unclear from their comments if those casual conversations might be considered teachable moments or day-to-day small talk. However, when asked, they had a difficult time articulating what their actual roles were other than to make sure the clients were safe.

What a Woman Needs to be Self-Sufficient

Goal:
• Have the staff identify skills and needs required to be self-sufficient
• Understand the staff’s perspective on their roles and responsibilities as service providers of HSH.

Method:
Small group workshop: 3 participants

Activity Format:
Researchers interviewed staff members for an hour about their roles, responsibilities and their perception of HSH.

Insights:
Most staff members work a second job and staff seem generally happy at HSH. In their five-day journals, the majority reported that they spent most of the day doing housekeeping duties or baby-sitting. They talk to clients often but it was unclear from their comments if those casual conversations might be considered teachable moments or day-to-day small talk. However, when asked, they had a difficult time articulating what their actual roles were other than to make sure the clients were safe.

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Collage of What a Woman Needs to Be Self-Sufficient

Activity Format
Staff made individual collages illustrating what a woman needs to be self-sufficient. Then, with colored sticker dots, specified if it was the staff or workplace support in the areas they noted as important. The breakdown:
Green dots = workplace provides support in these areas
Yellow dots = staff personally provides support in these areas
Blue dots = areas that are not my responsibility to support
Red dots = areas that are not even our responsibility to support

Insights
This activity allowed for reflection and added more emotionally driven responses. They were able to articulate their goals and motivations as mothers and staff members more clearly than the previous activity. They have a deep desire to help the clients, but have yet to find the tools or strategies to help clients succeed.

Affinity Diagram of Core Competencies

Activity Format
Based on the collage activity the group identified overlapping ideas of needs and skills and made an affinity diagram with post-its on a sheet of butcher paper. The final groupings became the core competencies.

Insights
Looking for patterns and grouping was challenging for this group. We heavily led the categorization. Because of our strong influence during this activity, we repeated this exercise with the entire staff at a later date (see page 48).
Exploratory Research

Understanding Staff-Client Interactions, in Four Parts

Goal
Make conversations visible to get everyone on the same page and collect accurate information about daily operations and interactions.

Participants
Activity Format
We conducted this workshop in a round robin format. The staff split into small groups and rotated between three activities at 15 minute intervals, and a poster to which the entire house would contribute over time.

Station One
The first activity was to use post-its to describe a client’s entire journey while living at hsh on a timeline.

Station Two
The second activity asked the staff to use post-its to map what the client experiences during her first week at hsh on a timeline.

Station Three
The third activity used a house drawn on a piece of butcher paper to prompt discussion and labeling of where staff and clients interact, and what they are typically talking about or doing together.

Poster
Last, we left a poster on the wall for the staff and clients to fill in over the course of a week, which we separated into the original set of core competencies with the space to address “What does hsh do well” and “What could hsh do better?” for each core competency.

Insights
hsh has few and infrequent organized activities within the house that aren’t purely for entertainment. The staff had a difficult time reflecting on daily operations and communicating what the clients do daily. The staff were able to recall the most structure during the first week a client moves into hsh.

The staff are unaware of what the clients do outside the house, specifically what the clients do in programming.

The staff have differing opinions about hsh’s strengths and weaknesses.

Staff Research Activity Photos
2. page 29. Re-mapping Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
3,4,5. page 30. Collages depicting what a woman needs to be self-sufficient
6. page 31. Initial affinity diagram of core competencies
7. page 32. Charting a client’s first week at hsh
8. page 33. Charting a client’s typical month through a hsh
9. page 34. Identifying places in hsh where staff and clients engage
We developed a basic understanding of the goals, objectives and operations of the service organization, through our exploratory research activities which we identified as key insights:

- Employees did not have a clear sense of purpose, nor could they articulate their value or job description.
- While all employees could recite the mission statement of working to find women appropriate permanent housing, few could articulate how to support the women in that endeavor, or how women may be able to maintain that housing.
- Very few processes and procedures were followed uniformly and there is very little organizational or client history documented since the facility’s inception.
- Staff were able to identify client issues, but could not consistently identify solutions or appropriate times to address concerns.
- Further, there lacks a process or precedent for follow-up and measuring success of clients’ goals.

Key Insights

Monthly Staff Meetings, Fly-on-the-Wall Observation

**Goal**
- Understand how staff communicate in a group.
- See how staff discuss clients and strategies for providing support in specific cases.

**Activity Format**
We scheduled four staff meetings which occur once a month. This is the only time the entire staff is gathered together to discuss news, review client cases and present new processes or protocols the manager has been implementing. Each meeting begins with dinner prepared by a couple of the staff members and lasts approximately three hours. During these times we sat and listened, taking notes and observing staff throughout the course of the meeting.

**Insights**
These meetings are the time for the staff to catch up as they rarely see each other during the month, as only one to two staff members work during a shift. The meetings are long but the staff laugh and joke to keep the mood light. The manager spends the first part of the meeting discussing internal operations, with little staff engagement. When the manager shifts to discussing client cases, the tone of the room shifts to an excited discussion about issues they are having with the clients. Everyone contributes. Problems are raised, however, there is no strategy for how the staff should deal with the problems and issues. Lack of follow-up creates...
Card Sorting Interviews

Goal
- Learn who the clients are as individuals and begin to understand their circumstances.
- Learn about their perception of life and experiences to identify the life skills around which to focus our solution.

6 participants

Activity Format
Used flash cards and pictures to facilitate conversations as a method to make the session more friendly and casual as well as extracting information that might be hard to reflect upon if asked directly.

Getting to Know You
Client has nine picture cards in front of her, chooses one, flips it over and talks about the topic. Some examples include:
- Name your 10 best characteristics.
- My favorite time of the day/night is _ because_.
- Three things you want for your children.
- If I could introduce my child to any person or character it would be...

Who are the people in your life?
Flash cards depicting a variety of individuals that could play a role in each woman’s life, including family members, community members, service providers, and health providers, were placed on the table for each woman to organize based on who is currently in her life. Women then grouped the cards according to importance.

Easy to Hard Tasks
Flash cards depicted daily activities and life skills. Clients organized these on a spectrum of what is easy or hard for them to do, manage, learn, etc.

Insights
- All the women named their children and other women in their lives as their support networks and who they love.
- Several admitted it took struggle, pain and engaging their children in play or homework. All wanted something better for their children.
- All the women stated they came to see us before not to work on life skills, and they were eager to become independent and leave the group home setting. Several complained about the format of the workshops and lectures they leave the house to attend. Some said there was interesting material, but they don’t remember much of it.

Reflection Mailboxes
3 participants

Goal
- We were interested to see if clients would use this format to reflect on one thing they do each day.

Activity Format
Clients had their own mailboxes that they decorated and kept in their rooms. Every day, a staff member was to give them a card with the prompts: “One thing I did today,” “One thing I accomplished today,” and “This accomplishment made me feel good because.”

Insights
- One client completed a card once during the week-long trial, and another client completed three cards. Both staff and clients said they forgot because they kept their mailbox in their rooms and they were busy with other things. They also said it was too much writing. We learned that artifacts and activities need to be led by staff or else the clients won’t take the initiative to complete them, especially when there is no clear incentive. They felt it was an instant bond with the mailbox and said it was a good way to decorate them for their rooms. It was difficult for them to think about the difference between something they did versus something they accomplished.
We found that working with the clients was one of the most challenging aspects of this project and resulted in much less interaction with them than with the staff. However, the interviews provided insight into their diverse backgrounds and illuminated common challenges they faced. The challenges themselves provided insights about the client demographic:

- Many were incapable of keeping an appointment.
- Often when we were working with the clients their children were a distraction.
- Clients were reluctant to participate, knowing they were getting a “gift” helped with participation.
- Clients were skeptical about why we were there and what we were trying to do.
- Some were more willing to engage with us than others, but we did not form the rapport with them like we did the staff.
- Using props and cards was always more successful than just a conversation, however, there might have been something else we could have tried.
- Having two of us there may have intimidated them. We were advised that two people is helpful because clients may relate to one person more than the other, but it may have seemed overbearing.
- We were often at home during the day when the clients were out; it would have been beneficial for us to set a specific day and time to be at the house during a time that clients would be home.

Key Insights

We found that working with the clients was one of the most challenging aspects of this project and resulted in much less interaction with them than with the staff. However, the interviews provided insight into their diverse backgrounds and illuminated common challenges they faced. The challenges themselves provided insights about the client demographic:

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- Having two of us there may have intimidated them. We were advised that two people is helpful because clients may relate to one person more than the other, but it may have seemed overbearing.
- We were often at home during the day when the clients were out; it would have been beneficial for us to set a specific day and time to be at the house during a time that clients would be home.
Given these discoveries, it seemed premature to look at how to develop a mentorship program for *hsh* and instead, more appropriate to investigate how to strengthen their current service offering. It was important to us to pursue this work utilizing a co-creative process, as Manzini says, to work with, not for, carefully considering the efforts already put forth, and using our abilities to see how we might amplify the work and current infrastructures in place (Manzini 2003, 8). Rather than build a new program from scratch we saw the opportunity to leverage much of the existing knowledge within *hsh* to shift the focus to an important component of attaining permanent housing: developing the skills necessary to maintain that housing. If we consider the service framework as a way to evaluate the existing service offering, and observe the evidence currently available to communicate to its customers their service offering, we can identify some glaring gaps. For example, the women develop a list of goals they want to work on when they enter the house. There are no visual reminders or aids on how to work towards these goals available in the house, and no objects for the women to possess that may inspire them to keep striving for self-sufficiency. They do have regular status meetings, however without some physical reminders, these goals become abstract ideas. Additionally the environment, while clean and safe, is sterile. When considering the varying nature of each client, *hsh* lacks the supports to allow their staff to successfully facilitate, and tangible evidence for the clients to clearly understand how to achieve their goals. As we moved into our next phase of research, our key directives for ourselves were to figure out how to strengthen their current service offering in ways that will still allow them to meet the goals set forth by their county funding and also the goals set forth by Adagio Health administration and *hsh* management.

### Service Framework

Through our research, we discovered opportunities for improvement or clarity throughout the service and the service delivery. We identified a variety of concerns that caused us to take pause and reconsider our end goals. We grouped our findings into four categories to create a service framework which includes: Procedures, Knowledge Transfer, Culture and Adaptability.

#### Definitions

**Adaptability**

Making the tools and knowledge needed to readily adjust in order to maintain consistency through changing dynamics and varying situations.

**Culture**

The environment cultivated by interpersonal relationships and a shared vision.

**Knowledge Transfer**

Passing skills or information; can happen through various kinds of interactions, for example, a person engaging with an artifact or a person engaging with another person.

**Living System**

Dynamic system comprised of multiple integrated procedures and interactions, able to grow and change as necessary to support survival and growth.

**Procedure**

A prescribed set of steps that may include documents or other artifacts that are standard for certain situations; likely to accompany some form of documentation.

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Future

Procedures
Expectations clear and actionable.

Adaptability
Service is capable of flowing and changing as needed for growth or to accommodate new clients.

Current

Procedures
Through new structures, new management working to gain credibility and foster sense of team.

Adaptability
Challenges navigating boundaries to form appropriate relationships.

Exploratory Research

Future Culture
Shared vision for staff and clients.

Knowledge Transfer
Skill-based outcomes not established, thus difficult to measure.

Current: State of Healthy Start House

House comprised of dedicated and caring staff that currently face challenges to deliver the service they intend. Lack of protocols and artifacts, unclear expectations, and no defined roles lead to staff confusion and uncertainty about how to invest themselves in their daily work.

It appears that most staff members previously maintained peripheral roles within the service. Desires of duties are unevenly distributed. All this is leading to a service incoherently delivered to clients, strained relationships between staff members and between staff and clients.

Future: Service Concept

essential service for men is a service with actionable goals, providing its staff with the autonomy needed to comfortably deliver the service to clients under conditions of continual growth and change. New management will assume a peripheral role providing continued support for the service structure, leaving the service delivery as the primary responsibility of the staff.

With new core competencies identified, the time is ideal to shift the focus of staff from permanent housing to the development of skills needed to attain and maintain housing. The Six Core Competency areas identified by the staff will guide the partnership moving forward. Our goal is to continue working with staff to build the appropriate prerequisites (knowledge, attitudes, and skills) to support the successful co-creation between staff and clients of their service.

Cultural Shift

Forget that all are working toward a common goal.

Procedures
Through new structures, new management working to gain credibility and foster sense of team.

Adaptability
Challenges navigating boundaries to form appropriate relationships.

Exploratory Research
Narrowing Our Focus

Our approach to the generative research phase was shaped based on shifting our focus from developing a new arm of the service to developing supports within the current service structure. We aimed to investigate two areas, one being staff-to-staff interactions and internal processes, the other being staff-to-client interactions and processes.

The staff-to-staff service concepts addressed three sections of our service framework including culture, knowledge transfer and protocol. In every monthly staff meeting we observed that the format for discussing client cases was more of a story swap than a discussion of issues and solutions. During each meeting the staff voiced their experiences and opinions, but no tangible summaries or plans emerged for how the staff were expected to deal with current issues. This resulted in fragmented communication between staff members and unresolved issues or unchanging statuses with clients.

Our goal for this section of the research was to test frameworks that provided structure to their staff meeting discussions as well as begin to integrate the core competencies into the client case discussions.

The staff-to-client service concepts addressed the need for adaptability, knowledge transfer and protocol. We identified that the staff should be able to teach on the fly and through structured activities. Thus we tested a framework we referred to as an action plan, and sought to formalize those teaching on the fly moments. We also investigated the contexts in which the staff might feel the most comfortable teaching structured activities.
formalizing staff meetings
Goal
• Test our proposed framework for discussing client cases during a staff meeting.
• Develop aids for the staff to identify client issues and develop a plan of action that they can collectively execute.

Manager and case worker, 2 participants
Activity Format
In the first part of the activity we were testing a framework for discussing client cases during a staff meeting. To set the context, the manager was asked to give a verbal report on a client as she normally does during a monthly staff meeting. Next, she gave the report with a framework we provided on a handout. A debriefing discussion followed.

In the second half of the activity the participants were given various paper prototypes, such as a calendar, checklist and a decision maker dial, to develop an action plan based on a scenario we provided of a common client issue. The action plan is a five step process to help the staff identify a problem and then develop a viable strategy to solve the problem. A debriefing discussion followed.

Insights
In all, the activity format was unsuccessful. Rather than attempt to use the provided artifacts to complete the activities, the participants only pointed out foreseeable problems with the staff using them. This activity relied on role playing and imagination, which the participants were not comfortable with. One participant might have reacted more favorably to our proposed frameworks if she saw the activities prior to our session and had time to reflect, rather than being asked to react in the moment.

Both parts of the activity were thought to be overly complicated. The action plan relied on critical thinking and follow through, which the participants thought would be overwhelming for each staff member to champion on an individual basis. They recommended that tools for staff provide clear guidance and protocol, not open frameworks to develop a strategy.

finalizing the core competencies list
Non-staff, 10 participants
Goal
• Engage the entire staff to generate an official list of core competencies.
• Build a sense of ownership and investment amongst the staff through participation.

Activity Format
Each staff member contributed at least two skills a woman needs to support herself and her family. After writing each skill on a post-it note, the staff affinitized them, grouping the skills into larger categories. In order to form the affinity map into a final list of core competencies, the staff voted for the top three most important skills. Then they voted on the next three most important skills. The skills with the most votes became the final six core competencies.

Insights
The format of this activity proved to be productive, efficient and successful. For the staff key staff members were very quiet and often sat back and watch instead of actively contributing to meetings by providing time for individuals to brainstorm and share their ideas. Many staff members did not contribute to the discussions. This was an opportunity for staff to share their ideas and the post-it notes on the wall provided a equal platform for everyone to participate without being overheard. Then, the staff worked as a team, discussing how to categorize the ideas. At the end of the activity they had a tangible artifact of which they could take collective ownership. This activity was valuable in that we emerged with a list of core competencies, but also discovered an activity format that encourages the staff to become invested in the new programming.
The span of our generative research resulted in a narrowed solution space consisting of a staff-to-client service embodying the six core competencies. Specifically, we would develop the over-arching system, but also build out the core competency of money management. Staff-to-staff internal supports, such as a protocol for how to implement part of the service, would be a necessary component of the system, but it wasn’t the essence of the solution.

Reflecting on the activity format and results we were able to confirm some previous observations; we concluded that the staff desired tools to help them engage with the clients. Also, the staff were capable of applying critical thinking skills to a problem, but had difficulty executing a solution. In the implementation of our solution, we were also able to get a sense of the way the participants might engage with clients. For example using post-it notes to create the core competency list utilized a simple and direct task that they could complete by reflecting on past experiences rather than imagining the future. These artifacts and exercises helped determine possible forms that would be successful in a final solution for the staff’s use.

Drawing from insights of both exploratory and generative research, we wanted to ensure that our final solution preserved and fostered a future vision of how based off of key recommendations and principles. It was critical that our solution encouraged the clients’ development of life skills, specifically budgeting skills, by empowering the staff to take a more proactive role in daily interactions. In tandem with this, we wanted to create tools and artifacts for staff to teach about saving and fiscal practices. Additionally, we wanted to foster the growth of the staff members’ skills and capabilities, staff will support each other in the constantly changing environment. Together they become more nimble in interacting with range of clients in appropriate ways. Ultimately, building a collective knowledge base of productive ways to engage clients. To maintain this growing rapport, small achievements are celebrated amongst staff and clients.
ideation
Ideation on Money Management

The ideation phase occurred in tandem with generative research – concepts would inform our research plan and results from research would often re-frame or refine our concept direction. The ideation phase encompasses the brainstorming sessions and rapid prototyping that led to the final service concept and supporting artifacts of our solution. The staff requested we focus on money management for this project. Ideation sessions started broadly, considering varying aspects of money management that needed addressing, and the ways in which both the client and staff would interact with the money management program.

Constraints and considerations for ideation sessions included: tools or supports for staff to aid in developing money management skills, tools or supports to increase the client’s success in money management, frameworks for on-the-fly teachable moments, structured teachable moment, various aspects of money management and our service framework.

Service Models to Consider

Given our aim was to develop learning modules around the core competencies we had to figure out the service model for delivering this knowledge. Currently in the house teachable moments occur sporadically in context of the situation, although the manager’s long term goal was to formalize the learning. We identified four different models that would guide the development of the service touchpoints and supports for both staff and clients.

**Umbrella:**
This service model would implement a holistic curriculum that all clients participate in. It is the least flexible, but has the most integrated components and covers all of the core competencies.

**Scaffold over time:**
This model would provide the staff with an open framework that would allow them to grow and evolve the service over time. This model encourages sustainability by focusing on ease of implementation so the staff can champion it before increasing their responsibilities.

**Toolbox:**
This would include a breadth of learning modules for the staff to use as a client issue arises. Although the activities were structured, this model doesn’t have a blueprint for use over time. It is an as an needed basis as determined by a staff member.

**Menu:**
This model would provide the opportunity to engage in learning experiences that can be customized to a client’s individual needs and interests. Ultimately, we chose the menu service model under the guise of the umbrella service model. The Dream Catcher provides the entire curriculum and the client has the freedom to choose which learning modules to work on. Leveraging game mechanics and a reward system, if a client completes all the learning modules in a core competency then she is awarded a prize.

Service Blueprinting and Scenario Building

Developing service blueprints and customer journeys allowed us to consider the service holistically, providing the ability to jump between a macro and micro level view from both the staff and client perspectives. During brainstorming sessions we would often propose tools or artifacts for one aspect of the system. Then we would insert it into a scenario of use to help us understand the role of this artifact, how it fits into the larger system and what other artifacts or touchpoints were necessary to execute the service. The service blueprints helped to identify all artifacts and touchpoints necessary for the service, although by then end we had created a modified blueprint that took on more aspects of a customer journey, highlighting needs and motivations coupled with artifacts and touchpoints.

System Components

We arrived at a system that incorporated the opportunity for the client to develop life skills, as well as embedded support structures that increase staff engagement with the clients while strengthening their quality of the service delivery. Our service proposed two components: the first component was the overarching theme, which would encompass all six core competencies. At this point, that overarching theme was to take the form of a resume as living document, a form that was always growing and changing with the client as she mastered various life skills. The other component is the currency system which would be nested within the primary system as a program centered around money management core competency. This would take the form of tracking and visualizing money to plan for the future.
Refining the System

Service Blueprint
Concept, iteration 1
A Client’s Journey Through hsh

Concept, iteration 1

INTRODUCTION
- Becomes a member of household skeleton, begins process of earning
- Receives Strengths Finder inventory, focus on six core competencies
- Client updates her click counter

EARN CREDITS
- Task completed value assessed daily by house member
- Client receives credit based on quality of performance
- Client demonstrates understanding
- Client updates her click counter

EVALUATIONS
- Weekly Talk Time scheduled with each client to discuss progress toward monthly goal
- Evaluations reviewed
- Weekly Talk Time
- Client receives bimonthly performance evaluations
- Weekly Talk Time
- Poor evaluations lead to more structured staff activities around budgeting

SAVES
- Earns enough credits to pay off "debt" each month
- Saves and exchanges for real cash toward item on wish list

MOVES OUT
- Clients exchange saved credits for real cash toward purchase of wish list item
- Strengths Finder scrapbook reviewed
- Invited back to talk about experience

KEEPS S.F.I.
- Task completed value assessed on a daily basis by house member
- Client receives credit based on quality of performance
- Client demonstrates understanding
- Client updates her click counter

A Client’s Journey Through hsh

Concept, iteration 2

INTRODUCTION
- Becomes a member of household skeleton, begins process of earning
- Receives Strengths Finder inventory, focus on six core competencies
- Client updates her click counter

EARN CREDITS
- Task completed value assessed daily by house member
- Client receives credit based on quality of performance
- Client demonstrates understanding
- Client updates her click counter

EVALUATIONS
- Weekly Talk Time scheduled with each client to discuss progress toward monthly goal
- Evaluations reviewed
- Weekly Talk Time
- Poor evaluations lead to more structured staff activities around budgeting

SAVES
- Earns enough credits to pay off "debt" each month
- Saves and exchanges for real cash toward item on wish list

MOVES OUT
- Clients exchange saved credits for real cash toward purchase of wish list item
- Strengths Finder scrapbook reviewed
- Invited back to talk about experience

KEEPS S.F.I.
- Task completed value assessed on a daily basis by house member
- Client receives credit based on quality of performance
- Client demonstrates understanding
- Client updates her click counter

A Client’s Journey Through hsh

Concept, iteration 1

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PROTOTYPES & EVALUATIONS
After several ideation sessions we developed the main components of the currency system. We developed tools and artifacts to facilitate discussion, reflection and documentation for the service to be co-created by client and staff. The tools also provided a structure and protocol to help the staff maintain consistent expectations in order to deliver a cohesive service.

We showed ten concepts to the entire staff. Due to time constraints we conducted the study in small groups. The whole group had similar responses and immediately understood the value that was possible by integrating new programming in the house to help with money management. Ultimately, this session helped us to narrow and simplify the system by eliminating some parts.

Additional concerns and comments during the activity

“Everyone needs to be on board it won’t work.”

“Needs to be top down, doesn’t matter if we think it’s a good idea.”

“Some people have a ‘My way or no way’ mentality.”

“New idea might work well for a month, but then it might die out pretty fast.”

Our prototyping process helped us quickly refine and simplify our initial design solution. After outlining a sequence of use and the necessary artifacts, we role played using simple paper prototypes and walked through a scenario. We quickly found where we had created overly complex interactions and quickly went to work to simplify and streamline. We implemented a rough physical prototype within two for four days with one staff member and two clients, which substantially affected our final design.

SPend DatinG thE currency systEm

In this early iteration, clients received their paycheck on Thursday night meetings, along with a bill summary outlining what they needed to pay their bills. We then introduced the needed amount to pay off the bill. The payment would be put into a payment envelope and submitted to a staff member.

We walked through a week in the life of a new client, as it was her first week in the house, using our labeled paper cut-outs, and quickly realized this entire sequence was much too complicated. The system was overly complex and there were too many touchpoints that did not serve a clear and useful purpose. The whole sequence of receiving a check and bill check was as unnecessary component when it came to meeting our goals.

Proof of Concept

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Public tracking systems

The staff loved the concept of the tracking system being out in the open to create competition as a motivational factor. It’s in their room, but both clients and staff will probably forget about it. The tracker would need to be in a place like the multi-purpose room to get the most use. Seeing it on the wall all the time might be an incentive to complete their responsibilities on time.

Documenting activities in a scrapbook

This concept was met with either enthusiasm or indifference. Staff thought using the scrapbook as a place to keep paperwork, documents, evaluations would serve a functional purpose because currently the clients often lose or throw away their paperwork. They also saw promise in the scrapbook acting as a mechanism to document progress over time. They all agreed that using it as a tool for reflection or note-taking would vary from client to client.
Wearing A Promise

The staff unanimously disliked this idea. They immediately saw problems around both the concept and proposed form it might take. The form was complicated and had too many parts. They said that clients would never wear something around their necks, especially when the topics are kept private by many clients. Although this wearable charm was meant as a non-verbal signal to guide the staff in how to engage with the clients, they all would prefer to just talk to the clients.

From our paper prototyping session, we drafted our first round of artifacts and thought about what form the client’s tracking device would take. We brought all these materials with us to teach the staff member who would become our champion. We developed our prototype as an abbreviated version of how a regular month would operate within the home. Our three participants included one staff member, and two clients. Our goal in the first day was to walk our staff member through the system and teach her how the currency system worked. We then had her teach the system back to us, asking her to stop whenever she had questions or didn’t like something. During this time, we worked through using the client tracking device out loud with the staff member. We found through this teaching session, that the tracker we had prototyped did not map closely enough to what actions were being represented. We chose to move forward with a peg board idea and developed and built this prototype to implement the next day.

The following evening we took all the materials back to the home and observed the staff member as she separately taught two different clients who would test the system for the next three days. Client A is always compliant within the home and Client B is particularly non-compliant. She fielded questions and showed each client how to use the artifacts. Both clients seemed interested in participating. Staff asked each client what she would do with the “clunks,” the name of our currency during testing, or save them; both clients responded that they would bank and save. Client A responding, “I want to go get my own piggy bank.”
Testing the Currency System

Goal
- Observed if the system was easy-to-understand and still too
  complex, and where we could simplify it.
- Learn how artifacts worked together and their overall
  purpose.
- See how staff and clients engaged with the process, the
  artifacts, and each other.

3 participants as “non-compliant” client, one “compliant” client, one staff member

Format:
- For this prototype, Clients
  - Earned clunks by performing daily responsibilities around
    the home
  - Reported their progress to the staff member
  - Tracked their progress using the pegboard tracker in the
    room
  - Received a feedback form from the staff member based on
    the staff member utilizing a progress tracking sheet
  - Had the opportunity to start saving clunks if they earned
    enough throughout the three days

Staff member:
- Saw what she saw with the clients as they
  completed their tasks
- Noted what she liked and didn’t like about the system
- Utilized her daily progress tracking sheet to record clients’
  progress
  - Talked to us about how they felt using the system
  - Noted what they liked and didn’t like about the system
  - Earned clunks by performing daily responsibilities around
    the home
- Tracked her progress using her pegboard tracker in the
  room
- Reported their progress to the staff member

Our observations
- Currently the focus of the house is to do your chore so the
  pegboard is only about completing a chore rather than
  earning clunks to drop off.
- Staff member was still unsure as to how to use some of the
  tools based on complicated instructions and inconsistent
  language on the forms.

Feedback from Staff Participant:
- Missing clunk should be a priority because otherwise clients
  would make too much money—they spend all day.
  - The peg boards need to be in a very public space or else
    everyone (both staff and clients) will forget to use them for
    the first time, maybe even move it behind a curtain.
  - There was an instance where both she and Client B forgot to
    do the chore and check in. Client B did it the next day with
    the help of the staff member and who then paid her the
    same amount of clunks she would have received had she
    done it on her own, on time. We discussed that the client
    shouldn’t have received the full amount because she didn’t
    do the chore and check in. Client B did it the next day with
    the help of the staff member and who then paid her the
    same amount of clunks she would have received had she
    done it on her own, on time. We discussed that the client
    shouldn’t have received the full amount because she didn’t
    complete it on her own and the staff shouldn’t be helping her.

Feedback from Client A: the “compliant” client
- Thought it was easy because she always does her chores. She
  loved the reward system and would definitely save for the
  long term. The biggest motivation was the fines because she
  didn’t want to give up real money.
- As far as the overall system, she was confused about the
  relationship of the peg to the clunks and when she stops
  using her peg and starts saving real clunks.

Feedback from Client B: the “non-compliant” client
- She has doubts that some clients will be able to complete their
  responsibilities.
- The peg board was great because it helped to remind her
  how she was doing and she liked the charms to track her
  progress.
- Thought it was easy because she always does her chores.
  Because it was a new thing, she forgot to move her peg a
  couple of the days.
- Thought it was a public space doesn’t bother her because she
  is confident that she will do the chore. She thinks it is a
  little friendly competition in a good way, especially because
  she has doubts that some clients will be able to complete their
  responsibilities.

Feedback from Staff participant:
- This tool gives the staff member the power to enforce expectations.
- Client summary sheet was complicated and it was unclear how to
  complete. She loved the Banker’s Book was very clear and
  straight forward. Thought there was value in having the client sign
  the tool out on time and the staff shouldn’t be helping her.
- Overall she was thrilled to see Client B improve the quality
  of her responsibilities. She reported seeing this client with
  improved motivation and staff effort.

Challenge & staff participant:
- This tool gives the staff member the power to enforce expectations.
  She thought it was complicated and it was urgent that she
  teach the system back to us; we talked about different ideas for some
  of the artifacts and decided what would work best in a still rough
  but higher fidelity version to bring back the next day for the trial.

Feedback from Client: the “non-compliant” client
Our solution needed to address our service framework, as well as help us meet a variety of goals set forth by the county and their administration. We found that opportunity lies in shifting the service concept from attaining permanent housing to developing the skills necessary to maintain that housing. To refocus the service, we created D.I.monds, which stands for Diggin’ Independence. D.I.monds is an embedded learning system with structured tasks and activities and rapid feedback cycles. Our solution focuses on creating structures and tools for the clients to learn and the staff to facilitate. We hypothesize that this system will not only sustain the administration’s goals, but also increase the rate of success in meeting the county goals, ensuring their continued funding.

System Overview

Within our service concept, D.I.monds, we have branded our core competencies as Gems. The goal is to collect all Six Gems by working through various learning modules. For the purposes of our thesis project, we chose to focus on what staff identified as the most important Gem, money management. The rest of our scenarios and artifacts are based on this competency as a model to show how the other Gems could be developed and implemented.

As each client works to collect all Six Gems, she will document her progress in her personal journal, called her Dream Catcher. As a living document, the Dream Catcher is a place to be expressive and reflective, and also acts as a valuable resource when she leaves the home. The Dream Catcher also provides a tangible object around which to focus a discussion as a means to increase staff engagement in the clients’ daily learning.

Shift in Service Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Goals</th>
<th>1. obtain permanent housing</th>
<th>2. obtain employment, job training, education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Healthy Start House Goals

1. increase staff engagement
2. measurable goals
3. develop metrics for success

Money Management Goals

1. earning
2. understanding debt
3. planning ahead
4. prioritizing

Six Gems

- The Gems are the primary competencies identified by the staff that clients need to develop during their stay at HSH. Each month, the home will feature one Gem as the focus of the month. All clients work toward developing skills within this Gem.
The primary component of the money management Gem is Carbon, a currency system embedded into the home’s daily operations. By moving into the home, each resident agrees to participate. It supports four learning goals: earning, understanding debt, planning ahead and prioritizing.

At a high level, this is how Carbon works. A client moves in and a staff member introduces her to the Six Gems and to Carbon. She receives her Dream Catcher and an Welcome Guide that teaches her how to use Carbon. The staff member walks her through the three steps of the system.

First, clients earn. Each month, clients have a set amount they owe the house for things they would pay for if they lived independently, like electricity and food or other utilities. Clients pay for these expenses by completing tasks around the home they would normally be responsible for. In doing this, they earn home currency, which we’re calling Digs.

As clients work throughout each month, completing her daily, weekly and monthly responsibilities, both clients and staff track her progress using different artifacts. Each client uses her personal D.I. Tracker. This hangs publicly, providing a daily reminder of her progress and responsibilities, also allowing her to see how she is doing compared to the other women in the house.

Staff use Banker’s Book and Daily Progress Notes to track a client’s journey through each month and record of how much she’s earned for the month. These Progress Notes translate to her Skills Summary that the client receives semi-monthly, which she can file in her Dream Catcher.

In addition to her responsibilities, each client must complete four quests each month. These can be found in her Dream Catcher, and are structured learning activities meant to parallel real life, that she would complete with staff member. After clients work to earn the Digs they owe the house and complete their four quests, if there is still time left in the month, they can save any Digs they earn until the end of the month. They save these Digs in their piggy bank, with the opportunity to trade them at the end of the month for a small prize, or bank them until they move out. If they choose to bank their Digs, they can exchange these for real money, which would be put toward their security deposit or another purchase for their new home. In the case they do not earn enough Digs to repay the house before the month is over, they are actually fined $45, which goes to help support the Carbon currency system.

Once a client moves out, we see this system automatically developing ambassadors that could return to talk about their experience with Carbon and the Six Gems. We hope that through the structured activities the clients are now responsible for completing with the Dream Catcher and Carbon, they will learn how to apply their skills during independent living.
Carbon
A Currency System to Practice Money Management

**Move in**
Staff teach clients about Carbon, the currency system.

- Client receives her D.I.mond kit that includes her task list, her Carbon currency system, and her Dream Catcher.
- Staff records the reward in the banker’s book and tracks progress on the Progress Notes.

**Earn**
Fulfills responsibilities in exchange for Digs.

- Client completes jobs on time and as assigned.
- Staff evaluates the quality of work to determine how many Digs to pay out.
- Staff demonstrates the proper way to complete tasks, then the client demonstrates how to do it.

**Track**
Records progress toward financial obligations and goals.

- Client moves the marker along her D.I. Tracker.
- Staff provides reminders and checks the banker’s book to determine the most current earnings.
- If client forgets to maintain her tracking system, they lose earning.

**Save**
Meets financial obligations, continues to earn, banks earnings.

- Client pays off monthly utilities in the house.
- Client saves Digs for rewards or uses them towards rent for permanent housing.
- It is the client’s responsibility to keep her Digs safe. They are not replaceable.

**Move out**
Clients apply knowledge and skills to real life.

- Client comes back to share her story and provides support for the next clients.
- It is the client’s responsibility to keep her Digs safe. They are not replaceable.
- All increased engagement, metrics for success.
Welcome Guide

This is a booklet that clients receive when they move in that describes the Six Gems to them: the Dream Catcher and Carbon. This is what they can refer to when they have questions about what terms mean or how something works.

Staff’s Little Guide Book

This is an instructional book that teaches staff how to use the Daily Task Progress Notes worksheet and the Banker’s Book. It takes all the questions out of the daily setup, by using photographs to clearly outline different steps of tasks daily. This Guide Book also shows staff how to take the information in their Daily Task Progress Notes worksheet and convert that into feedback for the client on their Semi-monthly Skills Summary.

Earn

MONEY EXPENSES

Adding your own monetary means you need to help out.

Everyone has a responsibility to help keep the house running by contributing to the Monthly Expenses.

Let’s look at the Monthly Expenses chart to determine:

- the amount you are responsible for
- the amount you are responsible for earning
- the amount you are responsible for earning monthly

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**Daily Task Progress Notes & Banker's Book**

This is a two-sided worksheet created for staff to use as a simple daily tool to help them track clients' activity each day. The Banker’s Book is on the backside, and is essentially a ledger which allows the staff to track how much each client has earned over the month, and also the client to say that she agrees on the running total.

**Carbon Currency**

**MAIN TASKS & PUNCTUALITY**

1. I attended weekly client meetings on time.
2. I scheduled and attended case management meetings, twice per month.
3. I paid rent on time.
4. I made dinner when it’s my turn.

**NAME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE FOR WEEKS</th>
<th>TO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 = didn’t do it</td>
<td>1 = needs more effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AROUND THE HOUSE**

1. She maintains her room according to the handbook guidelines.
2. She does her daily/weekly chore.
3. She grows her Dream Catcher, adding a minimum of two entries by each progress cycle.

**MEETINGS & PUNCTUALITY**

1. She attends weekly client meetings on time.
2. She schedules and attends case management meetings, twice per month.

**NUMBER OF TIMES**

1. How many days late I’ve been paying rent:
2. How many times I’ve broken the smoking policy:
3. How many times I’ve missed curfew:

**NOTES:**

- Clients receive these every other week at client meetings to see how they have been doing in the home. It is meant to provide feedback and motivation, so that clients can see how they are doing over time. Clients can file these forms in their Dream Catchers to see how they have grown or maintained their behaviors over time, hopefully staff will use the comment spaces on the forms to provide useful notes for the client so she knows where she could improve or ask for help, or what things she’s doing really well.

**Semi-monthly Skills Summary**

**How am I doing?**

**Clients receive these every other week at client meetings to see how they have been doing in the home. It is meant to provide feedback and motivation, so that clients can see how they are doing over time. Clients can file these forms in their Dream Catchers to see how they have grown or maintained their behaviors over time, hopefully staff will use the comment spaces on the forms to provide useful notes for the client so she knows where she could improve or ask for help, or what things she’s doing really well.**

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**Banker’s Book**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLIENT NAME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Savings to date**

**Initials**

**PAGE**
This is essentially a structured scrapbook. It is divided into six sections which correspond with each Gem. The Dream Catcher contains structured activities and pages for clients to collage, draw, and write to capture thoughts, feelings, and learning experiences. This is also meant to be a place where clients can store handouts and any notes from other kinds of programming they attended during their time at [redacted].

**D.I. Tracker & Digs**

The D.I. Tracker is each client’s personal tracking device. It is displayed in a public location where clients see their own progress, and each other’s, on a daily basis. Clients move a peg to track their earnings for the month and also display any charms they earn. This also tracks how many quests they have completed within the month.

Digs are the [redacted] currency. This is what clients work to earn throughout the month. Until they earn the 100 they owe [redacted] each month, they don’t get to collect the actual currency to save for the future.

**Money Management Quests**

**THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF MONEY MANAGEMENT THAT WE WILL FOCUS ON ARE:**

- Budgeting
- Paying Bills
- Prioritizing Purchases

Work with a staff member to do each money management Quest below. Each Quest has a matching worksheet to keep in your Dream Catcher. Once you have mastered a quest, cut it out and paste it on the worksheet to show that it is complete. Complete all 9 Quests to master money management and add a Gem to your collection.

**PAYING BILLS**

**QUEST #1**

Paying my [redacted] expenses

**BUDGETING**

**QUEST #1**

Making Wish List

**QUEST #2**

Making a plan for the month

**QUEST #3**

What did I really spend my money on?

**PRIORITIZING PURCHASES**

**QUEST #1**

Building a home

**WILD CARD!**

Draw a Quest from the [redacted] Gem jar

**QUEST #2**

Starting a Savings account

**Understanding Credit Cards**

**QUEST #3**

Understanding Credit Cards

Managing your money allows you to feel safe and secure, and empowered to live your life. Using these skills on the job:

An accountant keeps track of a company’s money. They make reports of how much the company is spending and saving each year.

An administrative assistant can calculate how much money her company has earned from sales and prioritize what additional supplies she needs to order.

Collecting the Money Management Gem means you can:

- Consistently pay your bills and rent on time
- Make a plan to pay off your debt and with regular payments
- Be a smart shopper, always on the look out for sales and coupons
- Prioritize purchases based on your family’s needs

**What is Money Management?**

Being able to manage your money means a lot more than just getting a paycheck. It is being creative with what you have and finding new ways to stretch your income. It means making some sacrifices now in order to be more comfortable later. And it means thinking about the future and how you will provide for your family not just today or this week, but several years down the road.

Managing your money allows you to feel safe and secure, and empowered to live your life.
In keeping with our co-design practice, we hung a poster inside our office to ask for suggestions for our naming. What words did the clients associate with “money”? One client listed “diamonds,” which she reiterated during our prototyping training session. Without wanting to reinforce a material culture, we hesitated using this as a name within the system, until our adviser pointed out that we should consider a different spelling. Could we think of an embedded acronym? “Diggin’ Independence” came out of this discussion, with the over-arching title of “D.I.monds.” To keep with this theme, we named the core competencies “Gems,” which conceptually fit. Women will collect the Gems which is representative of them developing core competencies. Colors were selected to reflect bold gem tones. The typeface, Ithôrn, was selected because of its feminine, bold, and edgy characteristics. This is complemented by the legibility and structure of Univers for text.
The research conducted in this project was key in helping us understand our landscape, and appropriately scope and frame our work. Adagio’s initial request to build a mentorship program assumed a few key points that we discovered early in our work. Building a mentorship program meant that learning or guidance would continue from a previous staff or client. We learned that the service provided a significant amount of guidance and instruction that the women lived at home, and that the women wanted continued support. We did confirm that previous women clients definitely desired continued support from women and its staff, but we also saw many opportunities for ease to strengthen the service it was already providing.

Rather than design and develop an entirely new support program for clients no longer living in the home, it would be difficult to ascertain or develop outcomes for women that had not identified outcomes for the women living in the home, and might capably maintain self-sufficiency. Rather than design and develop an entirely new support program for men that may still be needed, but ostensibly, clients will be better prepared upon exiting and might capably maintain self-sufficiency without additional assistance.

To address the first two assumptions, we also learned that women had very few goals, objectives, processes or protocols in place upon which to base a men’s mentorship program. If goals, objectives, processes or protocols in place upon which to base a mentorship program may still be needed, but ostensibly, clients will be better prepared upon exiting and might capably maintain self-sufficiency without additional assistance.

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Conclusion

Ultimately, this project focused on how design can amplify established efforts through participatory design. Research dictated that building on hsh’s current resources and strengths to ensure their sustainability made more sense than developing an entirely new arm of the service, requiring additional time, funding and manpower. We applied what we learned about co-design in two primary ways: we looked at how service providers could shift to become facilitators and what needs they may have to do this. Because each client is so different and comes to hsh with different life experiences and circumstances, it is crucial that the staff become facilitators as opposed to highly scripted and mechanized processors with standardized outcomes. They must have frameworks and tools they can adapt to fit the changing needs of each client, and also allow them to consistently deliver the service to meet hsh’s core goals and outcome criteria. As design practitioners, we are not content or experiential experts on the subject of homelessness; thus it was important for us to partner with domain "experts". Through jointly participating in research activities, we elicited needs, desires and ideas out of our users; this was significant in the framing of our problem and the execution of our concept and solution.

As designers, evidence became a crucial part of this solution. It was glaringly evident that simple artifacts, could support both the clients and the staff throughout their journeys. By developing frameworks and guidelines and clarifying goals, we see potential that the staff may become more cohesive and unified in the attitude and outlook they exhibit toward, and the ways in which they engage with the clients. Additionally, we see the opportunity to foster stronger relationships with the clients and increase their core competency development during their time at hsh, which ultimately increases the number of success stories after clients transition out of the home, building in potential mentors.

Understanding how environment played a role in our project was harder to see until toward the end of our process. We learned that in this context it was less about the physical space and more about the culture and emotional climate. We had little flexibility and leverage in making recommendations about the physical space, but we worked hard to understand how we could adjust the environment in other ways. Tools and clear processes encourage staff to execute the services in a way that is comfortable for them, but also standardized to meet a unified end goal or vision. We are attempting to foster positivity by changing the focus to achievements and realistic rewards, to encourage behavior change and emphasize things done well as opposed to mistakes and poor choices.

In the end we did not practice true co-design, but rather participatory design in that the stakeholders had direct influence and voice on what the solution might be, however they were not the ones driving the process or developing the artifacts. As designers increase their engagement in social innovation issues, it would be very beneficial to survey several case studies to continue the discussion of when it is appropriate to engage in co-design versus participatory design and identify what that spectrum might look like.

To date, designers working in the area of social innovation for services strive to start small, practicing a common principle of designing with, not for. Throughout our process we focused on designing the most appropriate solution for the specific social innovation issue. The next step would be to explore if any of the frameworks or solutions we created are generalizable and useful to other organizations or demographics. Additionally, if this project is scalable, how might we incentivize users in a realistic, but motivating way for the other Gems?

Finally, our research methods and plans were largely participatory, and we did our best to be flexible and creative in the ways we developed and adapted activities to make them fun and productive experiences for our participants. Literature covers how to adapt methods to children, but not to our demographic of the underserved, which needs to take into consideration varying educational backgrounds, but also show respect to a range of life experience. We want to thank Adagio Health and Healthy Start House for providing us with a rich learning experience and we hope the design community will continue to work in this intersection of service and social innovation in order to improve the quality of life.
REFERENCES & APPENDIX
References


This is to notify you that your modification request satisfied on January 31, 2013 is to include a change to study design and consent form was approved on February 13, 2013 by expedited review. Please be instructed that all additional changes are to be made. Those changes will need to be reviewed prior to implementation. Please refer to the above-referenced protocol number in all correspondence regarding this protocol.

Approval for the study expires on September 1, 2013.

Please call the Research Regulatory Compliance office at 412-268-2012 if you have any questions regarding the memo. Thank you.

David Banks, Ph.D., IRB Chair

Kelly Nash, Ph.D., IRB Associate Chair

Suzanne Meier, Office Manager

http://researchreviews.andrew.cmu.edu

IRB Contact Information

Mellon Institute

Institutional Review Board

Andrew Mellon University

Mr. John Nash, IRB Chair

Ph: 412-268-2012

Note: If you feel the study is unethical, you are entitled to refuse participation. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point for any reason. Please contact the IRB office for any questions you may have regarding the study.

Michael Warne, PhD

Chair

March 28, 2011

IRB Chair

Carnegie Mellon University

Research Regulatory, Compliance

Mellon Hall, Frank Pore

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Email: review@andrew.cmu.edu
### Comparing Transitional Housing Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Clients</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Programming - on or off site?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Start House</td>
<td>women with children, pregnant or postpartum</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>1 house / room</td>
<td>on-site by staff parenting, life skills, financial, stress mgmt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Millicent Transitional Housing</td>
<td>families</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>apartments</td>
<td>off-site - volunteers Required Budget Counselor - 1/week Life skills - 2 times /3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitional Housing Incorporated</td>
<td>women children can visit</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>apartments</td>
<td>On-site life management classes are single sessions and must be completed within the first 30-60 days Off-site community services, employment training, and educational opportunities Building Blocks for Success: Education, accountability and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEARTH</td>
<td>women with children, must have GED or high school diploma</td>
<td>20 months</td>
<td>apartments</td>
<td>contains resources that help residents complete educational goals, weekly case management to set goals and coordinate resources, weekly personal growth meetings to teach self-sufficiency skills, referrals to services such as counseling, child care, and substance abuse support, substance setting with access to city and county services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Haven</td>
<td>women</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>apartments</td>
<td>looking better for the community every day of the week Drug and Alcohol meetings Twice a week Life Skills classes once a week for 9 weeks women’s empowerment meetings Twice a week Review of goals every 30 days, progress notes weekly work, go to school or volunteer within 90 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Job training/life skills services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Clients</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Programming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising Kitchen</td>
<td>women</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>paid</td>
<td>work in all aspects of the enterprise: manufacturing, customer services, direct retail, life skills, parenting, stress mgmt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FareStart</td>
<td>men &amp; women</td>
<td>16 weeks</td>
<td>restaurant/food prep</td>
<td>train people to practice professional work skills and attitudes. Training includes culinary training, case mgmt, life skills, job placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Woof</td>
<td>youth</td>
<td></td>
<td>dog daycare</td>
<td>provides job training to give youth a foundation from which to build assets, gain experience and financial skills, and move into jobs at career tracks. Training includes culinary training, case mgmt, life skills, job placement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Bud’s</td>
<td>single moms and women in transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>retail &amp; cleaning services</td>
<td>Baby goods thrift store and commercial cleaning services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Stakeholders of HSH

- Administration
- Gov’t Funding
- Go’s Health Administration
- Foundation Funding
- Residents’ caseworker
- Child’s caseworker
- Psycho/social & community services
- Workshop instructors
- Employers & educators
- Family
- Friends
- Community groups
- Residents
- Staff