

Explaining Critical Time Intervention (CTI)

Sample Talking Points

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

1. To individuals and groups in the community with no prior experience with CTI:

- CTI is a time-limited social service approach that provides people undergoing housing transitions with assistance getting the resources they need for long-term housing stability.
- The intervention was created to address the problem of people cycling back into shelters too quickly after becoming housed, and too often.
- Research on CTI found that if people were given extra assistance in their transition to housing, they were more likely not to return to homelessness and they continued to do well even after the intervention ended.
- CTI Case Managers in the VA Grant and Per Diem Case Management (GPD-CM) program use an array of skills to help Veterans transition, including supportive counseling, education and advocacy. However, CTI is not a mental health intervention, job training, or educational program. The purpose of CTI in the GPD-CM program is to actively link Veterans to these types of services, and others if they need them, in a systematic and meaningful way.
- The GPD-CM provides 6-months of case management for Veterans who have experienced homelessness undergoing housing transitions. CTI is currently being implemented as a preferred service model in the GPD-CM program.

2. To other social service providers:

- Critical Time Intervention (CTI) is an evidence-based practice used to help client's transition from homelessness to housing.
- Research on this intervention has shown that CTI increases the likelihood of long-term housing stability.
- CTI includes a set of phases that begins with intense services and tapers off over time. In the GPD-CM program, Veterans are provided a CTI Case Manager who meets with Veterans frequently at first, and then works to actively link Veterans to formal and informal supports that can meet their needs over the long term.

- A CTI Case Manager may educate Veterans, offer supportive counseling, or help Veterans prepare for job searches. However, CTI is not a substitute for long-term case management, nor is it a mental health intervention. CTI was adapted as a 6-month intervention to support Veterans engaging in VA's Grant and Per Diem Case Management (GPD-CM) program.

3. To the Veteran who has just enrolled in the GPD-CM program. This is sample language that should be adjusted based on the needs of each Veteran:

- Hello, my name is _____ and I will be your CTI Case Manager. I'd like to explain what CTI is and what my role will be.
- CTI stands for Critical Time Intervention, and it is a service I can offer you as you adjust to your new housing situation. The words "Critical" and "Time" refer to the fact that the first few months in your new housing arrangement are an important time. The more we can do to ensure you have a smooth transition, the more likely we can help you avoid losing your housing again.
- My role is to get an idea of what you (or you and your family) need to be comfortable and stable in your new home well into the future. I will then work with you to locate needed resources and help link you up with them.
- Over time we will check to see if these resources are helpful and might make some changes. This might include making sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to, or finding work, or re-connecting with friends and family. What we do will depend on your situation and your goals. CTI works best if you take an active role in our work together.
- Do you have any questions about CTI or our work together? Does this sound like it would be helpful to you?

The following is suggested language for explaining more about the process of CTI to Veterans in the GPD-CM program. Some of the language is appropriate for Veterans in Pre-CTI GPD-CM (before they are housed and enter the 6-month GPD-CM program):

- Until you get housed, I will meet with you here in (the GPD program, the shelter, etc.) to get a sense of what resources we need to start looking for housing. Once you are in housing, I will want to meet once a week at first to offer my support as you settle in.
- We can meet in your home, or in my office, or by video, whichever is most preferable to you. After two months, we will begin to meet less frequently, and six months after you are housed, my work with you will end.
- By the time our work together ends, I am hopeful you will have what you need or will know how to access help if a need arises. For example, if you have difficulty paying your rent you will know what steps to take to avoid losing your housing. If you need medical care, you will know where to go to access it.

If the Veteran seems hesitant or resistant...

- You seem a bit hesitant. Before I go further, I am wondering — have you had case managers in the past, and what was your experience?
- Do you have any concerns about participating in CTI?

