

# Focusing on the Future

When Vivian Hunter walks clients out of the crisis unit, she likes to remind them, “Your past is your past. Today you walk into your future.”

## **Vivian Hunter sees recovery as a process**

that includes the stumbling block of relapse. “Relapse is part of the disease. We have some clients who come back every other month. But I don’t pay attention to the fall. We all fall. I like to pay attention to the getting up. I like being able to say, ‘Welcome back; I’m so glad you’re here. Let’s get you straight.’”

Quentin’s Place in Dublin is a 16-bed crisis recovery center that serves predominantly homeless clients, many with a dual substance use and mental health diagnosis.

When a client is admitted, Vivian is one of the first people they see. She takes their vital signs and a photo, gets their paperwork signed, makes sure their room is ready and that they have everything they need – from giving them a meal to taking them outside for a smoke. “I use that time to establish rapport so that when I do their HIV test, I’m not a stranger.”

“When clients come in, most are in crisis. But during the five to seven days that they’re with us, I’m involved with them at all times. And when it’s time to conduct their HIV test, they want to know their status.”

By the time they finish detox, the clients that Vivian tests have learned their HIV status and how the virus is transmitted. When she walks them out of the clinic, she congratulates them on taking an important step toward recovery and lets them know that if they return, she’ll welcome them.



Vivian Hunter, Quentin’s Place, Dublin

“A client may tell me that they don’t know if they’re ready for treatment. Maybe their family or the judge made them come. Now I can’t make anyone ready; I can’t make anyone change. That’s not for me to do. That’s their work. And when they do change, it will be their achievement. But I give what I can. I’ve learned to be patient with people. I listen. I try to understand. I treat them the way I would like to be treated – like I’m somebody. We don’t know their lives. We don’t know what they went through.”

“And I try to give them a little hope. I let them know that I believe in them: *You can be that person that you are here to be. Your past is your past. Today you walk into your future.*” ■