

## SMART 1: Housing Transition

### Facilitator Manual for Module 2: Apartment Living

- This facilitator manual provides the narration text of each module along with facilitator notes indicating when discussions and activities should be carried out.
- **Facilitator notes are highlighted in red font.**
- Facilitators are encouraged to pause the module, especially where indicated (**PAUSE**) to facilitate discussion and/or activity.
- Ideas for activities and role play scenarios are included in the Appendix.

#### ***Slide 1: Supporting Many to Achieve Residential Transition (SMART)***

- The Supporting Many to Achieve Residential Transition (SMART) Program has been designed to provide you with the skills needed to successfully achieve and maintain independent housing. This program consists of six 1-hour modules covering the following topics: Preparing for the Housing Interview, Apartment Living, Being a Good Tenant and Neighbor, Community Living, Managing Money, and Maintaining Health and Wellbeing. Each module has been designed to be interactive through the use of group discussions, role plays, and other exercises. Active participation in all modules will better prepare you for transition to residential housing.

#### ***Slide 2: Presentation Outline***

- Welcome to Module 2 of the SMART-1 Program. In this module, you will learn about apartment living. We'll talk about and practice ways you can plan your new living space and manage your own apartment. In addition we'll review ways through which you can get to know your new neighbors and neighborhood, and we'll provide you with suggestions about how to feel comfortable in your new home and neighborhood. Let's get started.

#### ***Slide 3: Let's Brainstorm***

- So, let's brainstorm for a moment. What do YOU think you need to do before you move in? (***PAUSE for group participation***)  
***(Answers include: know your move-in date, start packing, and be prepared to say goodbye and thank those who have helped you.)***

#### ***Slide 4: Moving In***

- Knowing your move-in date is important. You can ask your case manager when your official move-in date is. Knowing this date will help you prepare and plan better.

#### ***Slide 5: Packing***

- Once you know your move-in date, you should start packing. Remember don't pack at the last minute because you might forget important things. Also, packing

neatly and in an organized manner will make it easier to unpack in your new apartment. It's also helpful to create a checklist of items you have packed.

***Slide 6: Tips and Tricks of Packing***

- Another tip is to pack one small bag that is easily accessible, in addition to your other possessions. For example, pack a separate bag that is immediately accessible for your medication and important documents.

***Slide 7: Goodbye and Thank you***

- Lastly, before you move in, don't forget to say goodbye to the people who have helped you along the way—your case manager, staff, OT students, and peers!

***Slide 8: Planning***

- Now, let's talk about planning. Planning is very important and will help you adjust to your new environment. Some things to plan for include setting up your apartment—thinking about furniture, use of space, and decoration; unpacking and settling in; paying your rent and utility bills, and getting to know your new neighborhood.

***Slide 9: Rent and Utilities***

- Before moving in, your case manager or your landlord will tell you how much you'll pay for rent. In some places, you'll also be required to pay for your electricity bill. Rent and electricity are usually separate bills and they may arrive at different times of the month. Rent and electricity are usually both paid only once a month. It's important to pay your bills on time because there is usually a penalty for late payments. In most cases you'll be expected to pay 30% of the rent. You'll need to budget this amount every month. *(see Reading Rent and Utility Bill Activity, p. 13)*

***Slide 10: Staying Positive***

- Moving can be a very stressful experience and it's important to stay positive. Everyone needs positive thinking at some point in life, even to just get out of bed and get going in the morning. Throughout the process of moving, accept help and use it to remain positive no matter what happens. Sometimes it may feel as if you have your own personal cloud following you around and ruining your day. The process of getting housing and moving into your own place hasn't been easy. There have been some hard times, frustrating delays, and personal challenges along the way. Remember, moving out of the shelter system is a big change and you wouldn't have gotten this far without determination and belief in yourself.

***Slide 11: Stress and Anxiety***

- There are many ways to address and reduce the stress and anxiety of moving so that they won't interfere with your move.

**Slide 12: Group Activity: Stress Management: Breathing Exercises**

- Try the Breathing Exercise and Positive Image Exercise to reduce the stress of moving. (*see Stress Reduction Activity Part I, p. 16*)

**Slide 13: Group Activity: Stress Management: Positive Image Exercise**

(*see Stress Reduction Activity Part II, p. 16*)

**Slide 14: Envisioning your New Apartment**

- Take a moment and envision all of the possibilities that your new place holds for you and how you might enjoy it. Think of all the possibilities for arranging your furniture and decorating your new apartment, including the kitchen, bedroom, living room, and bathroom. You can start to make this new space yours through imagining how you want it to look and feel. Building a connection with your new space is very important. It requires becoming aware of all the feelings, ideas and possibilities this new place represents. Don't just rush into your move thinking this is yet another step. Take pride in this space and make it yours. How do you envision your space?

**Slide 15: Calm Corner**

- Create a calm corner. It is important to have a special spot in your space that you can use to relax when things become overwhelming. This space will be your retreat. (*see Create a Calm Corner Activity, p. 17*)

**Slide 16: Make this Apartment Yours**

- Just as you create a calming corner in your new apartment, make the entire space reflect your tastes and interests. (*see Wall Art Activities, p. 18*)
- Learn what your personal tastes are including different colors, sounds, and textures. You want to enjoy your space, protect your space, and take pride in your space. In the next three slides we're going to engage in activities that'll help you understand how to go about doing this.

**Slide 17: Group Activity: Personal Taste Activity**

- Personal Taste Activity: It's interesting how different designs, colors and arrangements can make us feel comfortable or anxious. (*see Personal Taste Activity, p. 19*)

**Slide 18: Paying Bills**

- Paying your bills on time is a very important skill you must learn in order to keep your apartment. Paying bills can be stressful and creates some anxiety about your financial situation. The best way to tackle these feelings is to take control of this necessary task that must be done every month.

***Slide 19: Paying Bills (cont'd)***

- Make a list of all your bills and due dates and amounts. Keep this list posted somewhere that is private but accessible. Organize your monthly budget so that you have enough money to pay your bills and enough for your daily living expenses. Establish a place to pay bills in your apartment and a routine for paying your bills.

***Slide 20: Paying Bills (cont'd)***

- Pick one or two days out of the month and make an appointment with yourself to pay your bills. For this strategy to work, you need to keep a set day, time, and space. This will build repetition and good budgeting habits, and paying your bills will soon become a routine rather than a time of stress and chaos.

***Slide 21: Group Activity 3: Budgeting Activity***

- *(see Budgeting Activity, p. 20)*

***Slide 22: Keeping Your Apartment Clean***

- Cleaning your apartment on a regular basis is very important. Some ways to keep your apartment clean are keeping your clean clothing in closets and dressers.

***Slide 23: Keeping Your Apartment Clean (cont'd)***

- Putting dirty clothing in a hamper, cleaning the bathroom and kitchen regularly.

***Slide 24: Keeping Your Apartment Clean (cont'd)***

- Dusting furniture, vacuuming, sweeping or mopping floors.

***Slide 25: Keeping Your Apartment Clean (cont'd)***

- Recycling newspapers, magazines, plastics and cans, and knowing which cleaning products to use. Here is an activity, which will remind you of all the steps required each week for keeping your apartment livable. *(see Cleaning Schedule for Apartment Activity, p. 22)*

***Slide 26: Cleaning Supplies***

- There are many different cleaning supplies and tools you may need for the different surfaces in your apartment. It can sometimes be confusing to understand which product or tool you should use to clean specific areas, and it's important to always read the label first to make sure you're using the correct product. As a general rule, most cleaners should be kept away from children and pets. Now, let's talk more about specific products you can use to keep your apartment clean.

***Slide 27: All Purpose Cleaners***

- All-purpose cleaners are great for a variety of surfaces in your apartment. Some common all-purpose cleaners you can find in your nearest grocery store or

convenience store are Fantastic, Lysol, and Mr. Clean. These can be used to clean countertops, stainless steel, appliances, sinks, floors, showers, and many other surfaces. It's a good idea to read the label carefully for any warnings about surfaces for which the product should NOT be used.

***Slide 28: Dish Detergent***

- In order to clean your dishes, you need dish soap or detergent depending on whether you have a dishwasher. If you plan to hand wash your dishes in the sink, some common dish soap brands are Dawn and Palmolive. If you have a dishwasher, there are liquid dishwashing detergents and detergent tablets that are pre-measured—all you have to do is take the tablet and place it in the soap holder of your dishwasher. Some common dishwashing detergent brands are Cascade and Finish. While these pictures show common brands, look in the cleaning aisle of your grocery store and you'll find a variety of soaps to choose from. Always remember to read the label to make sure you're getting the correct item you need.

***Slide 29: Glass Cleaners***

- Glass cleaners like Windex and Glass Plus are great for cleaning windows, glass, chrome bathroom fixtures, mirrors, tile, and much more. It shouldn't be used on wood surfaces or mixed with other household cleaners. Glass Plus may also be used to clean your television or computer. You may buy the liquid spray version that allows you to spray the cleaner onto the surface and wipe it down with a towel. Or you may purchase the same cleaner in the form of wipes. The wipes are pre-moistened with cleaner, making it easy to grab a wipe from the container and clean whatever you need in one step.

***Slide 30: Toilet Cleaners***

- While the cleaning supplies previously mentioned can be used on a variety of surfaces, it is recommended to buy a product specifically designed for cleaning toilet bowls. Some companies that make toilet bowl cleaners are Lysol, Comet, and Scrubbing Bubbles. Each product may have slightly different instructions, but the general way to use them involves squeezing the product onto the toilet bowl and rim and allowing it to sit for a designated amount of time before scrubbing the product with a toilet brush.

***Slide 31: Toilet Cleaners (cont'd)***

- After you've cleaned the toilet bowl you can flush the toilet to wash the product away. Check the label of the cleaner for more specific information about using the product. You may find that there are many different cleaners with labels that say things like "extra strength" or "with bleach." Don't be afraid to ask the store employees for help if you're unsure which product to choose!

### ***Slide 32: Floors***

- If your apartment has carpets, you'll need to vacuum on a regular basis to keep the carpet clean and dust free. If you have wood floors, you may need to purchase a special cleaner to clean your floor. Remember we mentioned earlier that products like Windex cannot be used on wood surfaces. Instead, Murphy's Oil Soap and Pledge are two companies that make cleaners specially designed to clean your wood floors safely and effectively, as well as any other wood surfaces in your apartment that need to be cleaned.

### ***Slide 33: Cleaning Accessories***

- We talked a lot about cleaning products, but what about the tools you need to assist you while using those products? Paper towels are a common item, especially when used along with liquid cleaner. Other tools you'll likely need are rubber gloves to protect your hands, sponges, dust cloths, a mop, broom, and vacuum.

### ***Slide 34: Cleaning Accessories (cont'd)***

- There are also products like the Swiffer that are commonly used to make cleaning easier and more efficient, especially in hard to reach spots. The Swiffer is a mop-like tool, but instead of a mop, you attach a dusting cloth onto the bottom pad. The dusting cloth picks up dust and other dirt from the floor. Swiffers make floor cleaning easier.

### ***Slide 35: Cleaning Accessories (cont'd)***

- When buying a cleaning product, it's a good idea to take a minute and think about what you'll use it with. For example, when buying dish soap, do you have a sponge to use to scrub your dishes? Or when buying toilet bowl cleaner, do you have a brush that you can use to scrub the cleaner in the toilet? It's a good idea to keep a small stock of cleaning supplies including the products and tools mentioned so you're always prepared. *(see Cleaning Supplies Activity, p. 24)*

### ***Slide 36: Laundry***

- It's important to ask if your building has a laundry room before you move in. If so, you should become familiar with the machines and find out what you need in order to use them, how much it costs, and if the machines only take quarters. It's also important to buy supplies such as laundry detergent. If your building does not have a laundry room, you should locate Laundromats in the area where you can do your laundry. We'll revisit how to do your laundry in a later module, but always remember to check clothing labels for instructions about how to wash specific clothing items because some clothing can only be washed in cold water or must be dry-cleaned.

### ***Slide 37: Important Papers***

- Important papers will get lost if you don't file them. It's inevitable that you'll lose papers; we've all done this! But these papers can be essential to keeping your apartment, proving that you've paid your bills, or getting your medication prescriptions refilled. You'll need to keep track of your important documents and access them over time. Paper is easily lost, but binders are not. Binders are bulky and can be color-coded; they create privacy for your papers and help you stay organized. They're also inexpensive to buy. (*see Important Papers Organizing Activity, p. 25*)

### ***Slide 38: Food***

- Keeping yourself healthy will increase your happiness. The first thing your body needs to function at its best is good nutrition. Keep your refrigerator and pantry stocked with healthy foods to provide your body with the best nutrition. Your refrigerator and pantry should be kept clean and it's important to quickly clean spills to avoid bugs.

### ***Slide 39: Pantry and Closets***

- The pantry and nearby closets are the best place to store non-perishable food items like peanut butter, pasta, spaghetti sauce, macaroni and cheese mix, cereal, oatmeal, rice, beans, soup, and more. These foods can last a long time without the need to be refrigerated, so you'll always have a good source of healthy foods to cook on hand. Remember to read the item's label, as some items may need to be refrigerated after opening.

### ***Slide 40: Pantry and Closets (cont'd)***

- For example, spaghetti sauce may be kept in the pantry but once it's opened, the unused portion left in the jar needs to be put in the refrigerator or it will spoil. Another example is ketchup. Ketchup may be kept in the pantry until it's opened, and then must be kept in the refrigerator to safely consume at a later date. Some people choose to store opened peanut butter in the pantry; others prefer to store it in the refrigerator. With some food items, it's a matter of choice!

### ***Slide 41: Items to Keep Stocked in the Refrigerator***

- All perishable food and beverages must be kept in the refrigerator. This includes meats, vegetables, fruits, milk, cheese, yogurt, condiments, and anything found in the refrigerated aisle of the grocery store. Condiments can include ketchup, mustard, relish, and mayonnaise. It's important to make sure your refrigerator temperature is set at 40 degrees or below to safely store your items.

### ***Slide 42: Items to Keep Stocked in the Freezer***

- Items to store in your freezer are commonly found in the freezer aisle of your grocery store. These include frozen vegetables, frozen pizza, and meats and

poultry. You can buy pre-made meals in the freezer section that you can store in your freezer and warm up in the microwave or oven for an easy meal.

***Slide 43: Items to Keep Stocked in the Freezer (cont'd)***

- Remember, frozen meals are not always healthy and some may contain a lot of sodium. You should serve frozen meals rarely, for example, only when you are in a rush and too busy to cook. Most of your meals should consist of fresh food, including fresh fruits, vegetables, poultry, fish, and meat. It's important to check the nutrition label on the package before purchasing.

***Slide 44: Storing Meat, Poultry, and Fish to Prevent Illness***

- It's important to properly store meat, poultry, and fish to avoid getting sick from any foodborne illnesses. Raw meat, poultry, and fish should only be kept in the refrigerator for 2 to 4 days, otherwise it will spoil. If you don't plan to cook these items in 2 to 4 days, you must store them in the freezer to prevent them from spoiling and having to be thrown away.

***Slide 45: Storing Meat, Poultry, and Fish to Prevent Illness (cont'd)***

- Keep all meat, poultry, and fish in original packaging, wrapped in freezer wrap, or placed in airtight containers or plastic bags to keep them safe for consumption and avoid contaminating any other items in your refrigerator or freezer. Once cooked, these items last 3 to 4 days in the refrigerator when stored properly. It may be helpful to write down the date you purchased the meat and the date it was cooked, so you know when it's time to throw it away.

***Slide 46: Storing Leftovers***

- All leftovers should be stored in airtight containers or wraps and refrigerated within two hours of cooking to avoid bacteria growth and the potential of getting sick. Any leftovers from a can should be transferred to a storage container and then stored properly in the refrigerator or freezer. If you don't plan to consume the leftovers within the next few days, it may be a good idea to store them in your freezer.

***Slide 47: Storing Leftovers (cont'd)***

- Depending on the type of food, leftovers may last several months and even a year if properly stored and placed in the freezer. It's especially important to place the food in an airtight container or fully wrapped to avoid freezer burn and ruining the food.

***Slide 48: Storing Leftovers (cont'd)***

- When it comes time to defrost the leftovers, it's best to move the container from the freezer to the refrigerator the day before to give it plenty of time to defrost safely, as defrosting an item from the freezer to the counter is not considered

safe and increases the chance of illness. Once a food item has defrosted, you should not re-freeze it.

***Slide 49: Storing Perishable Foods***

- Perishable foods and beverages have expiration dates on the container that should be checked to make sure the item is still safe to eat or drink. Some items are more perishable than others such as milk and dairy products. These foods should be checked when purchasing to make sure you're choosing the item with the longest expiration date. Items like soft cheese may last 1 to 2 weeks while eggs may last 3 to 5 weeks.

***Slide 50: Storing Perishable Foods (cont'd)***

- It may seem difficult to keep track, but checking the expiration dates of items in your refrigerator on a regular basis will help you maintain a clean refrigerator and know when it's time to restock items. It's also important to make sure you're storing the food properly in the refrigerator to maximize shelf life. Fruit and vegetables should not be stored together in the same drawer, as this increases the rate at which they will spoil. Although some fruits and vegetables may not need to be refrigerated such as bananas and tomatoes, it's important to remember that these items are still perishable and need to be checked for signs of spoilage before eating.

***Slide 51: Spoiled Food Signs***

- Besides checking the expiration dates, there are signs that a food has spoiled. Any food that has mold on it should be thrown away, along with food that has color changes or spots of color that were not there when you purchased it. If it smells different, this is also a sign that the food may be spoiled, especially in the case of meats or poultry.

***Slide 52: Spoiled Food Signs (cont'd)***

- It's easy to identify if milk has spoiled because it'll have a very strong odor and may be chunky or bubbly. Other foods and beverages may present similar changes that are signs you should immediately throw them away. Do not taste test the food or drink to see if it's spoiled. Always remember that it's better to be safe, so when in doubt, throw it away.

***Slide 53: Stocking the Bathroom and Medicine Cabinet***

- We talked a lot about what to keep in your pantry and refrigerator or freezer as well as how to properly store these items so you can always provide your body with good nutrition, but it's also important to keep other areas of your apartment well stocked for your health. There are many items that are used on a regular basis that contribute to keeping your body in good shape such as soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, tissues, and more that are part of maintaining good hygiene. It's a good idea to keep these in your bathroom and medicine

cabinet so you always have access to them and know when you're running low and need to buy more.

***Slide 54: Stocking the Bathroom and Medicine Cabinet (cont'd)***

- Some items are not used daily but are also important to keep stocked, such as band aids, nail clippers, cotton balls, small scissors, alcohol, and hydrogen peroxide. While some of these items may not always seem necessary, they're important to have handy so when you do need them, you don't need to go out to the store.

***Slide 55: Stocking the Bathroom and Medicine Cabinet (cont'd)***

- For example, if you accidentally cut your hand while cooking, you already have all the items you need and can simply go to your cabinet, get the peroxide to clean the wound, and then put a band-aid on it. Remember that your medicine cabinet should NOT be used to store prescription or over-the-counter medication because the humidity of the bathroom will break down medication.

***Slide 56: Group Activity: Storing Food in Your Refrigerator***

- *(see attached group activity: Storing Food in Your Refrigerator, p. 26)*

***Slide 57: Medication Management***

- Medication management is essential. Taking your medication should become a consistent habit and part of an organized routine: take it at the correct time and in the correct dosage. Don't rely on your memory. If you take a number of pills each day, use a pillbox.

***Slide 58: Group Activity: Medication Activity***

- *(see Create a Medication Pillbox Activity, p. 28)*

***Slide 59: Problem Solving***

- Problems will arise with your new apartment, such as breaks or leaks—they happen to all of us! Be prepared and ready to handle or ask for assistance with a variety of problems. Know when to call for help; don't feel shy or ashamed if something breaks. Apartments have working parts, and these working parts will need maintenance from time to time. Know that all problems can be solved; it just may take time and patience to figure out what's the best way to get something fixed.

***Slide 60: Contacts***

- Contact information is very important! You'll want to have the contact number for someone you can call for support, such as your case manager, super, landlord, building management company, and emergency numbers including 911. Keeping these numbers clearly posted on your refrigerator and available to you is the first step to problem solving. Knowing whom to call is important but

also knowing when to call will help you get results. *(see Contact Information Activity, p. 29)*

**Slide 61: Review**

- Let's review what we've gone over in this module so far:  
We've learned the importance of planning your move to your new apartment and ways to cope with the stress and anxiety that usually accompany such a move. Think back to some of the techniques you practiced. We've learned how to envision ways to make your new living space more personal as well as how to take care of and take pride in your new living space.

**Slide 62: Review (cont'd)**

- We reviewed the importance of organizing your papers and medications. We've also covered how to problem solve about things that break or stop working in your apartment, and whom to contact when you need help. If you have any further questions, take some time now and write them down. Your group leader will be able to respond to these important questions. Remember, no question is stupid; just those that go unasked!

**Slide 63: Review Questions**

- Now, we have some questions that can help you refresh your memory about what you just learned.
  - What do you do before you move in? *(PAUSE for participation)*
    - Know your move-in date
    - Say goodbye and thank you
    - Plan what to pack

**Slide 64: Review Questions**

- Give some examples of what you would pack? *(PAUSE for participation)*
  - Medication
  - Clothes
  - Important documents

**Slide 65: Review Questions**

- How often do you have to pay your rent bill? *(PAUSE for participation)*
  - Usually about once a month but depends on landlord

**Slide 66: Review Questions**

- Where would you find chicken or other meats in the supermarket?  
*(PAUSE for participation)*
  - In the refrigerated food aisle

***Slide 67: Congratulations!***

- Congratulations! You have successfully completed Module 2!!! And now you have foundational skills to manage and maintain your apartment!

## APPENDIX

### Activity: Reading Rent and Utility Bills and Writing Checks

Facilitators should either provide sample rent and utility bills, and checks, or use those on the attached page.

Identify the following information on both types of bills: the amount due, the due date, late fees, and the name and address of the Rental Management Office and the Utility Company where the check should be sent.

Problem solve the following:

- The last day that you must get the check in the mail to pay each bill on time
- The information that must be included on each check

Practice writing a mock check. Be sure to include account numbers when they are required.

John Smith 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Apt 25 Brooklyn, NY 12115	107
	Date _____
Pay to the order of _____	\$ _____
_____	Dollars
Memo _____	_____
0318845001	17783993550      1286

# Brooklyn Realty Firm

INVOICE / 01-01-32

28 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn, NY 12105

**John Smith**  
5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Apt 25  
Brooklyn, NY 12115

**BALANCE DUE**  
Upon Receipt  
**\$755.00**

Item Description	Quantity	Price Per	Total
June Rent			755.00
		Subtotal	\$755.00
		Tax - 0%	\$0.00
TOTAL			\$755.00



**New York Phone Company**

*Highest Quality Sound*

**Invoice**

Date: 6/5/2018  
Invoice # [100]

To

John Smith  
5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Apt 25  
Brooklyn, NY 12115  
718-125-6731  
Customer ID PPS-155893

Salesperson	Job	Payment Terms	Due Date
		Due on receipt	June 15

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Line Total
	Phone Service May 1 – 30		46.83
	Federal taxes		1.58

Subtotal	
Sales Tax	
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.41</b>

Make all checks payable to New York Phone Company

***Thank you for your business!***

### **Activity: Stress Reduction Part I**

Let's review and practice a number of different stress reduction activities. Take a deep breath and imagine an image of letting light shine into your mind and body. Hold the breath in your lungs for 5 seconds or as long as you can comfortably do so. Count to 5 slowly in your mind. Then release the breath slowly, counting to 5 or as it is comfortable for you. Do this 3 more times.

### **Activity: Stress Reduction Part II**

Positive mental imagery can also help. Close your eyes and picture yourself having successfully moved out of the shelter and into your apartment. Talk with the group about the images and feelings that came to mind.

Close your eyes a second time and picture yourself living comfortably for 6 months in your new apartment. Talk with the group about the images and feelings that came to mind.

**Activity: Create a Calm Corner**

Create a collage or draw a picture of your future apartment, using magazines and paper provided by the group facilitator. Draw furniture or pick photographs and pictures from magazines that appeal to you; be sure to include a designated calm corner where you can go to relax, meditate and carry out the stress management exercises that you have learned in the SMART Program. They should be images that inspire you and make you feel secure. Just looking at artwork can begin to lower your blood pressure, which will assist your body to relax. Put some calming music on while you are creating your collage, such as nature sounds. You may want to have a glass of water or tea while you center yourself and make your collage. Take a moment now to imagine your new apartment and be sure to include a calm corner.

### **Activity: Wall Art**

1. Create throw pillows to use as decoration in your apartment (such as sofa pillows). First, take two pieces of fabric and place them on top of one another. Sew them together on three sides using the demonstrated sewing technique. Place stuffing in the fabric through the open side, and sew the remaining side after it is stuffed to your liking. Using fabric markers, create your own design on the pillow or use a template based on your interests and what you would like to have as a decoration in your apartment. For example, you may put your favorite sports team's logo on the pillow or a motivational quote that has meaning to you.
2. Create an abstract art piece to hang on your wall to personalize your apartment. Paint on a piece of paper using colors that you enjoy to look at. Do not worry about painting an object or something specific, but rather have fun and use the paints and colors to create your own unique design to display on your wall.
3. There are many ways to hang wall art without damaging the walls and without needing a hammer and nails. Items such as double sided tape, poster tape, and command hooks are all available at your nearest drugstore or hardware store. Take the time to hold your decoration and decide how heavy it is, and pick a wall hanging device that is strong enough to hold your art. You should also check the material of the wall on which you plan to hang your art to understand what type of items are needed. For example, a poster on thick paper may fall down if you use double-sided tape on brick. A better option would be an adhesive hook that holds up to 2 pounds. Adhesive hooks are non-damaging to the walls and landlord friendly. If you chose to hang your art with nails, make sure to hammer the nail into a stud or use a picture frame hook.

**Activity: Personal Taste**

Flip through the many color chips; observe how you feel when you first look at a color. Write that feeling down on the color chip and use as many descriptive words as possible.

Think about how you can incorporate colors that feel positive into your new home and how you can avoid or adapt colors that feel negative.

### **Activity: Budgeting**

Take a moment and consider what you'll need to budget money for during a one-month period once you are living in your apartment. Remember to take into account things such as food, transportation, rent, utilities, phone, medicine, clothing, self-care products, and leisure activities. Make a list of your expenses. Write each item on its own index card, too. Now look through all your index cards and sort them into two piles. One pile for *current expenses* and one pile for *future expenses*. It is important to understand and recognize our current expenses and future expenses when budgeting to make sure enough money is saved for the planned future expenses before buying items we may want, such as a new CD.

Now sort the items into *needs* and *wants*. It's important to understand the difference between needs and wants when making and adhering to a budget.

Budget		
	Weekly Expense	Monthly Expense
Food	_____	_____
Transportation	_____	_____
Rent		_____
Utilities:		
Electric Bill		_____
Gas Bill		_____
Water Bill		_____
Cable Bill		_____
Phone Bill		_____
Medication		_____
Health Care Visits		_____
Clothing		_____
Laundromat	_____	_____
Self-Care Products:		
Toothpaste		_____
Soap		_____
Shampoo		_____
Deodorant		_____
Toilet paper	_____	_____
Tissues		_____
Band-aids		_____
Leisure Activities	_____	_____
Other Items:		

### **Activity: Cleaning and Errands Schedule**

For this activity about keeping your apartment clean and well-stocked, facilitators will provide you with a blank daily schedule (e.g., a time use chart on the following page) that you will fill in. Schedule times during the week to carry out the following activities in your apartment once you have moved:

- Make your bed
- Cook
- Wash dishes and pots
- Clean bathroom
- Clean kitchen
- Take out trash
- Vacuum or sweep floors
- Dust surface areas
- Do laundry
- Put clothes away
- Go food shopping
- Put food away
- Clean refrigerator and freezer
- Go to the post office
- Go to the bank
- Pay bills
- See doctors/dentists/therapists
- Go to the pharmacy

Record necessary items and steps of each cleaning activity you would need to complete for each of the tasks above in your notebook.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8:00 am							
9:00 am							
10:00 am							
11:00 am							
12:00 pm							
1:00 pm							
2:00 pm							
3:00 pm							
4:00 pm							
5:00 pm							
6:00 pm							
7:00 pm							
8:00 pm							
9:00 pm							
10:00 pm							
11:00 pm							

### **Activity: Cleaning Supplies**

Pick a day from your daily schedule above and practice each task. Use the tools, products and steps recorded in the above activity to complete the activities, such as clean the kitchen area, dust surface areas, organize papers and books on shelves, re-organize and clean cabinets and closets, practice making the bed and changing sheets, fold and organize clothes, wipe tables and chairs, and vacuum and sweep the floors with appropriate tools. Work with the maintenance staff at the shelter; practice cleaning bathrooms and the kitchen.

*Note to facilitator: Gather common household cleaners with which to allow the clients to practice (e.g., Windex, Fantastic, Comet, dish detergent, laundry detergent, paper towels, sponges, dust pans, Swiffer, etc.). Go over what each product is specifically used for and allow clients to practice and demonstrate.*

### **Activity: Organizing Important Papers**

Facilitators will present a file that contains important documents (e.g., a copy of a birth certificate, passport, citizenship papers, social security card, social security disability card, Medicaid or Medicare card, other insurance cards, ATM card, MetroCard) as well as unimportant documents (e.g., old receipts, old rent bill, old shopping list, old phone bill, etc.)

The group will first identify the important documents as opposed to those that should be discarded. Then discuss why important documents must be filed in a safe place, and why it is important to discard the unimportant documents to avoid hoarding. Placing your papers into a folder in a drawer keeps them safe and available to you when you need them. You may also place your documents in a binder that can be purchased at stores such as Duane Reade or Gristedes. You can store this binder with important documents in a file cabinet, shelf, or cabinet that is convenient and accessible for you. This simple organizational system can decrease the stress of having lost a paper that you need. It also gives you control over the storage and organization of important information. Take control of your papers and you will notice a decrease in your overall stress levels!

### **Activity: Storing Food in Your Refrigerator**

- Make a list of “staples” or essential food items that you should have in your refrigerator and pantry once you move into your apartment (worksheet on following page). With these items you will always have the ingredients to make a meal. For example, eggs and canned beans are important and tasty sources of protein that can be used to make breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Practice creating a shopping list (worksheet on following page).
- There is a proper way to store, defrost, clean and cook meat, poultry, and fish to prevent illness. The facilitator can show pictures of different meat, poultry, and fish items to the group and each member picks one and discusses how to store, defrost, clean and prepare it safely.
- Similarly, there is a proper way to store leftovers in the refrigerator and freezer so that these items can be safely eaten at a later time. The facilitator engages the group members in a discussion with samples of different sizes and types of freezer-proof storage containers about the proper methods of storing foods using different types of storage containers and products.
- There are also proper methods to store perishable foods such as fruits and vegetables. What are the signs that tell us that a food item is spoiled and should be thrown away? The facilitator can present pictures of various foods that need to be discarded after their expiration date and/or spoilage (e.g., vegetables, fruits, milk, butter, eggs)
- Practice by cleaning the refrigerator (if one is available). Use appropriate cleaning materials, including gloves to protect your hands from any spills, and check the expiration dates to throw away items that are no longer safe to consume.
- Clean the kitchen cabinets (in the shelter if available) with appropriate cleaning tools. Organize the non-perishable items described above and shop for more to include a variety of non-perishable items to place in the cabinet to keep it well-stocked and well-organized. Throw away perishable food that is expired.

### List of Essential Foods to Have in Apartment Kitchen

1. Whole Wheat Pasta
2. Spaghetti Sauce
3. Whole Wheat Bread
4. Beans
5. Rice
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_

### Grocery Shopping List

1. Eggs
2. Orange Juice
3. Chicken breasts
4. Salmon
5. tomatoes
6. apples
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Activity: Medication Management Pillbox**

Fill a pillbox provided by the facilitator that is labeled for each day of the week. Use raisins, nuts or other small healthy foods and fill up the weekly pillbox. Add each medicine to the daily slot. If you take medicine more than once a day, be sure to include pills for morning, lunch, and evening times. When you are filling up your medication box, remember to follow the directions on your prescription labels to ensure that you have the correct dosage and amounts. Once you have moved into your apartment, be sure to keep your pillbox in a place you will always see it, for example, in the kitchen or next to your bed as a reminder to take your medicine.

*Note to facilitator: inexpensive pill boxes can be purchased at dollar stores.*

## Activity: Contact Information

If you call your building management company at 11:00 pm with a question, you are bound to get a voicemail message! Call them during office hours, between 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. If there is an emergency in your apartment, such as your toilet overflowing you can call your super right away, even late at night. If there is a cabinet that is loose and needs re-attaching, wait until the morning to call your super. Picking the right time to contact people who can provide help will get you better results!

Fix it Activity – This is a big area for inexperienced shelter dwellers who sometimes panic and abandon an apartment rather than try to fix something when it breaks or stops working. It is important to understand:

- What broken things need the super's attention (e.g., broken appliances, broken door knobs and locks, broken windows, leaking faucet)
- What things can an apartment dweller fix (e.g., burned out lightbulbs, refrigerator spills, doors that stick)

Ask the clients to list broken items/problems that need the super's attention compared to those that they can address themselves (see next page for worksheet).

The facilitator can also have pictures of or opportunities to practice home maintenance activities:

- learning how to use a plunger to unclog a toilet or bathtub
- changing a light bulb
- changing the batteries in a clock/watch
- using WD-40 to make a can opener work better
- using WD-40 on the frame of doors to make them open/close easier
- replacing broken laces on shoes/sneakers
- waxing window frames to make them easier to open/shut
- sewing buttons on a shirt

The facilitator can ask clients if they have observed things that are broken at the shelter. A discussion can follow including opportunities to problem-solve fixing these items.

The facilitator can encourage clients to think of other home maintenance tasks that the participants could actually practice doing while at the shelter in preparation for their move to their apartments.

**Broken Items that Need the Super's Attention**

1. Broken door lock
2. Pilot gas light on stove that isn't working
3. Leaking pipe
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

**Items that Apartment Dwellers Might be able to Fix by Themselves**

1. Clogged sink (if a plunger doesn't work, call the super to snake the sink)
2. Burned out lightbulb (unless a ladder is required)
3. Door that sticks in the door frame (use wax or WD-40 along the frame)
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_