

Promising Evidence for Adapting Housing First for DV Survivors

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Overview

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children.

The Domestic Violence Housing First approach focuses on getting survivors of domestic violence into stable housing as quickly as possible and then providing the necessary support as they rebuild their lives.

This approach has been shown to promote long-term stability, safety and well-being for survivors and their children.



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Housing Options

- **Prevention (Diversion)—Survivor may choose to stay in the home or may leave temporarily if safety is a concern**
- **Rapid ReHousing → Flexible Engagement**
- **Subsidized housing with services available**
- **Permanent supportive housing**



Building Our Evidence Base

- The *Domestic Violence Housing First* model builds on prior evidence
- And offers the opportunity to significantly move the field forward



Shared and Similar Principles Between the Pathways Housing First Model and Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy

Housing First Model Tenets (Tsemberis, 2010, p. 18)	Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy Tenets
Shared Principles	
Housing is a basic human right	Housing is a basic human right
Respect, warmth, and compassion for all clients	Respect, warmth, and compassion for all clients
Commitment to working with clients for as long as they need	Commitment to working with clients for as long as they need
Scattered site housing; independent apartments	Scattered site housing; independent apartments (and communal shelters)
Separation of housing and services	Separation of housing and services



Shared and Similar Principles Between the Pathways Housing First Model and Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy

Housing First Model Tenets (Tsemberis, 2010, p. 18)	Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy Tenets
Similar Principles	
Consumer choice and self-determination	Strengths-based; empowerment focus
Harm reduction	Safety planning
Recovery orientation	Orientation toward social and emotional well-being
Explicit Principles of Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy	
	Community engagement; systems change
	Trauma-informed practice



Survivor-driven, Trauma-informed, Mobile Advocacy

Evidence from the Field



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Community Advocacy Project

Funded by NIMH 1989-1997



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Community Advocacy Project

*CAP provided some of the earliest evidence for the effectiveness of community-based (mobile) advocacy



worked 4-6
in community



CAP Study

- Recruited 278 DV survivors after they exited a DV shelter program
- Half were randomly assigned to work with a mobile advocate for 10 weeks (4-6 hrs/wk)
- No formal flexible funding account
- Interviewed them every 6 mos over 24 months (94+% retention)

Community Advocacy Project

CAP provided evidence that mobile advocacy leads to:

Higher social support

Decreased risk of re-abuse

Access to needed resources

Higher quality of life



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SHARE Study



Funded by CDC 2005-2010 (Rollins, C., & Glass, N. Grant #U49CE000520-01)



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SHARE Study

- Recruited 278 DV survivors from 4 programs providing housing assistance and/or DV advocacy services
- Interviewed them every 6 mos over 18 months (94% retention; final sample=260)
- Baseline: High danger scores, PTSD, depression, absences from work/school...

SHARE Study



82% of the families stably housed *at 6 months*
remained stably housed *a year later*



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SHARE Study: at 18 mos



Higher quality of life

Higher income

Greater job stability

Missed fewer days of work

Less depression

Fewer problems with drugs/alcohol

Decreased PTSD



And how about
the kids??

Missed fewer days of school

Better academic performance

Fewer behavioral problems



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Flexible Funding

Evidence from the Field



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Does Flexible Funding, with Brief Advocacy, Work?

- Evaluated an innovative program in Washington, DC
- DASH – District Alliance for Safe Housing



DASH Provides a Range of Services:

- A 43-unit apartment-style “shelter”
- A transitional-to-permanent scattered site safe housing program
- **Housing Resource Center**: A variety of homeless prevention services through:
 - Advocacy
 - The **Survivor Resilience Fund** (**a flexible funding program**), where grants are given to help survivors attain stable, safe housing

Survivor Resilience Fund

- This fund is for survivors who have been fairly stable but who have either become homeless or are at high risk of becoming homeless if a financial crisis isn't averted.
- They specifically target survivors who do not want shelter or intensive services but who need immediate financial help.

Guiding Principles in Flexible Funding Decisions

- “Can **any other organization** provide this resource?”
- “Will this grant help this person to retain housing, not just today, but **over time**?”
- Process is **survivor-centered, accessible, and respectful**
- Process is **quick** to respond to urgent situations

Research Plan

- Survivors invited to participate after they received grant
- Interviewed at 30-days, 3-months and 6-months post-grant
- 55 survivors in study
 - 95% retention rate at three months
 - 87% retention at six months



Demographics

- 53 women, 2 men
- Average age 34 (range 21-57 years old)
- Primarily African American
- 82% have children
 - (range 0-4)



Amount of Flex Funding Awarded

- Average grant: \$2,078
- Grant range: \$275 - \$8,508

Grants were used for:

Moving expenses Utilities
Car repair Back rent
Credit card debt Storage unit fees
Out-of-state travel to court for custody hearing Other needs

Housing at Six Months Follow-up

94% housed

Up-to-date on rent	Somewhat behind on rent	No way to pay next month's rent	Homeless
37 (76%)	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)

Impact on Safety

- We later began asking survivors in 6 month interviews if they had experienced any domestic violence since receiving their flexible funding
- Of the 23 survivors asked the question:
 - 20 (91%) reported no further DV
 - 1 reported receiving harassing phone calls
 - 2 experienced further DV

The Promise of Flexible Funding

- Flex funding with **brief** advocacy is promising option for *some* survivors
 - Those who were relatively stable, and are now experiencing a crisis
- Flex funding with **longer-term advocacy** (DV Housing First, DV Rapid Re-housing) is also promising, needs further research

Ongoing Evaluations/Research

- Rigorous evaluation of DVHF in Washington state
- Following 320 survivors over 18 months, comparing those who receive DVHF with those receiving more “typical” services
 - 2 sites in urban area, 2 sites in rural



Hypotheses

- **Those receiving DVHF will show greater improvement over time on:**
 - Housing stability
 - Financial stability
 - Safety
 - Quality of life
 - Mental health and substance misuse
- **Children will show improvements on:**
 - School attendance and performance
 - Behaviors and social-emotional skills



Ongoing Evaluations/Research

- Examining “DV Rapid Rehousing” in Houston, Texas and Seattle, Washington
- Examining Transitional Housing in Austin, Texas (may be expanding)
- Process evaluation of implementing DVHF in California last year
- Upcoming outcome evaluation of DVHF in California



Resources

- Sullivan, C.M. & Olsen, L. (2016). Common ground, complementary approaches: Adapting the Housing First model for domestic violence survivors. *Housing and Society*, 43(3),182-194.
- <https://wscadv.org/projects/domestic-violence-housing-first/>

Examples from the Field



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