

Domestic Violence: A Different Kind of Homelessness



The Face of Homelessness Has Been Changing

- Homeless families with young children is one of the fastest growing segments of homeless population, and now comprises 37%¹
- Homeless families are overwhelmingly households headed by women²
- 80% of homeless mothers are victims of DV³

Making Housing for Domestic Violence (DV) Victims a Policy and Funding Priority Can Make a Difference

- Increased long term safety, housing and economic stability, and improved health outcomes for intimate partner violence survivors⁴
- Better child outcomes⁵
- Reduction in other costs, such as Child Welfare, criminal justice and health care⁶

Historically, HUD Funding Priorities for Homelessness Have Disadvantaged DV Survivors

- Focused on chronic homelessness: Women, especially women with children, are unlikely to be living on the streets or in shelters.⁷
- Only recently included DV as a factor in and of itself in terms of eligibility for housing or services.

HEARTH Act Makes Significant Advances in Addressing the Needs of Homeless Families with DV

- Includes “fleeing” domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking as accepted eligibility for homeless services/funding
- Opens up to families funds that were restricted to chronic homeless singles in the past
- Increases the use of current funds for homeless prevention, which will include doubling up and other strategies women use

HOWEVER

It Has Limitations for the Needs of DV Victims, Especially Those with Children

- For DV victims, especially those with children, housing instability rather than homelessness is a more frequent problem.⁷
- Housing instability has the same negative impacts as homelessness for women and their children.
- Medium and long-term housing instability due to DV may not meet the definition of “fleeing DV.”
- Needs to incorporate an understanding of the intersection of housing instability and DV.

What Is Housing Instability?

Housing instability is different from homelessness. Someone experiencing housing instability may currently have a place to live but faces multiple on-going difficulties, both personal and economic, associated with maintaining the residence.

Addressing Housing Instability Reduces Revictimization and the Likelihood of Homelessness

- No place to go/need for housing is the biggest reason women return to perpetrator.⁹
- Housing instability is a precursor to homelessness.¹⁰

The SHARE Study Developed an Assessment Tool to Measure Housing Instability

- No standardized measure existed; the SHARE Housing Stability Index now can capture the complexity of housing concerns and barriers that families face.

Findings From The SHARE Study Show Housing Instability is Linked to Poor Outcomes for DV Survivors and Their Children

- Greater housing instability is related to more severe PTSD, worse depression, poorer quality of life, missing work/school and greater hospital/emergency medical use
- Housing instability is as strong or stronger a predictor of negative outcomes as level of danger
- Higher number of housing instability indicators linked to children's problems in cognitive, emotional or behavioral functioning and decreased school performance and attendance.



The SHARE Study Is a Model for Future Research on DV and Housing Issues

- Focused on safety of the participants
- High retention rate over 18 months of data collection
- Measured a wide variety of possible outcomes associated with housing for women and children
- Strong support and participation by community-based victim advocacy and housing programs.

The SHARE Provides a Guide for the Next Steps for Housing Policy and Practice

1. Housing policy, practice and research needs to be informed by what we know about DV and how it uniquely affects housing and homelessness.
2. Domestic violence experts need to be involved in all levels of housing policy, funding, and research decisions
3. Federal agencies should allocate funds specifically for specialized housing and support services for DV survivors and their children

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