

OUTCOMES OF SURVIVORS AFTER TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



Executive Summary

In an effort to enhance the evidence base supporting Transitional Housing (TH) services for survivors of intimate partner violence, this project sought to understand survivor and advocate identified outcomes of TH programs, including barriers and facilitators to post TH outcomes and differences due to geographic setting, along with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic of TH services. Employing a concurrent mixed-methods approach, collecting and comparing multiple streams of survivor and advocate focused data, the study provides a look at the variation within Texas-based TH programs, and speaks to key outcomes for survivors in the first two years after program exit. Data streams collected included program data, advocate interview and focus group data, and survivor survey and interview data. Eight programs representing 10 TH programs participated, with participating advocates and survivors representing diverse racial, age, and geographic groups. Interviews and surveys were conducted in English and Spanish, with additional languages supported through language line assistance.

Programs predominantly operate TH programs through voucher or direct landlord payments in scattered site models, although there are also agency owned and site based models represented. Common program components included participants having access to their own private space, completing a written agreement related to length of stay and other obligations, and access to program staff at least during business hours. Greater variability was found related to program expectations. Survivors generally had access to a wide range of services during their stay in TH, with access to fewer services post TH, with particularly significant reductions in the number of programs providing access to basic needs and support system building efforts post TH.

Key program outcomes identified by survivors include increased safety (physical and emotional), enhanced parent/child relationships, longer term housing stability, job stability, better mental and physical health, and increased hope and well-being. As stated by one survivor, success to her was that *"it's because of them that I own this moment."* Participating survivors consistently reported increased physical safety post TH, although identified some on-going challenges with emotional or psychological safety. Survivors also identified significant improvements in mental health and short term housing stability, although continued anxiety about medium and long-term housing stability remained. Barriers to achieving these goals identified by staff and survivors include parenting challenges, shorter lengths of stay in TH, and on-going transportation, child care, mental and physical health challenges.

Further, continued risks created by an abusive partner, systemic and community barriers to safe housing, and need for support post TH were identified as additional barriers by advocates, which could be at least partly met with access to follow up services, flexible funding, and flexibility in program lengths for survivors with specific challenges. While survivors and advocates identified similar broad goals and barriers across geographic settings, specific barriers and strategies varied. Transportation and access to affordable housing were consistently named barriers to post TH program outcomes, however differences in how these dynamics play out in urban and rural settings were substantial.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Enhance Access to Subsidies and Flexible Funding

- Promote access to Section 8 or other longer-term subsidies.
- Access to support post TH.
- Transportation and childcare assistance.
- Flexible funding during and after program participation.

Promote Survivor-Centered Voluntary Services

- Address any differences between perceived and actual rules.
- Promote continued voluntary engagement after program end.
- Enhance flexibility in program length.
- Consider pathways into and out of TH services.

Address Community Conditions

- Develop permanent funding streams for programs to enhance program stability.
- Increase access to affordable housing.
- Address landlord discrimination and economic inequity.

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