

# Domestic Violence Housing First Evaluation Findings



**What is home?** For many of us, words like family, safety, and security come to mind. Unfortunately, for too many women, home is a reason to stay in an abusive relationship. For many survivors of domestic violence, the alternative is homelessness, which can be just as unsafe and scary. No one should become homeless because they are fleeing domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Housing First (DVHF) creates pathways to permanent, safe, and stable housing, and provides an individualized approach to victim advocacy, giving survivors the freedom to choose how to rebuild their lives.

Findings show that women and children are safe, more stable, self-sufficient, and empowered to create lives free from violence after participating in DVHF programming.

**Housing Stability:** 96% of survivors retained their housing 18 months after entering the DVHF program. Flexible financial assistance and services driven by participants' unique needs allowed advocates to help survivors stay in their current home or access other housing, and then retain that housing.

**Safety and Independence:** 84% of survivors surveyed strongly agreed that DVHF increased their safety and the safety of their children. At final follow-up with participants, 76% were receiving minimal services from the DVHF program at a low cost to the agency.

**Supportive, Nurturing Environments for Children:** Safe, secure homes allowed survivors to normalize life for their children who had experienced trauma. Children were able to stay in the same school, have their own rooms, and play without fear.

*“When you help moms, you are helping their children and you are changing society for the better.” —Program Participant*

**Improved Health and Well-Being:** When in permanent, stable homes, survivors no longer had to focus their energy on day-to-day survival. Having a home allowed them to heal from trauma and address other barriers to their health and well-being, such as substance abuse.

**Restored Dignity and Self-Worth:** 99% of survivors reported that advocacy helped to restore their sense of dignity. After retaining housing, survivors showed progress toward their goals, as well as increased sense of confidence and self-worth.

*“The services and support have given me a chance to start over.” —Program Participant*

**Culturally Appropriate and Adaptable Services:** Participants reported that working with an advocate who culturally and linguistically understood them was critical to getting the support they needed to become stable. Culturally-specific programs provided flexible services, which made survivors feel comfortable, understood, and accepted.

*“You always feel comfortable with your own people. They understand you.”  
— Program Participant*

Domestic Violence Housing First eliminates housing as a reason to stay in an abusive relationship. To learn more about DVHF visit: [www.wscadv.org](http://www.wscadv.org)

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AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Handout from Linda Olsen, WSCADV  
at the HHS meeting on 2/2/16.  
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