Housing as Healthcare:
Addressing the long-term effects of violence through housing interventions

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Presentation Overview

1. New Destiny’s Mission
2. Intersectionality of Health, Domestic Violence & Homelessness
3. Housing Models
4. Evaluation
5. Q & A
New Destiny Housing

New Destiny’s mission is to end the cycle of violence for low-income families and individuals experiencing homelessness and domestic violence by connecting them to safe, permanent housing and services.

To achieve its mission, New Destiny builds and manages housing with on-site services; offers innovative programs that assist survivors in finding and retaining affordable housing; and expands access to permanent housing resources for survivors.
Domestic violence is a major public health problem.

- Domestic violence survivors are:
  - 31% more likely to develop cardiovascular disease
  - 51% more likely to develop type 2 diabetes
- 51% of survivors live with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), often as a co-morbidity with depression
- Survivors can sustain head trauma more often than football players, but they are less likely to be diagnosed and properly treated
Health & Domestic Violence (Cont.)

Children exposed to domestic violence, or who are victims of abuse, experience mood and anxiety disorders, PTSD, and substance abuse at higher rates. The negative health outcomes of domestic violence are intergenerational:

- Boys who have witnessed abuse of their mothers are 10 times more likely to abuse their female partners as adults
- Girls who grow up in a home where the father assaults the mother are more than 6 times more likely to be sexually abused than girls in non-abusive homes
Health & Housing

Housing is a crucial social determinant of health.

• Where people live often predicts their access to quality health care, education, jobs, childcare, and other resources\(^6\)

• Having trouble paying rent, overcrowding, moving frequently, or experiencing homelessness negatively affects physical health and makes it harder to access health care

• People worried about paying their rent are also more likely to have multiple chronic conditions, such as hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes\(^7\)
Health & Housing (Cont.)

People Worried About Housing Costs Likelier to Forgo Medical Care, Report Poorer Health

- Deferred health care due to cost
- Diagnosed with 2+ chronic conditions
- No annual check up
- No usual source of care
- Poor overall health (self-reported)

Source: Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine, "Adults with Housing Insecurity Have Worse Access to Primary and Preventive Care," 2019

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities | CBPP.ORG
Access to safe, affordable, and permanent housing is associated with positive health outcomes and improvements to life expectancy. Yet, millions of Americans are housing insecure:

- In 2019, 37.1 million households, including renters and owners, were cost burdened — of these, 17.6 million households were severely cost burdened.

**Why?**

- Since 2001, rents have increased four times more than wages.
- Limited rental assistance, with only 1 in 4 income-eligible households qualifying for Housing Choice Vouchers.
Domestic Violence & Homelessness

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness, particularly for women and children:

• 80% of women with children experiencing homelessness have also experienced domestic violence\textsuperscript{11}

• 57% of all women experiencing homelessness report domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness\textsuperscript{12}

More than 94% of domestic violence survivors have also experienced economic abuse.\textsuperscript{13}

In New York City, survivors are more likely to remain in shelter than to move to permanent housing over the course of a year.\textsuperscript{14}
How Housing is Healthcare

It’s very difficult for survivors to access healthcare or any wellness related services while still living in fear of the abuser or living in shelter, unsure where they will sleep next.

Once housed and safety is no longer a primary concern, survivors can:

• Prioritize care for themselves and children
• Have control over their own finances and time

And in supportive housing specifically:

• They have access to the services they want, when they’re ready
• There’s also a new community that can support each other
Housing Models – Supportive Housing

• Permanent, affordable housing with onsite services for homeless domestic violence survivors that need housing and some level of support to find and maintain stability
• Using a "housing first" model with voluntary services
• All staff are trained in trauma-informed care & are focused on community building
• Tenants pay no more than 30% of their income in rent
Housing Models – Supportive Housing (Cont.)

New Destiny has developed or co-developed 10 supportive/affordable housing buildings in New York City:

- 649 total units, 304 for domestic violence survivors
- All onsite service staff work for New Destiny’s Family Support Program
- Services are supplemented with an extensive network of community-based organizations
- Capital financing provided by New York City and/or New York State subsidies and federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Operating and service funding provided by New York State
- Referrals made by New York City funded domestic violence shelter providers
Housing Models – Supportive Housing (Cont.)
Examples of services provided in supportive housing:

- Case management and counseling
- Referrals to community-based medical and behavioral health services
- Assistance with food benefits, public assistance
- Wellness checks
- Parent support groups
- Fitness and nutritional workshops
- Yoga, meditation, aromatherapy
- Assistance with recertification and applying for rent arrear funding
- Adding health and wellness coaching and onsite financial coaches
Housing Models – Rapid Re-housing

Rapid Re-housing is a federal program that provides short-term rental assistance, housing search assistance and aftercare support.

• Funded by U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's Mckinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program. Funding for these programs are prioritized by the local Continuum of Care
• Allowable rent set to local Fair Market Rent with flexibility on how much tenants pay in rent and for how long they need it (up to 2 years)
• Lease must be in the tenant's name. Rent goes directly to the landlord
• Service funding is very flexible to meet most emergency needs to foster stability after being housed
Housing Models – Rapid Re-housing (Cont.)

New Destiny's Rapid Re-housing program is called HousingLink.

- Since its launch, the HousingLink team has housed >200 households
- Common uses of service funding:
  - Housing search and case management
  - Security deposits and moving costs (but not furniture)
  - Childcare
  - Education – classes, school supplies
  - Job training and exams
  - Utility arrears
  - Moving costs (but not furniture)
  - Healthcare
Housing Models – Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

In 2021, the Domestic Violence Subcommittee of the NYC Continuum of Care (CoC) requested a subset of EHV from the American Rescue Act.

• This is a Section 8 program that include housing navigation assistance and additional administrative funding to housing authorities to implement the program and expedite the housing placement process

• The NYC CoC, in coordination with the Mayor's Office, allocated 1,100 of the 7,700 vouchers to households fleeing domestic violence and seeking help through the City's Family Justice Centers

• An additional 500 vouchers were allocated to households in the domestic violence shelter system
New Destiny received a Housing Navigation contract to assist survivors receiving vouchers through the Family Justice Centers to find housing. Navigators meet with survivors to assess their housing needs and preferences and then assist them with finding safe, affordable housing. This work includes:

- Continuously searching for available apartments by building relationships with developers, landlords and brokers and taking referrals from New York City's landlord engagement office.
- Scheduling and managing apartment viewings, follow-up, landlord and tenant lease documentation, inspections, Section 8 paperwork and move-in documentation.
- Assisting with the move in and connecting families to aftercare.
New Destiny sought and received philanthropic support to provide aftercare for all households placed into housing through this program.

• The aftercare model includes both a light touch component and a clinical component for those needing a greater level of care. All services are voluntary.
Post-Aftercare Voucher holders continue to engage with University Settlement and/or other organizations connected through referrals.

1. Housing navigator offers aftercare services to voucher holders upon move-in.
2. Navigator completes referral form with voucher holder.
3. Voucher holder self-identifies, or HN identifies, a need for clinical services.
4. Supervisor approves request and completes referral to University Settlement via Aftercare Coordinator.

**Housing Navigation**

- **First Contact**
  - Do you have the necessities?
- **Follow-Up Text**
  - message: Are you experiencing any issues?
  - 1 week
- **Follow-Up Text**
  - message: Are you experiencing any issues?
  - 3 months
- **Follow-Up Text**
  - message: Are you experiencing any issues?
  - 9 months

**Other Referrals**

**University Settlement**

Nearly all of New Destiny’s tenants remain stably housed each year and free from domestic violence incidents.

In an independent evaluation, tenants reported:

• 84% feel physically safe
• 77% feel emotionally safe
• Only 5% have trouble affording healthcare/medication

Of 408 wellness check calls during Covid-19 lockdown, only 23 tenants reported any kind of health/wellness related issues
Evaluation – New Data Collection

- New Destiny social service staff administers a Tenant Stability Survey
- Questions are based on safety (physical and emotional) and the following housing stability measures:
  - Food insecurity
  - Ability to pay rent and other housing related bills (e.g. utilities)
  - Access to healthcare and mediation needed for self and family
  - Access to childcare (if applicable)
## Evaluation – New Data Collection

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stability Indicators (last 12 months)</th>
<th>FSP</th>
<th>HL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Struggling with food insecurity</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have healthcare coverage</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a primary care physician</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen a doctor</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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Tenant Testimony

After four years in a shelter, Milagros and her children found safety and stability when she moved into one of our apartments: “When I first received the keys to my apartment I was filled with joy. I can’t even describe it any other way, it’s like a new beginning.”

Video: newdestinyhousing.org/programs/stories-of-hope
Thank you. Any questions?
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Resources


• Learn more about the Domestic Violence Housing First model from the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence: https://wscadv.org/projects/domestic-violence-housing-first/


