



Creating Permanent Supportive Housing to Meet the Needs of Survivors of Domestic Violence:

A Toolkit for Low-Income Housing Developers, Architects, Property Managers, and Housing Service Providers

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness and housing insecurity in America, with more than one-third (38%) of survivors experiencing homelessness at some point in their lives.¹

Despite growing research into the intersection of domestic violence and homelessness, there remains a lack of published guidance on permanent housing solutions that respond to survivors' needs in attaining housing and personal stability.

To address this gap, the Downtown Women's Center and the National Alliance for Safe Housing partnered in 2019 to develop this Toolkit as a best practice resource for housing developers, property managers, and service providers involved in building and operating Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for domestic violence (DV) survivors. As the first of its kind, the Toolkit also includes recommendations for involving survivors in the development of trauma-informed PSH programs, to better meet the need for effective permanent housing options in addition to shelter, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing models.

While intended as a reference for individuals building and operating PSH for DV survivors, the Toolkit's recommendations are applicable across PSH programs and partnerships that serve or will serve trauma survivors, even if units are not specifically designated for survivors of DV. It incorporates unique perspectives and case studies from architects, service providers, survivors, housing developers, and other key stakeholders, in order to serve those currently operating PSH as well as those exploring the creation of new PSH buildings and programs.

Most broadly, this Toolkit advances the need for expanding PSH's core principles to include safety planning as well as survivor-centered and trauma-informed advocacy and services. Central to this conceptualization is the principle of survivor voice and inclusion in the mindful design and coordination of all PSH operations.



Topics addressed in this Toolkit include:

01

The implementation of trauma-informed care in PSH building and program design.

02

Considerations around serving survivors of color and survivors with other intersectional identities.

03

Avenues for developing long-term, sustainable dialogues with survivors regarding PSH design and operation, in order to create programs that more effectively respond to their unique needs, challenges, and perspectives.

04

The cultivation of strategic partnerships and community support in PSH development, as well as the identification of key funding sources.

05

Considerations for responsive and effective property management, with information on leasing policies, legal housing protections, and safety, security, and confidentiality risks.

Additional topics:

- Coordinated Entry System (CES)
- Intersectionality & cultural humility
- Trauma-informed care
- Survivor inclusion & empowerment
- PSH development
- Funding sources
- Community engagement
- Mindful architectural design
- Property management
- Program design & service delivery
- Therapeutic modalities
- Security & confidentiality
- Safety planning
- Housing & legal protections



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This Toolkit was made possible thanks to the expertise and insight of community partners and survivors of domestic violence and homelessness. Financial support was provided by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the Blue Shield of California Foundation.

¹ Baker, Charlene K., Sarah L. Cook, and Fran H. Norris. "Domestic Violence and Housing Problems: A Contextual Analysis of Women's Help-Seeking, Received Informal Support, and Formal System Response." *Violence Against Women* 9, no. 7 (2003): 754-793.