

Supportive Housing for the Most Vulnerable: Building Programs for Youth

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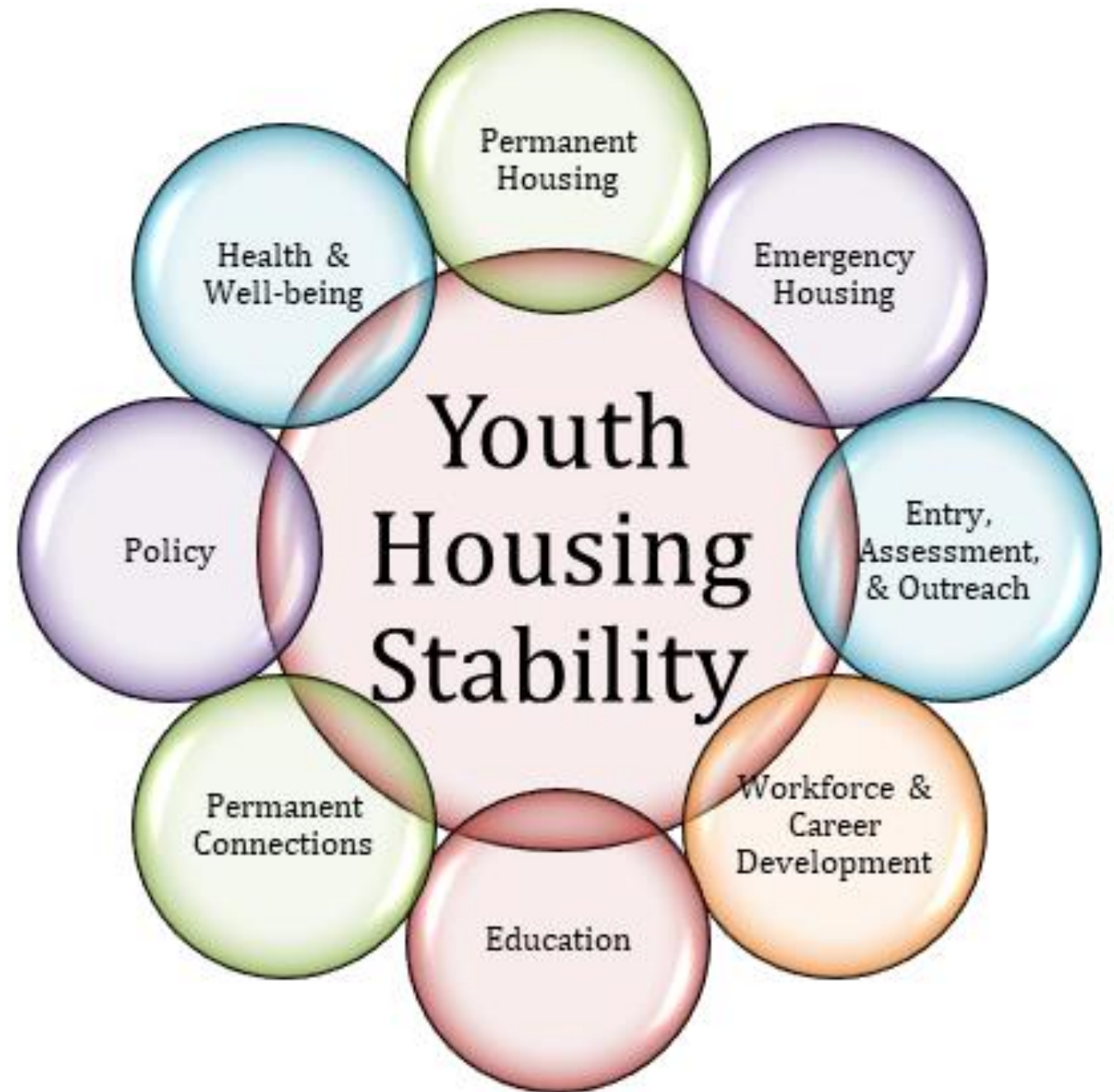
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Why are youth considered a vulnerable population?

- Brain development & the impact of trauma
 - Long term impact
- Defining homelessness – unique experiences
- Limited resource acquisition – youth haven't had as much time
- Sub-populations that are overrepresented among youth experiencing homelessness include youth who have unique vulnerabilities – LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, system-involved youth, parenting youth, youth who have immigrated to the US
 - Lack of affirming systems & supports often pushes youth into places where risk of trauma and exploitation are increased.

A Coordinated
Community
Response to Ending
Youth
Homelessness – It's
not just about
housing.



Guiding Principles & Knowledge Infrastructure

Trauma Informed Practices & Systems

Policy & Advocacy Integration

LGBTQ+ Affirming

Data Informed

Anti-Racist

Immigrant & Refugee Inclusive

Sensitive to Risks for Violence & Exploitation / Honoring Harm
Reduction

Housing Models for Youth

- Rapid rehousing
- Host homes
- Transitional living programs
- Supportive housing – time limited & non-time limited



Resilient mental perspective
• Helping really help housing
and needs to see that can help them
• Different definitions of
homelessness
• Difficult to address (an invisible
group who make look for safety)
• Location/access to services

• Gender specific
• Building Relationships
trusting
• Transport



What should supportive housing look like for youth?

- Housing first – get youth connected to housing quickly.
- Provide the wrap-around resources needed for reducing barriers in the short and long term - legal support, job experience, career development, credit building/repair.
- Have services in one program OR a seamless connection with other providers.
- Make permanent connections a priority in the program.
- Promote and incentivize autonomy while also not pulling out supportive services too early.
- Make room for mistakes.

What should supportive housing look like for youth?

- Focus on building the basic skills needed to live independently.
- Teaching and not doing for the youth. - Applied learning. Not just giving youth information on “how to”.
- Tailor to the needs of the individual youth.
- Trauma-informed - recognize how a young person’s background impacts their ability to be independent.
- Attentive to mental health needs.
- Peer support or peer navigation as a component - includes the training to provide emotional support.
- Affirming of youth in all of their identities.

Developing youth affirming housing programs

- Identify & enhance strengths of individual youth.
- Build & support peer networks.
- Recognize and address adultism.
- Hire youth with direct experience of homelessness as staff.
- Include young people in organizational and programmatic decision making.
- Seek out input from youth in community decisions about homeless services.

Contact us!

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Advocates for Richmond Youth

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