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HELP USA

HELP USA

20 Years of Providing
Homes, Jobs, and Services for America's Homeless

Over 200,000 People Helped Since 1986

Building Better Lives

"Homelessness is such a disruption to one's life; it's hard to understate the damaging effects on a person or family system."

Destructive effects include social, relational, medical, psychological, legal, etc.

# Enduring Destructive Nature of Homelessness

- Yet our efforts to eradicate homelessness only begin when a person or family is literally homelessness

- Imagine trying to eradicate crime, drug addiction, drunk driving, disease and other social ills exclusively *after* its occurrence

WHY PREVENTION?

Prevention as a Framework in many other areas of Interest

- Crime prevention
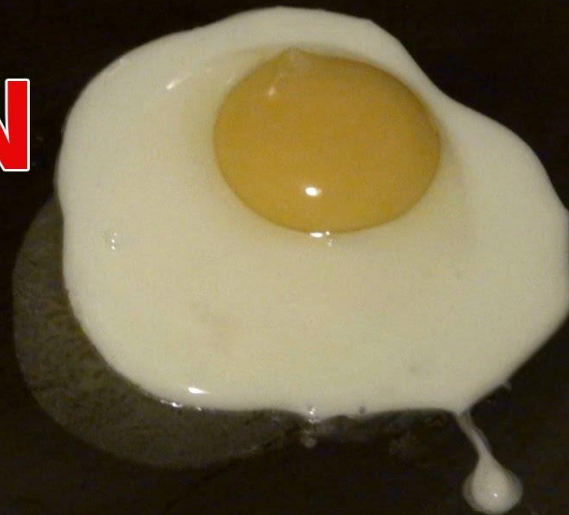- Alcohol/Drugs
- Drunk Driving

PREVENTION
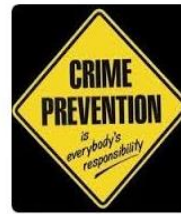
CRIME PREVENTION

DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

DRUNK DRIVING PREVENTION

- How do we know if a prevention effort was effective in each case? The answer is, you don't
- Efficacy rates for prevention activities vary based on strong targeting efforts
- Evaluation is based long-term trends
- Estimates of literal homelessness decreased nationally 13% from 2010 to 2016; Obama's ARRA act from 2009 to 2012 was probably an important factor

PREVENTION

- Homelessness prevention is less expensive and has shown to be effective in American localities and countries including Germany and England (Culhane, Metraux, & Byrne, 2011)

- Homeless prevention must be expanded from its current and limited program design, which most often enrolls people who are at the most imminent, emergent risk of homelessness, in order to catch people "further upstream" (Shinn, Baumohl, & Hopper, 2001)

So, why invest in Homeless Prevention?

- Messeri, O'Flaherty & Goodman's (2011) research on the effectiveness of Homebase homeless prevention finds that for every one hundred families enrolled, shelter entry falls between 10% to 20%

- Rolston, et. al (2013) established a 6.5% reduction of shelter entry of families enrolled in Homebase (and a reduction of length of stay for those who entered shelter)

So, why invest in Homeless Prevention?

- Determinants of Homelessness are complex, multifaceted and ever-changing
- Cascading effects of multiple risk factors without sufficient protective factors as counterweight. Results in tipping point into homelessness
- Convergence of multiple unfortunate micro (domestic violence, substance abuse) and macro factors (hot housing market) *and* destabilizing events (loss of income) (Lee, Tyler & Wright, 2010; Early, 2005; O'Flaherty, 2004)

Determining Risk factors of Homelessness

- Homeless prevention model
  - Prevent episode of homelessness by working with families and single adults identified as high risk for homelessness, and who are likely to enter into NYC's shelter system (Primary)

- Rapid Rehousing/Diversion model
  - Rapidly rehouse/divert families from shelter who recently entered shelter system or are literally homeless on the street (Secondary)

Conceptual Framework of Homebase Homeless Prevention

- Targeting is vital to a successful homeless prevention or rapid re-housing program
- Risk Assessment point system to assess and weigh correlates of homelessness (minimum of seven points determines risk)
- Two points for each factor:
  - Head of Household (HOH) is under 22 yrs. old
  - Four or more moves in past year
  - Severe household discord (subjectively determined)
  - Two or more of individual factors as child:
    - Experience of Homelessness
    - Foster care
    - Physically, sexually or emotionally abused
    - Moved four or more times
    - Family received Public Assistance

Targeting/Assessing Risk or Threat to Housing Stability

- One point for each factor:
  - HOH is between 23 and 28 yrs. old
  - Receiving Public Assistance
  - Involvement of children's services or foster care
  - Shelter stay in past three months
  - Shelter stay as an adult
  - One to three moves in past year
  - Moderate household discord (subjectively determined)
  - Non-leaseholder
  - Return from institution:
    - Jail or Prison
    - In-patient substance abuse treatment or mental health facility

Targeting/Assessing Risk or Threat to Housing Stability

- Risk Assessment score of **seven** or more points
- Income under 30% area median income (AMI)
- 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- Geographic specificity to capture areas where high entrants into shelter system come from
- Clustered areas of severe impoverishment

Eligibility Criteria for Services

- Short-Term Financial Assistance
- Rent arrears, security deposits, furniture, moving expenses
  - Ongoing rent contributions
  - Work expenses/training
  - Incentives (Payments to primary leaseholder)
- Leverage financial assistance with other existing funding sources
- Money management and household budgeting seminars
- Housing Court assistance
- Rehousing and/or diversion when appropriate

Homebase Services

- HELP USA doubled its Homebase programs in the Fall of 2014: Currently HELP has 4 stand-alone offices in the Bronx
- In FY 14 Homebase served 1,994 total households at risk for homelessness in the Bronx (unduplicated is not broken out)
- In FY 15 Homebase served 3,955 total households, of which 3360 were unduplicated
- In FY 16 Homebase served 5045 total households, of which 4365 were unduplicated

Homebase Statistics

- **3397** unduplicated families (with children) were enrolled
- **968** unduplicated single adults were enrolled
- **4365** total unduplicated households were served
- **66** households entered shelter (98.5% success…or 1.5% failure rate)

- Messeri, O'Flaherty & Goodman's (2011) research on the effectiveness of Homebase finds that for every one hundred families enrolled, shelter entry falls between **10% to 20%**
- Rolston, et. al (2013) established a **6.5%** reduction of shelter entry of families enrolled in Homebase (and a reduction of length of stay for those who entered shelter)

Outcome Data

3,397 Unduplicated Families

968 Unduplicated Single Adults

HOMEBASE INTERVENTION

1.5% Entered Shelter

98.5% Did Not Enter Shelter

FY 16 Outcome Data

- Shelter costs approximately $38,000 a year per family ($105 per night). In FY 16, the average length of stay is 13 months in a NYC family shelter ($41,166)

- Shelter costs approximately $27,375 ($75 per night) a year for a single adult. The average length of stay is 10 months in a NYC shelter for single adults ($22,810)

- In FY 16, HELP USA's Homebase programs cost eight million dollars

- Homebase cost per family unit is **$1832 per year**

The Cost Effectiveness of Homeless Prevention

In FY 16, 4365 Unduplicated Family Units Received HOMEBASE Services

Not every family unit would have become homeless without intervention
But some would have:

If **20%** became homeless	If **15%** became homeless	If **10%** became homeless	If **6.5%** became homeless
873 total families would have experienced homelessness	**655** total families would have experienced homelessness	**436** total families would have experienced homelessness	**284** total families would have experienced homelessness
807 more than with Homebase	**589** more than with Homebase	**370** more than with Homebase	**218** more than with Homebase
Savings of $21M	**Savings of $13.2M**	**Savings of $5.3M**	**Costs $175,000 more with Homebase**

- Cost estimate does not include reduced time in shelter for those who did enter shelter
- ABT Associates (2013) found that for each Homebase participant, taxpayers saved $2235 per participant during the study period
- This analysis does not calculate the uncalculatable costs associated with homelessness

Takeaway

- What is the argument for NOT engaging in Homeless Prevention?

Takeaway