

Assessing the Effectiveness of Housing First (HF) Models on Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) Experiencing Homelessness: A Systematized Review

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This study examined current Housing First interventions and principles utilized in housing programs for young adults ages 18-25 experiencing homelessness and assessed their effectiveness based on a review of the research using a systematized review strategy.

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Introduction

Youth homelessness is a national crisis, with 1 in 10 young adults (18–25) experiencing homelessness each year. Transitional-age youth face heightened risks of violence, trauma, and unsafe environments during a critical developmental period, requiring targeted supports beyond housing alone. While Housing First has shown strong outcomes for adults, less is known about its effectiveness for TAY. This review examines Housing First principles and interventions for this population to inform future policy and practice.

Current Housing Models

What are Housing First Models?

Immediate, low-barrier housing with no preconditions, paired with voluntary, choice-based supports.

➤ Permanent Supportive Housing

Long-term housing with ongoing supports for individuals with complex needs, focused on stability and wellbeing.

➤ Rapid Re-Housing

Short-term support to quickly exit homelessness through housing assistance and time-limited services.

➤ Transitional Living Programs

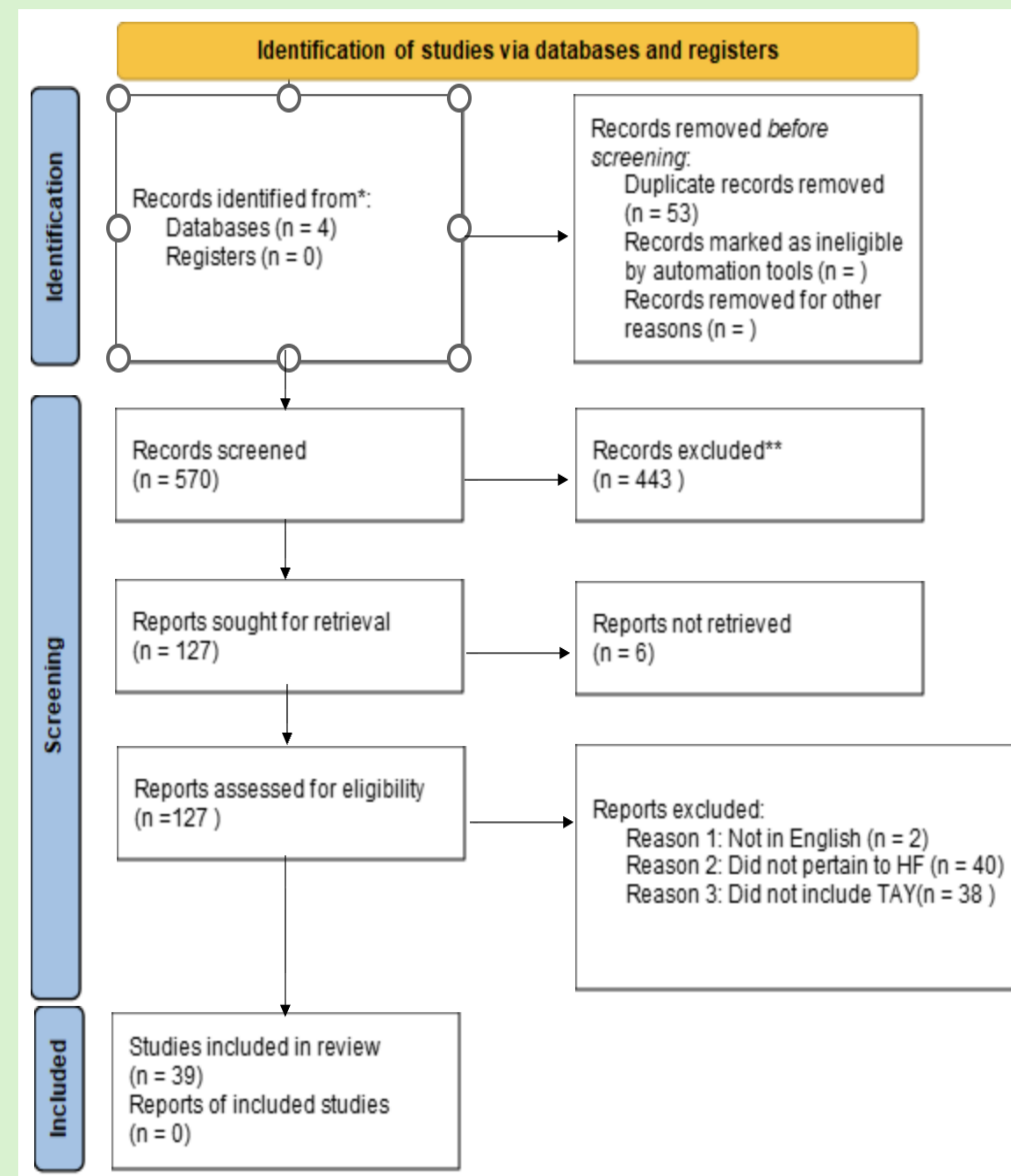
Structured, time-limited housing with life skills and support services to help youth transition to independence.

Research Question

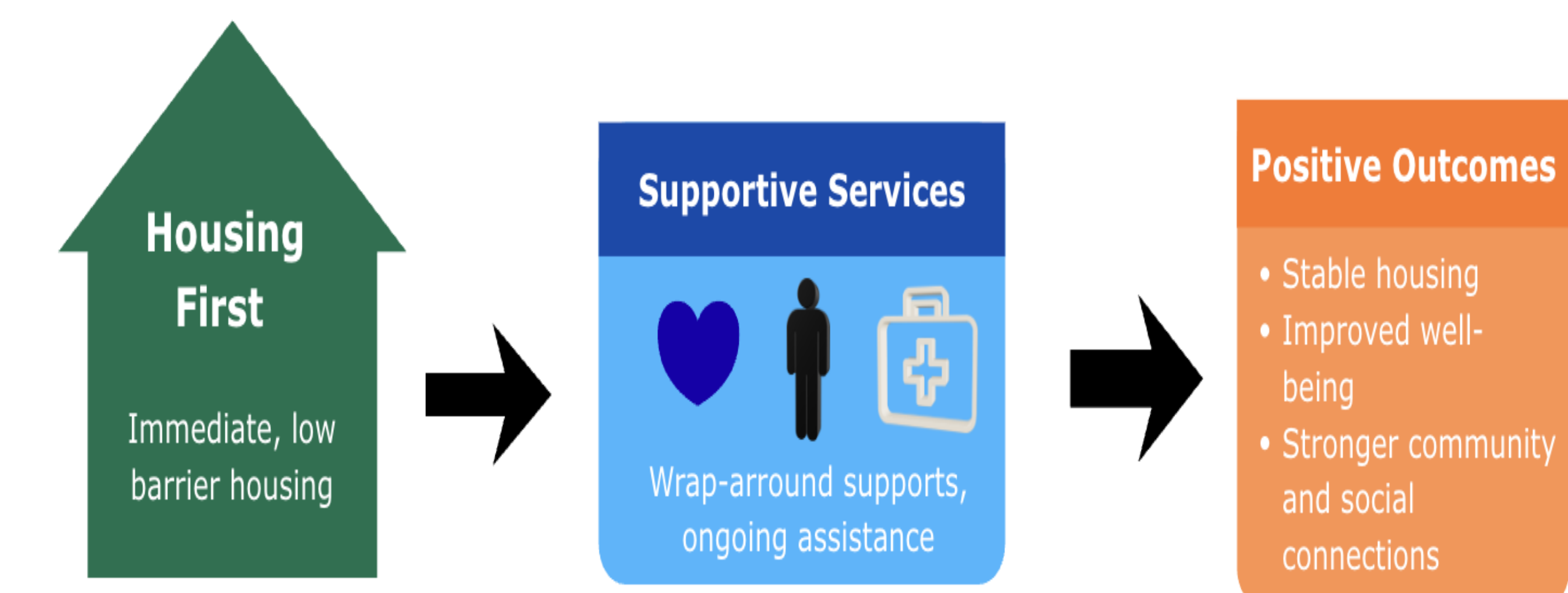
How do Housing First principals and interventions impact housing stability and overall well-being for Transitional-Aged Youth (ages 18-25) experiencing homelessness?

Methodology

The following four databases were screened for peer-reviewed articles:
EBSCOhost, JSTOR, PubMed, Scopus



Housing First Approach to Youth Homelessness



Findings

Core Benefits

- High housing stability, fewer returns
- Better quality of life
- Greater independence
- Improved physical & mental health
- Stronger social connections

What Makes HF Work

- Youth choice & autonomy
- Trust + consistent support

What Limits Impact

- Limited housing options
- Developmental mismatch
- Systemic barriers

Discussion

Implications for Practice

- Youth-tailored HF + developmental supports
- Relationship-based, long-term care

Limitations

- Limited TAY research
- Program variability