# Housing crisis fragments support networks, intensifying pressures on mothers



The adage that “it takes a village to raise a child” encapsulates the essence of communal support in parenting, a concept that has been vital throughout history. This framework of interconnectedness allowed families, especially mothers, to share responsibilities, easing the burdens of child-rearing. However, the current housing crisis has disrupted this foundational ethos, compelling mothers not only to fulfil the roles of caregivers but also to become primary financial providers in an increasingly strained economic environment.

Traditionally, multi-generational living arrangements were a hallmark of many communities, from the shtetls of Eastern Europe to the post-war suburbs of America. Surrounding mothers with a network of support—comprising grandparents, relatives, and close neighbours—enabled them to balance familial duties with employment, creating an environment ripe for cultural and social transmission. This approach not only facilitated shared childcare but also promoted emotional wellbeing. Unfortunately, as housing costs soar, particularly in urban areas rich with cultural history such as Los Angeles, families are increasingly dispersed, often forced to relocate to more affordable areas far from their support networks. As a consequence, many mothers face a debilitating isolation that heightens feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

Recent studies underscore the importance of housing stability for family well-being. Families experiencing housing instability—characterised by evictions, overcrowding, or unsafe living conditions—are exposed to heightened stress, which can jeopardise child safety and wellbeing. The pressures associated with maintaining adequate housing not only heighten the risk of child neglect but can also delay critical reunification processes for families affected by state intervention due to abuse or neglect. Such circumstances often drive mothers to work longer hours or juggle multiple jobs, diminishing their capacity to be present with their children and participate actively in their lives.

As traditional support structures erode, mothers find themselves bearing the weight of household duties and professional obligations in isolation. This relentless balancing act leads many to seek solace in medication rather than confronting the systemic issues causing their stress. The communal ties that once facilitated wisdom sharing and continuity of cultural practices have weakened, leaving individuals to navigate parenting largely on their own.

In light of these challenges, there is a glimmer of hope. Communities are beginning to adapt, and mothers are leveraging contemporary tools to forge new support networks. Initiatives involving community organisations, parenting groups, and even digital platforms are emerging as vital resources, enabling women to connect, share experiences, and provide emotional support to each other. Notably, these networks help diminish feelings of isolation while fostering a resurgence of collective care.

Addressing the broader housing crisis will require concerted systemic reforms, including policies promoting affordable housing, childcare subsidies, and adjustments to workplace practices to enhance family support. Advocacy initiatives aiming to tackle these root causes of housing insecurity can play a pivotal role in restoring the communal living environment essential for nurturing families. Efforts to alleviate the burdens on mothers not only stand to rebuild the structure of support they require, but they also affirm the collective responsibility of society in nurturing the next generation.

Ultimately, the challenge of balancing work and motherhood should not fall solely on the shoulders of women. It is a communal issue that necessitates a collective response, prioritising affordable living conditions, equitable shared parenting responsibilities, and community cohesion. Through such efforts, there is potential for a modern interpretation of the proverbial village—one that maintains its core values while adapting to the complexities of contemporary life. The resilience of mothers and families stands as a testament to the importance of communal support, highlighting a collective effort to nurture both children and the societies in which they thrive.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/382041/unaffordable-housing-and-the-erosion-of-the-proverbial-village/), [[2]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability), [[5]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/382041/unaffordable-housing-and-the-erosion-of-the-proverbial-village/), [[4]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability), [[6]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability), [[5]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability), [[6]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/382041/unaffordable-housing-and-the-erosion-of-the-proverbial-village/), [[3]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/382041/unaffordable-housing-and-the-erosion-of-the-proverbial-village/), [[4]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/382041/unaffordable-housing-and-the-erosion-of-the-proverbial-village/), [[4]](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/columnist/382041/unaffordable-housing-and-the-erosion-of-the-proverbial-village/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/strengthening-families-through-housing-stability> - This article discusses how housing instability, including issues like eviction and overcrowding, can lead to increased stress and exposure to unsafe conditions, raising the risk of child neglect or abuse. Families facing housing challenges are more likely to be reported to child protective services, and unstable housing can delay reunification for children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Ensuring families have safe, stable housing is crucial for promoting conditions where children and their families can thrive.
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