**TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES**

A cornerstone of victim services has been to support victims’ choices; believing that victims know their situation best. While providers undoubtedly operate from this philosophy, there is more providers can do to ensure that services to not unintentionally re-traumatize victims through policies and programming that has not taken into account the impact of trauma on a person’s thinking, feelings, and behaviors. Use of trauma-informed services is encouraged. Core principles of trauma-informed services include the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Core Principles** | **Examples** |
| Understanding Trauma and Its Impact | |  | | --- | | Understanding traumatic stress and recognizing that many current behaviors and responses are ways of adapting to and coping with past traumatic experiences. | |
| Promoting Safety | Establishing a safe physical and emotional environment where basic needs are met; safety measures are in place; and provider responses are consistent, predictable, and respectful. |
| Supporting Consumer Control, Choice and Autonomy | Helping people regain a sense of control over their daily lives. Keeping people informed about all aspects of the system and allowing them to drive goal planning and decision-making. |
| Sharing Power and Governance | Sharing power and decision-making across all levels of an organization, whether related to daily decisions or when reviewing and establishing policies and procedures. |
| Ensuring Cultural Competence | Respecting diversity within the program, providing opportunities for consumers to engage in cultural rituals, and using interventions specific to cultural backgrounds. |
| Integrating Care | Maintaining a holistic view of consumers that acknowledges the interrelated nature of emotional, physical, relational, and spiritual health and facilitates communication within and among service providers and systems. |
| Healing Happens in Relationship | Believing that establishing safe, authentic, and positive relationships can be corrective and restorative to trauma survivors. |
| Understanding that Recovery is Possible | Understanding that recovery is possible for everyone regardless of how vulnerable he or she may appear, instilling hope by providing opportunities for consumer involvement at all levels of the system, and establishing future-oriented goals. |

Source: Guarino, Soares, Konnath, Clervil, & Bassuk, 2009

**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING MODELS & RENT STRUCTURES**

Transitional housing is often a critical service for survivors of violence, allowing them to escape an abusive partner safely. There are a variety of housing models and rent structures being used by transitional housing programs across the country. This document highlights the three most common transitional housing models being used by the Office of Violence Against Women’s (OVW) Transitional Housing Grant program grantees. Additionally, there are a variety of rent structures that are being used by these program which are noted here as well. There is no one correct way to structure your transitional housing model or rent process. These things will vary based on your program mission, the way in which you are funded, and the population of survivors you are serving. Below is a list of the various housing models that exist and some of the pros and cons.

**Transitional Housing Models**

**Scattered Site**

* Survivors live in an apartment in the community in a full market rent unit.
* Survivor holds lease in their own name.
* On rare occasions the program hold the lease and subleases to survivor.
  + Program is not in the role of the landlord (unless subleasing to survivor).
  + Increasingly the most common model. This model allows for the survivor to possibly remain in the unit once the financial assistance has ended therefore eliminating the need to relocate again.

**Clustered Site**

* Program owns building with units or rents a group of apartments in a common location.
* Program is landlord and service provider.
* Survivor lives in program building or one of the program rented units for a specific period of time while they find more permanent housing.

**Communal Living**

1. Similar to shelter design. May have separate/private bedrooms but share common space such as living room, dining room, kitchen, etc.
2. Least common of the 3 models used.

It is important that communal living models for anyone that will be served with OVW Transitional Housing funds be sufficiently separate from any other communal housing offered by the grant recipient to allow for separate and distinct policies governing each type of housing. For example, the transitional housing units could be on a specific floor or section within a building or in a separate building on the same property.

*\*Transitional Housing is not an extended shelter stay.* Federal guidelines for program receiving grants from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) state that transitional housing is not intended to be an extended shelter stay and must be offered for a minimum of 6 months. Regardless of the model used, transitional housing programs should be providing a longer-term housing option for survivors while helping them to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

**Transitional Housing Rent Structures**

**Subsidized**

* Survivor enters into lease. Program provides a portion of rent, as rental assistance, paid directly to the landlord.

**Rent and Sublet**

* Lease is in program’s name and program is responsible for payment of the rent. Program creates sub-lease or rental agreement for survivor and survivor pays a portion of the total cost of rent to the program.

**Own**

* Program owned and operated. Program creates sub-lease or rental agreement for survivor and survivor pays a portion of the total cost of rent to the program.

*Note – If you are implementing your transitional housing program with OVW Transitional Housing grant funds, rent collected from survivors must not be used as program income. Any rent collected from survivors in this structure must be put back into the transitional housing program and be used to provide assistance to survivors.*

\*As a best practice, it is recommended that in all rent structures mentioned that survivors never be required to pay more than 30% of their income in rent.\*

**Pros and Cons to Housing Models and Rent Structures**

**Subsidize**

* Pros:
* Program is not responsible for unit. Allows the program to instead focus on being a service provider and ally.
* Survivor may be able to remain in the unit once the financial assistance has ended therefore eliminating the need to relocate again.
* Cons:
* Not all survivors are eligible for a lease. (For example; undocumented survivors, survivors with low to no income and/or survivors with poor or no credit).
* Not ideal for survivors who prefer a more supportive transitional environment since there is typically no staff on hand in a scattered site model.

**Rent and Sublet**

* Pros:
  + Program can increase access for survivors otherwise not eligible for a lease by holding the least in the programs name.
* Cons:
  + Program is responsible for unit and must act as landlord as well as service provider. \*It is recommended best practice that programs using this model designate separate staff to perform duties related to managing the property and collection of rent (Landlord role) and staff to provide support and advocacy services. By doing this, programs maximize the ability for staff to provide trauma informed services.

**Own**

* Pros:
  + Program is in control of all aspects of housing and can create a housing program with minimal barriers for survivors.
* Cons:
  + Program is responsible for all maintenance, upkeep, and repairs. Program acts as landlord as well as service provider.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) Fiscal Year 2016 Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Solicitation