

SHELTER RULES

WHY DO WE HAVE SO MANY?

Confidentiality

Chores

Medication

Curfew



Bedtime

Let's Test Equipment

- Side Panel:
 - Raise your hand
 - Enter your first name & role in program



My name is Mary & I'm the Queen.



Objectives

- Have an open examination of:
 - Why we have shelter rules
 - Which ones we really need
 - Who benefits from our rules
- Examine how we move to “rights and responsibilities”?



Imagine A World Without Rules



Why Do We Have Shelter Rules?

Shift from grassroots efforts to institutionalized, regulated organization



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Why Do We Have Shelter Rules?

Legitimate Reasons

- Outside agencies require them
- (Fire Department, Health & Human Services, etc.)
- Communal living
- Safety/liability
- Confidentiality



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Why Do We Have Shelter Rules?

Not so legitimate

- It's the way we've always done things
- Because one time this thing happened!
- Prevent chaos!!
- The real world has rules
- ??? Enter reasons into text box

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Rules

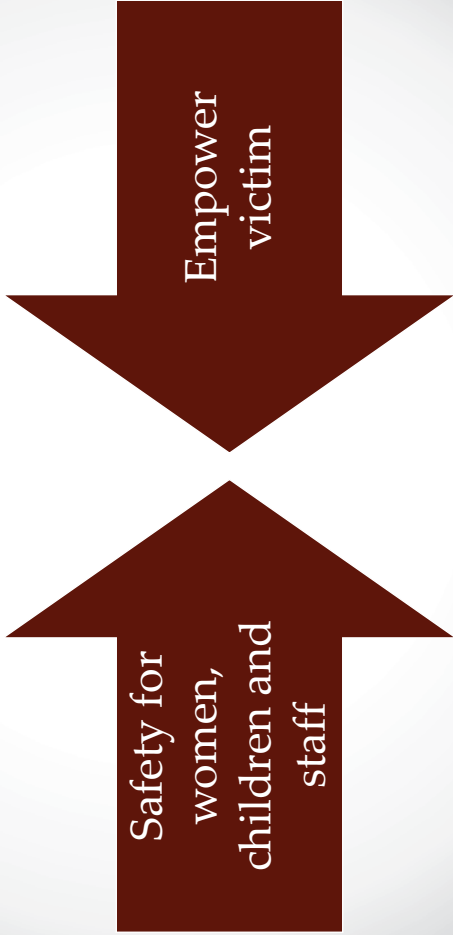
- Needed to control behavior
- Prevent bad or harmful situations
 - But what consequences should violation of shelter rules be?



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Conflict



Describe Your Rules in Two Words

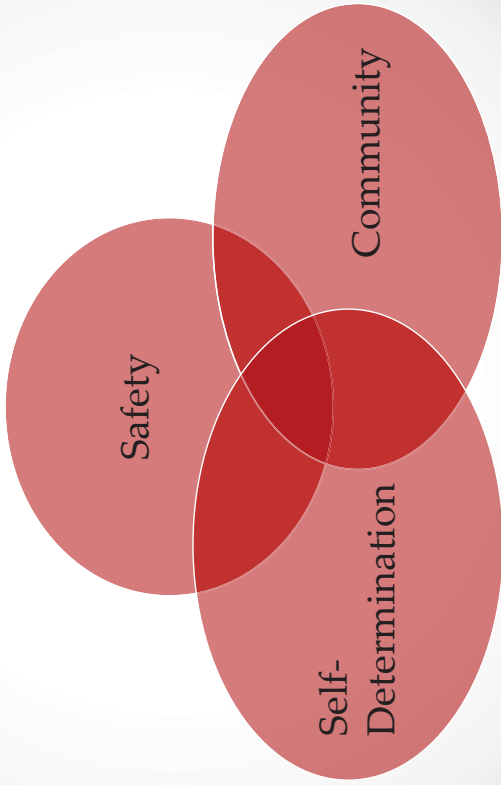
Which rules are most commonly broken?

Would you want to live under those same rules?

Describe the Values Your Rules Express Now

Describe the Values You'd Like Your Rules to Express

3 Core Values



Purpose of Rules*

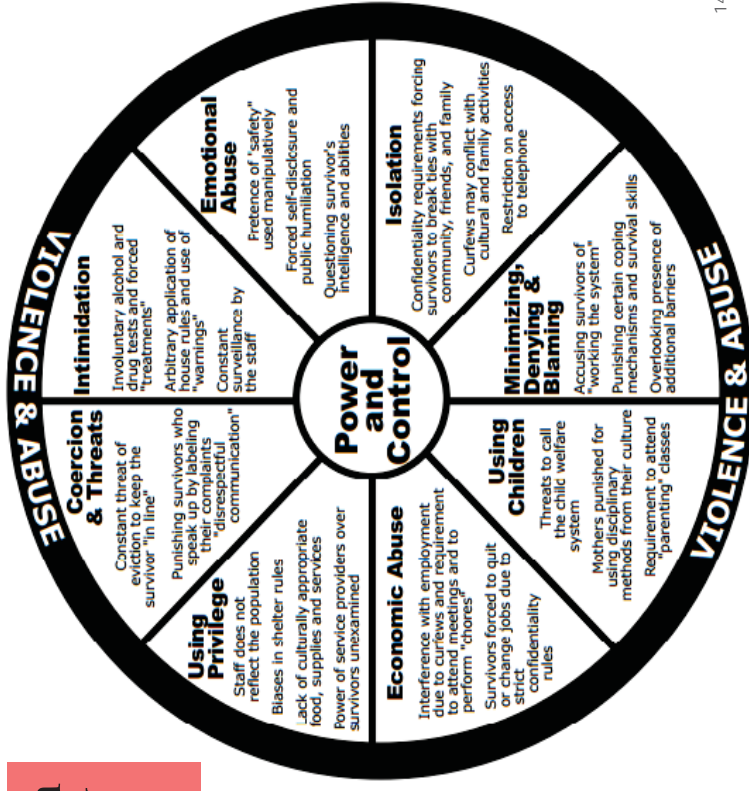
To preserve the confidentiality & external safety of the shelter

To assure the health standards & internal safety of the shelter

To provide an environment of mutual respect for clients & staff from different backgrounds with a wide variety of living experiences

*Shelter Rules: The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly

P&C in the DV Shelter



P&C Wheel In DV Shelter

Intimidation: Involuntary drug & alcohol testing; constant 'surveillance; warnings

Emotional Abuse: Forced self-disclosure; questioning victim's abilities

Isolation: Curfews conflicting with family events; restricted phone access or use

Minimizing, Denying: Accusing victim of "working the system"; punishing some coping & survival strategies

P&C Wheel In DV Shelter

Using Children: Requirement to attend 'parenting classes'; threats to call CPS

Economic Abuse: Interference with job because of curfew, chores, meetings

Using Privilege: Staff doesn't reflect victim population, biases in rules, no culturally appropriate food, supplies, etc.

Coercion & Threats: Punishing for speaking up; threats to evict; demerits

Is It?

Reasonable to expect a mother never to let her children out of her sight? What about going to the bathroom or taking a shower?

Reasonable to expect a group of strangers with diverse backgrounds to get along all of the time?

Reasonable to expect a woman whose life has been turned upside down to keep track of all of the shelter rules when staff can't even do that?

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Meeting Survivors Needs: A Multi-State Study of DV Shelter Experiences



3410 residents from 215 DV shelters surveyed

Nearly three-quarters of survivors (74% percent) rated the assistance they received as very helpful

Victims reported that if the shelter did not exist, the consequences for them would be dire, including:

- homelessness, loss of their children, actions taken in desperation, or continued abuse or death.

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Positive Findings

82 % of shelters allow survivors to stay more than 30 days and 34 percent allow a stay of more than 60 days.

82% have staff members who speak at least one language other than English.

75% of victims got at least some of the help they wanted.

Nearly all survivors (99 %) reported they got the help they wanted with their own safety & safety planning

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Findings of Problems

32% reported conflict with other residents

- Theft, drug use, parenting differences

Other problems related to rules:

- Transportation
- Time limits of stay
- Curfew
- Chores
- Child disciplining & monitoring
- Cultural competency

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Changes Across the Country



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Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

How We Gave Up Curfew (& a lot of other rules too)

Moving from Rules to Rights & Responsibilities

Shelter Rules: The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly

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Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence



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Commonalities

Strong desire to move away from punitive policies & practices

Recognition of need to empower victims and improve experience of living in the shelter

Belief that change would benefit BOTH victims and staff

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Trauma informed advocacy

Chronic prolonged trauma affects the way a victim may react

Too many rules can trigger victim's self preservation tactics

Controlling shelter environment may mimic batterer's behavior

Empowerment



What Safety Means to Staff	What Safety Means to residents	What safety means between staff and residents
Protecting our liability	Confidentiality	Boundaries
Being free of physical danger	Being out of the abuser's range	Respect
Boundaries	Being free of fear of staff and other residents	Feeling comfortable
Feeling able to communicate w/o intimidation	Being supported	Addressing things w/o attitude
Our "no weapons" policy	Open, transparent communication	Paying attention to whole family
Shared decision making	Children being treated well and respected	Accountability for whole family
De-escalation skills	Being understood	Clarity around rules
Control — how much do we need to have?	Having adequate resources available	Empathy — cared for and can express hard issues/feelings
Full faith and credit		
No undermining of each other		
Power sharing — no tording over		

Hickman House: Moving From Rules to Responsibilities

Challenges & Realities of Shelter Life



Chores



CHORE CHART

CHORES TO DO:	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

Communal living creates messes

Who's supposed to clean up?

Is cleaning the kitchen a priority for someone who just uprooted her entire life?

Should advocates have to clean up?

Children



Rules often contradictory:

- Stay with children at all times, but
- Make dinner & kids can't be in kitchen
- Take a shower (with kids?)
- Seek employment but other residents can't watch your kids!

Victims' parenting undermined by batterer

- Mandatory parenting classes

Confidentiality



New Jersey requires location of shelter be kept confidential

But how is that done?

- Can she be picked up by friend at shelter?
- What about bringing packages home?
- Can she tell DCPP or Welfare she's living there?

Conflict Resolution

Core value that no violence or abuse will be permitted

- But what does that mean?
- Physical
- Emotional
- Aggression

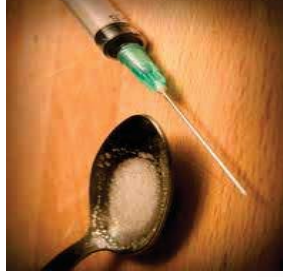
Consequences

- Exit
- Conversation

Drugs: Illegal, Legal & Somewhere in Between



Inside/outside



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Alcohol: Use vs. Abuse



Addiction versus glass of wine at dinner with friends?

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Medication

- **Common Practice**
 - Client turns all meds over to staff
 - Meds are locked and client must ask staff for access
 - Staff keeps a log of what's taken & when



- **Best Practice**
 - Each client is provided with lock box to store meds
 - Only client can access meds
 - Staff does not keep track of meds in anyway
 - Precautions are taken to ensure children don't get access to meds



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Curfews*

Most shelters have curfews, typically early during the week, and later on weekends

- Basis include:
 - Concern for client safety
 - Desire of night staff to have everyone accounted for
 - Belief that substance use more likely at night
 - Other basis?

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*How We Gave Up Curfews (& a lot of other rules, YWCA Pierce County

Curfews



Problems with curfews:

- Enforcement/consistency
- Flexibility
- Clients' work schedule
- Disempowerment

Do we really want to exit clients because of curfew violations?

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No curfew

- Provide process for schedule, location
- Common courtesy – Call if you're late, etc
- Policy limiting # of overnights - Conversation about need for shelter space



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Overnights

- Many programs do not permit a client to stay out overnight
- Belief that if they have someplace to stay for a night, they don't need the shelter space



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Mandatory Anything



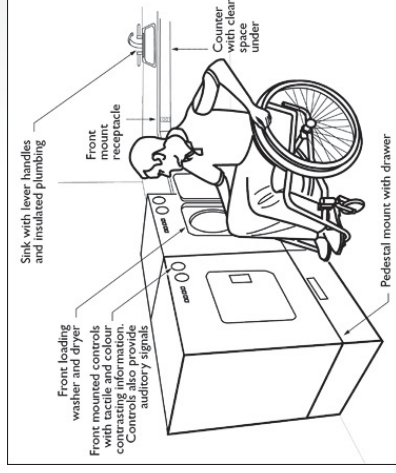
Check box policy:

- Parenting classes
- Group Counseling
- House meetings

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Victims with Disabilities: Barriers to Shelter

- Space not truly accessible
- Lack of training for DV Shelter staff
- Misconceptions about women with disabilities



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Positive Things to Do

- Ask the victim what she needs for an accommodation
- Hire certified interpreters or other helpers as required
- Don't make assumptions
- Consider having an accessibility review of your agency
- Collaborate with disability organizations
- Include people with disabilities in your trainings

Great Resource: Domestic Violence Shelters & the ADA, by Marc Dubin, Esq. <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DVsheltersADA.pdf>

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Questions to Ask

- How well does your shelter serve people with disabilities?
- Does your shelter comply with the American with Disabilities Act?
- Do people with disabilities feel welcome?
- Are staff able to communicate with women with Deaf & Hard of Hearing?
- Can women with visual disabilities use the shelter?
- Is your shelter accessible to women who use wheelchairs?



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LGBTQ Clients

- Post VAWA 2013, all domestic violence service providers who receive federal VAWA funding must implement inclusive policies that include and affirm gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation and ban discrimination.
- Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment written policies must be explicit and made available to both employees and survivors.
- Forms should provide more gender identity options than just male or female.

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Teenage Boys



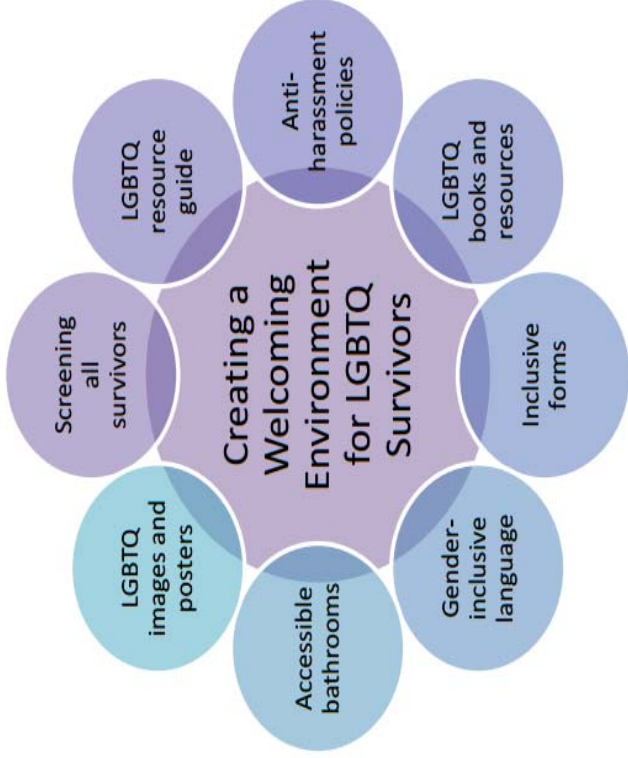
Policies limiting admitting teenage boys

- Cut-off age
- Restrictions in shelter
- No written policy resulting in ad hoc denial/admission

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Creating a Welcoming Environment for LGBTQ Survivors



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Intercultural Awareness

Social Justice Framework

- Social justice means genuine equality among all people of society – far more than just ‘political correctness’
- Strives for equality, equity, & full inclusion
- Requires different attitude from *us* as ‘normal’ and *them* as ‘different’

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Macro view:
Actual change in attitudes and beliefs

Micro view:
Culturally appropriate products, pictures, etc.

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Cultural Inclusiveness

Does the shelter reflect the culture of its victim population?*

- Are staff who speak a variety of languages available to non-English speaking clients.
- Are there procedures in place to provide translators for non-English speaking clients.
- Does the shelter supplies include personal care products that address the needs of African Americans, Asians, Latinas, and other racial groups.
- Are services are based on an understanding of many cultural beliefs and not just Eurocentric values and beliefs.

*Paraphrased from the **Inclusion and Access: Tools to Support Culturally Competent Domestic Violence Programs**

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Cultural Inclusiveness

- Consider conducting a self-assessment of your program & policies for cultural competence: www.njcbw.org, Programs, Social Justice, Cultural Competence
- Technical Assistance is available through NJCBW

Inclusion and Access:

Tools to Support Culturally Competent Domestic Violence Programs

Women of Diversity Task Force
New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women
Fall 2006

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