



Every Door is the Right Door: Skills and Tools for Working with Domestic Violence Survivors

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Objectives-Part I

- Enhance your ability to work with domestic violence survivors by incorporating a trauma informed framework
- Enhance your ability to become more self aware and minimize compassion fatigue by using a trauma informed framework



Objectives-Part II

- Understand the shelter/housing legal protections victims have in the District of Columbia, including local and federal protections
- Understand the legal protections to help ensure program compliance
- Understand the legal protections to provide tools and assistance to clients/program participants so they can utilize the protections afforded to them



Journaling Activity

- What are your personal thoughts, feelings about domestic violence?
- What are your personal thoughts, feelings about domestic violence victims, survivors, perpetrators?
Where do they come from?



What is Trauma?

- Trauma is simply exposure to any traumatic situation or event that overwhelms your ability to cope.
 - Sexual, Physical or Emotional Abuse or Neglect
 - Traumatic grief, loss or abandonment of a loved one
 - Natural or Man Made Disasters
 - Interpersonal or Domestic Violence
 - Medical Trauma
 - Community or School Violence
 - Serious Accidents



Domestic Violence as a Trauma Experience

- Psychologically changes a persons belief in themselves
- Diminishes a persons ability to trust
- Hinders a persons ability to make decisions for themselves
- Decreased sense of safety
- Intense fear



Trauma Informed Framework

- being trauma informed is about creating a culture that understands the physical, mental, and emotional impacts of trauma
- provides trauma sensitive services to everyone
- provides a framework for understanding



Trauma Informed Framework

- understanding how certain behaviors are linked to traumatic experiences
- frames survivors' symptoms as adaptations, rather than as pathology.
- creates a safe environment for people to journey towards recovery



Symptoms are Adaptations

Every symptom helped a survivor in the past and continues to help in the present — in some way.

Survivors who manifest trauma symptoms usually present in one of four ways:

- **Sad**
- **Mad**
- **Bad**
- **I've Been Had**



SAD

- persistent negative mood/affect
- suicidality
- passive suicidality
- low self esteem
- self-injury
- shame, feeling stigmatized by the abuse
- hopelessness and despair
- feelings of isolation and withdrawal
- helplessness



MAD

- dissociative episodes/ amnesia
- compulsions
- depersonalization
- obsessional thinking
- feeling totally different from everyone (special, unique, bizarre)
- preoccupations with the perpetrator which may appear delusional
- paranoia
- eating disorders



BAD

- explosive anger and ragefulness
- hyper sexuality
- drug use and sale
- run-away or truancy in adolescence
- gang related violence
- preoccupation with revenge toward the perpetrator
- frequent physical fights



I'VE BEEN HAD

- distrust and re-victimization
- disrupted relationships
- domestic violence
- failure to protect oneself and to accurately assess dangerousness
- pattern of succumbing to damaging peer pressure



SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Question: How do the trauma symptoms show up in your work with clients? Provide one or more examples of how a client you've worked with displayed one of the symptom adaptations.

Follow up Questions:

- Was it challenging working with that person? Why or Why not?
- What strategy/approach did you use to work with that person?
- Was the strategy/approach trauma informed? If so, how?



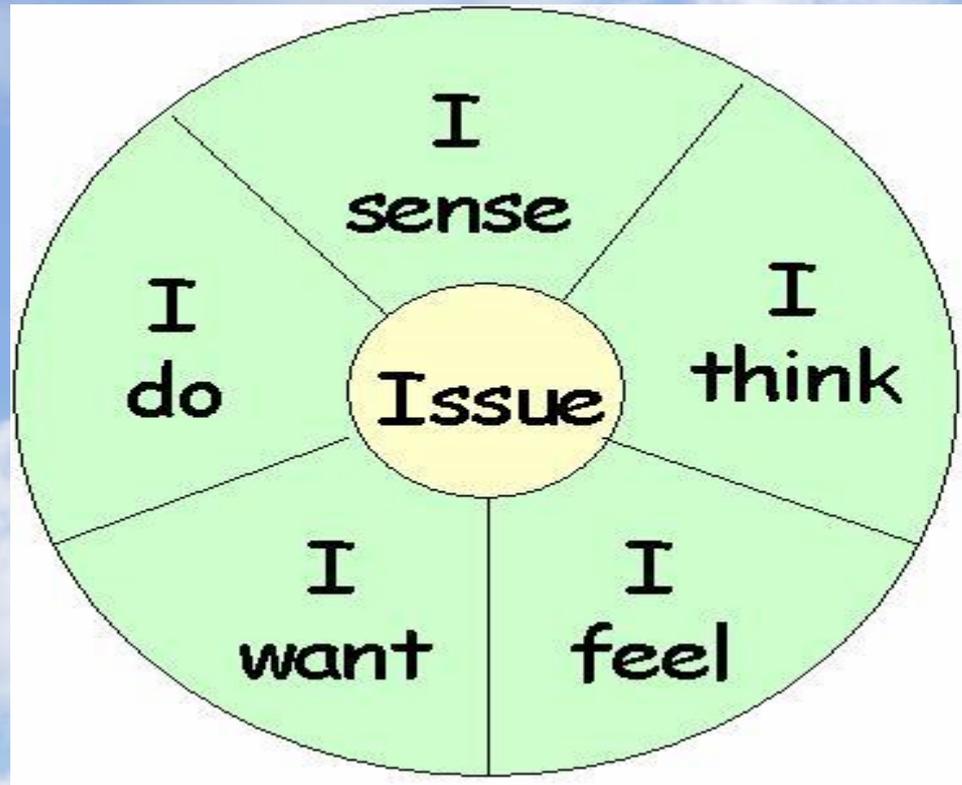
SELF AWARENESS

Self Awareness is your ability to be in tune with yourself for the purpose of understanding why you do what you do.



Self Awareness Wheel

- Adapted from *Alive & Aware* by Miller, Nunnally & Walkman





Sensory Data

- Sensory data is all the information we receive through our five physical senses, i.e. our eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin.
- Once received it's immediately processed in our mind by comparing it with previous experiences.



Thoughts

- Our thoughts are the story we tell ourselves and others about the sensory data that we have interpreted.
- Our thoughts result in
 - Impressions
 - Conclusions
 - Assumptions
 - Expectations
 - Reasons
 - Stereotypes



Feelings

- Our Feelings are a spontaneous reaction to the data we've received
 - Physical signs
 - Anxiety
 - Fear
 - A mixture of emotions



Wants/Intention

- Our Intention is what we want from the situation for self, for others
- What are my intentions, desires, hopes
 - To support
 - To avoid
 - To demand
 - To be responsive
 - To care
 - To listen



Actions

- Our Actions are others sensory data
 - Words
 - Silences
 - Making plans
 - Movement
 - Posture
 - Voice characteristics
 - Expression



Self Awareness as a Tool

- To avoid projecting personal feelings/values onto clients.
- Recognize and accept areas of vulnerability and unresolved issues which in turn interfere with your capacity to be objective.
- Realize how they influence outcomes.
 - Actions



Self Awareness as a Tool

- Behave based on personal needs and style rather than in response to the needs and reactions of clients.
- Helps you to re-center on your own role, tasks and boundaries



Trauma Work Do's

- Assume that everyone you see is a trauma survivor
- Assess for the trauma and abuse
- Value the individual in all aspects of care
- Avoid interventions that result in shame, humiliation or unlawful action
- Understand how your actions could trigger trauma reactions
- Assess the agency for trauma–informed practices
- Refer to community resources
- Practice self care



Trauma Work Don'ts

- Do not take away their power and control
- Do not violate their privacy or confidentiality
- Do not look away or say “I don't think I'm the one you should be talking to” when they tell you their trauma story



Small Group Activity

- Think of a client that you have now.
- What thoughts and feelings do you have about that person and/or the situation?
 - How did your thoughts/feelings drive your intentions/actions?
- Were you aware of your intention at the time or were they hidden?
 - How might you work with them differently?



Questions & Answers



LUNCH BREAK

We will resume at 1pm
ENJOY!!!



Objectives Part II

- Understand the shelter/housing legal protections victims have in the District of Columbia, including local and federal protections
- Understand the legal protections to help ensure program compliance
- Understand the legal protections to provide tools and assistance to clients/program participants so they can utilize the protections afforded to them



Group Brainstorm

What are barriers facing victims of domestic violence when they seek shelter and/or housing in the District of Columbia?



Local and Federal Law Overview

District of Columbia Laws

The Human Rights Act of 1977 (“HRA”) and Rental Housing Act (“RHA”) were amended March 2007, providing extensive protections to victims in **public and private housing**

Special Note: This includes homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, housing programs, privately owned apartments/houses, public housing, Section 8 Housing, Subsidized housing).



Local and Federal Law Overview

District of Columbia Laws Continued

Victims have the right to:

- Not be treated differently than other tenants or housing program participants
- Have the locks changed
- Have the batterer not given access to the unit regardless of whether the batterer lives there and is still on the lease



Local and Federal Law Overview

District of Columbia Laws Continued

Victims have the right to:

- Be released from a lease free of penalty within 14 days of giving notice
- Not be evicted or threatened with eviction if s/he experiences domestic violence in her/his home
- Not be evicted or threatened with eviction if s/he contacts the police or emergency services during or after a domestic violence incident



Local and Federal Law Overview

Federal Laws:

Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”)

Under VAWA, someone who is a survivor of domestic violence and a tenant in federal Public Housing, Section 8 voucher or project based housing, is entitled to certain protections.



Local and Federal Law Overview

Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) Continued

Victims have the right to:

- Have the batterer removed from the lease and to stay in the unit
- Have DCHA and Section 8 landlords honor a civil protection order, specifically if it addresses the batterer’s access to where the survivor lives
- Have the right to not lose housing if criminal activity related to the domestic violence occurs



Local and Federal Law Overview

Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) Continued

Victims have the right to:

- Seek an emergency transfer
- Stay in the unit even if there is criminal activity that is directly related to the domestic violence



Local and Federal Law Overview

Other Federal Protections Include:

- Fair Housing Act
- Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act



Common Scenarios: Group Brainstorm and Group Activities

Special Note: Remember these scenarios apply whether you are a permanent supportive housing program, transitional housing program, emergency shelter, etc. The laws apply to all shelters and housing programs in the District.



Group Brainstorm

- 1) Read the scenario 1
- 2) Answer the question presented after the scenario (Full Group Discussion)



Can This Victim Move Into Shelter?

Scenario 1:

I am an intake counselor for our shelter, and someone called seeking shelter. I went through our intake form and asked for the person's name. When she told me, it sounded very familiar. I remembered having a conversation with one of our case managers a few months ago and remembered her saying this woman was trouble, with an abusive girlfriend and drama in her life. When this came back to me, I told her we couldn't take her.



Can This Victim Move Into Shelter?

Scenario 1 Question

Assume the shelter had space. Since this the intake counselor decided she was not going to let the woman in the shelter, was that legal?

Why or Why Not?



Discussion



Can This Victim Move Into Shelter?

Scenario 1 Answer

A shelter cannot deny shelter to someone because they believe that person may be a victim, whether it is true or not.



Small Group Activity

- 1) Get into small groups
- 2) Read scenario 2
- 3) Discuss and answer questions in small groups
- 4) Write down answers on paper provided
- 5) Share with full group
- 6) Group Discussion



Victim Wants to Stay in Housing But...

Scenario 2:

A victim wants to stay in her transitional housing unit with her kids, but her husband—who calls her names and has even hit her—is on the lease. She wants to have him taken off the lease and wants her locks changed. You're her case manager and she shares this with you.



Victim Wants to Stay in Housing But...

Scenario 2 Questions

- 1) Can the husband be removed from the lease?
- 2) Does the client/program participant need to show me anything to prove that she is the victim so that I can go ahead and move forward with the lease bifurcation?
- 3) What if I do want documentation?
- 4) Since she requested the locks to be changed what do we need to do? Do we have to change the locks?



Discussion



Victim Wants to Stay in Housing But...

Scenario 2 Questions

- 1) Can the husband be removed from the lease?
- 2) Does the client/program participant need to show me anything to prove that she is the victim so that I can go ahead and move forward with the lease bifurcation?
- 3) What if I do want documentation?
- 4) Since she requested the locks to be changed what do we need to do? Do we have to change the locks?

Scenario 2 Answers

- 1) Yes, the husband can be removed from the lease.
- 2) No. Under federal and local law, you do not have to ask for proof of any kind that she is a victim. You can move ahead immediately.
- 3) The victim will need to provide a temporary or civil protection order.
- 4) Since the victim requested that her locks be changed, your program needs to do so within 5 business days of her request.



Victim Wants to Stay in Housing But.

Revisiting Question 3: What if I do want documentation?

Consider the following before answering:

- Where is your desire for documentation coming from?
- Think about the trauma informed framework and self awareness portion of the training. What are your feelings? Intentions?



Victim Wants to Stay in Housing But...

Special Note: If the husband was not on the lease and the victim/client requests that he not be allowed in the unit, or near the unit, she does not have to provide any documentation and the landlord must abide by her request unless ordered otherwise by a court order.



Victim Wants to Leave, But...

Scenario 3:

The victim is scared for her safety and wants to leave but has eight months left on her one-year lease in your program. Your program requires that the victim pay a percentage of the rent.



Victim Wants to Leave, But...

Scenario 3 Questions

- 1) Does the victim have the right to be released from her lease?
- 2) Does the victim owe rent?
- 3) Does the client/program participant need to show me anything to prove that she is the victim (i.e. documentation)?
- 4) What if I do want documentation?



Discussion



Victim Wants to Leave, But...

Scenario 3 Questions

- 1) Does the victim have the right to be released from her lease?
- 2) Does the victim owe rent?
- 3) Does the client/program participant need to show me anything to prove that she is the victim (i.e documentation) ?
- 4) What if I do want documentation?

Scenario 3 Answers

- 1) Yes, she has the right to be released from her lease within 14 days of giving notice.
- 2) The victim will still be responsible for a prorated rent to the 14 days or the date when the housing provider finds a new tenant, whichever comes first.
- 3) No (same answer as scenario 2)
- 4) The victim can provide either a copy of a temporary or civil protection order OR a letter signed by a **qualified third party**



Victim Wants to Leave, But...

Special Note: Only one document is required to be released from the lease.



Victim Wants to Leave, But...

Qualified Third Parties are:

- Law enforcement officers
- Domestic violence counselors (individuals that work for a domestic violence organization)
- Health professionals (doctor, nurse)
- DC Housing Authority Office of Public Safety Officer



Question and Answer



DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

CASE STUDY



SELF CARE

- Clinical Supervision
- Group/Peer Support
- Utilize Community Resources
- Your own self care rituals/practice