

National Best Practices and Resources on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Housing

Safe Housing Partnerships

The federal Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium (the Consortium) is an innovative, collaborative approach to providing training, technical assistance, and resource development at the critical intersection of domestic and sexual violence, homelessness, and housing.

- [The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Homelessness](#)
 - Infographic that lays out how the issues intersect
- [Creating Safe Housing Options for Survivors: Learning From and Expanding Research](#)
 - Explains evidence for current practices and the importance of trauma-informed and survivor driven services
- [Safety Planning for Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence: A Toolkit for Homeless/Housing Programs](#)
 - From the National Alliance on Safe Housing, found through Safe Housing Partnerships
 - 34 page document that details policies and practices that promote safety
- [RESEARCH BRIEF 'There's Just All These Moving Parts:' Helping Domestic Violence Survivors Obtain Housing](#)
 - Brief on a study designed to better understand the complexities involved in helping IPV survivors access safe and stable housing
- [TECHNICAL REPORT Exploring Domestic Violence Survivors' Need for Transitional Housing](#) 6y
 - Research study of options such as rapid rehousing and transitional housing
- [Common ground, complementary approaches: adapting the Housing First model for domestic violence survivors](#)

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health

The National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health provides training, support, and consultation to advocates, mental health and substance abuse providers, legal professionals, and policymakers as they work to improve agency and systems-level responses to survivors and their children. Our work is survivor defined and rooted in principles of social justice.

- [Trauma-Informed Approaches for LGBTQ* Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence](#)

- Discusses the high rates of homelessness among LGBTQ+ survivors, especially youth
- [Helping to Overcome PTSD through Empowerment \(HOPE\)](#)
- Study focused on women residing in a domestic violence shelter
- [NCDVTMH Review of Trauma-Specific Treatment in the Context of Domestic Violence](#)

National Alliance to End Homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to end homelessness in the United States. We use research and data to find solutions to homelessness; we work with federal and local partners to create a solid base of policy and resources that support those solutions; and then we help communities implement them.

- [Domestic Violence](#): Understanding the connection between domestic violence and homelessness.
- Short document that outlines the connection between the issues and possible solutions
- [Homelessness and Domestic Violence: What's the Connection?](#)
- Introductory overview of the issues, numbers of people affected
- [Making the Homeless System More Responsive to the Needs of Survivors of Domestic Violence: 2018 CoC NOFA](#)
- How to make systems work for survivors, rapid re-housing and transitional housing, collaboration between DV service providers and homeless services
- [Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing for Survivors of Domestic Violence](#)
- Report on prevention strategies and rapid re-housing options for survivors
- [Using Flexible Financial Assistance to Serve Domestic Violence Survivors](#)
- Need more than just shelter, need affordable housing options

Additional Resources and Toolkits

- [National Alliance on Safe Housing 2017 Safe Housing Needs Assessment: Results Overview](#)
- [The SHIFT Study Final Report: Service and Housing Interventions for Families in Transition](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma-Specific Services: A Comprehensive Approach to Trauma Intervention](#)

Glossary of Terms

Trauma

- Trauma is an injury (physical or emotional) resulting from a crisis that can lead to physical, emotional, psychological, and cognitive changes.¹
- Trauma results from "an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being."²
- Trauma is the severe distress, harm, or suffering that results from overwhelming mental or emotional pain or physical injury. Trauma is also caused by or magnified by discrimination, marginalization, and historical and/or generational trauma.³

Trauma-Informed Care

- Organizations and practices that incorporate an understanding of the pervasiveness and impact of trauma, including an understanding that a person is the expert of their own trauma. These organizations and practices are designed to reduce retraumatization, support healing and resiliency, promote safety for survivors and staff, and recognize the root causes of oppression, abuse and violence.⁴
- *Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based service delivery approach "that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment." It also involves vigilance in anticipating and avoiding institutional processes and individual practices that are likely to retraumatize individuals who already have histories of trauma, and it upholds the importance of consumer participation in the development, delivery, and evaluation of services.*⁵

¹ DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV) Guiding Principles

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Available at <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>

³ National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEADV); Available at

⁴ This definition was developed by the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Sub-Committee of the DC Collaborative on Domestic Violence and Human Services and was adapted from the NCDVTMH definition.

⁵ Hooper, Bassuk, and Olivet (2010). *Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings*; Available at http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/shelter_from_storm.pdf

Cultural humility

- Proactively integrating meaningful attention to the cultural identities of participants and staff, and to the ways culture can shape people’s experiences of trauma and healing. Being culturally humble also means systematically integrating awareness of culture into our services, policies, structures, and environments. It requires being interested in, learning about, and acknowledging the vast number of ways people express their cultural identities, values, connections, and experiences in order to provide services that are meaningful and relevant. It means seeking out and understanding the strengths, resources, and inherent resilience of individuals, families, and communities. Cultural responsiveness also means that organizations and individuals in agency settings affirm and are inclusive of the many aspects of human identities.⁶
- Cultural humility is a humble and respectful attitude toward individuals of other cultures that pushes one to challenge their own cultural biases, realize they cannot possibly know everything about other cultures, and approach learning about other cultures as a lifelong goal and process.⁷
- We honor every individual we work with and are committed to learning from and lifting up the voices of the people we serve. We honor culture, tradition, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and ability.⁸

Safety

- Establishing a safe physical, psychological, and emotional environment where basic needs are met; safety measures are in place; and provider responses are consistent, predictable, and respectful.⁹
- *“It is not enough that a survivor be physically safe from their abuser if that safety comes at the cost of the survivor’s sovereignty and health.”¹⁰*

⁶ Warshaw, MD; Tinnon, MSW, LSW; Cave (2018). *Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed Organizations*. NCDVTMH. Available at http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NCDVTMH_2018_ToolsforTransformation_WarshawTinnonCave.pdf

⁷ This definition was adapted from definitions developed by the American Psychological Association and the Asian Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP). Learn more at <https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/newsletter/2013/08/cultural-humility>

⁸ DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV) Guiding Principles

⁹ Definition taken from materials developed by the American Institute for Research on Trauma-Informed Care. Resources available here <https://www.air.org/resource/trauma-informed-care-curriculum>

¹⁰ Sullivan (2018). Understanding How Domestic Violence Support Services Promote Survivor Well-Being: A Conceptual Model. Available at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10896-017-9931-6>

- “To survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault, safety means freedom from violence or abuse. While the primacy of safety should be emphasized for everyone, advocates will want to keep in mind that safety may mean additional things for people facing [different kinds of] violence (**Trujillo, 2009**). Here are some examples of what people may need, in addition to freedom from violence, in order to feel safe:
 - For a person in recovery from substance abuse or addiction: Having a network of people who support recovery and sobriety. Being in an environment free of constant triggers or pressure to drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.
 - For a person with mental health concerns: Being able to talk about one’s feelings and issues, or one’s own view of reality, without fear of being discounted or acquiring yet another label. If on medication, having a reliable source of affordable refills, so one doesn’t have to worry about running out.
 - For a person with disabilities: Full accessibility to any needed services. Freedom from bullying or exploitation. Being taken seriously rather than discounted. Being seen as a full-fledged human being capable of making one’s own decisions.
 - For a person who has experienced societal abuse or oppression: Being in an environment where diversity is respected. Freedom from being bullied, discounted or discriminated against because of misconceptions about one’s race, sexual orientation or other difference. Freedom to talk about one’s feelings, issues or view of reality without being stereotyped.
 - For a person facing intergenerational grief/historical trauma: Having one’s own customs, values and beliefs respected and honored. Freedom to practice one’s own customs or hold one’s own values and beliefs without pressure to conform to the dominant culture.
 - For a person living in poverty: Having a reliable source of income from employment, subsistence or public assistance. Ability to access enough resources to meet basic needs.
 - For a person who is homeless: A place to keep one’s belongings without fear of them getting stolen. A place to sleep without fear of arrest or of being harassed. Privacy for such things as taking a shower or changing clothes.”¹¹

- “Consideration is given to the impact of the physical and sensory environment on both people participating in services and staff members. Needs related to noise,

¹¹ Edmund MA, LPC; Bland, MA, CPD (2010). Real Tools: Responding to Multi-Abuse Trauma. Available at http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/RealTools_RespondingtoMultiAbuseTrauma_BlandandEdmund.pdf

chaos, and privacy are addressed. Emotional and physical safety are taken seriously for each individual with consideration for access to outdoor spaces, types of lighting available, and the number of visible exits. The space is experienced as flexible, healing, and nurturing.

- The agency is attentive to the impact of the relational environment on both people accessing services and on staff members. Consideration is given to emotional safety with regard to respect, trust, choice, and transparency. Staff support participants in using conflict resolution strategies to address disagreement and repair relational harm. Survivors are given plenty of time and space to share their experiences with staff.
- This includes creating a physical and sensory environment that is accessible welcoming, inclusive, and healing, and attends to potential trauma reminders; a cultural and linguistic environment that is responsive to the people and communities being served; a relational environment that is caring, respectful, empowering, and transparent, and strives to create emotional safety; and a programmatic environment that is flexible and responsive to individual and family needs.”¹²

Choice

- We are committed to the freedoms and choices of the people we serve and support their right to decide their path to healing. We assist people to direct the course of their own lives; survivors make, act on, and take responsibilities for their own decisions.¹³

¹² Warshaw, MD; Tinnon, MSW, LSW; Cave (2018). *Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed Organizations*. NCDVTMH. Available at http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NCDVTMH_2018_ToolsforTransformation_WarshawTinnonCave.pdf

¹³ DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV) Guiding Principles