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EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF
HOMELESSNESS, DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

MOLLY VOYLES, LARAMIE GORBETT, & KRISTA DEL GALLO





Who We Are

Molly Voyles

Krista Del Gallo

**Public Policy
Manager**

**Public Policy
Manager**

Where We Work:

- **Mission** – The Texas Council on Family Violence promotes safe and healthy relationships by supporting service providers, facilitating strategic prevention efforts, and creating opportunities for freedom from domestic violence.
- Focus on Policy, Prevention, and Supporting Service Providers





Who We Are

- **Laramie Gorbett, M.A.**
Human Trafficking Specialist
TAASA

Where We Work:

- TAASA's goal is to lead the statewide community to be free of sexual violence.
- The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault is committed to ending sexual violence in Texas through education, prevention and advocacy. In the meantime, we desire to support survivors on their paths to hope, healing and justice.
- TAASA is the voice of the sexual assault movement in Texas. We are a unifying force bringing together parties involved in and affected by sexual assault as a catalyst for change.





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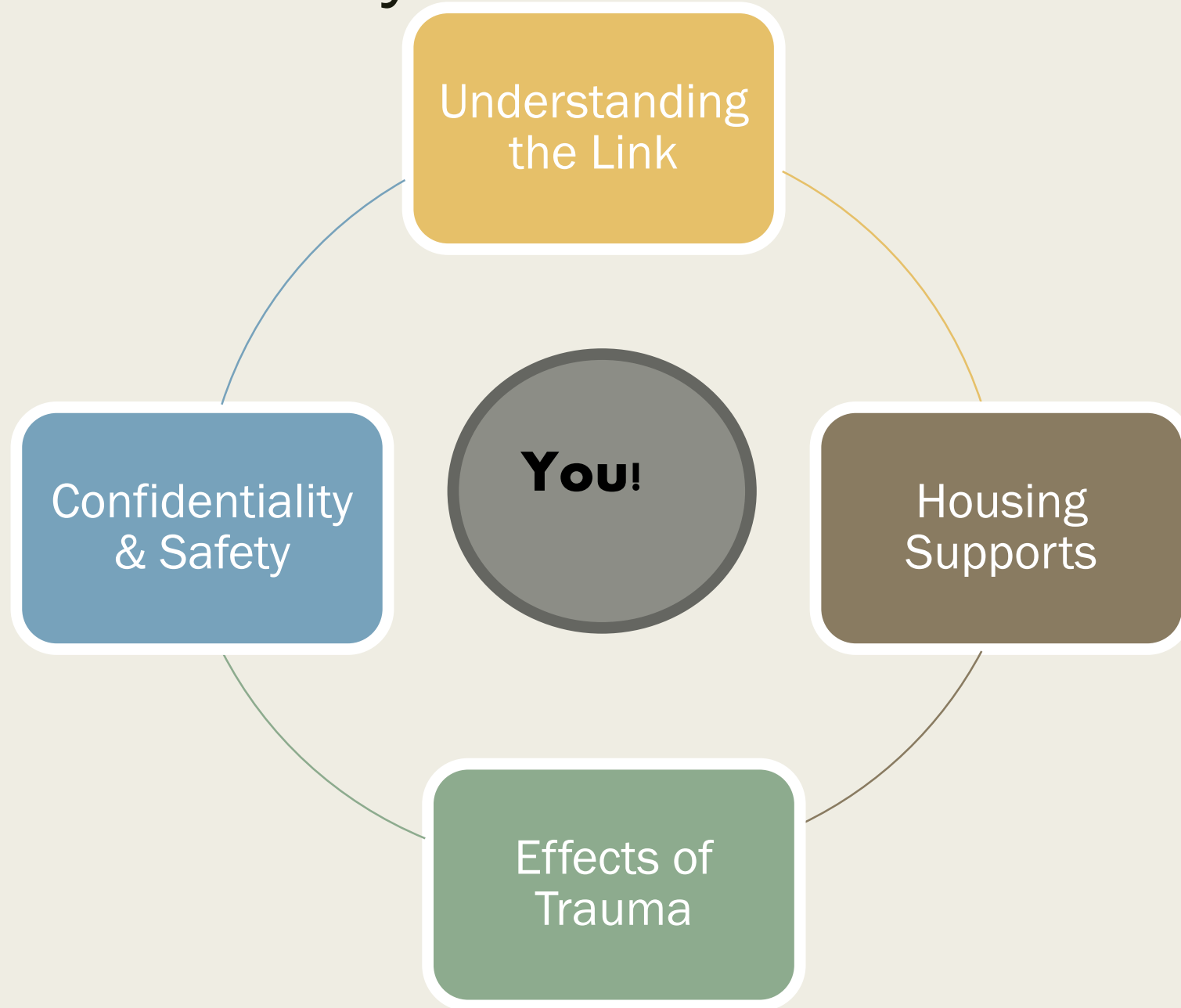
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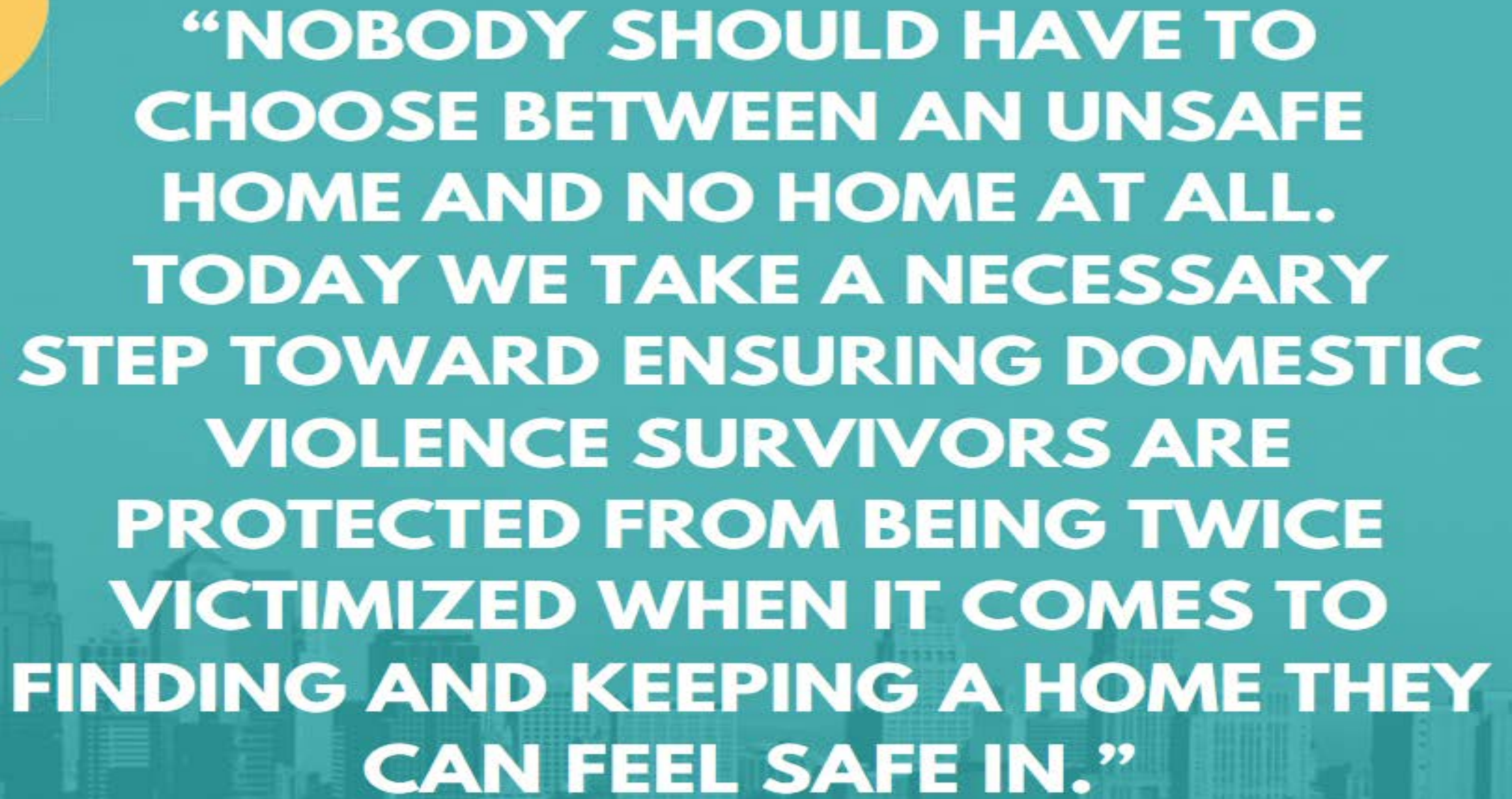
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Framework for Today





**“NOBODY SHOULD HAVE TO
CHOOSE BETWEEN AN UNSAFE
HOME AND NO HOME AT ALL.
TODAY WE TAKE A NECESSARY
STEP TOWARD ENSURING DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE SURVIVORS ARE
PROTECTED FROM BEING TWICE
VICTIMIZED WHEN IT COMES TO
FINDING AND KEEPING A HOME THEY
CAN FEEL SAFE IN.”**

Former HUD SECRETARY JULÍAN CASTRO

A rustic wooden cabin with a window and blue shutters. The cabin is made of weathered wood and has a wooden staircase on the right side. The window has white shutters and a white frame. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

***AMONG FAMILIES EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS, MORE THAN
80% HAD PREVIOUSLY
EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.
-USICH***



The Link: Domestic Violence & Homelessness

- Between 22-57% of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness.
- ~63% of homeless women have experienced domestic violence in their adult lives.
- A report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that 44% of the cities surveyed identified domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness.

“Housing is a constant need for domestic violence survivors. We get calls and walk-ins almost every day from women, most with children, who are fleeing abusive situations and are in desperate need of housing. We always have a waiting list.”



The Link: Sexual Violence & Homelessness

More than 50% of all rape/sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred within 1 mile of their home or at their home

61% of girls and 16% of boys report sexual abuse at home as reason for running away

Forty-four percent of homeless youth are fearful of being sexually assaulted, molested, or raped on the streets



The Link: Sexual Violence & Homelessness

Sexual Violence by Landlords

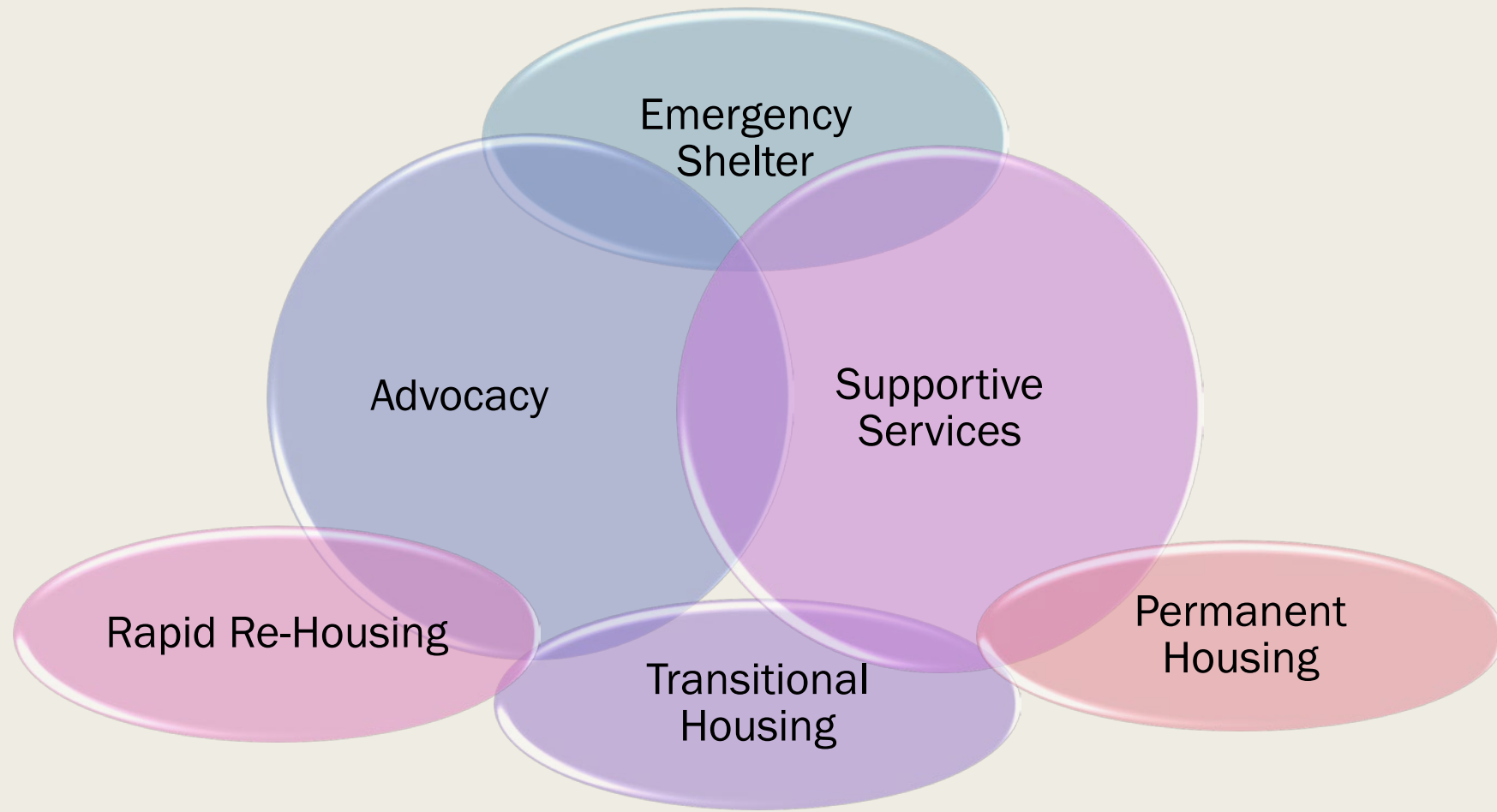
38% of respondents to a national survey reported receiving reports of landlord sexual assault; in these cases, 79% of women reported that their landlords refused to repair locks, supply heat, hot water, or make the space “safe” (Keeley, 2006).

Landlords also made sexual propositions, stalked tenants and/or engaged in unwanted sexual contact with the tenants before committing sexual assaults (Keeley, 2006).

Studies show that the age at which youth leave home directly relates to sexual victimization on the streets; the younger they are when they leave, the more likely they are to be victimized (Tyler et al., 2004).

44% of homeless youth are fearful of being sexually assaulted, molested, or raped on the streets (Kipke et al., 1997).

Spectrum of Housing for Survivors



A large, thick black L-shaped graphic is positioned on the left and bottom edges of the slide, framing the text. The vertical bar is on the left, and the horizontal bar is at the bottom, meeting at a corner on the right side.

IMPACTS OF TRAUMA

On Survivors of Domestic
and Sexual Violence



The Link: Domestic & Sexual Violence and Trauma

- 80% of women who experienced rape, stalking, or physical violence by an intimate partner reported significant short or long-term effects including PTSD



"Exposure to ongoing abuse can exacerbate symptoms and precipitate mental health crises, making it more difficult to access resources and increasing abusers' control over their lives."



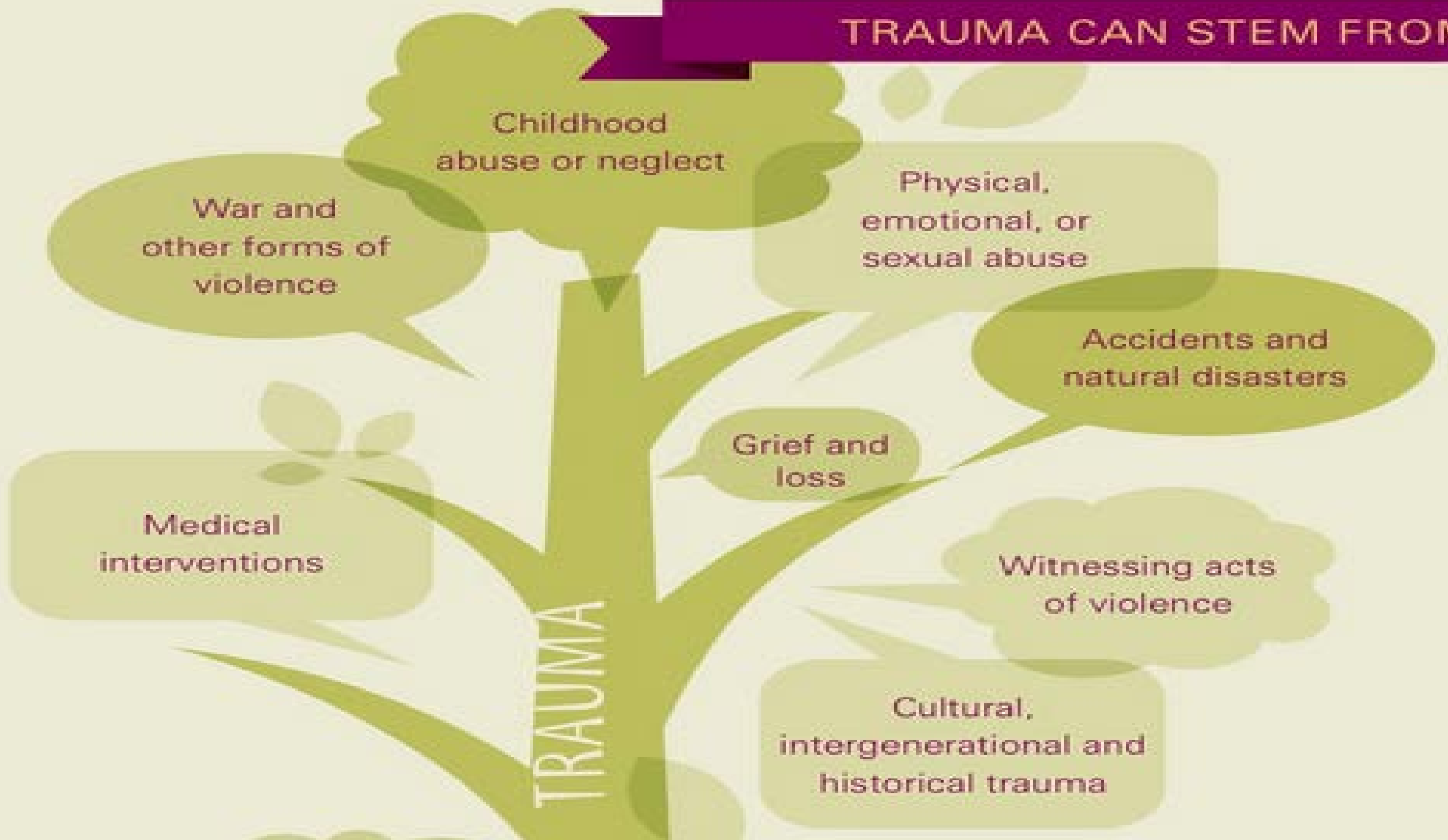
WHAT IS TRAUMA?

A **threat** to a person's physical and/or emotional wellbeing.

An **overwhelming** experience that is difficult to manage emotionally.

Distressing to individuals, and may affect whole families and communities across generations.

TRAUMA CAN STEM FROM



Childhood
abuse or neglect

Physical,
emotional, or
sexual abuse

Accidents and
natural disasters

Witnessing acts
of violence

Cultural,
intergenerational and
historical trauma

Grief and
loss

Medical
interventions

War and
other forms of
violence

TRAUMA

Childhood Toxic Stress

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO TOXIC STRESS CAN EXPERIENCE PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR LIFE

HERE TODAY, HERE TOMORROW

Toxic Stress:

"The excessive or prolonged activation of the physiologic stress response systems in the absence of the buffering protection afforded by stable, responsive relationships."

- American Academy of Pediatrics



Oversatvation of the stress management system can change the architecture of the brain, disrupt metabolic regulatory systems, and alter the genome.



These changes trigger a cycle of chronic stress, compromise cognitive and behavioral functioning, and lead to chronic disease.



Childhood

Economic hardship
Incarceration of a parent
Abuse
Neglect
Divorce/separation
Parental mental illness
Parental substance abuse



Adolescence & Adulthood

Problems with:
Learning
Memory
Impulse control
Regulation of emotion
Depression
Asthma
Cancer
Heart disease
Autoimmune disease

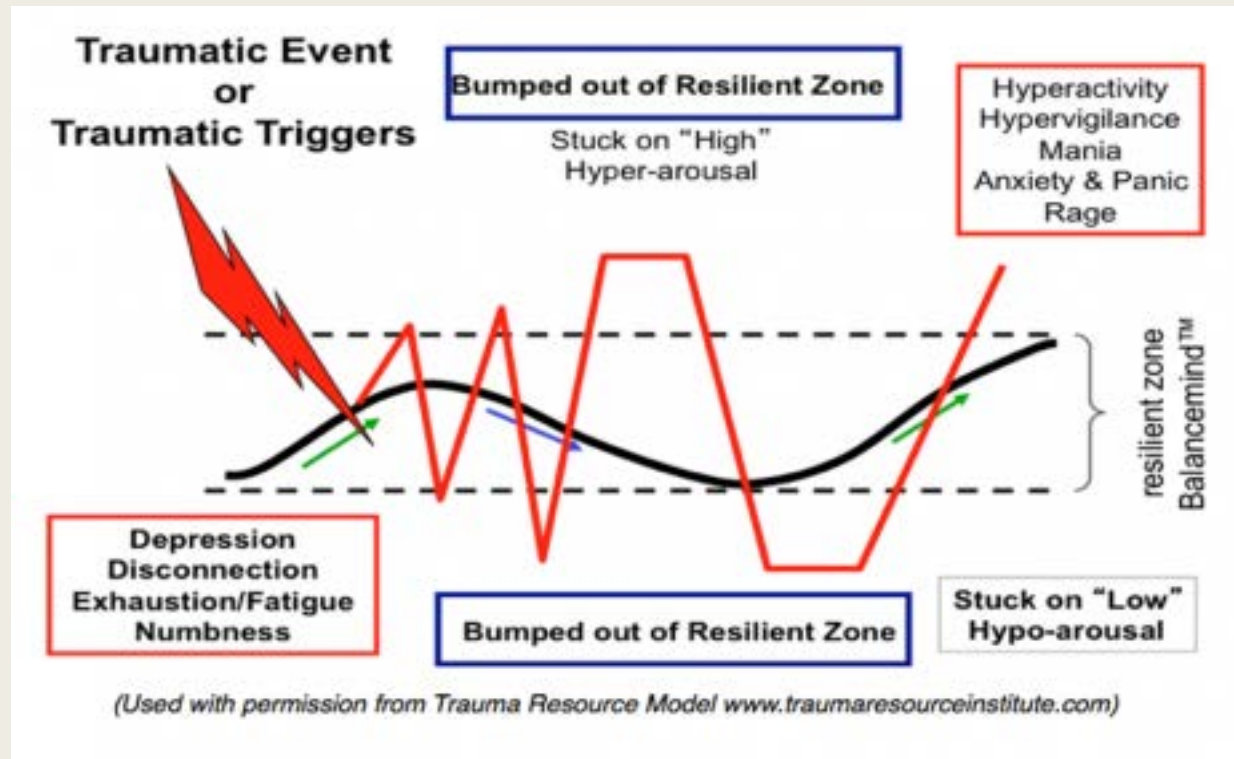


Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress

“Preventing toxic stress, however, entails an entirely different paradigm, with a focus not at the molecular level but at the **level of family, society, and policy.**”

Effects of Trauma

- Different Responses to “normal” interactions
- Anxiety
- Avoid certain activities
- Stress levels differ
- Health issues
- Feel out of control





Resiliency and Protective Factors

- **Resilience**: Capacity for successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances
- **Protective factors**: Promote resilience in those at risk. Response of caregivers and other caring adults
 - ✓ Secure attachment can be most important source of resilience & ability to manage stress.
 - ✓ Social support, social fabric, community, spirituality
 - ✓ Individual factors such as capacities and talents, ability to positively engage others
 - ✓ Access to social and economic resources



How do we provide trauma informed services?

- Trauma-specific intervention programs generally recognize the following:
- The survivor's need to be respected, informed, connected, and hopeful regarding their own recovery.
- The interrelation between trauma and symptoms of trauma such as substance abuse, eating disorders, depression, and anxiety
- The need to work in a collaborative way with survivors, family and friends of the survivor, and other human services agencies in a manner that will empower survivors and consumers.

A decorative vertical graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a thick black central bar with a series of light gray chevron arrows pointing downwards, alternating with the black bar.

Trauma-Informed Conversations

Knowing symptoms of PTSD can help us normalize their experiences

Common Symptoms:

- Nightmares
- Lack of sleep or excessive sleep
- Flashbacks
- Loss of trust
- Impacts ability to form relationships

The body reacts as if it were reliving the traumatic experience, so grounding to the present is important.

Creating Trauma Informed Organizations

- We need an **Organizational culture** in which everyone feels valued, empathy is nurtured, hierarchy is limited, tensions are addressed openly. This means there are no hidden agendas and there is a collective sense of purpose.
- **HR policies, salaries, benefits** (including mental health coverage) and activities that support personal and professional development and staff well-being
- **Reasonable workload expectations** and time off; staffing patterns that allow back-up and shared responsibility and coverage
- **Ongoing training & reflective supervision** assume work will elicit strong feelings; Make a safe place in which to discuss them. Attention to burnout and secondary trauma; balance, self-awareness, & “self-care”

Agency Evaluation: ASRI and National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health 2012 Creating Accessible, Culturally Relevant, Domestic Violence and Trauma Informed Agencies

http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/ACDVTI-Self-Reflection-Tool_NCDVTMH.pdf

A decorative vertical graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a central black vertical bar with a series of white downward-pointing chevrons on either side, creating a staircase-like effect.

Trauma from the System

Re-traumatization refers to the psychological and physiological experience of being “triggered,” perhaps by a smell, a sound, or a sensation, that recreates or recalls the original abuse.

Triggers for **re-traumatization** may include: strip searches, room searches that involve inspecting personal items, cuffs or restraints, isolation, sudden room changes, yelling, and insults.

- Exposure to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and personal loss such as the death of a family member also may trigger **re-traumatization**.
- Illicit Self Protection: including violent outbursts and withdrawal from treatment.

Defining Success

“Success is measured by our efforts to reduce isolation and to improve options for safety.”

Futures Without Violence



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HOUSING

Protections



**victims are more likely to have a problem finding housing because of their unique & often urgent situation, poor credit, rental & employment histories, & limited income due to inability to collect and/or enforce child support & alimony payment
-reif**



Tenant's Right to Police / Emergency Assistance

- Victims of family violence have maintained a legal right to summons the police or emergency assistance without fear of penalty since 2003
- Texas Property Code Section 92.015 (a) and (b) as amended
 - *Extends this right to any tenant with a reasonable belief that an individual is in need of intervention or emergency assistance regardless of the reason*
 - *A landlord may not prohibit or limit this right*
 - *A lease is void if any provision attempts to waive this right or exempt any party from liability under this section*

Lease termination



A victim of family violence, sexual assault, or stalking may have the right to terminate her/his lease

- **Texas Property Code § 92.016-§92.0161**



Co-tenant or Co-occupant

Delivers a protective order under Chapter 85 of the TX Family Code

OR

A temporary injunction to the landlord

AND

vacates the dwelling



Not a Co-tenant or Co-occupant

- Provides the landlord with 30 days notice
- Delivers a copy of a temporary injunction
- A temporary ex parte order
- Or a protective order to the landlord,
- AND Vacates the dwelling

Lease termination Sexual Abuse & Stalking

WHO

- A victim or parent/guardian of a victim of stalking sexual assault, sexual abuse, or attempted assault or abuse that occurred at home or on the premises in the last 6 months may terminate once:

Documentation

- Delivers documentation of a final sexual assault or stalking PO
- Delivers documentation of the assault or abuse from:
 - Licensed health care service provider
 - Licensed mental health service provider
 - Victim advocate authorized under Gov. code
- Vacates the premises and 30 days expire



Denials of admissions, termination of tenancy or assistance

- An applicant or tenant may not be denied admission to, denied assistance under, or terminated from participation in housing on the basis that the applicant or tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking
- A tenant may not be evicted from housing on the basis that the tenant is or has been the victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking

Consistency with Court Order Provisions

Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), owners, and managers of “covered housing programs” must honor:

- civil protection orders
- court orders from domestic violence and family court judges
 - *that address the rights of access to or control of the property and distribution or possession of property among household members in a case*



Portability

- **Section 8:** Victims of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking using the Section 8 Voucher may:
 - *transfer their voucher to another jurisdiction if safety is a concern*
 - *even if moving would otherwise terminate their lease*
- **Public housing:** Victims can request an emergency transfer to another PHA not within the same jurisdiction. The PHA may permit the family to move even if the family's lease term has not yet expired



- **Bifurcation**

- Covered housing programs may:



- Evict, remove, or terminate the assistance of the offender

- Allow the victim, who is the tenant or lawful occupant, to remain without penalty



90 days

To establish eligibility for a covered housing program



Emergency Transfers

Each federal agency must adopt a model emergency transfer plan to be used by PHAs, owners, or managers of housing assisted under the “covered housing programs”

This transfer plan must:

- *allow survivor tenants to transfer to another available and safe dwelling unit assisted under a “covered housing program” under certain circumstances, and*
- *describe policies for assisting tenants to make emergency transfers when a safe unit is not immediately available*

- Applicant or tenant may not be denied:
 - admission to, denied assistance, terminated from participation, or evicted
 - On the basis of OR as a direct result of victimization

Protections from Adverse Factors

- §5.2005(b)

Amended


- Poor credit or rental history
Criminal record





SAFETY & CONFIDENTIALITY

Considerations for
Survivors





Safety...Safer

- Safety includes more than absence of physical violence or violation
- Safer includes:
 - *Health and Well-Being*
 - *Free from ongoing stalking and harassment*
 - *Financial Stability*
 - *Children*
 - *Advocacy & Support*
- **Housing that supports the survivor agency and safety**



VAWA/FVPSA Confidentiality

“...confidentiality of records pertaining to any individual provided domestic violence services by any FVPSA-supported program...”

“No client-level data may be shared with a third party, regardless of encryption, hashing or other data security measures, without a written, time-limited release as described in section 40002(b)(2) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(2)).”



HMIS & Comparable Databases

- Federal law dictates that Victim Service Providers (VSP's) are prohibited from entering information into an HMIS.
 - *Victim Service Providers include domestic violence programs and sexual assault programs*
- VSP's must maintain data, but in a Comparable Database that they maintain. This includes items for the ESG Caper and other required data elements per HUD.

Coordinated Entry/Access & Survivors

**INTENT IS TO SWITCH FROM
BEING PROGRAM-FOCUSED TO
CLIENT-CENTERED, BUT WHAT
DOES THAT LOOK LIKE FOR
POPULATIONS WITH SPECIAL
NEEDS SUCH AS SURVIVORS
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?**



Coordinated Entry/Access & Survivors

- First think about safe assessment options
 - *When, where, & with who present?*
 - *Use a tool that assesses safety FIRST and get input from the local domestic violence agency on the tool*
 - Tools that work well for some communities may not for survivors
 - Be prepared with appropriate referral:



Coordinated Entry/Access & Survivors

- The process for survivors is only as good as the training the assessor has received on domestic violence.
- Offer CE/A sites training on:
 - *Basic safety questions to ask PRIOR to other tools and ways in which to ask to promote a safer environment*
 - *Awareness of local family violence information for emergency situations*
 - *Confidentiality under VAWA & FVPSA*
 - *Certifications differences; survivors can self-certify*

&

Basic Dynamics of Domestic Violence



Coordinated Entry/Access & Survivors

Should prioritize survivors and
their housing needs

&

Be designed by the local domestic
& sexual violence experts

"A VICTIM WHO IS NO LONGER HIT BY A PARTNER BUT HAS NO WAY TO FEED HER CHILDREN OR PAY THE RENT IS NOT SAFE. VICTIMS ARE SAFE WHEN THERE IS NO VIOLENCE, THEIR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS ARE MET, & THEY EXPERIENCE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING."

DAVIES & LYONS



Safer is on all of us!

- The first question we ask in any situation should always be about the safety of those involved.
- Survivors are experts at navigating their own safety.
- Safer includes more than absence of physical violence. It includes:
 - Health and Well-Being
 - Free from ongoing stalking and harassment
 - Financial Stability
 - Children
 - Advocacy & Support
- Housing that supports the survivors agency and safety



Know your Experts!

➤ *Do you know where your local family or sexual violence program is in your community? Their hotline number? Who is the ‘full partner’ in your CA/E process?*

❖ <http://tcfv.org/service-directory/>

❖ <http://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2016-2017-Service-Directory.pdf>



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