

Virginia Department of Social Services

Office of Family Violence

Voluntary Services
Learning Module One



New Requirement

- OFV will be requiring all programs funded through the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Grant to shift to the voluntary services model as of January 1, 2014.
- This is a federal requirement of the Family Violence Prevention Services Act grant (part of your VDSS grant dollars).
- The voluntary services model is essential to understanding a victim's needs and offering meaningful support.

Training on voluntary services

- To help facilitate this change, OFV will be providing training and technical assistance on the voluntary services model in several different formats over the next year.
- The first phase involves this series of 5 learning modules which will be emailed on a monthly basis from February through June this year.
- OFV is planning a conference in the fall that will feature additional training on this topic.
- Additionally, OFV staff are available to work one-on-one with programs to provide program-specific technical assistance.

The learning modules

- Each module will provide enough information to count as one hour of training, if the accompanying exercise is completed.
- The exercises are not pass/ fail but rather an opportunity for reflection.
- The exercises will be done via Survey Monkey accessed through a link at the end of each module.
- The first module will provide an overview of the voluntary services model.
- The subsequent modules will go into further detail on various aspects of this model, the types of planning that will help guide your process and address common concerns.

Voluntary Services Model

- The voluntary services model is based on the idea that participating in services should be voluntary and not a condition of receiving shelter or other services.
- Voluntary services, sometimes referred to as the reduced-rules model, emphasizes client-driven services.
- The voluntary services model is based on the belief that adult survivors are competent, capable and should have right to make their own decisions.



Voluntary Services Model

- The goal is to find a better way to serve clients in a way that allows them personal autonomy, something likely denied them in abusive relationships.
- The focus is on empowerment-based advocacy rather than compliance-driven services.
- This model takes into account each survivor's unique circumstances and meets them where they currently are in their lives.
- It takes time, commitment & creativity to fully incorporate voluntary services into a program.



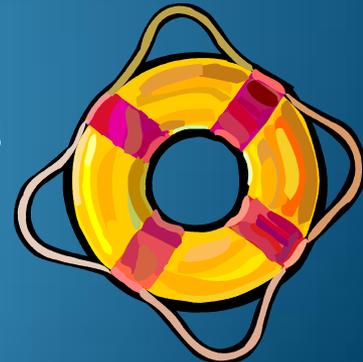
Voluntary Services

- This model promotes building relationships with survivors to work as allies or partners rather than providers.
- Services, such as support groups and individual counseling, are offered consistently, and repeatedly, in an effort to encourage client participation, adapting services to ensure their relevance.
- This approach encourages a nonjudgmental safe space where services are driven by the needs, wants and goals of survivors.



Multi-state study

- In a multi-state study of domestic violence shelter experiences, for all identified needs, 75% of survivors rated assistance as very helpful and another 18% rated it as helpful.
- Nearly all survivors (99%) reported they got help with their own safety and safety planning.
- Many survivors reported that if the shelter did not exist, the consequences would have resulted in homelessness, death, going back to the abuser, loss of children and actions taken in desperation.



Multi-state study



- Challenges identified by survivors included: conflicts with other residents, transportation conflicts, privacy, child disciplining/ monitoring and chores.
- Implications suggests shelter programs are doing a good job in many areas, but suggested some room for improvement.
- Areas for improvement include: a need to address some shelter rules related to eligibility, what clients must do while in residence, how long they can stay and a need for more staff training on conflict resolution.

History of shelters & voluntary services movement

- Shelters, and other programs for domestic violence victims, began as a grassroots effort which became institutionalized during the past 30 years.
- During the institutionalization of shelters, many programs adopted rule-driven environments.
- The concept of having rules in shelter has been repeatedly brought up and debated throughout the history's movement.
- In the 1980's and 1990's, Lydia Walker, an expert in the movement, trained about rule reduction throughout the U.S.

History of shelters and voluntary services movement

- In the early part of 2000, once again, many individual programs were examining this issue and changing their shelter environments by rule reduction.
- In 2007, the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence led the way with a statewide process to address and examine this issue.
- MCADV created a “how-to” manual called “How the Earth Didn’t Fly Into the Sun” for other states, funded by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

Conclusion

- This concludes the first part of learning module 1. To complete this module:
 - Please read the two documents from the links provided on the next slide.
 - Then complete the exercise provided on the last two slides.

Reading assignment

Please use the following links to access additional information on Voluntary Services:

- ["Rethinking the Punitive Approached to Shelter"](#)

http://www.wscadv.org/docs/ShelterRules_RethinkingPunitiveApproaches.pdf

- ["Rule-making and Enforcement"](#)

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/RuleMakingEnforcementViolentControlling.pdf>



Written exercise

- Please take time now to answer the following questions:
- Think back to a personal situation – a time when you needed some type of support or service from someone else or a system. This can be anything specific to your own life: A medical appointment or healthcare issue; applying for some type of public assistance or healthcare benefits; trying to rent an apartment or reserve a hotel room; joining a support group (or program) to quit smoking or lose weight; etc.

Written Exercise

- What was done right on your behalf? What enabled you to get the support or services you needed? And what was not?
- What would you have needed to improve the outcome of the situation?
- What would have been (or WAS) the worst consequence if this situation was not resolved successfully or to your full liking?
- How would you have behaved differently if your basic needs were at stake, and you had no other options?

Thank you for
participating !!!!!