

SHELTER, INC.

SURVIVOR/PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT

Shelter, Inc. is a community supported human service organization dedicated to assisting victims/survivors and their families in ending domestic and sexual violence and discrimination in their lives through education, systems change, building community partnerships, and ensuring availability and accessibility of support services.

Shelter, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Service Provider.
Information Presented in This Manual can be Made Available on Audio Upon Request



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WELCOME

Dear Survivor/Participant,

A warm welcome is extended to you on behalf of the entire staff of Shelter, Inc. We hope Shelter, Inc. services will help you set and achieve life goals that will ultimately enable you to exist free from violence.

The Program Participant Handbook has been developed to provide you with a guide to our services, eligibility criteria and guidelines for all programs/services. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook. It will serve as a guide for most questions concerning accessing services and guidelines, policies, procedures and practices.

A portion of the information/language presented in the Program Participant Handbook is in compliance with state and federal consumer protection guidelines and laws. We hope your experience here will be rewarding.

The Staff of Shelter, Inc.

PROGRAM/SERVICE OPTIONS

The Shelter, Inc. program/service structure has been developed to offer survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault a wide range of services that can be helpful in obtaining and maintaining self-sufficient violence free living. Each service is designed to help promote the empowerment of survivors and/or seek social change to redress the existing power imbalance within violent relationships. These programs and services can provide you with tools that can help in making informed decisions for yourself and your family and supporters. These tools can help you in evaluating your need for creating plans for accessing safety. Staff are here to provide you with information about available options and community resources. Because we understand each person/family has different needs, our staff will work with you in identifying resources and services to fit your needs. It is our goal to provide information about available options and resources while providing access assistance and support. Shelter, Inc. has programs and services that offer:

- Access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, Examinations
- Child Care Assistance
- Community Access/Referrals to Individual Need Specific Services/Agencies
- Community Resources
- Education and Employment Planning Assistance
- Education, Information and Support Groups
- Emergency Shelter
- Employment Assistance
- Financial Planning
- Individual and Group Counseling
- Information and Referrals
- Legal Advocacy/Assistance
- Life Skills Management
- Life Skills/Short and Long Range Planning Assistance
- Parenting/Children's Services/Support
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Personal Safety Assessment and Planning

- Redevelopment of Self Directed Socialization Skills/Activities
- Referral/Access to Health/Mental Health/Medical and Dental Services
- Referral/Access to Sobriety Maintenance/Substance Abuse Treatment Services
- Self-Esteem/Awareness Development Activities
- Support Services (food, clothing, personal needs)
- Transitional Supportive Housing

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Shelter, Inc.'s programs/services are designed specifically for survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Although all Shelter, Inc. programs/services require that participants be survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, some programs/services have additional eligibility requirements. All programs and services are voluntary. An advocate, counselor or program coordinator can help provide information on service options, help you with an application for a service, and inform you of any important admission guidelines to the program or service you have interest in pursuing. All services are provided free of cost. However, transitional housing requires participants to pay rent based on income.

Individuals/families who are not victims/survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, but who request services will be provided with information about other agencies/programs providing services for individuals/groups who are not victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

INDIVIDUAL PLANS OF SERVICE

Each residential, transitional and/or permanent supportive housing and non-residential program participant will receive assistance in creating a vision statement and developing an individual plan of service. The vision statement will help to create a long-range vision for the future. The plan of service will help in choosing goals, objectives and responsibilities for making steps towards reaching your vision. Examples of objectives and goals identified by survivors may include: help with placing the blame for the violence where it belongs, on the perpetrator; reducing the isolation often felt by survivors; help with rebuilding social networks and support; re-establishing trust, intimacy and sexuality; re-establishing personal power and control; building on strengths; and empowerment. Although participation in a plan of service is not mandatory, your consistent participation will be helpful in assisting you reach your dreams for the future.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

Emergency services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are accessed through business and crisis telephone lines. Alpena 356-9650 (24 hrs./day), Oscoda 739-0144 other areas and after business hours 1-800-396-9129. Many other non-emergency services can be accessed on an appointment basis. This practice insures each survivor receives adequate access to needed services. If a survivor is unable to keep a scheduled appointment, the cancellation should be done as soon as possible. We encourage you to try and cancel appointments at least 24 hours before the scheduled time. Remember, our 24-hour crisis line is available to all survivors who may need assistance outside of traditional scheduled office hours.

SERVICE OPERATION HOURS

Safe house: 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Crisis calls: 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Individual counseling: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by appointment only.
(Evening appointments may be made available upon request, at the discretion of the counselor)

Legal Advocacy: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by appointment only.

Personal Advocacy: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by appointment only.
(Evening appointments may be made available upon request at the discretion of the advocate.)

Sexual Assault Support Services: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by appointment only.

Children's Programming: See staff for activity schedules.

Support Groups: See staff for activity schedules.

Food/clothing assistance: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Residential and non-residential program participants are responsible for the care of their children while in or on Shelter, Inc. properties. Whenever possible we provide children's programming during support groups. However, mothers are responsible for the care and supervision of their children at all times. Older children cannot be left in charge of younger children. Please check with staff ahead of time to see if assistance with childcare is available. The Transitional Supportive Housing Program can provide childcare vouchers for specified licensed centers. Again, our philosophy is to empower survivors in making informed choices. Our role is to provide you with information and support assisting you in attaining your objectives, goals and visions. Although other mothers in a Shelter, Inc. facility may offer to watch your children, we discourage this option. Our commitment is to assisting each survivor in the individual personal pursuit of self-sufficiency. There are childcare forms to fill out which are to be signed by the mother in cases of emergency. These forms are available to you by asking a staff person.

SAFETY PRACTICES

Shelter, Inc., cannot insure your safety. However, we maintain a commitment to helping you protect yourself against any additional injury by the perpetrator(s)/abuser(s). We have developed some practices dedicated to helping each victim/survivor maximize their safety. If you always do these things, your personal safety and the safety of your dependent children can be better protected.

- Make certain that exterior doors are locked at all times. Teach your children the importance of keeping exterior doors locked.
- Never open an exterior door without first making certain who is outside.
- If your unit has a security alarm, turn it on each night before going to bed and each time you leave home.
- Teach your children where panic buttons are located and help them understand the importance of pushing these buttons **only** when there is danger.
- If you do not have a telephone in your home, request a Shelter, Inc. staff provide you with Verizon Wireless Hope Line cellular phone or a 911 pre-programmed cellular telephone. Make sure the cellular telephone is always charged.
- Always leave exterior lights burning when you do not expect to return home during day light hours.
- Always visually inspect the areas around your home or other locations prior to getting out of your car.
- If someone gives you a ride home, ask them to watch and make sure you get safely inside before they drive away.
- Learn the location of local and state police department buildings.
- If you see your abuser(s)/perpetrator(s) lurking around your home and you are in your car drive to the nearest safe place i.e. police department, shelter.
- If your abuser(s)/perpetrator(s) comes to your home and tries to enter, do **not** open the door. Call 911 and request assistance.
- Always make sure a dependable person knows where you are and when you expect to return.
- If you do not have a personal protection order and you feel you are at risk of further injury by your abuser(s) ask a Shelter, Inc. Legal Advocacy Program staff person to assist you in evaluating if you may benefit from one or help you in obtaining one.
- Report harassment telephone calls to the telephone company, the police and a Shelter, Inc. Advocate, Counselor or Program Coordinator.
- Create firm boundaries with your children. Be very clear where and with whom they are allowed to go.

- Make sure your child(ren)'s school(s) have information regarding who can or cannot pick up your child(ren).
- If you see someone trying to force their way into your neighbor's unit/home, call the police.
- Make sure Shelter, Inc. staff has current accurate information and description of your abuser(s)/perpetrator(s).
- Shelter, Inc. staff will monitor the exterior of transitional housing units on a regular basis for safety purposes. Should a staff person observe suspicious activity, your abuser(s)/perpetrators on the property a report may be made to the local or state police.
- A Shelter, Inc., Advocate, Counselor or Program Coordinator can help in developing a personal safety plan. Safety plans should be reviewed with your children and conduct regular safety drills.

These practices have been developed to help you and your dependent children enhance your personal safety.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Shelter, Inc. is committed to ensuring; each survivor's information remains confidential and confined within the agency, except where a survivor signs a time limited release of information listing the type of information and the person(s) with whom information may be shared. It is important that you respect the privacy and rights of other residents and information pertaining to the programs location and operations.

CONFIDENTIALITY REGARDING MEDICAL AND HEALTH CONDITIONS

Shelter, Inc. will respect and protect the confidentiality of each survivor's medical and/or health histories/conditions. No information will be included in case files that would identify the survivor/participant as either having or not having medical and/or health conditions. When a survivor/participant is referred to health care area agencies for testing, treatment or supportive services, referral information will be contained in strict compliance with the agency's confidentiality policy.

ACCESSING CASE FILES

Survivors/participants have the right to review their case file. To review a case file, a survivor/participant must submit a written request to the program coordinator or manager. The file will be made available for review within three business days of receipt of the request. The file may be reviewed in an area of the agency specified by the program coordinator or supervisor. No documentation may be removed from the case file. Should a participant request documentation from their file, a copy will be made and provided to the survivor/participant within two business days of receipt of the requests. Request for documentation from a case file must be submitted to the program coordinator or supervisor in written form. In the absence of the program coordinator or manager, a program advocate can request permission from the Executive Director to process requests to view or copy information from a case file. Residential Advocates, on-call staff and volunteers do not have authority to process requests to review case files. Case files will be maintained and stored in compliance with the agency's confidentiality policy and procedures.

COMMITMENT TO A SAFE DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT

The agency will adhere to and comply with MIOSHA standards as well as local, state and federal laws/guidelines for maintaining a safe environment.

SMOKING POLICY

All Shelter, Inc. facilities are non-smoking. There are absolutely no designated smoking areas inside the facilities. Survivors/ participants may smoke outside but must be at least twenty feet from an entrance doorway while smoking. It is the responsibility of each smoker to remove his/her cigarette butts. Throwing cigarette butts onto the grounds is unsightly, unhealthy and prohibited.

ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY

Alcohol and illegal/recreational drugs and/or paraphernalia are not allowed on Shelter, Inc. premises at any time. Any survivor/participant under the influence of illegal/recreational drugs or alcohol who is deemed a threat or risk will not be permitted access to any Shelter, Inc. facility. Should a survivor/participants inform staff that she/he is addicted to alcohol and/or illegal/recreational drugs, she/he will be provided with information regarding substance abuse treatment/prevention programs/services. Selling or distributing alcohol or illegal substances on Shelter, Inc. premises is forbidden. Access to services will not be denied for a first attempt to bring illegal recreational drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia on the premises. Participants will be provided with an opportunity to remove recreational drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia from the premises. A detailed review of the drug/alcohol policy will occur if the participant elects to remove items and remain in the facility. Additional violations of the alcohol/drug policy may result in a participant being required to exit the program.

WEAPONS/VIOLENCE

No weapons or acts of violence will be allowed or tolerated within any Shelter, Inc. facility. The no violence policy includes treatment/discipline of children while on Shelter, Inc. premises. Shelter, Inc. staff will provide information, resources and options for interacting with your children in a loving non-violent manner. You and your children have a right to experience feelings of anger and disagreement, however, it is not okay to hit, bite, kick, call names, throw things or yell. Shelter, Inc. staff is available to help and give support to survivors/participants in working with or in disciplining children. Under no circumstances will hitting of children be allowed on Shelter, Inc. premises.

CHILD PROTECTION LAW

Shelter, Inc. employs staff that is mandated by State of Michigan Child Protection laws require staff to report any and all instances of child abuse and or neglect to the local child protection agency.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In Case of Fire or Severe Weather:

During the intake/orientation process you will be given a tour and instructions identifying fire and severe weather safe locations.

Shelter, Inc. randomly conducts fire and severe weather drills. If you are in a Shelter, Inc. facility when a drill occurs you are expected to follow the direction of staff and behave as if the emergency were real.

In the unlikely event a fire breaks out or severe weather should occur while you are in the facility you will be expected to follow staff instructions and move you and your child(ren) to the designated safe location. You and your child(ren) may not re-enter the main areas of a facility until a staff member gives you an all-clear signal. This procedure is strictly enforced during drills and actual fire or severe weather emergency.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is the intent of the agency that all survivors/participants be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to each survivor/participant receiving services as identified during the needs assessment/orientation process and listed in the individual plan of service. If any survivor/participant feels they have not been treated with dignity and respect or not allowed to have input into their plan of service they are encouraged to utilize the grievance process to seek resolution. Guidelines, requirements for program participation as outlined in the Program Participant Handbook, that are required by legal/ethical authorities are not subject to grievance as they have been established to insure each program participant receives equal service/program opportunities in a safe environment.

Step 1: You have the right to submit your grievance to a Shelter, Inc. program coordinator, supervisor or counselor and request an immediate resolution.

Step 2: If utilizing Step 1 does not resolve the problem, you have the right to file a written complaint with the Executive Director of Shelter, Inc. The Executive Director may request to meet with you to discuss your complaint or he/she may investigate your complaint on his/her own. You will receive a written response/solution to your complaint within five working days of the Executive Director receiving your complaint.

Step 3: If the following steps 1 and 2 have not resolved the problem, you may submit a written copy of your complaint and response to the Board of Directors of Shelter, Inc. The Board will investigate your complaint and provide you with a written resolution within 30 calendar days of receiving your complaint. The Executive Director will supply you with the name and address of the Board Chairperson upon your written request for this information.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/CIVIL RIGHTS

Laws governing equal rights opportunities will be observed and strongly enforced throughout each of the agency's programs/services. No person seeking services will be denied services based on: age, height, weight, national origin, marital status, sexual preference, physical or mental handicap, gender, religion or race.

ACCESSIBILITY

Persons presenting themselves as a person with disability(s) with respect to accessing services according to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) will be provided with reasonable accommodations which will allow them to access services. The agency will comply with all applicable statutes guiding accessibility requirements for facilities, programs, and services.

TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Shelter, Inc. Transitional Supportive Housing Program was created to help victims/survivors and their dependent children (if any) in planning and transitioning into a self-sufficient violence-free life style. Support and advocacy services are provided without cost to participants. Applications/requests for transitional housing are sometimes greater than the number of housing units available. Priority consideration is given based on safety need first, followed by the date an application is received. Safe house staff, advocates and counselors are available to help you research all available housing options and identify any community or agency resources that may be available to help in obtaining housing. Transitional supportive housing program staff is dedicated to helping each transitional housing resident/family in identifying, accessing and utilizing information, resources, support and advocacy. The services will be helpful in pursuing and attaining a home free of violence. Clients interested in pursuing transitional supportive housing can request an application from safe house staff or transitional housing staff. Each applicant meeting eligibility criteria will be provided with an opportunity to meet with the transitional housing team. The team will discuss the program and how it may be beneficial. When it is determined that an applicant meets eligibility criteria and a size-suitable unit is available, the client may be accepted into the program.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA- TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

- ◆ Be a victim/survivor of domestic violence/sexual assault (by self declaration) who requires safe affordable housing to better ensure safety.
- ◆ Meet TANF eligibility criteria (income and child accompaniment/pregnancy).
- ◆ Have physical custody/care of one or more child(ren) and/or be pregnant (documentation of pregnancy may be required).
- ◆ Be at least 18 years of age.
- ◆ The length of the program is for a period of no more than two years.
- ◆ Rent payments are required. Rents are based on 30% of adjusted gross income.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA- PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

- ◆ Be a victim/survivor of domestic violence/sexual assault (by self declaration) who requires safe affordable housing to better ensure safety.
- ◆ Provide proof of documented disability.

SERVICE OPTIONS

- Advocacy (Legal, Personal, Housing, Medical, Community, Employment, Educational, Parenting)
- Personal Support
- Community Resources

- Child Care Assistance
- Transportation Assistance
- Financial Planning and Budgeting
- Nutrition and Meal Planning
- Home Care and Maintenance Support and Assistance
- Individual and Group Counseling
- Child and Family Counseling
- Food, Clothing, Household Goods Assistance
- Individual and Group Life Skills/Education
- Credit Building and Repair Assistance
- Health Care Assistance
- Education and Employment Research

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. The locations of our safe houses are confidential. Family and friends (other than the abusive partner) may pick you up and drop you off at a location convenient to the safe house. You can check with staff if you are unsure of a location. They may not pick you up or drop you off at the safe house.
2. No weapons of any sort or acts of violence will be tolerated in any Shelter, Inc. facility.
3. Because we are promoting non-violence, spanking or yelling is prohibited. If you need support or suggestions for alternative/constructive discipline of your child(ren), please ask staff. Staff has access to resources and information that can help you and your children as you work toward developing and maintaining a non-violent family/relationship.
4. All Shelter, Inc. buildings/facilities are legally required to remain drug/alcohol and smoke free. Recreational/illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia and alcohol are prohibited on agency property. Prescription drugs in the name(s) of someone other than the client and/or accompanied dependent child(ren) is also prohibited. Services will not be declined however, individuals possessing any prohibited item(s) will be asked to remove the item(s) from the property. If the request is refused the individual will be asked to leave.
5. For health and safety reasons all prescription and non-prescription medications must be stored in a locked designated medication storage location in a safe house office. Your medication will be made available to you upon your request. You must sign the medication log each time you request and receive your medication. Life sustaining medications may be made readily accessible based upon staff/participant assessment of need and type of medication. This practice is consistently implemented to help ensure other residents and their child(ren) do not accidentally ingest medications that could be potentially harmful.
6. Shelter, Inc. is a smoke free facility. Smoking is prohibited in all areas of the building.
7. When leaving the safe house at any time during your stay, we ask that you record the time you leave, your expected return time and general information regarding your destination on the in/out log. This practice has been adopted as a safety measure for you and your child(ren). For safety reasons, we ask that you contact Safe House Staff if you're going to be later than your designated return time.

For the consideration, respect and safety of all residents, it is encouraged that residents return to the facility by 12:00 midnight, unless prior arrangements have been made with residential advocates. Reassessment of safe house eligibility may occur at any time that it appears that the need for safe housing is no longer needed to enhance/assure safety.

Because the Oscoda Safe House facility is not a 24-hour crisis center, but rather an "as needed" facility, it may be necessary to close the facility, from midnight until 8am of the following day, if residents have not returned or made contact with the residential advocate on duty by midnight. Should safety issues arise and the facility is closed, please call the crisis line at 1-800-396-9129, or 911 in case of an emergency.

7a. Because of limited emergency shelter space, after two (2) consecutive nights (bednights) of no contact or prior arrangements with safe house staff, all personal belongings will be packed up and held for ten

(10) calendar days. Disposal of belongs may occur following the ten consecutive day guideline.

8. To ensure children have adequate rest and parents have time to plan and reflect, quiet time begins at 8:00 p.m. Parents are encouraged to begin getting children ready for bed at that time. We suggest all children under the age of 15 be in their bedrooms by 9:00 p.m. Parents can then have time for themselves. Parents are not required to stay in the room of a sleeping/naping child but should check on their child(ren) periodically.

9. Support groups are held weekly at designated times and locations. Participation in group and individual domestic violence education activities is encouraged. Nightly house meetings provide residents with opportunities for input on program/facility operations and policies. You are encouraged to attend all meetings.

10. The safe house is for the use of all families who need a safe place to stay. We ask that you keep this in mind in your care and use of the facilities. Meals are to be eaten in the dining room only. For the safety of all children, children are not allowed in the kitchen area unsupervised. Residents are responsible for working together to insure housekeeping chores and meal preparation occur on a daily basis. All residents are responsible for keeping their bedroom in a manner that is compliant with local health and fire safety codes. Safe house staff will provide you with bed and bath linens; it is your responsibility to launder them as needed. In compliance with fire safety codes clear pathways must be present at all times. It is important that your personal belongings be stored in closets and out of walk ways. Soiled diapers must be disposed of in the outside trash receptacle on a daily basis. For pest control reasons food items are not allowed in bedrooms.

11. Each individual/family is provided with a private locking sleeping room. It is your responsibility to ensure your belongings are securely maintained. Shelter, Inc. does not assume responsibility for personal injury to you or your family or for the loss or damage of your personal possessions.

12. Every effort must be made by all residents and staff to maintain the confidentiality of the adults and children at Shelter, Inc. Any and all information that you are privileged to regarding other residents, staff, volunteers and safe house locations must be held in strict confidence. It is your responsibility to explain this information to your children. It is important for all to understand the need for safety.

Program guidelines have been developed to encourage safety and smooth operations of a communal living facility. It is our hope to provide residents with services/care that recognizes individual needs and differences. We understand that many of the guidelines and expectations outlined in this handbook may be difficult for you and your children. Living in shelter can be challenging especially when you are living with others that you may not know. As a staff we will listen to your concerns and we will make every effort to accommodate special needs where safety and the needs of others are not compromised. When guideline violations have been observed, the staff member who observed the violation will review the guideline with you so that there is not a misunderstanding. You will be asked to sign a form that outlines both the guideline violation and suggestions or action to be taken. Repeated disregarding of the same or similar guidelines that compromise the safety of yourself and/or others may result in your being asked to leave the program.

MONEY/PERSONAL ITEMS BORROWING POLICY

Borrowing of money and/or personal items i.e. tobacco products, vehicles, cell phones, clothing and personal hygiene products between programs participants/residents is strongly discouraged. Victims/survivors often have difficulty saying no. Please remain aware that each resident is here because they have experienced violence in their home. It's important that we treat each other with dignity and respect which include refraining from asking others to do things, loan or give items to others. Persistence in attempting to recruit items, money or acts of favor is reflective of power and control the very root of domestic violence.

GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AND SAFETY

Creating and maintaining some level of consistency for children residing in the shelter can be helpful in lessening the effects of trauma caused by domestic violence. These guidelines have been developed to help you and your child(ren) in developing family relationships/roles free from violent words and actions.

- Children are required to attend school unless school attendance creates safety concerns. When school cannot be attended due to safety/health issues academic exercise will be provided by the parent and supported by Children's Program and other staff.
- Children enrolled in home schooling prior to entering the shelter will be required to continue home schooling. Parents indicating they have been home schooling may receive assistance in securing home schooling materials.
- Children must be accompanied by an adult when leaving the safe house.
- All play areas must be supervised. Staff and parents will determine together an appropriate level of supervision.
- There is no hitting, biting, yelling or throwing of objects on the property. If such behaviors occur, staff will work with parents to determine an appropriate non-violent consequence.
- The kitchen is off-limits to children unless the parent is present. Parents and staff will determine together if an older child can **help** with cooking and kitchen clean-up duties.
- Other resident's rooms are off-limits to children without an invitation and each child must be accompanied by their parent.
- **Only** staff will answer safe house doors and telephones.
- Meals must be eaten in the dining room. However snacks and meals may occur in other areas in conjunction with special recreational/entertainment activities. These activities will require direct supervision of adults/parents.
- Absolutely **NO** jumping on furniture will be allowed.

COMMUNAL LIVING HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

Shelter, Inc. retains the right to review/inventory the personal belongings of each individual during the intake admit process for safe house residency safety requirements. The practice of reviewing/assessing is conducted as a safety measure and not to embarrass or violate any person's privacy. Shelter, Inc. may also do random bedroom safety assessments, for the purpose of insuring the safe house remains weapon/drug/alcohol free. There will be periodic reviews (visual observations) to assess for risks of fire, safety and health concerns.

I, _____, have read and do understand the above paragraph, and accept that my personal belongings will be inventoried/assessed prior to my admittance to Shelter, Inc.'s residential program. I also understand and accept that my bedroom may be randomly assessed for safety, and reviewed for weapons, drugs, alcohol, and drug paraphernalia. These items will not prohibit/exclude me from Shelter, Inc.'s services; however, these items are prohibited from Shelter, Inc.'s premises.

CONSENT TO ASSISTANCE

I, _____, have voluntarily sought out assistance from Shelter, Inc. I understand that I can seek separate crisis and support counseling, legal advocacy and/or temporary housing from Shelter, Inc. These services are confidential except in certain conditions. Cases in which certain information may need to be shared include:

- 1) Cases in which program participants pose a clear and imminent danger to themselves or others.
- 2) Cases in which program participants give written consent that their records be released to themselves or a third party.
- 3) Cases in which a court orders a counselor to release information to a specific court or judge.
- 4) Cases in which a program participant was/is a victim or perpetrator of child abuse or neglect.
- 5) Cases in which the program participant committed a crime on the premises.
- 6) Cases in which the program participant is in a bona fide medical emergency and can't speak for her/himself.
- 7) Cases in which audits are conducted and files are selected.

GENERAL NOTICE TO SURVIORS/PARTICIPANTS-access to files may be provided to auditors or reviewers from funding agencies to insure that the agency has provided services claimed for reimbursement or quality control purposes is permitted.

Every effort will be made by the counselor to discuss any and all decisions, keeping the program participant's best interests in mind in the event that such a case should arise from the above situations.

I understand that I may terminate these services at any time. The staff will provide information of other services, agencies or organizations within the community that may be of further help to me. I am under no obligation to use the resources that are explained to me.

CHILD CARE GUIDELINES

Mothers are responsible for the care of their children. Childcare duties cannot become the responsibility of older children or other adult residents. Childcare is not the responsibility of staff. Although child care assistance can not be guaranteed in emergency situations and during periods of medical illness and in conjunction with plans of service activities we will make every attempt to help with childcare.

RESIDENT TELEPHONE/EQUIPMENT USAGE

A telephone will be made available for program participant usage. Non-business telephone usage must be limited to no longer than ten minutes. It is each resident's responsibility to make certain they have money and/or a calling card to pay for non-service related long distance calls. If you cannot afford a calling card you may ask the staff for assistance. The office telephones may be used with permission to make telephone calls. However, because of confidential information housed in offices, a staff person must accompany a resident utilizing an office telephone during the entire telephone call. However, we recognize that telephone calls to agencies can be lengthy. Calls should be limited to ten minutes whenever possible. Should you receive an incoming telephone call, the caller will receive a standardized confidentiality statement stating we cannot acknowledge whether you are a resident with us or not. Callers are informed they can choose to leave a message and if you are a resident we will insure that the message is delivered to you. The message will then be given to you.

Program participants needing to access the Internet, fax machine or other equipment must request permission from the primary case coordination staff person. During non-business hours participants may obtain equipment usage permission from a house manager. However, we encourage participants to plan ahead so that the primary case coordination staff person may grant permission.

MEALS

The Shelter, Inc. safe houses maintain well-stocked food pantries. We want to make sure residents and their child(ren) have access to food items that support their personal cultures and needs to ensure access to foods that will support eating healthy well-balanced meals. It is the responsibility of each resident/mother to prepare meals for her family. Staff will help if assistance in planning meals or finding out what foods are available is needed. We discourage young children in the kitchen area during meal preparations. Teen-age children are allowed to help with meal preparation but are not allowed to take full responsibility for planning and preparing meals. Meals should only be eaten at dining tables, not common living areas or bedrooms. If you have special dietary needs based on a medical condition or culture it is your responsibility to inform staff during the intake/orientation process. We will make every effort to obtain foods that meet cultural and medical dietary needs.

HOUSEHOLD CHORES

It is each resident's responsibility to insure the safe house is maintained in a manner that supports health and safety guidelines. Each resident is responsible for keeping their assigned bedroom(s) free of health and safety hazards. The common living areas need to be clean and orderly at all times. Residents may choose to share common area housekeeping chores (living room, kitchen, play areas and bathrooms).

EXITING THE PROGRAM

Part of the exiting process is to clean your bedroom, wash bedding and towels returning the bedroom back to the condition in which it was when you assumed possession. It is our goal that when you leave the bedroom will be ready for the next person(s) who use the facility. Cleaning includes vacuuming/sweeping, dusting, disinfecting the mattress(es), and washing, drying and returning bedding and any other appliances you may have borrowed (clock, blow dryer etc.). Please make sure you plan time in your moving out process that allows you to accomplish these housekeeping tasks. When you exit the safe house, you are required to clean out your personal belongings as well. All unclaimed personal belongings will be disposed of 10 calendar days from date of exit.

You will be asked to complete some exit paperwork including a voluntary satisfaction survey prior to exiting the safe house. It is our goal that the services have been helpful to you. Please let us know things we did well, things we could do better, and services that may have been helpful but were not available. We wish you every success in your continued pursuit of non-violence and self-sufficiency. We have established an exit procedure checklist that we encourage you to use for health and safety reasons.

Survivor/Participant Name

Case Number

Intake Date

**SURVIVOR/PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGMENT/ACCEPTANCE FORM
RELEASE OF LIABILITY
(SURVIVOR/PARTICIPANT'S COPY)**

I have received a Program Participant Handbook. Policies and practices regarding confidentiality, civil rights, grievance procedures, accessibility, drug and smoke free facilities, child protection laws and health and safety rules have been reviewed with me during my intake interview. I understand and agree to adhere to the policies and practices of Shelter, Inc. as presented in the Program Participant Handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to review all of the information presented in the handbook. I also understand that it is my responsibility to request Shelter, Inc. staff to provide me with clarification and any additional help/information I may require to fully understand the policies and practices of Shelter, Inc.

Survivor/Participant Signature

Date

Staff/Witness Signature

Date

Survivor/ Participant Name

Case Number

Intake Date

**SURVIVOR/PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGMENT/ACCEPTANCE FORM
RELEASE OF LIABILITY
(PARTICIPANT'S FILE)**

I have received a Program Participant Handbook. Policies and practices regarding confidentiality, civil rights, grievance procedures, accessibility, drug and smoke free facilities, child protection laws and health and safety rules have been reviewed with me during my intake interview. I understand and agree to adhere to the policies and practices of Shelter, Inc. as presented in the Program Participant Handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to review all of the information presented in the handbook. I also understand that it is my responsibility to request Shelter, Inc. staff to provide me with clarification and any additional help/information I may require to fully understand the policies and practices of Shelter, Inc.

Survivor/Participant Signature

Date

Staff/Witness Signature

Date

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Revisions:6-4-09 added 7a on page 14
6-24-09 added paragraph 2 & 3 under 7 on page 14
6-23-09 meals paragraph reworded on page 18
1/11 accessing case files
Language change program participant to survivor/participant
Services update