

Mobile Advocacy Program Policy & Protocol

Survivor- Driven, Trauma-Informed Mobile Advocacy

Mobile advocacy is a service Sheltering Wings currently provides with trauma-informed services. The new initiative is an expansion of our services, now provided to participants in safe locations in the community. The case management offered is focused on safety and supporting survivors to rebuild control over their lives. (Mobile Advocacy is a nationally recognized term for this movement. Sheltering Wings will maintain this label despite utilizing case managers as the agent of the services and see case management as more representative of the specific services provided.) Survivors lead the process, choose their own goals, and define services needed and safety protocol for themselves. It is important to ensure that the survivor has other supports in place that will empower them to live independently. Emergency sheltering protocols will still be utilized for survivors who need it.

In addition, once our residents exit our shelter program, they continue to have access to pertinent, beneficial and realistic services through our Mobile Advocacy Program. The MAP leads to many positive outcomes such as reaching survivors who will never come into shelter, improving safety and building the skills and acquiring the tools needed to build stability and independence. MAP is also a benefit for those survivors who would not otherwise be able to access services due to barriers in the lack of transportation, childcare, and potential safety concerns. This program will afford opportunity for interventions to include family members, who may also be at-risk or who can support the process of safety and re-stabilization for a survivor. Expanding our reach to include all survivors of domestic abuse, and not just those who enter shelter, will make a greater impact on the people we serve and reduce interpersonal violence overall.

Mobile advocacy services are provided for up to one year, unless the survivor needs additional time with case management, which is determined by the case manager and survivor. All Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) clients will receive case management during the duration of their RRH/PSH program agreement with Sheltering Wings. Sheltering Wings staff will serve the following counties: Hendricks, Putnam, Boone, Montgomery, and Morgan. If a client returns to a county not represented from residing at Sheltering Wings (for example Marion County) but transitional case management is needed in order for stability to occur, then case managers may continue with limited case management in the interim.

Key Service Pillars of the Mobile Advocacy Model:

- 1. Survivor-Driven, Trauma Informed Case Management Services (Assesses, Understands & Engages)**
- 2. Community Engagement (Equip, Connect, and Implement)**
- 3. Housing Options (Build Stable & Independent Lives)**

Survivor-Driven Trauma-informed Crisis Practices:

- Creating emotional safety
- Reestablishing choice and control
- Facilitating survivors' connections and engagement to community supports
- Understanding and appropriately responding to trauma
- Assessing survivor's current crisis situation, allowing survivor to create goals to promote growth, and building upon survivor's strengths

Case managers respect survivor's decisions, offer options (not opinions or mandates) and build off the strengths of each survivor and their children.

- Case managers ask "what do you need?" instead of saying "these are our services we can offer you."
- Case managers are mobile. They meet in a survivor's home (only if safe and abuser is not a threat), out in the community, at coffee shops, etc.
- Case managers goal set with survivor based upon the needs of the survivor and their self-sufficiency matrix determinations.
- Case managers have skills, supervision, and technology to support working safely, effectively, and efficiently out in the community.
- Case managers look at the strengths of a survivor's culture and community in order to promote becoming safer and rebuilding meaningful & necessary connections.
- Case managers understand the impacts of trauma and are aware of potential triggers, and engage in trauma informed practices

Community Engagement Practices:

- Equip survivors with life skill classes to build skills, assets, and tools
- Connect with community referrals to provide needed services with and for survivor
- Practicing the art of accessing community resources with survivor to build confidence and comfort to complete autonomously

- Ongoing assessment of self sufficiency matrix domains to determine lacking tools, skills, and resources needed
- Providing necessary support before and during implementation with evaluation for further assistance

Case managers will complete ongoing assessments and evaluations to ensure that survivors are equipped with accessible, understandable, and specific resources, services, and connections to essential resources in the community to assist survivors in meeting their goals.

- Case managers proactively cultivate relationships within the community such as car mechanics, community colleges, law enforcement, mental health providers, etc.
- Case managers are encouraged to spend work time connecting with people and organizations in the community to help meet needs of survivors
- Case managers regularly assess life skills classes offered to determine need in areas such as financial empowerment, survivor support groups, employment, parenting, recovery programs.
- Case managers explore community events to support and attend to build relationships
- Case managers build these connections in the community with the goal of supporting survivor's safety, independence, and housing stability.

Housing Option Practices:

- Share the housing options that each person can pursue through the 'Are You Ready for Housing?' Class
- Collaborate with client to pursue each viable option
- Provide necessary advocacy, communication and resource management to secure housing for client in their preferred and qualified for housing option
- Assist client in understanding their lease rental agreement and/or any stipulations to their new housing arrangement
- Provide ongoing case management for up to a year of housing in order to monitor progress towards client's goals and provide any other necessary support or connection to community resources

For case managers, the ultimate goal is to motivate and equip each client towards a stable and independent lifestyle --- affordable and sustainable housing with the essential community resources in place to act as building blocks to their ultimate success.

- Case Managers work with survivors collaboratively to determine the level and amount of financial assistance needed in order to secure housing

- Case Managers will have strong relationships with housing authorities and landlords who provide different options for clients
- Case Managers will pursue access to viable, affordable options to meet the survivor's unique needs
- Case Managers will be proactive and flexible to meet the needs of the survivors in their housing decisions. They will accompany them to housing appointments, education and navigate lease agreements, and mediate between survivors and landlords
- Case Managers will assess and evaluate services needed for the survivor to encourage continuity of care, navigation of necessary new resources, and determine the end to services that are no longer needed. All this is to ensure that the survivor is given the absolute best, case management to bring about personal, familial, and community growth as the survivor becomes stable and independent

Essential Protocol & Procedures for the Mobile Advocacy Model:

PURPOSE

Remember the purpose in providing mobile advocacy is to break down barriers to access services, meet survivor on their terms and at their preferred location (within safety restraints), and eliminate stigma associated with seeking assistance.

Respect each survivor as an individual and remember to be an example of Christ's compassion and love for others. One way to do this is to understand your own fears, triggers and biases in order to be prepared ahead of time of how to handle yourself professionally. Establish a plan of action for yourself to address your fears, triggers and biases head on.

- Know your personal triggers, biases, and fears
- Portray professionalism and empathy
- Know the background and history of those served
- Be respectful & remember the example of Jesus
- Seek understanding about potential cultural barriers
- Be a persistent learner

SAFETY

Thinking ahead of time about safety issues for yourself and the survivors is critical before meeting together. Boundaries should be clearly established regarding availability & location of meeting, confidential information, contact procedure, preparedness measures, and a plan if things go awry. Recognizing when safety becomes a risk and practicing safety interventions is another key component. This includes being prepared ahead of meeting for potential concerns and responding quickly on-site if situation turns unhealthy and/or unsafe.

Protocol Prior to Meeting:

- Discuss best place for visit with survivor taking into consideration safety of all and comfort for client (see below for special considerations); preferably in a public location
- Ask survivor for any pertinent information concerning their background history (substance use, mental health, and overall circumstances), hesitancy in meeting (examples - cultural, religious, increased abuse), safety of meeting place, protocol if someone sees survivor meeting with case manager (including abuser), and their desired outcome of meeting (case managers can complete a preliminary self-sufficiency matrix by phone if desired)
- Complete Covid Screening with Survivor 24 hours prior to meeting (see below for specific Covid screening instructions)
- Map your route and point of exit
- Place survivor's Client Track number, address of meeting, and time on calendar
- Make Sheltering Wings staff on shift aware of meeting before leaving and when end of meeting is expected. (sharing with a partner or friend is in breach of confidentiality)
- Ensure phone is fully charged and transfer office calls to cell phone
- Plan dress attire. Over dressing and accessorizing with too much jewelry can create a barrier of discomfort and judgement. Set the tone that you are equals, working together toward shared goals.
- Call survivor before you leave office and again when arrive at meeting location (utilize *67 to maintain confidentiality for your personal cell phone number)
- Trained in verbal de-escalation
- Trained in non-verbal crisis intervention

Arrival to Meeting:

- Do not carry a weapon
- Scan surroundings and have an escape route plan
- Be alert to any substance use or signs of aggression (see below for special considerations)
- Do not drive into a small driveway where you may be blocked in
- Park on the street or back into driveway facing the road
- Carry cell phone into meeting and keep accessible in case need of use arises
- Keep any items not needed for meeting locked in vehicle
- Upon knocking on the door of the home give space for the person to observe you and provide space in case you need to move away.
- Never walk in front of person in which they are behind you, especially into enclosed areas such as a basement.
- Let them lead the way and ask permission to enter a location in the home and upon entering ask for permission to sit down.
- Try to meet in the front room (if meeting in home) or another place where there is a clear path to the door in case of emergency

- Be courteous and respectful as you would your own home.
- If the person asks you to leave and shows signs of aggression, do so, contact them at a later date.
- Trust your instincts and exit or disengage immediately for your own safety if you feel that your safety may be compromised (abuser arrives, person becomes irrational, under the influence of a substance, becoming violent, observe the manufacturing of narcotics, other criminal behavior, weapons are present)

Special Considerations:

Determining a Meeting Location:

- Public Location is always best for safety purposes due to having witnesses and a neutral location (examples – parks, churches, community centers, libraries, local coffee shops), however, a survivor's home can be a viable option
- Outside of a residence (front porch) can be more comfortable until survivor can trust case manager and is more familiar with the purpose and services provided
- Avoid home visits if abuser knows housing location, is a present threat, and behavior is stalking and following survivor
- Remember safety is paramount; survivor needs to be comfortable with location chosen, however, case manager also needs to be assured of the safety of the location
- If it is not safe for survivor to meet in home but has no means to travel to a designated location, there are a couple options that a case manager can utilize. Case manager can ask survivor (if safe) to walk to a public place for case manager to pick up and transport to public location meeting place. Or a case manager could offer Uber services, gas card, etc.

Covid Safety Measures:

- Ask COVID screening questions the day before; if anything changes for the staff or client between the time of the screening and the visit either one should notify the other prior to the meeting. If you can't reach the client to screen them, you will need to reschedule.
- Wear facemasks at all times
- Take extra masks for them to wear also
- Sanitize hands before and after
- Take everyone's temperature in the home
- If arrive and see symptoms, then can reschedule and encourage client to seek medical attention

Law Enforcement Needed:

- Trust your instincts – weigh the pros and cons of contacting law enforcement
- Utilize law enforcement as needed

- If any criminal behavior is occurring, call law enforcement after have exited the premises (unless unable to leave)
- Rule of thumb --- if someone is injuring or threatening to injure themselves or others; or case manager observes criminal behavior

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE

Communicating the purpose and ensuring safety measures followed assist in an efficient and effective meeting. However, there are some other tools to incorporate into your mobile advocacy to strengthen the level of productivity attained during the case management meetings. Come prepared and equipped to meet the needs of the survivor. Having a background history of any substance use, mental health needs and the overall circumstances can greatly assist and change how you approach a person and situation. Value the person and respect their time and boundaries.

- Plan ahead and schedule an appointment together with the client. Surprise visits can create hostility and stress.
- Take identification but know that sometimes wearing identification can be disrespectful as some do not want their neighbors or others to know their situation.
- Confirm with the survivor the reason for the visit and what is hoped to be accomplished. This can eliminate stress and anxiety for the survivor.
- Utilize a Wi-Fi card provided for each case manager to ensure information is able to be collected and through a secure avenue.
- Bring referral information, forms to be signed, and any worksheet tools/books/calendars to assist survivor in being productive as they reach for goals.
- Ask open ended questions utilizing motivational interviewing as one strategy to understand the survivor's goals and motivations