

## THE SANCTUARY TOOLBOX

The Sanctuary Model has a “toolbox” to help us in achieving our goal of creating Sanctuary for the children in our care, their families, and staff members.

### Safety Plans

Safety plans are another tool in the Sanctuary process. Safety plans are physical and concrete commitment to maintaining safety in all areas of the therapeutic milieu. Children and staff are expected to carry their safety plan cards with them throughout the day and refer to them when necessary. With the staff’s help, children make their own safety plans, a list of steps one can take when feeling overwhelmed or when symptoms are particularly distressing.

The safety plan is a small card that has 4 to 5 blank lines on it where a child or staff can write any suggestions for ways to keep them safe. These cards can be confidential, but all are encouraged to share their safety plans with others who can help them. The following are examples that children and staff have found beneficial:

Take a deep breath	Use positive self-talk
Take a walk	Think about being in a safe place
Talk to a friend	Listen to music
Leave the room	Write or draw

Safety plans are a simple, but very effective way of keeping alive the message to children that our goal is to keep them and ourselves safe. Children and their families should also make safety plans to use at home when they are on visits since healing and staying safe are the prerequisites to leaving care.

### Community Meetings:

Community meetings reflect almost every value of the Sanctuary Model. The meeting reflects the first step of trauma recovery by creating safety in the group. All individuals present in the community including staff and other agency members participate in the meetings. All participants answer the following three questions:

- 1. How are you feeling?** We ask this to assist and encourage feelings identification and transfer feelings into words as well as to support the importance of recognizing and managing emotions. We increase emotional intelligence by learning new words for feelings. Knowing the emotional climate of a group can help us feel safe. Participating in more than one Community meeting per day helps us to understand the transient nature of feelings. This is NOT a meeting to process, explain or justify the feeling, it is for identification purposes only. This part of the meeting is one sentence: “I feel \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 2. What is Your Goal for the Day?** The Sanctuary Model promotes self-recovery. The purpose of this question is to help focus on the future (remembering that many people who experience trauma get stuck in the past or can’t envision a future). This is the bridging question from the present to the future. Goals create structure and cognitive focus, help everyone stay on track and provide us with a purpose. This also implies hope and a sense of being able to master or accomplish something, linking to self esteem.

- 3. Who Can You Ask for Help?** We ask this question to build relationships among community members. Asking for help repairs damaged relationships. Helping others takes us out of our own problems and promotes self worth. It also helps foster a sense of community. Whenever possible, we should ask for help from a member in the room. Some people may indicate they will receive help from an inanimate object (i.e. “my computer/telephone will help me with that...”). This will not serve the purpose of building relationships among community members. It can be beneficial to reframe the question “if I run into a problem with meeting my goal, who will I ask for help?”

Community meetings begin and end each day, bracketing for the participants the commitment to safety, growth and healing.

### **Psychoeducational Groups**

Psychoeducational groups are a key tenet of the Sanctuary Model. The group curriculum teaches youth why their past experiences effects the way they act in the present. Many youth have a hard time making sense of their current experiences, and once they are able to name and identify these experiences, then the youth can seize control of their own recovery.

The psychoeducational curriculum includes didactic and experiential activities to help youth understand the impact of trauma, and make connections to their own experiences. The groups are based on trauma theory, attachment theory, democratic community principles, and stages of change (cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and behavioral).

The groups are divided into six topics (two of each) that include trauma theory, an overview of SELF, safety, emotional management, loss, and future. Psychoeducational groups are facilitated by the group home social workers.

### **Team meetings**

The entire team provides the treatment in the Sanctuary Model. Team meetings are held regularly and include as many people possible who provide care to the children. The team meeting should provide a safe place for staff to talk and it also should be a place where staff can ask each other for help and share constructive criticism with each other to avoid creating any collective disturbances. The following goals should be met during the meeting:

- Check-in with staff and their own well-being
- Review basic Sanctuary concepts
- Review histories of children and discuss in SELF language
- Discuss issues of vicarious trauma in staff
- Plan individual interventions for clients
- Review safety plans for children and staff
- Address housekeeping issues.

### **Red Light Reviews**

Red light review meetings are called to discuss residents in crisis. They are appropriate for AWOLS, physical holds, increased aggression, injury, child/staff/family complaint, anything the

community needs to respond to as a group. Anyone can call a red light review, and must choose a time and communicate it to those who should be in attendance. Those who should be invited to a red light review include:

Families (when appropriate), client (when appropriate) administrators, social workers, nursing staff, psychiatrists, ancillary service providers, and teachers. The more hands helping to solve a problem, the more likely it is to be handled well.

### **Treatment Planning Conferences**

Treatment planning conferences provide an opportunity for staff, clients and families to reflect on the therapeutic, academic, social and behavioral work that has been done in the group home setting. It is also an opportunity to discuss progress that has been made and further work to be done. Because it is the one time that the whole team has a chance to give and get feedback from the child, family, other treatment team members, partners or service providers, it is essential that the meeting itself be structured. The structure utilized in the treatment planning conferences at Glove House is the S.E.L.F. model.