


**DASH Model of Safe Housing**



DASH DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

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**DASH Mission**

DASH is an innovator in providing access to safe housing and services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their families as they rebuild their lives on their own terms. We envision a culture where safe housing is a human right shared by everyone.

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**DASH Programs**

- **Cornerstone:** A 43-unit emergency-to-transitional site-based safe housing program;
- **Empowerment Project:** A transitional-to-permanent scattered site safe housing program;
- **Housing Resource Center:** Innovative non-residential homelessness prevention services offered through a variety of assistance and housing advocacy programs including the **Survivor Resilience Fund** (a flexible funds program), where grants are given to help survivors maintain housing; and,
- **National Alliance for Safe Housing:** TA and Training project to improve access to housing for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

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**Core Belief #1:**  
**Housing is a Human Right**

DASH believes that all survivors of abuse, regardless of their circumstances, should have access to safe housing.

**This includes survivors of:**

- intimate partner violence
- sexual assault
- sex trafficking
- same-sex DV
- stalking
- homelessness

**As well as survivors with:**

- physical and mental disabilities
- chemical addictions
- mental illnesses
- undocumented citizens
- differing family configurations

**Low Barrier Access**

**PRACTICE**

**BELIEF**

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**Core Belief #2:**  
**Self-Determination**

DASH believes that one's housing stability should never hinge on their engagement in services.

Survivors are far more likely to make meaningful change when program engagement is voluntary.

The critical work of program staff (especially Advocates) is to establish trusting relationships with survivors built on mutual respect, transparency and honesty.

**Voluntary Services**

**PRACTICE**

**BELIEF**

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**Core Belief #3:**  
**DV/SA is a Traumatic Experience**

DASH believes experiencing DV/SA:

Psychologically changes a person's belief in themselves.

Diminishes a person's ability to trust.

Hinders a person's ability to make decisions for themselves, organize and mobilize to accomplish goals.

Decreases a person's sense of safety and intense fear.

**Trauma-Informed Services**

**PRACTICE**

**BELIEF**

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### Beliefs 1+2+3 = DASH's Theory of Change:

- 1) Survivors with complex needs are best served by programs which are highly individualized, relational, and adaptable;
- 2) The higher the degree to which programs are designed to be trauma-informed, flexible and individualized, the less ability staff has to rely on a "one size fits all" approach; and,
- 3) Staff require an equivalent degree of autonomy, support, and skill-building in order to best meet the complex needs of survivors.

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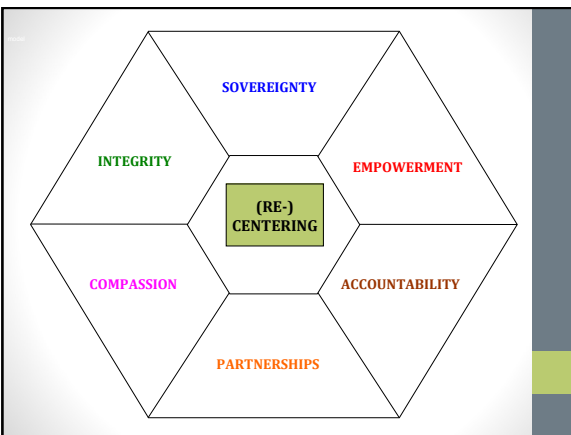
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### Principles

- Sovereignty:** Having the freedom and responsibility to determine what is right for yourself and be self-governing.
- Integrity:** Behaving consistently with the values you promote; striving to know yourself and behaving authentically.
- Empowerment:** Owning and giving voice to your own power to get your needs met, and helping others to do the same.

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### Principles

- **Partnerships:** Having mutually cooperative and respectful relationships with those with whom you interact.
- **Accountability:** Being responsible for maintaining ethical standards and clear boundaries in the course of daily interactions.
- **Compassion:** Having empathy for others who are vulnerable to help them get their needs met, and doing the same for yourself.

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### Principles

- **(Re-)Centering:** The process of negotiating change, conflict, and challenges in order to find balance to move forward the way you want.

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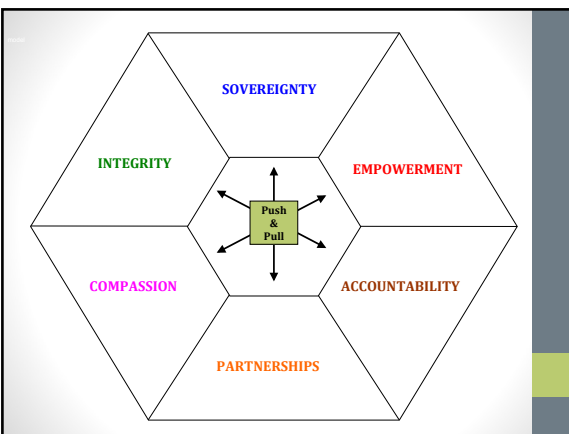
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### DASH Model Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- (a) understand how the DASH model influences organizational practice;
- (b) determine the extent to which employees engage with residents in a way that aligns with the practices of the DASH model, and
- (c) determine whether these practices lead to residents feeling more empowered and safe.

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### Model Evaluation Summary

- DASH policies and procedures were in alignment with the core beliefs
- The cultural norms and flexible policies supports use of practices derived from the DASH model
- Consequently, the greater use of practices that reflect the DASH model, the more likely clients report empowerment

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### Model Evaluation Summary

- Consequently, the greater use of practices that reflect the DASH model, the more likely clients report empowerment
- These relationships are statistically significant even when considering how frequently the survivor engaged in organizational programming, and the length of time they had been residing at Cornerstone.
- DASH model is deeply engrained in the organizational context.

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*Thank you!*

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