



MOVING YOUR SHELTER FROM RULES TO TRAUMA INFORMED

Conference on Ending Homelessness

Thursday, November 7, 2019 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

INTRODUCTIONS

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ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

- Family Support Center of South Sound is a nonprofit organization in Olympia with the mission “Working Together to Strengthen All Families”.
- Founded in 1992 to be a “one stop shop” for families with children
- Grown and evolved since then, incorporating best practice and evidence based approaches to serve families and survivors



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- 6 programs with the goal to reduce the impacts of trauma, homelessness, and domestic violence.
- Programs include:
 - Homeless Family Services
 - Family Resource Services
 - Family Justice Center
 - Parent & Child Education
 - Hope Program
 - Pear Blossom Place
- Programs rooted in trauma informed care, hope theory, client driven services, harm reduction, low barrier



SHELTER HISTORY

- Salvation Army in Olympia provided emergency shelter for families with children for several years.
- Fall 2009, Salvation Army closed family shelter with very little community notice.
- Family Support Center best poised to take on shelter, as we were collaborating with Interfaith Works to operate overflow shelter for women
 - Rather than close it, transitioned to serve families; started November 1, 2009.
- Moved from church to church a week at a time, run by volunteers overnight.
- Overnight shelter only, first come first served.



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- By winter of 2010 we were settled permanently in the basement of First Christian Church.
- Staffed by volunteers every night; initially 7pm to 7am only. Later able to open at 5:00PM.
- 26 beds for families.
 - Must have children under age 18 with you or be pregnant
- Always very family centered, and open to ANY family as they define themselves









RULES IN THE EARLY DAYS

Client Name: _____

Exit Date: _____

In order to continue to stay at the shelter, you must:

- Abide by the shelter rules outlined below
- Rescreen every week at the Family Support Center during your case management appointment. If you miss your appointment, your shelter stay may be at risk.
- Meet with your case manager once per week, and make a diligent effort to work on goals outlined in your self-sufficiency plan. If you do not actively participate in case management, and meet at least one goal per month, your shelter stay is at risk.
- Need the shelter as your primary nightly residence. If you anticipate an absence of more than one night per week, you must get approval from your case manager.
- Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- Respect and follow directions of the shelter volunteers, who are giving up their personal time to allow Family Support Center to keep the shelter open every day.
- Take responsibility for keeping your personal shelter space and the shelter itself clean and organized. Keep all personal items contained to assigned bin – no additional items allowed. Your daily assigned shelter task is: _____
- Your next case management appointment with _____ is _____@_____
- Your assigned day of the week to switch out your dirty bedding for clean bedding is: _____ (put your dirty bedding on the laundry table that morning)
- Shelter issues reported to case managers that must be rectified to maintain shelter stay (if any) are:

I agree while I am a guest at the Family Support Shelter, I will abide by the following rules. I agree to:

- Maintain supervision of my children. I understand that I may not leave my children unattended or have other guests babysit. I may request assistance of the host in supervising my children for short periods of time, however, I understand they do not have an obligation to do so and it should not be a regular occurrence.
- Not use offensive and/or obscene language, including conversations with my own family and with my children.
- Not use violence, including corporal punishment. Spanking is strictly forbidden.
- Not engage in sexual activity.

RULES IN THE EARLY DAYS

- Access food from the kitchen for my children. I understand that my child is not allowed to access food from the kitchen without my supervision.
- Keep personal belongings contained to assigned bin. Take all other belongings with me when I leave the shelter for the day.
- Eat and drink only in the designated eating area.
- Abide by the shelter's no smoking policy.
- Be completely sober when I arrive at the shelter. I understand that drugs and alcohol are strictly banned from the shelter.
- Leave windows bare – no window coverings or blocked doorways are allowed.
- Arrive at the shelter between 5:00pm-8:30pm. Once I check in, I agree not to leave shelter until the next morning unless approved by staff.
- Rescreen at the Family Support Center every week in order to continue staying at the shelter.
- Call the office (or the shift lead after 5:00pm) to report an expected absence. I understand that if I do not call and do not show up that I will be removed from the list. I understand that I can rescreen into the shelter at the office the next day if there is room available.
- Comply with additional rules indicated by the shelter hosts that are not included in this list. Any questions or concerns regarding the rules can be brought to the Family Support Center staff.
- Arrive at shelter with my entire family unless prior approval has been obtained by Family Support Center staff. (This approval will be noted on nightly guest list.) Note: Host/Greeter will only allow entrance to families on the guest list, or who have been added to guest list after screening by Shift Lead.

Daily Schedule

Note: Check-In Time at Shelter 5:00pm-8:30pm

Evening Schedule

Time	Activity
5:00 – 7:30 pm	Kitchen Open
7:30 – 8:00 pm	Clean Up Time (For Kitchen and All Other Spaces)
8:00 – 8:30 pm	Suggested Activity: Reading Circle (Hosts and/or Parents Can Lead This Activity)
8:30 pm	Prepare Children For Bed
9:00 pm	Lights Out – Children must be in bed. IF children are asleep, adults may be in kitchen until 10 pm if quiet. Parents must stay with children who are not asleep.

Morning Schedule

Time	Activity
6:00 am	Wake-Up Time
6:30 am	Clean Up Time (All dishes washed, toys put away, bedding put in large white bags, soiled bedding in laundry basket)
7:00 am	Check-Out Time



WHAT WERE WE
THINKING?!

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

- Family Support Center of South Sound applied to City of Olympia for a package which included acquisition of a vacant building and \$500,000 in CDBG funds towards renovations.
 - Funds were for capital dollars plus supportive services
- July 1, 2014 Pear Blossom Place: A Family Support Community opened.
- 6 shelter units, 36 shelter beds. 24 hours / day, 365 days / year
- 7 Permanent supportive housing apartments







A FRESH START

- Shelter was now open 24 hours per day for families
- Continued to be first come, first served. Did not maintain a waiting list.
- 90 day shelter stay.
- Staff present from 9am to 5pm; volunteers overnight
- Supportive services onsite for families living in apartments





NEW RULES

I agree to:

1. **Listen to staff and volunteers and communicate with courtesy and respect.**
2. **Sign in/out at the front desk EVERY time** I &/or my child(ren) leave the building for **ANY** reason.
3. **Supervise, stay with, and accompany my own child(ren) at all times, even teenagers, everywhere on shelter property.** We will sign in & out together, walk in & out together, remain in continuous line of sight of each other. **I understand that I may not leave my child(ren) unattended or have other shelter guests babysit for any reason, including taking smoke breaks.**
4. **10pm curfew.** My family will be inside the shelter every night before curfew. We understand that a night out is allowed for **approved** reasons only with **PRIOR** staff approval.
5. **10pm-7am quiet time.** My family will be in our room by 10pm. We will keep voices and activity quiet during these hours. Community room TV off by 9pm.
6. **Not have guests or visitors anywhere on property:** inside shelter or in parking lot. I will make arrangements to meet visitors off property. I will not talk to visitors off property through bedroom windows.
7. **Participate in weekly deep clean of my room unit, daily community room chores** (to be assigned), **and weekly house meetings** (to be scheduled).
8. **Provide my family's own food, hygiene supplies, and laundry supplies.** If any shelter supplies are available, staff will distribute when asked and as needed at their discretion. Shelter supplies are donated by the community and only available while they last. They should not be my primary source of supplies.
9. **To keep all interior doors closed at all times.** I will not prop open any room doors, including laundry room.
10. **Eat and drink at the community room tables only.** No food, drink, candy, etc. in living room area or at the computer table.
11. **Do laundry on my assigned laundry day.** Sunday is make-up day. If I have emergency laundry (soiled bedding/linens) I will check with staff first. I will keep laundry room door closed. No dryer sheets allowed.
12. **Be as fragrance free as possible.** I will not use air freshener sprays or gels, dryer sheets, perfume, incense, candles, etc. in shelter or immediately before entering shelter.
13. **No smoking, alcohol, drugs, weapons, or illegal activity on property.**
14. **No sexual relations in shelter or on property.** Shelter is a temporary shared space. My words and actions will be appropriate for all ages while on shelter property.

BUT WHY?

- Within 1 hour of guests arriving to Pear Blossom Place, a rule was broken...
 - Mom wanted to go smoke; everyone was in their room- who's going to watch her child?
- What's the purpose of our "rules"?
- What's the punishment?
- What type of dynamic does it create to have rules?
 - So what if someone uses dryer sheets?
 - Guests have to watch their kids at all times, yet can't prop open their door?
 - We want shelter to be friendly and welcoming, but a child can't have a friend over?





WE KEPT ASKING...

If I were to walk into shelter today with my family, how
would I want to be treated?



HOW TO START TO CHANGE

- Training, training, training
 - WSCADV – “Running a Shelter”
 - Rules can be triggering
 - A way to control someone
- What do our values say?
 - Family Support Principles
 - Protective Factors
 - Trauma Informed Care
 - What is the need behind the behavior?





TOUR OTHER PROGRAMS

- Visit other programs to see what they're doing
 - What can we take from their program?
 - What are we doing well?
 - What successes have they had with their program?

PRIORITIZATION OF SHELTER BEDS

- July 2015 – began using Vulnerability Index Family Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-F-SPDAT)
 - No longer first come first served
 - Prioritizing shelter placement
- Began to see longer shelter stay
 - Higher barriers to housing
 - Poor rental market
- So what do we do at day 91?





OPEN ENDED STAY

- Dropped out length of stay requirement and went to open ended stay
- Seeing higher barriers to housing, needing more time to identify a housing option
 - Many of the families transition into a permanent supportive housing program
- Dynamic change now that there's no clock ticking for families
 - Able to settle
 - Work on their own goals
 - Consistency for kids

CHANGE IN LANGUAGE

- Working with staff to change our language when working with families, and when talking about the expectations at shelter
- If we have a rule that you must be respectful to one another, are we assuming that our families won't do that already? Why do we need to say it?



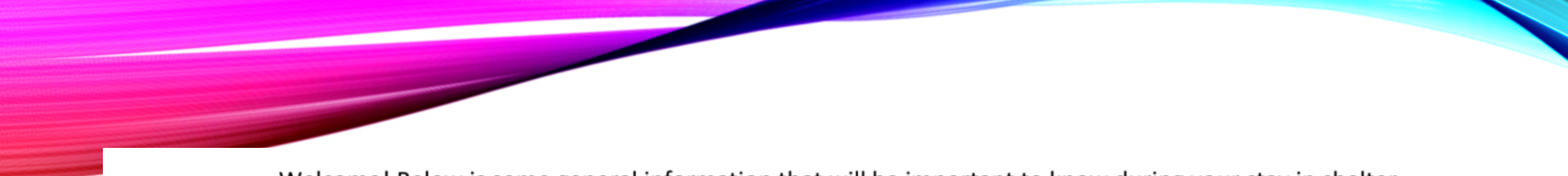
SLOW PROGRESSION

- Didn't throw all of the rules out at once
- Took time to evaluate each change– what's going well with removing one of the rules?
- Are there unintended consequences?
- Do we need to be clearer on different things?



DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- Property is smoke free- non negotiable
 - But, not going to be exited for it.
 - Staff address it with you
 - Make a plan to support smoking off the property if needed
- Ask that guests are not using drugs or alcohol on the property or in their rooms
 - Harm reduction approach
 - Offer lock boxes if requested
 - Address issues individually through case management



Welcome! Below is some general information that will be important to know during your stay in shelter.

- We recognize that Pear Blossom Place shelter is a last resort for families. As such, we ask that families stay at shelter nightly. If you expect to be away from shelter for more than a night, please notify your case manager or Program Manager.
 - If families do not notify staff of an absence longer than 3 days, staff will reach out to you to find out if you will return.
 - After 7 days of absence from shelter, staff will attempt to contact you again. If you are unable to return to shelter or contact us within 48 hours, you will lose your shelter space.
 - Staff will pack your belongings and it will be held for one week, and can be picked up at our main office.
 - If you lose your shelter space and find yourself needing shelter again, you may complete Coordinated Entry and go on the waiting list.
- We are committed to your health, safety, and well-being and we work to maintain a comfortable family friendly environment. We ask that you do not use illegal drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, vaporizers or e-cigarettes on Pear Blossom Place property.
 - If you possess any of these items, including edible marijuana, prescribed medications, or alcohol, please request a lock box from a staff member so that you can securely store these items away from children.
- The entire property is a smoke/vape free environment. We ask that you smoke off the property at all times
 - If you need to leave the property to smoke, please arrange for someone to watch your child or take your child with you.

child with you.

- If you feel that use of legal or illegal substances are negatively affecting your family, please ask a staff person for assistance. Admitting to or asking for assistance with a substance abuse challenge will NOT affect your shelter stay.
- Weapons, threatening behavior, and illegal activity are not permitted at the shelter.
- We respect your needs for privacy and independence, and believe that you know what is best for your family. We want your stay here to be a positive memory for your family.
- We understand that living together with others can be both a joy and a challenge. If you experience conflicts with other guests that you are not able to resolve on your own, please ask staff or volunteer for assistance.
- Pets are not permitted. We allow service dogs that provide a direct service to their owner. Service dogs must be controlled by their owner at all times either on a leash or in a kennel. Service dogs may not be left unattended.
- You are welcome to have guests including service providers, during daytime hours when staff are present. This is typically Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:00AM and 5:00 PM.
 - If you have a service provider coming outside of these hours, please coordinate with the PBP Program Manager so we can accommodate you as best as possible.
- Pear Blossom Place staff will complete a registered sex offender check on all guests. No registered sex offenders will be allowed on property.
- If you find yourself needing to provide a physical address while you are staying in shelter, please complete the Guest Mail form with your case manager.
- You are welcome to park your vehicle in the parking lot during your stay. We do not allow RV parking onsite.
 - If your vehicle is broken down or remains at shelter for more than 10 days after you exit shelter, it will be towed at the owner's expense.
- Our staff are unable to babysit or watch your children; if you arrange for another shelter guest to watch your children, please notify our staff. If you need support with identifying childcare for your family, we can help!
- If you need anything, we are here to help! Do not hesitate to connect with our team at Pear Blossom Place.



SUPPORTING STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

- Some staff and volunteers have struggled with our approach
 - There aren't any rules! People can do whatever they want!
- Working individually with each person, as well as a whole team to get buy in and understand why we've transitioned
- Reminder that it's about basic health and safety



SUCCESSES

- Families are able to settle; have consistency for their children
- Open ended stay allows families time to gain permanent supportive housing
- Shelter feels more like a home. The atmosphere is positive and nonpunative
- Families come back to volunteer



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