

## CHAPTER 5 -- SHELTER PROTOCOLS

### *Chapter Highlights*

This chapter is designed to assist domestic violence shelter advocates with the creation of culturally sensitive shelter protocols for battered immigrant residents. The following topics should be integrated into shelter planning as they will help shelters overcome potential barriers that immigrant residents may have to their services.

#### ❑ **ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A SHELTER PROTOCOL:**

- ✓ Language Accessibility
- ✓ "Acculturation" (difficulties immigrant clients have when adapting to U.S. culture and understanding how U.S. legal and social service systems function).
- ✓ Length of Shelter Stay
- ✓ Flexibility in Food Preparation
- ✓ Child Care and Discipline of Children
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Employment status of the immigrant resident
- ✓ Physical Accessibility of the shelter to immigrant women
- ✓ Grievance Procedures
- ✓ Assisting out-of-state clients who are fleeing violence
- ✓ Support by other agencies:
  - Develop relationships with immigration-based agencies.
  - Recruit pro bono immigration and family law attorneys to assist with legal needs of clients.
  - Recruit interpreters and volunteers with connections to the immigrant community.
  - Tap into the cultural resources of local, state and national organizations.
  - Seek the assistance and support of your state domestic violence coalition.

#### ❑ **MODEL PROTOCOL** (Adapted from protocols designed by the Asian Women's Shelter and Aasra (Shelter Services and Support for the South Asian Community)).

## CHAPTER 5

### SHELTER PROTOCOLS

*by Leslye Orloff, Rachel Little, and Tara Pappas*

#### INTRODUCTION

To leave a violent household and seek the help of strangers in a shelter is a courageous and difficult act for any woman. Various factors make the process of fleeing violence even more complicated for immigrant women. Immigrant victims of domestic violence are often reluctant to go to shelters because they fear that they will be turned away, be reported to the INS by shelter staff, be isolated from their communities, be unable to communicate with the staff, and be prevented from eating familiar foods or practicing their religious and cultural traditions. For shelters to become safe, comfortable, and accessible to battered immigrant women, shelter staff need to be prepared to work flexibly and creatively with this population.

Staff need to recognize that battered immigrant women may also need greater assistance than U.S.-born victims of domestic violence. Immigrant women may not know where or how to seek social and legal services. They may have immigration problems, be unable to communicate in English, be illiterate in their spoken language, have child care concerns, and face other impediments to gaining meaningful, lawful employment.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will provide an overview of steps shelters can take to adapt existing shelter rules, policies, and protocols in a manner that will alleviate immigrant women's fears and meet their special needs. It will further offer a suggested model protocol that shelters can use to formulate policies for accommodating culturally diverse populations.

#### DEVELOPING PROTOCOLS

When creating protocols to assist battered immigrant women, consider the following issues.

##### A. Language Accessibility

A major concern facing battered immigrant women is the potential language barrier between themselves and shelter personnel. To minimize this problem:

---

<sup>1</sup>Kimberle Crenshaw. *Women of Color Mapping Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*. 43 Stan. L. Rev. 1244, (1991).

\*Hire multilingual and multicultural staff, including caseworkers, counselors, and intake staff to cover all shifts, including evenings and weekends (see Chapter 4).

\*Create telephone prompts in different languages.

\*Run a hotline number with prompts in more than one language and have a person who can speak more than one language answer the phones.

\*Encourage shelter staff to take language classes to learn the language of the immigrant community your shelter serves the most (see Chapter 3).

\*Create a pool of on-call interpreters who are paid by the hour to translate for battered immigrants during group counseling sessions and legal/social services appointments (see Chapter 3).

\*Recruit multilingual/multicultural volunteers who can be trained on domestic violence and assist with translations (see Chapter 4).

\*Make a cellular phone available to your pool of volunteer translators and rotate it as needed.

\*Use the AT&T language line to facilitate communication with non-English speaking battered women (see Chapter 3). Use the National Domestic Violence Hotline sparingly to provide brief emergency assistance and referrals and to determine if the person a client has brought to translate is someone whom the client is comfortable with.

\*Translate all intake forms, shelter rules, and shelter policies into all necessary languages.

For shelters in areas where there is not a large immigrant population:

\*Band together with other agencies to share the costs of establishing and using interpreter services.

\*Develop a statewide list of bilingual staff and volunteers that work at each social service agency.

\*Have the state domestic violence coalition sign up for the AT&T language line and share the access code with all the participating agencies so that each agency does not have to pay the membership fee (see Chapter 3).

\*Share language resources.

\*Develop lists of interpreters across the state. All WIC offices are required to provide interpreters and they do not inquire about the status of clients seeking their services. Call your local WIC office to obtain their list of interpreters. You may also want to try the local Red Cross, local universities, language teachers, or the Department of Education as these agencies may be able to provide names of persons who can provide interpretation services.

## B. Acculturation

Battered immigrant women may still be struggling to adjust and acclimate themselves to U.S. culture. Many newly-arrived immigrants may not understand how systems operate that we take for granted. For example, they may not know how to mail a letter in the United States, how area codes work, what a P.O. box is, or how to leave a message on a voice mail system. To assist residents with these problems:

\*Create basic instructions on how to use the shelter's beeper, how to set the shelter's alarm, and how to use the appliances in the house. Make posters in numerous languages. Use pictures to communicate instructions as well.

\*If residents will be in contact with numerous service providers or attorneys as a part of their individual case management plan, teach them how voice mail systems work and basic phone etiquette. Helping clients learn how to carry out goals on their own can be very empowering for everyone involved.

\*Offer basic skills classes to immigrant residents as a part of any job training program that your shelter runs. These classes can teach immigrant women how to do such things as open bank accounts, use ATMs, write checks, do their taxes, fill out job applications, manage bills, etc.

## C. Shelter Stay

\*Battered immigrant women may need to stay in the shelter for a longer period of time to accommodate processing of VAWA cases, access to work authorization, access to social services, job training needs, etc. Be flexible and work with battered immigrants to help them attain self-sufficiency and locate a place where they can safely move after the shelter stay.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Leti Volpp and Leni Marin. *Working With Battered Immigrant Women: A Handbook to Make Services Accessible*. Family Violence Prevention Fund. 12 (no date).

#### D. Food Preparation

Shelters can also increase their capacity to better serve battered immigrant women by allowing them to prepare meals that they and their children are accustomed to eating.<sup>3</sup> Given the uncertainty of life in a shelter, it may give a battered woman some sense of control to cook her native food her way. Shelters can:

- \*Ask women to place specific foods they require on the weekly shopping list.
- \*Offer a vegetarian menu for women who do not consume meat for personal or religious reasons.
- \*Find out what types of food staples women from the immigrant community in your area consume frequently and keep these on hand at the shelter (such as rice, tortillas, etc.)
- \*Purchase utensils and cookware needed to prepare meals of certain ethnic groups.
- \*Keep spices, dried foods, and teas on hand for women admitted for emergency shelter after the weekly shopping has occurred.
- \*Prepare and allow for keeping kosher.
- \*Permit immigrant women to opt out of group cooking duties at shelters that have these arrangements so that they can cook foods separately that are familiar to them.
- \*Buy gift certificates from grocery stores that sell food and products to specific ethnic communities.

#### E. Children/Discipline

Child care differs from culture to culture. Most shelters have a policy requiring a nonviolent approach to disciplining children as well as rules against shaming, name calling, and so forth. Many shelters also set bedtimes and sleeping arrangements for children that may conflict with certain cultural traditions. Immigrant women come from a variety of cultures where different techniques are used to discipline children, some of

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

which may counter the rules set out by the shelter. Shelter personnel can help alleviate some of these conflicts by:

- \*Asking women about their practices and customs for child rearing and working with women to find to discipline children that are consistent with shelter policies and are culturally appropriate.

- \*Allowing for flexibility in children's bedtimes, where children sleep, and child care.

- \*Helping women through counseling to reestablish their role as a disciplinarian for their children. It is often the case that an abuser will undermine this role. This may also occur in a shelter, as shelter rules may inevitably supersede those of the mother. When the mother and her children move out of the shelter and the mother is finally "in charge" of the home, the children may unconsciously see their mother's rules as unenforceable.

## F. Religion

Religion is a very personal issue for many battered immigrant women and it often affects their willingness to report abuse or seek shelter. For many, religion is a way of life with certain standards and rules that must be followed under all circumstances. It is important for domestic violence shelters to try to allow for flexibility in this area for women of different faiths. Certain practices may seem disruptive at first, but with some careful planning, cooperation, and understanding, a shelter can allow women to practice their specific religion while staying at the shelter.

- \*Keep an open line of communication about what religious beliefs are important to immigrant residents and what the residents need to fulfill their religious duties.

- \*Learn about religious practices among the immigrant groups the shelter serves.

- \*Plan group meetings at times when women will not be involved in worship activities.

- \*Designate certain spaces within the shelter where women can practice their religion (such as an area where incense or candles can be burned safely).

- \*Adopt a policy of acceptance of all religions and beliefs and work with shelter residents to find a way for them to meet religious obligations while residing at the shelter.

\*Purchase foods and allow residents to prepare meals consistent with religious dietary restrictions.

\*Allow residents to observe religious holidays at the shelter. If appropriate, encourage interested staff and residents to share this in experience with the resident to learn more about her cultural and religious traditions.

## G. Work

Shelters frequently ask residents to leave their present jobs in order to protect them from attacks by abusers at the workplace. These policies were developed because abusers could also follow shelter residents after work and discover the shelter's location. Given welfare reform and welfare-to-work programs, these policies could pose problems for many battered women. Further, some battered immigrant women could become ineligible to work legally if they are required to leave their present job to remain at the shelter. Other battered immigrants could be working without legal work authorization. Under these circumstances, finding a new job after her shelter stay that would accommodate the battered immigrant could be very difficult. Before urging an immigrant woman to quit her job, shelter staff should inquire about her present employment and ask the battered immigrant whether:<sup>4</sup>

\*Her job is visa specific. Sometimes employment with a specific employer is a condition for keeping a visa to remain in the United States.

\*She started working at her present job before 1990. If this is the case, her job is considered "grandfathered." Beginning in 1990, Employer Sanctions required all employers to have a signed I-9 form for each employee. Employees working before that date can continue working even if are not legally authorized to work and the employer would not be subject to sanctions. If she were to leave that job, it would be difficult to find another without legal work authorization.

\*Some employers will hire women without documents. An immigrant can do this so long as she does not present false papers to show residency or falsely claim to be a U.S. citizen. However, it can be very hard to find employers who will do this as employers could be subject to employer sanctions. If a shelter resident has work and is undocumented, shelter staff should not encourage her to leave unless alternative employment is readily available as she may have great difficulty finding other employment.

---

<sup>4</sup>Leti Volpp and Leni Marin. *Working With Battered Immigrant Women: A Handbook to Make Services Accessible*. Family Violence Prevention Fund. 11 (no date).

If a shelter is considering advising an employed battered immigrant to leave her job, the battered immigrant should be referred for a consultation with an immigration attorney. This attorney can assess her options for obtaining legal work authorization and inform her of any risks she might face when leaving her current job.

#### H. Accessibility

\* Offer transportation services for immigrant women living in isolated areas where public transportation may be more limited.<sup>5</sup>

\*Participate in community development plans by advocating for the creation of new shelters in parts of your city or county where immigrant women reside.

#### I. Grievance Procedures

\*Provide an explanation of the shelter's grievance procedure in as many languages as necessary.

\*Train all interpreters and staff how to mediate conflicts as they arise.

\*Allow residents to write or present complaints in the language they feel most comfortable using.

#### J. Out-of-State Clients

In some cases, your shelter may see clients who cannot be protected by your agency. You may find during the intake interview that your client needs to leave the state or county to be safe from her abuser. Her abuser may also discover the whereabouts of the shelter or the transitional housing program where she resides, which puts your client at even greater danger. To assist clients who need this type of assistance:

\*Identify shelters across the state and in neighboring states that work with immigrant clients and are committed to providing culturally competent services. If these do not exist, offer to collaborate with state domestic violence coalitions and hold cultural competency training for these shelters. You should also identify shelters that are interested in assisting battered immigrants and can take

---

<sup>5</sup>See Leti Volpp and Leni Marin. *Working With Battered Immigrant Women: A Handbook to Make Services Accessible*. Family Violence Prevention Fund. 10 (no date).

temporary measures to assist them during their stay (such as contracting out an interpreter). (The directory that accompanies this manual can be an important resource for this type of assistance. It lists both agencies with bilingual capabilities and agencies that have learned how to offer culturally competent services to battered immigrants).

\*Work with these shelters to coordinate services and create a crisis response team that can assist battered immigrant clients with transportation to a shelter in another jurisdiction. Make this arrangement reciprocal and offer to take clients in flight from the other shelters as well. Both parties should agree to answer any emergency calls that come in from the other shelter.

\*Find out how domestic violence and family laws operate in the neighboring states. Your client may need to register her protection order or have advocates in the new state help her obtain a new order.

\*Find out what type of custody arrangement your client has with the abuser. If she has sole permanent custody through a protection order or custody order, where safe to do so, seek court permission to take the children over the state border. Ask the court to order a visitation schedule that will allow for the move and continue to protect the safety of the battered immigrant and her children. Battered immigrants with custody orders who must flee for their safety should immediately contact a family lawyer in the new jurisdiction who has been trained in domestic violence. This attorney can help her file for modification of the visitation provision of the prior state's order under the emergency provisions of the state's Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act. Since custody jurisdictional issues can be complicated, it is essential that battered immigrants with children receive trained legal representation in each state, and that the attorneys work together.<sup>6</sup>

## **SUPPORT**

Adapting shelter practices to fit the needs of new groups of women is a task that can be eased by working with others. There are often other groups in the community who can aid shelters in changing policies, attitudes, and rules. The following are suggestions for building strong cultural, legal, and community support systems for shelters that work with battered immigrants.

---

<sup>6</sup>For referrals to family lawyers, call domestic violence programs in your client's new jurisdiction listed in the directory. You may also contact Leslye Orloff at Ayuda at (202) 387-0434 for further referral information.

- \*Develop relationships with organizations that have been working with battered immigrant women or immigrant populations.
- \*Recruit pro bono attorneys who work with battered immigrant women or immigration issues. Work with the local Legal Services agency to encourage this program to prioritize the acceptance of cases for battered immigrant women. Work with the local Bar Association to create more legal resources for battered immigrant women.
- \*Recruit pro bono family lawyers to receive domestic violence training and assist with protection order, custody, and child support cases.
- \*Make use of volunteers who can assist your program with their language skills and connections to the immigrant community.
- \*Network in your community, state or region with other shelters to create a model approach that all local shelters can follow when working with battered immigrants.
- \*Create resource lists of people in your community who can offer help in housing, work, immigration, accessing benefits, language, or education.
- \*Receive training on how immigration law may impact clients so that staff can spot issues as they arise.
- \*If local resources are few, ask your state coalition to help you gather culturally specific materials and resources. You may want to contact Ayuda, the Family Violence Prevention Fund and other members of the National Network on Behalf of Battered Immigrant Women for materials as well. Search the Internet for resources and look into on-line discussion groups that cover cultural competency issues.
- \*For State Coalitions: Ask each domestic violence program in your state to designate one or two staff members as outreach coordinators. Host a meeting every month to train, brainstorm, and network. Invite women from other communities to these meetings and work on building partnerships and allies to help do domestic violence work.

## MODEL PROTOCOL FOR BATTERED IMMIGRANT WOMEN (adapted from the Asian Women's Shelter<sup>7</sup> and Aasra<sup>8</sup>)

The following protocol is a suggested model. We recommend that you conduct additional research to create a protocol that is suitable to your program's mission and the actual immigrant population in your area.

Welcome to the Anywhere Women's Shelter. By joining our community, you have taken a major step toward creating a life that is free of domestic violence. We hope that your time with us is both helpful and rewarding. The following rules have been designed to make your stay here comfortable and safe. If you have any questions or comments about the house rules, please speak with a staff member in the language you feel most comfortable using. Staff will access interpreter services for you to help make communication easier. The Anywhere Shelter provides services to all battered women and their children regardless of color, race, national origin, immigration status, sexual identity, gender, religion, disability, religion, education level, or occupation.

### SAFETY

- 1) Do not reveal the address of the shelter or location to anyone. This includes friends, relatives, and co-workers. If you are expecting important mail such as tax returns or immigration-related paperwork, you may use the P.O. (Post Office) Box address of the shelter or get your own P.O. box at the local post office. Have the post office forward your mail to either address.
- 2) Never have anyone drop you off or pick you up at or near the shelter. Ask a staff member to show you where the safe drop off and pick up points are.
- 3) No visitors are allowed to visit the shelter. Arrange to meet them at their home or at a safe location away from the shelter.

---

<sup>7</sup>Asian Women's Shelter. Address - 3543 18th Street, Box 19, San Francisco, CA 94110. Phone - (415) 751-7110. Fax - (415) 751-0806.

<sup>8</sup>Aasra (Shelter and Support Services for the Victims of Domestic Violence of the South Asian Community). Address - 41835 Albrae Street, Fremont, CA 94358. Phone - (510) 657-1245. Fax - (510) 657-1246. E-mail - Asraal@aol.com

- 3) Do not identify the house as a shelter to repair workers, postal carriers, or to strangers on the telephone.
- 4) Do not reveal the names of other residents to anyone.
- 6) Do not allow children or teenagers to answer the phone or the door.
- 7) Keep the front door of the house locked at all times. Do not let any strangers into the house. Repair workers are only scheduled to come by when staff are at the shelter. If someone comes over in the evening and you have not been informed by staff to expect this person, page a staff member immediately. If you do not know how to use the pager, ask a staff member to explain it to you. Feel free to take notes on its use in your own language so that you will have instructions at hand when you need them.
- 8) The staff person on call during the night will set the alarm at curfew time. You will be shown how to use the alarm on your first day in the shelter. Please ask for further clarification or instructions if you need them.
- 9) No weapons are allowed in the house. If you carry mace or pepper spray, please leave it with a staff member while you are in the shelter. You may check it out when you leave the shelter during the day or evening.
- 10) Do not burn candles in your room. You may light incense in your room, but do not leave it unattended and make sure it is out of reach of children. You may light candles or incense in the basement worship space, but do not leave these unattended.
- 11) To protect residents, you are required to keep the shelter's location a secret after you leave.

#### NO CONTACT WITH ABUSER

While you are in the shelter, you are not permitted to contact your abuser. Do not call or write to him/her. Do not tell the abuser where you are. Do not tell the abuser's friends or family where you are. Do not call the abuser from the house phone as these calls could be traced. If we receive any mail from your abuser, we will send it back. If we receive phone calls from the abuser or the abuser's friends or family, we will say that you are not here. For reasons of confidentiality, we will not inform you that he has attempted to make contact with you. Failure to follow this policy could jeopardize your safety, the safety of other residents, and your shelter stay.

#### CURFEW

Curfew is at 10:00 p.m. unless you have made special arrangements with the staff. You are not permitted to stay elsewhere overnight while you are a resident of the shelter.

## SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

Whenever you leave the shelter, you must sign out your destination and the time you will return. When you return, sign in and put down your actual return time. There are no exceptions to this. Please call the shelter immediately if you are going to be late.

## NONVIOLENCE

Do not yell or use abusive language toward residents, staff, or your children. Do not hit, threaten or behave violently toward anyone in the shelter, including your children. Violent or aggressive behavior will result in your removal from the shelter.

## SHELTER STAY

All residents may stay in the shelter for up to 90 days. If you need more time to resolve any immigration legal problems, apply for public benefits, find work, or qualify for transitional housing, this stay can be extended. Please inform your personal advocate when you arrive at the shelter if you think that you will need to stay more than 90 days and we will work out a plan to accommodate you.

## ROOMS

- 1) If you have children, you will usually be given a room for yourself and your children.
- 2) If you do not have children, you may have to share your room with other residents.
- 3) Beds will be provided for you and each of your children. If you need a different sleeping arrangement, please talk to a staff member and we will find alternatives for you (such as a futon).
- 4) You will be given a key to your room. If you lose the key, you will have to pay a small fee to get it replaced. Never give your key to anyone but a staff member. You will be expected to return it when you leave the shelter.
- 5) Please keep your room as clean as possible.

## SHELTER PROGRAMS

- 1) Weekly house meetings are held every Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. Translators are available during these meetings if needed. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory. The only

exemptions are work, religious commitments, or the illness of yourself or one of your children. If enough residents have conflicts, the staff are willing to change the meeting date and time.

2) Weekly support group meetings are required of each resident as well. Bilingual advocates facilitate these meetings and additional interpreters will be available as needed.

3) You will be expected to attend a weekly individual meeting with your personal advocate. During this meeting, you will be working on a case plan and on developing personal goals. These will depend on your individual needs. Each advocate is trained to assist you with protection orders, immigration legal problems, and various social service issues. The advocate can provide you with referrals to attorneys, language/literacy classes, and therapists for your children. As your shelter stay progresses, the advocate will work with you to find housing, employment, and public benefits for which you or your children may qualify. We will do the best we can to provide you with an advocate who speaks your language or we will arrange for an interpreter to be present. All forms and information that your advocate gives you will be printed in the language that you feel most comfortable using.

4) The shelter offers classes in parenting, computer skills, and basic life skills. Your advocate will place you in these classes depending on your needs and interests. If you work 20 hours a week, you will not be expected to attend more than two classes a week. If you work 40 hours, you will only have to attend one class a week. If you want to take ESL or literacy classes, these can be substituted for the classes listed above.

4) You are expected to keep all appointments with outside service providers and doctors as arranged by yourself and your advocate. If you are unable to keep an appointment, please notify your advocate immediately so that a new date can be arranged and a volunteer translator can be found to accompany you.

5) Child care will be available during all shelter meetings. If you need to go to an outside appointment, please make your own child care arrangements or talk to the staff about having a volunteer or resident watch your children.

## RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL PROGRAMS

1) The basement recreation room is a designated sacred space for residents to practice their religious faith. Please speak to a staff member about what your special needs may be (such as if you want to light incense or have a designated time where you pray or meditate). We will do our best to accommodate you.

2) If you attend worship services regularly, we ask that you make alternative arrangements during your stay in the shelter to prevent your abuser from following you back to the shelter.

3) If important cultural or religious events occur while you are staying at the shelter, please let a staff member know. We want to help you celebrate and would welcome having a special

house meeting where you can educate the other members about the event and invite them to participate.

4) A mandatory cultural competency/diversity class is held once every two weeks to help residents communicate effectively with one another, resolve conflicts, and learn from each other. Interpreters will be present during these meetings to help facilitate discussion.

5) On a more informal level, we encourage you and the other residents to share and learn about one another's cultures and religious beliefs through music, dance, foods, etc. If you would be interested in having a cultural exchange, please talk to a staff member.

6) You will be excused from any mandatory group meetings that conflict with any cultural or religious events. Please let the staff know in advance so that we can reschedule meetings.

## WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

On weekends, the shelter will pay for one activity such as going to the movies, renting movies, going to the zoo, or going to museums. If there is an activity that you are interested in doing, please bring it up during the house meeting. When renting movies, please do not choose movies that contain sexually explicit scenes or violence.

## WORK

If you are currently employed, your advocate will work out a safety plan with you on your first day in the shelter. If your abuser knows where you work and you need to keep your job for immigration purposes, we encourage you to try to use vacation or sick leave as much as possible.

To protect the safety of the shelter, we ask that you switch your shifts around and take different routes to and from work. If you suspect that you are being followed while going to or from work, go to a well-lit public area and call the shelter immediately. An advocate will pick you up and bring you back to the shelter. If you have hidden your job from your abuser, you may continue to work and follow the same safety precautions. If you were not working prior to coming to the shelter, we ask that you continue to not do so. As your stay at the shelter draws to a close, we will work with you to find employment. We have a clothes bank with outfits suitable to be worn to a job interview and we offer job skills classes if this becomes a part of your case plan.

## CHILDREN

1) Parents are responsible for their children at all times. The staff will only provide child care during mandatory meetings and outside appointments. Do not ask the volunteers to watch your children unless you have first talked to a staff member. Staff can refer you to local child care programs if you need these services.

- 2) Do not use violence or verbal abuse to discipline your children. Shelter staff are required by law to report abuse and neglect of children. Therapy and support are available to you if you are having difficulty with your children.
- 3) You and your children must be up, dressed, beds made, breakfast eaten, and children taken to school/child care by 10:00 a.m. Monday through Friday.
- 4) Set a bathing and feeding schedule for your children and adhere to it. Children should be bathed and fed by 8:00 p.m.
- 5) Children should be in bed by 8:30 p.m. on weekdays during the school year and at 9:30 p.m. during the summer, holidays, and weekends. Older children over the age of 10 can stay up an additional hour. If you need alternative sleeping arrangements, please speak to a staff member who will try to accommodate you.
- 6) School age children must attend school if it is in session. To protect yourself, your children, and the shelter, please register your children in the school district where the shelter is located. If you would like to send your children to a day care center, talk to a staff member about what options are available in the community. You are responsible for getting your children to and from school/day care.
- 7) Programs are planned for the children during your stay in the shelter. There are also staff members who are trained to provide therapy to children if needed. A schedule of activities is posted in the living room. Volunteers are available to tutor your children during the school year.
- 8) Children cannot invite friends to visit them in the shelter. They must meet them at a safe, neutral place away from the shelter.

## CHORES

- 1) Weekly house chores will be assigned at house meetings and rotated among the residents. Chores include cleaning the bathrooms, cleaning the kitchen (mopping the floor, cleaning the stove), dusting and vacuuming common areas, taking out the trash and recycling, and cleaning the yard.
- 2) If there are certain chores that you cannot do due to illness or disability, please speak to a staff member and we will come up with alternative responsibilities.
- 3) Each resident is responsible for washing, drying, and putting away her dishes after each meal. Please do not leave dishes out as this attracts bugs.
- 4) On a daily basis, please clean up the bathroom (i.e., around the tub or shower drain), refrain from leaving personal belongings in the living room, and make sure that your children to return toys and books to shelves when they are done with them.

## FOOD

- 1) Grocery shopping is done by shelter staff once a week and all residents share the food that is purchased.
- 2) Please submit a shopping list with foods that you need for the week at the house meeting.
- 3) If you have special dietary needs, please inform a staff person.
- 4) You are responsible for preparing all meals for yourself and your children. You may make arrangements to cook collectively with other residents if you wish. We encourage you to cook foods that are culturally familiar to you.
- 5) Please clean up all pots, pans, and utensils that you use. If the shelter does not have a particular utensil that you need, please talk to a staff person.
- 6) If you purchase any personal foods, please put your name on them and keep them in the small refrigerator.
- 7) The shelter does not provide soda, ice cream, candy, or other sugary snacks.
- 8) Food and drink are only to be consumed in the kitchen and dining room. Please do not feed your children in the bedrooms or living room. You may drink tea and water in the living room.

## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES/ILLEGAL DRUGS

No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are allowed in the shelter. If you wish to smoke, you may do so in the backyard. If you are taking any prescription drugs, please let the staff know. Be sure to either keep them in a secure location out of the reach of children or leave them with staff.

## PHONES

- 1) If you are expecting calls from your attorney, social worker, etc., please give them the business phone number and let your advocate know.
- 2) To make outgoing calls, please use the house phone. Log in the number you are dialing next to the phone. Please limit your calls to 15 minutes. No long distance calls are allowed.

## QUIET HOURS

Please be considerate of noise in the evenings. Quiet hours are from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.  
LAUNDRY HOURS

Laundry hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

#### PET POLICY

No pets are allowed except for seeing eye dogs.

#### DONATIONS

If you need personal toiletries or clothes, please speak with a staff member. We receive numerous donations and can generally assist you.

#### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If no staff member is available, the following procedures should be followed.

- 1) Life threatening emergencies - call 911 and then call a staff member on the beeper.
- 2) Non-life threatening emergencies - call the beeper number. Dial 555-1234. When you hear "beep beep beep," dial 911#. When you hear "beep beep beep," hang up. Wait 10 to 15 minutes for the call to be returned. If no one has called back after 15 minutes, try again. A staff member will call the house phone number, identify herself by name, and assist you.

Use the pager if shelter repairs are needed immediately (plumbing, electricity out, etc.), if shelter resident(s) are behaving inappropriately, if you see a suspicious person outside of the shelter, if children have been left alone in the shelter, if someone is not back by curfew, or if you or someone else is suicidal.

#### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

During your intake with your personal advocate, you will be asked to provide information about what you want the staff to do if you are killed or are caught in circumstances where it is impossible for you to return to the shelter (i.e., arrested by the INS). This is particularly important if you have children.

#### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If conflicts occur:

- 1) Take some time in your room or in the backyard to calm down, if necessary.

- 2) Figure out what is the cause of the problem or conflict.
- 3) If the conflict is with a resident, please talk to that person directly in a positive and nonviolent way. If you feel uncomfortable talking to that person, ask a staff member to help you.
- 4) If you have a problem with a staff member or a shelter program, first try to talk to that staff member directly. If this is not possible, speak with your personal advocate or the shelter director.
- 5) If you do not feel that progress is being made on your complaint, you may present a formal complaint to the shelter staff in writing or verbally in the language you feel most comfortable using.
- 6) When you present your grievance, describe your complaint, the steps you have taken to resolve the problem, and why you believe that they have not worked. The shelter staff will review your formal grievance during the weekly staff meeting and may hold a hearing to gather information and allow other residents to speak on the issue. After receiving your grievance, the staff have 15 days to make a decision and notify you. This decision will be final.
- 7) Please use the grievance procedure if you feel that it is necessary. You will not be penalized in any way, experience retaliation, or discrimination for using this grievance procedure.
- 8) If you discover that any of your personal belongings have been stolen, notify a staff member immediately and we will hold an emergency meeting. During this meeting, we will inform all residents that no one can leave the house until the person who has stolen the item either comes forward or anonymously returns the missing items to the staff office. Television and radio privileges will be revoked during this time. If you have any valuable items that you are worried about keeping in your room, a staff person will lock them in the office safe for you.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The shelter staff will not share any information about you to other residents of the shelter except for your name, the names and ages of your children, and the language you speak. Any information that you choose to share with the residents is your choice. The staff, volunteers, and interns work together as a team to help the residents. As a result, we may need to share information about you to provide the best possible services to you. Know that all staff have been trained and will not disclose any information to residents or persons outside of the shelter without your permission.

## EXIT PROCEDURES

When you leave the shelter:

- 1) Please clean your room and leave your washed and folded linens on the beds.
- 2) Please take your personal belongings with you. You will have a week after you leave the shelter to pick up your belongings. You will only be allowed back into the shelter if a staff member is on duty. Please make arrangements with a staff member to pick up your things. If you fail to return within a week or do not make other arrangements, your belongings will be donated to new residents.
- 3) If you will need furnishings for your new home, please talk to your personal advocate and we will see if any arrangements can be made for you.
- 4) Please leave a forwarding address so that we can get your mail to you if you decide not to participate in a transitional housing program.

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Transitional housing is available to all qualified women and children upon leaving the shelter. The application process begins during your last month in the shelter. To qualify, you must be a current resident of the shelter, show that you have followed your individual case plan to the best of your ability, and be able to support yourself through work, child support, and/or public assistance. We refer residents to several different transitional housing programs. Your personal advocate will help you complete the paperwork and make sure that an interpreter is present at all interviews.

The transitional housing program lasts for two years and is subsidized so that you pay no more than 30% of your monthly income toward your monthly rent. A shelter staff member will meet with you periodically during this time to assist you with any problems that come up. If you experience financial difficulties or fear for your safety, notify the shelter immediately. If necessary, you can return to the shelter. Otherwise, we will work with you to explore other options that are available to you.