



VILLA *of* HOPE
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Sanctuary Handbook
For
Youth, Individuals and Families



sanctuary
INSTITUTE

What Is the Sanctuary Model®?

- Villa of Hope operates under the Sanctuary Model®, a trauma-informed model of care that promotes positive and sustainable change for youth, families and Villa employees.
- The model helps us to use what we know about the effects of trauma, adversity, and chronic stress on individuals and families to create and to help the people we serve grow, change and heal within their families.
- We know that in order to provide good services, we have to have a healthy environment.
- The same is true for people who are leaving treatment with us – they also need to have a healthy environment in which they can practice their new skills. That is why we ask family members to practice the same strategies and be familiar with the same language that our staff members use while working with our youth.
- We know that the more we take care of ourselves and the families supporting our youth, the better our youth will do.

The Goal Is to Create Change That Promotes Safety for All Family Members!

Sanctuary Model® Facts

- Adversity happens to all people in one way or another. Sometimes people experience different levels of adversity, but what we know is that these difficult life experiences shape how we behave or act.
- When we experience trauma, chronic stress, and adversity, it affects our emotional, physical, and thinking reactions, and we tend to behave in a basic “survival mode”.
- We also believe, very strongly, that people are resilient and can heal from these experiences.
- Because we believe that trauma, chronic stress, and adversity drive how we act, we also believe that it is important that we change the way we talk about problems by changing the questions we ask and changing our mental model.
- We believe the question to ask individuals is: “**what has happened to you?**” in your experience and **NOT** “what is wrong with you”.



Sanctuary Model®: Seven Commitments

Seven Commitments are the values we aspire to, and the ways we treat each other in order to mitigate the effects of trauma.

Commitment	Definition	Why It Matters
Nonviolence	Being safe outside (physically), inside (emotionally), with others (socially), and to do the right thing (moral).	Survivors of chronic stress, adversity and trauma have often experienced violence as part of their trauma: physical, psychological, social and/or moral. This commitment attempts to give the opposite experience within the program, home and community.
Emotional Intelligence	Managing our feelings so that we don't hurt ourselves or others.	Survivors of chronic stress, adversity and trauma have often experienced insensitivity and disrespect regarding their behaviors or feelings. This commitment creates an environment in which people understand the relationship between past experiences, emotions and behaviors and to respond to each other with those relationships in mind.
Social Learning	Respecting and sharing the ideas with each other and making it possible to learn from our mistakes.	Survivors of chronic stress, adversity and trauma may isolate themselves as a way to self-protect and can become engaged in repetitive patterns of thinking and behavior. This commitment promotes collaborative thinking and problem solving to break dysfunctional and repetitive patterns through exposure to other's perspectives and ideas. It also mitigates the isolating effects of shame by viewing mistakes as positive learning opportunities.
Democracy	Sharing decision making (as it is appropriate)	Many definitions of chronic stress and trauma include an overwhelming sense of helplessness during an event which can lead to learned helplessness in the future. Democracy requires active participation and empowerment to counter-act helplessness.
Open Communication	Saying what we mean and not being mean when we say it.	Secrecy is often a component of prolonged exposure to traumatic experiences (i.e.: sexual abuse, parental alcoholism). This commitment creates a community that tolerates expression of emotions and interpersonal and organizational issues.
Social Responsibility	Together we accomplish more, everyone makes a contribution to the family and everything we do matters to the entire family.	Survivors of chronic stress, adversity and trauma have often experienced injustice either during or in response to reporting a traumatic event. This commitment focuses on building a community in which people feel a sense of responsibility and care for each other and the group as a whole and in which people are held accountable for their actions.
Growth and Change	Creating hope for the future of our family.	Survivors of chronic stress, adversity and trauma can become paralyzed by their experiences so that they continue to re-live or repeat the past in ways that prevent healing or growth. This commitment presents a framework to evaluate current behaviors and a focus on the future with goals and planning to break dysfunctional patterns.

Sanctuary Model®: S.E.L.F.

The **S.E.L.F. (Safety, Emotions, Loss, Future)** framework is the language we use to understand problems and solve them without blaming others or ourselves and how we plan for the future.

S.E.L.F. is composed of four categories that are used to measure healing and define the significant impairments people face when exposed to trauma.

- **Safety** – physical, psychological, social and moral. Example: Not tolerating violence of any kind; Belief in yourself (confidence); safe attachments; say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- **Emotion Management** – recognizing and handling feelings without hurting ourselves or others. Example: Recognizing impact of your actions on others.
- **Loss** – acknowledging and grieving past losses or trauma and committing to work against getting stuck in the past while recognizing that all change involves loss. Example: Disrupting dysfunctional patterns.
- **Future** – Re-establishing the capacity for choice and engaging in new behaviors rather than repeating old patterns. Example: Providing and making different choices.

S.E.L.F. is a tool we can use to help us figure things out. When we teach S.E.L.F. to youth, families and individuals, we teach that S.E.L.F. is like a compass; it can help give direction on where to go.

How Does Using S.E.L.F. Help?

- Organizes our thinking to make our problems more manageable.
- Aids in helping us see behavior patterns.
- Provides a road map for recovery.
- Helps get everyone on the same page.
- The language is simple and easy to understand.
- Helps us practice recognizing patterns in thinking, feelings and behavior.

S.E.L.F. is a non-linear framework, so using it means sometimes going out of order when looking at an issue. Many times it makes sense to start with future (where we hope to be) and work backwards, considering issues related to and steps to interventions concerning safety, emotions and loss.



Sanctuary Model®: Tool Kit

The **Tool Kit** is a set of daily practices that reinforce the theory, values and language of Sanctuary. These practices are used to build a trauma-informed community:

- **Community Meetings** – a way to identify feelings, set goals and ask for help.
- **Safety Plans** – a list of things you can do to manage your emotions.
- **Red Flags** – meetings that you or your loved one can call to discuss problems.
- **Self-Care Plans** – a personalized list of ongoing activities that support your health and wellness.

Community Meeting: What is the Purpose?

- The **Community Meeting** is a Sanctuary tool that reflects our commitment to Non-Violence, Emotional Intelligence, Social Responsibility, Growth and Change.
- It is a ritual that is done in a circle, with adults and youth participating together.
- It is used to begin our day, our meetings and important time together in a group.
- The goal is for everyone in a community to participate in at least one per day.
- A “**Feelings Check-In**” utilizes just the first question of “How are you feeling?” and can be done anytime a group seems to be struggling in any way.

How to Conduct a Community Meeting: Step-By-Step

First, ask: ***How are you feeling today (or right now)?***

- The purpose of this question is to help all of us recognize our feelings and manage them. It helps to raise our awareness of our emotions and it helps when we are able to share how we are feeling with others in our family.
- This question also allows others in the family or group to know what is happening with each other and helps us to know if there are concerns or tension that we may require the family or group to provide more support.

Second, ask: ***What is your goal for today (or for this morning, afternoon, or evening)?***

- This question is designed to keep us focused on the future. Sometimes when we have been affected by trauma, chronic stress, and adversity it is hard to envision the future. This question helps us build a bridge from the present to the future.

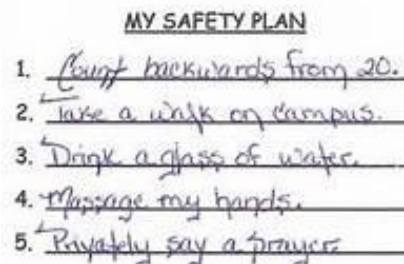
Third, ask: ***Who can you ask for help?***

- This question encourages us to build our relationships with each other and to know we are not in this alone.

Safety Plans

One of the tools we use in Sanctuary to help us deal with our emotions under stressful situations is a safety plan.

- A safety plan lists 5 things to do instead of engaging in unsafe behaviors.
- Safety plans remind us to manage our emotions and to keep ourselves and others safe.
- Safety plans include things we can do alone and with others to help us calm down and stay in control of our feelings and behavior during or following a traumatic event
- We utilize the *Creating a Safety Plan* document to help us make our safety plan.



Red Flag Reviews

What is a Red Flag Review? It is an important Sanctuary tool that assists with healing from trauma by providing a space for open communication and democracy amongst the whole team - including youth and families.

Why would you call one? To address an ongoing issue regarding a youth, family or your experience in our program that has not been resolved to your satisfaction or to address a problem that you foresee in the future if action isn't taken now by the whole team.

Some reasons why a Red Flag review would be called include: A child running away; Injury; Increased aggression; Child, staff or family complaint; Feeling unsafe; or anything else the youth, individual and/or family needs to address as a group.



Who can call a Red Flag Review? Anyone – staff members, youth, parents, guardians, and caregivers. The person calling the Red Flag meeting should state the concern or issue to be addressed ahead of time, so that everyone can gather their thoughts in preparation for the

meeting. If a parent, guardian or caregiver is not able to attend in person, we should make arrangements for them to join by telephone conferencing.

Who you should call if you would like to call a Red Flag Meeting (Name and Number):

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

When should it take place?

- Whenever possible, a Red Flag meeting will take place within 72 hours of the request.

Who should attend?

- Anyone involved with the child or family who can contribute to understanding the problem or identifying the solution should attend. The reason for calling the meeting determines who should attend.

What is the focus?

- The incident of concern is the focus of the meeting – whether individual and family related or system related.
- The meeting is not about blaming or finding fault, but rather on suggesting solutions and actions (future focus)

How is the time spent? One third of the time is spent on describing the concern/problem and two thirds of the time is spent on potential solutions.

The whole team will review any recent history, triggers or other factors related to safety, emotional management, loss or future (S.E.L.F.) Together, everyone will develop a plan to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

Self-Care Plans

You have inherent value and deserve to take care of yourself!

The best person to do that is YOU!

You need to role model for your loved ones, so they can take good care of themselves.

Your wellbeing matters to others who love you!

- Self-Care Plans ask you to make commitments to a set of activities that will help you maintain balance in your life, especially when you are faced with chronic stress and adversity.
- We know that our brains and bodies respond to traumatic events in ways that can hurt us over time.
- Safety plans help us to manage our emotions during or immediately following a traumatic event. Self-care plans help us manage our stress over time.

The categories listed in the Self-Care Plans are:

- Personal Physical – activities like diet, sleep and exercise that help you care for your body.
- Personal Psychological – activities that foster creativity and self-awareness.
- Personal Social – activities that garner support from other people.
- Personal Moral – activities that give you a sense of purpose in the world.
- Caregiving – activities that focus on managing the stress that comes with your role with your loved one.
- Organizational/Work – activities that decrease stress in your workplace.
- Societal – activities that help you feel effective and useful.



For questions about the Sanctuary Model® please call your Villa of Hope contact or Aaron James, VP of Sanctuary and Trauma Education at 585-865-1550 x 208.