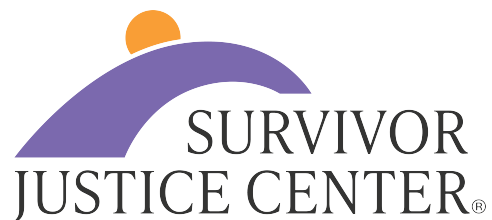




BEYOND SHELTER:

**A TRAUMA-
INFORMED
APPROACH TO
HOUSING STABILITY
FOR
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SURVIVORS**



AGENDA

Understanding the Intersection of Domestic Violence and Homelessness

Trauma-Informed Principles in Housing and Service Delivery

Integrating Services – A Holistic Approach

Multidisciplinary Teams – Building Effective Collaboration

Organizational Change – Shifting Toward Trauma-Informed Systems



INTENTION

Lasting stability requires more than just shelter — like a tree finding ground after a storm, survivors need intentional care, cross-disciplinary support, and space to grow. Together, we cultivate more than housing; we nurture healing.



UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS



Violence and Housing Instability

When home isn't safe...

- 1 in 3 women experience domestic violence in their lifetime
- Survivors often flee without resources
- Shelters are a stopgap, not a solution
- 38% of homeless women cite domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness

Impact of Sexual Assault and Trafficking on Housing

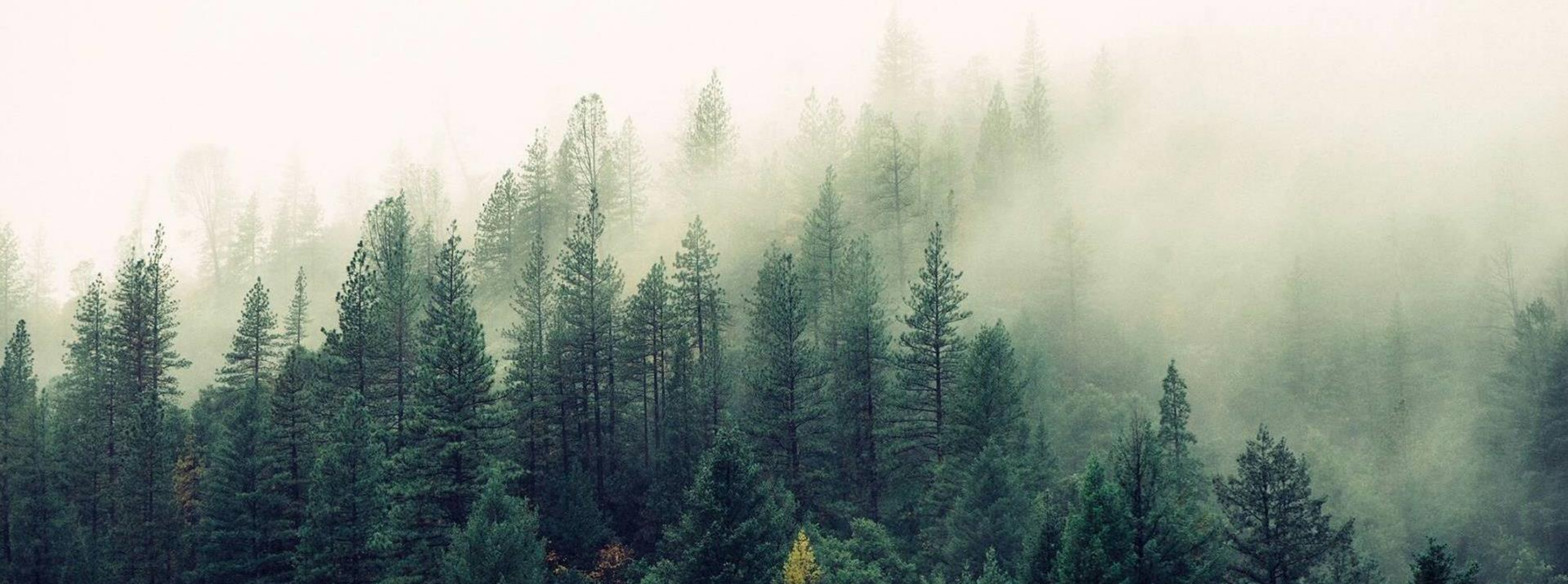
- ▶ When safety is shattered...
 - Survivors may be forced to leave due to stigma or lack of support
 - Exploitation often involves manipulation through housing (“room for rent” coercion)
 - Trafficking survivors may exit with criminal records, eviction histories, or no ID (intersectional harm)

LAYERED TRAUMA AND HOUSING INSTABILITY

Compounding harm...

- ❖ **Trauma symptoms** (hypervigilance, PTSD) can make traditional shelters feel unsafe
- ❖ **Economic abuse** limits access to credit, employment, and housing applications
- ❖ **Systemic barriers:** racism, ableism, xenophobia further marginalize survivors

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRINCIPLES IN HOUSING AND SERVICE DELIVERY



THE 6 PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE (SAMHSA)

A foundation for healing...

- Safety
- Trustworthiness & Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Responsiveness



APPLICATION OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES IN HOUSING CONTEXTS

Clear expectation and flexible rules

(Trust & Safety)

Private spaces or autonomy in shared housing

(Empowerment)

Peer-led programming or mentorship

(Peer Support)

Survivor input on program policies

(Collaboration)

Identity-affirming services, language access

(Cultural Responsiveness)



PEOPLE HEAL IN RELATIONSHIP, NOT IN CONTROL



Principles in Action

Safety & Building Trust

- Predictable routines, clear communication
- Trauma-informed staff interactions
- Minimize surveillance, maximize transparency
- Practice active listening and consistency

Challenge: Which common housing practices could unintentionally undermine trust?

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

Empowerment & Collaboration

- Predictable routines, clear communication
- Trauma-informed staff interactions
- Minimize surveillance, maximize transparency
- Practice active listening and consistency



Challenge: How do we shift from “fixing” to partnering?

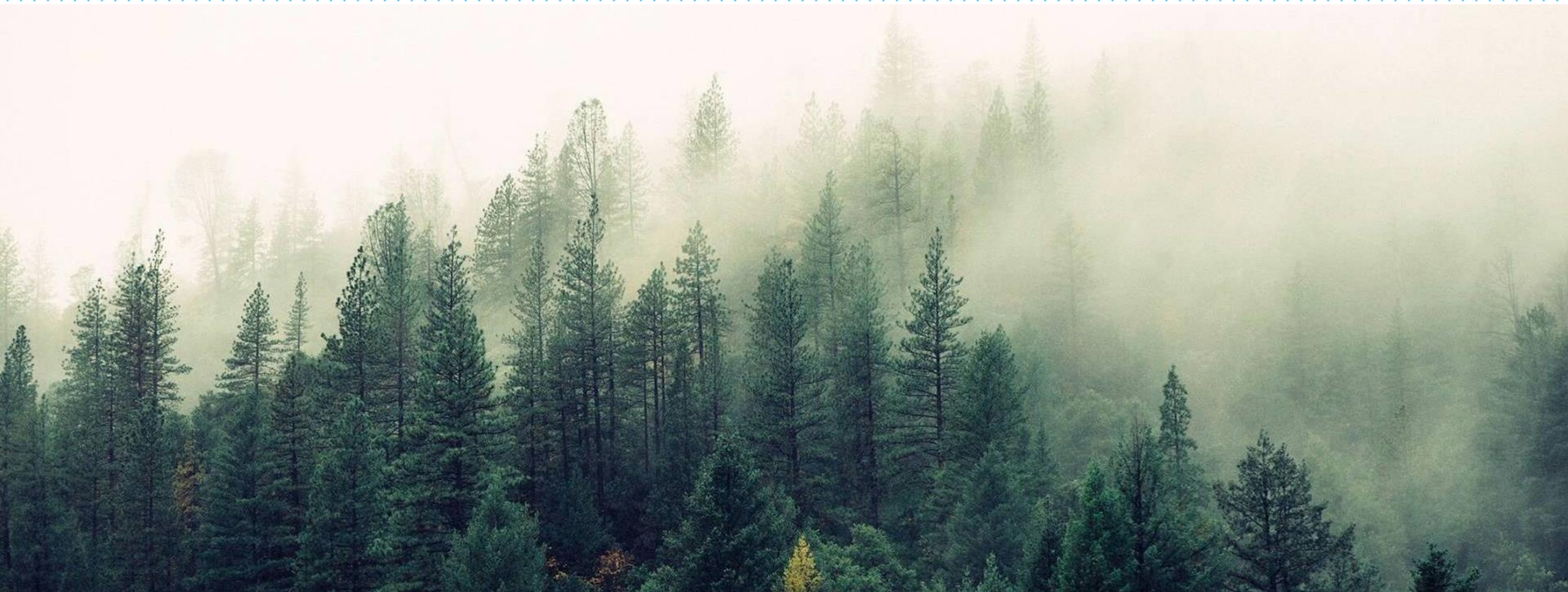
Principles in Action

From Intake to Legal Advocacy

- Avoid unnecessary repetition of trauma narratives
- Use strengths-based language on forms and in person
- Explain each step of legal or housing processes clearly
- Ask permission before touch, photos, or invasive questions

Example: Reframe Intake Question - “Why didn’t you leave?” to “What helped you survive?”

INTEGRATING SERVICES – A HOLISTIC APPROACH



WHY MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION MATTERS

No One Discipline Can Do It Alone

Housing instability is complex
and intersectional

Survivors interact with legal, housing,
and social systems simultaneously

Collaboration reduces re-traumatization and
improves outcomes

ROLES DEFINED

Legal Tools Preventing Displacement in Los Angeles County

- Early Intervention and Collaboration with Landlords,
- Illegal Lockouts (Cal. Civ. Code § 789.3)
- Domestic Violence Restraining Orders (DVROs) with housing provisions
- Early Lease Termination (Cal. Civ. Code § 1946.7)
- **VAWA Protections** in federally subsidized housing
- Fair Housing protections (FHA and FEHA)
- Civil Remedies for Human Trafficking (Cal. Civ. Code § 52.6)
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Sealing eviction records and Safe at Home for confidentiality



ROLES DEFINED

Social Work and Advocacy

- Help maximize the effectiveness of legal orders and housing strategies
- Provide systems navigation, safety planning, referrals, and psychoeducation
- Support clients with CES intake, rental assistance (Operation HOPE), and shelter navigation
- Assist with applications and documentation for emergency and permanent housing
- Offer education, referrals, and support across systems like CalFresh, CalWORKs, and public housing



MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS – BUILDING EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION



INTENTIONAL COLLABORATION

Best Practices within Multidisciplinary Teams

- Explore the value of shared language, mutual respect, co-advocacy between discipline
- Identify key elements of successful cross-sector collaboration between DV, housing, legal, and social service systems
- Learn communication strategies and how to develop shared service goals, client-centered team planning, and warm handoff
- Discuss accountability structures, confidentiality boundaries, and cross-training methods to build unified responses

CASE STUDY: PRE-FILING INTERVENTION

Melissa is a low-income survivor of DV. She works for Uber and Door Dash throughout the day when her children are at school and afterschool program. She receives public benefits, but only CalFresh due to the amount she earns each month. Unfortunately, Melissa's car broke down and the repair quote is \$3,159.00. Melissa is living paycheck to paycheck. She has not been able to save any financial safety net that would be available to her during this financial crisis. She must fix the car or she will lose her jobs and only sources of income. She reached out to SJC for guidance because she would be unable to pay to repair her car *and* to be able to pay rent on time. She has already received one 3-day notice from this landlord previously because she previously fell behind once before, two years ago. Her relationship with her property manager is not the best due to her having been unable to pay rent on that occasion. Melissa is considering taking out a pay-day loan which charges high interest, but which would allow her to repair her vehicle and remain housed temporarily.



CASE STUDY: SOLUTIONS

Our housing attorney reached out to the LL right away to explain the dilemma, provided a letter stating that Melissa was a survivor of DV and a client of SJC. She shared how we can provide support to both Melissa and the LL by seeking financial assistance from LAHSA through their Problem Solving Assistance Funds application (PSA application.) PSA funds up to \$7,500 can be spent to help a low-income survivor stabilize and prevent imminent homelessness. This amount could be utilized for rent, utilities, car problems, child care, or anything else that would help client become self-sufficient once again.

SJC helped Melissa gather all supporting documents including the lease, prior 3-Day Notice, car repair estimate, and proof of self-sustaining employment - driving for Uber and Door Dash. Also, landlord/property manager's signature on the application. Legal Team completed and then emailed Melissa's PSA application to our LAHSA contact and completed LAHSA PSA Funds online referral requesting two months of rental assistance and money for the car repairs, after having confirmed there were PSA funds available to assist in this case. The money from LAHSA came to SJC and SJC delivered the money to the LL and auto-shop. SJC provided updates to the LL and Melissa and received the application back from LAHSA within 2 weeks.

If PSA Funds had not been available to client, we would have brainstormed together on alternate solutions like FSC/CES referral or client moving out at an agreed-upon day and time to avoid the eviction process.

Legal Team connected CL to local Community Resource Center for food, medical and mental health support. The team helped client enroll in utility assistance through Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, Melissa is able to place the income she earns for the next two months in a savings account to provide a financial safety net.

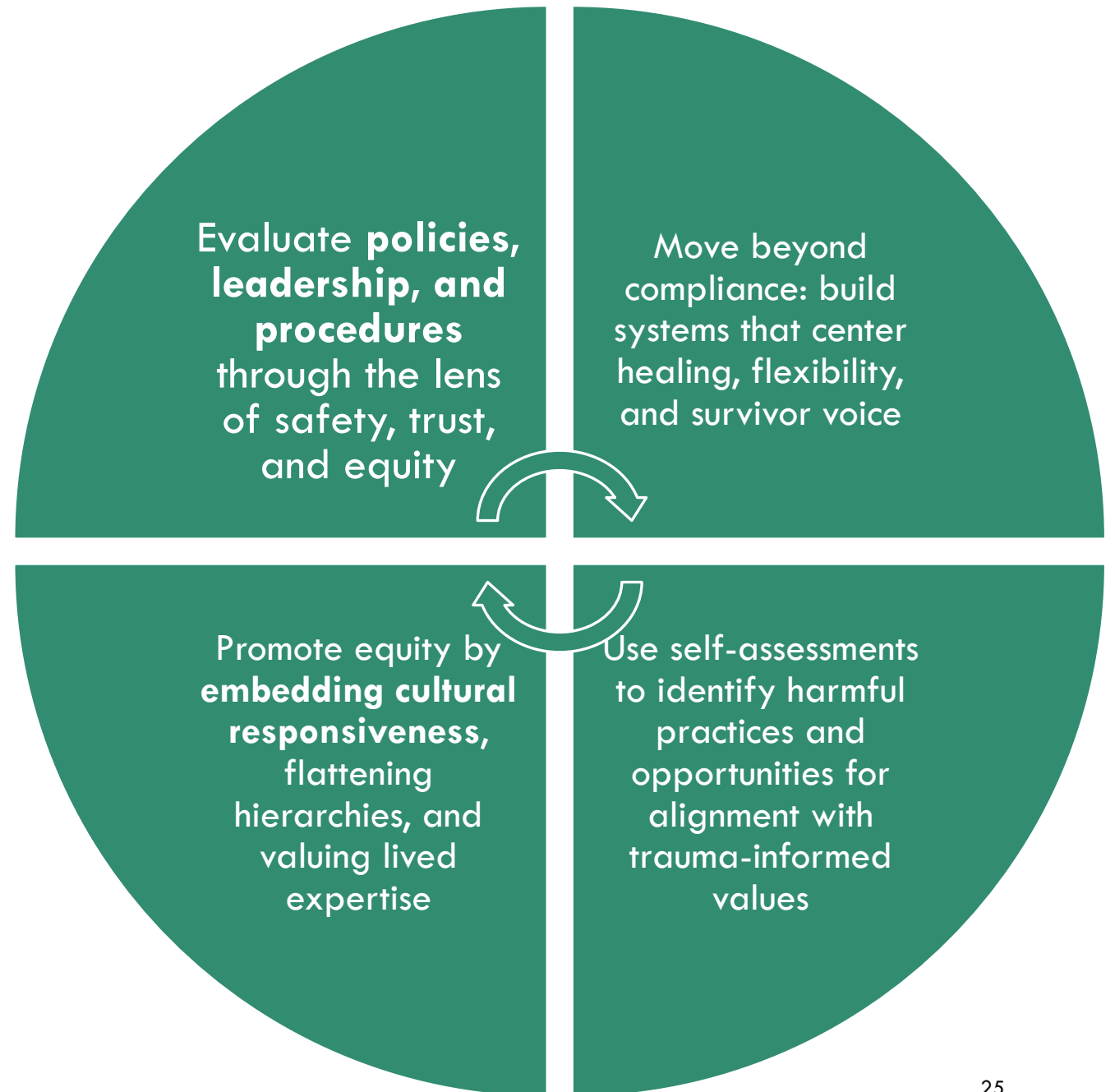
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

SHIFTING TOWARD TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEMS



SHIFTING SYSTEMS THROUGH A TRAUMA-INFORMED LENS

*What Does Organizational Change
Require?*



BUILDING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

From Burnout to Belonging



- **Leadership sets the tone:** Create space for reflection, not just productivity
- Support frontline staff with reflective supervision, autonomy, and shared decision-making
- Break silos with cross-trained teams, clear communication, and survivor-informed program design
- **Retention improves** when all staff feel safe, empowered, and included

“You can’t ask staff to be trauma-informed with clients if leadership isn’t trauma-informed with staff.”

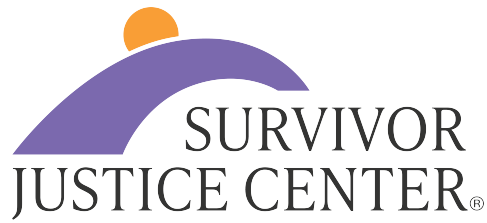


FUNDING, DESIGN, AND SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

Align Your Money With Your Mission

- Advocate for **flexible, values-aligned funding** that supports long-term healing, not short-term metrics
- Design programs with **layered supports** (legal, housing, mental health) and **continuity of care**
- Fund **staff wellness**, interpreters, and **survivor leadership**.
- Reimagine systems with **shared power** and trauma-informed infrastructure at every level.





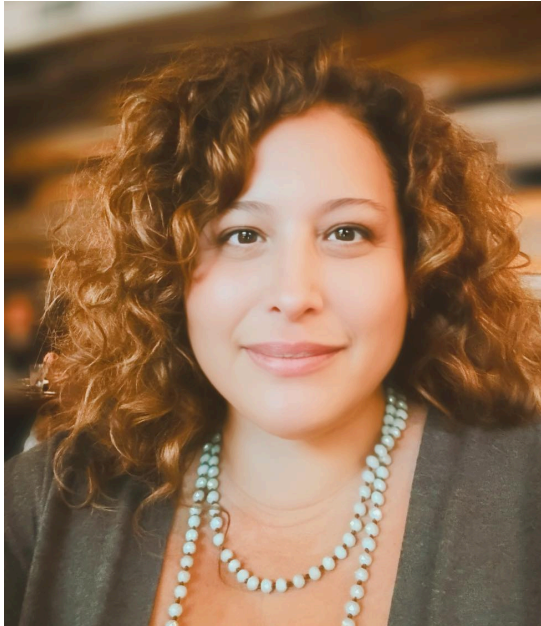
THANK YOU

*True stability begins where
systems listen,
leadership cares, and
survivors are met with dignity
— not just shelter.*

*Trauma-informed change means
building structures that heal,
relationships that empower, and
policies that serve.”*



Presenters



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Resources

VICARIOUS TRAUMA & PROVIDER WELLNESS

- Stamm, B. H. (2010). *The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) – Version 5*.
<https://proqol.org/>
– Gold-standard tool to assess compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress among helping professionals.
- *The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit* – Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).
<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/overview>
– Free, research-informed toolkit for agencies addressing vicarious trauma in multidisciplinary teams.

TRAUMA-INFORMED HOUSING & MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

- This Sullivan, C. M. (2018). *Examining the Work of Domestic Violence Programs Within a “Social and Emotional Well-being Promotion” Conceptual Framework*. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
<https://vawnet.org/material/examining-work-domestic-violence-programs-within-social-and-emotional-well-being>