

## **The Basics of the Voluntary Services Approach**

1. The Voluntary Services approach is based on the notion that participation in services should be voluntary and not a condition of housing or receiving other services.
2. This approach is based on the belief that survivors should have the freedom to make their own decisions about their lives.
3. This approach promotes the building of relationships between staff and survivors in transitional housing, working as allies and not as 'providers'. Relationships then used as the foundation to assist survivors in reaching their goals.
4. Input from survivors is actively solicited and incorporated when designing services and policies. This is to ensure a survivor-driven program design.
5. This approach emphasizes respectful and welcoming behavior in all aspects of the work. Services are driven by the needs, wants, and individual goals of survivors in transitional housing. Value is placed in meeting survivors where they currently are in their lives.
6. Services are consistently made available to encourage participation and ensure assistance is as relevant and accessible as possible. Staff are encouraged to make suggestions and express concerns or encouragement as appropriate, but to never require participation.
7. Creative and less-traditional services can be offered exclusively or in conjunction with more traditional approaches, depending on the needs and wants of the individual survivor.
8. Choices and options are highly valued and prioritized.
9. A nonjudgmental, safe space is provided for survivors to talk about their experiences, fears, beliefs, and goals.
10. This approach promotes including survivors of abuse as workers and leaders in all aspects of the housing program.