

YWCA Toronto Trauma Model of Support



*with a
multi-disciplinary team
approach to staffing
shelters for women and
children fleeing violence*



YWCA
TORONTO



YWCA Toronto

- Mission Statement: YWCA Toronto is an association of diverse and caring women dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls through dynamic leadership, advocacy, and a range of unique and essential services that promote personal growth and economic independence
- A multi-service association offering emergency shelter, permanent housing, employment and skills development, group work, and programs for women and girls

Development of the Model

- Arise opens in 2003
- Consultative process involved women who had resided in shelters/staff and community stakeholders
- Extending model to YWCA VAW Women's Shelter and First Stop homeless women shelter

Features of Trauma Model of Support -Holistic Approach

- Holistic view of complex client service needs and strengths (language, culture, status, history of trauma—interpersonal & social, ie war)
- A staff team that reflects the linguistic and cultural diversity of Toronto and includes representation of women who have used violence against women shelter services
- A specialist staffing model (mental health, addictions, employment, client advocate, parenting, child development, house facilitator) within a generalist framework
- Individualized service delivery

Diverse, multi-disciplinary team



Features of Trauma Model of Support -Analysis of Trauma and Oppression

- Focus on building staff skill and competency (individual and team) that incorporates understanding of the impact/intersections of trauma and oppression
- Efforts on reducing impact of institutional living (working with power, policies around behavior and open kitchen)
- Clinical support to incorporate understanding of intersections of trauma, violence, and mental health (impact of trauma on mental health, mental health issues as taboo and risk factors for abuse)
- In group and individual work, balance on individual responses and social analysis

Features of Trauma Model of Support -Transitional Support

- Maintains continuity of services when families move into community
- Supports ongoing capacity-building (life skills)
- Possibility of families moving to YWCA Toronto permanent housing

The Physical Setting

- Individual rooms designed for families
- Shared laundry and washroom facilities on each floor
- A warm, inviting space with a central gathering/dining area adjoined to the kitchen



Challenges

- Labor-intensive model requiring resources for staff training, team processes
- Focus on relationship-building & policies that support values
- Managing complex communal environment
- Operating in larger social context with many obstacles





YWCA ARISE

Coming to Arise was the best thing I did for myself and my 3 children. This was a major turning point in our lives. We are safe and free at