



## **LONG-TERM RELATIONAL APPROACH**

Trauma, such as experiences of physical and sexual abuse and violence, has damaging effects on individuals and societies. Many women who repeatedly seek help from our social service system for issues such as mental health, addiction, and homelessness have experienced trauma, often since childhood. While every person responds to traumatic events in different ways, survivors of traumatic experiences can feel overwhelmed by feelings of vulnerability, fear, shame, guilt, numbness, and alienation. These feelings can alter her sense of safety and trust and make it difficult to form relationships. Without professional and personal supports to help them recover, survivors of trauma can become isolated in a cycle of pathologies where the only constant relationships she has in her life are with an abusive person, a drug, or the voices in her head. Often these women are at high risk of further victimization because of their vulnerable living situations.

Short-term interventions are unlikely to provide sustainable solutions for survivors of trauma who lack the supportive community and non-judgmental relationships that they need to heal and recover. Within the Safe Haven community at *On The Rise*, each woman is given time, space, dignity, respect, and choices to develop her own personal agency and to build relationships with staff that are not predicated on pre-determined program outcomes, but on meeting her needs and goals as she expresses them.

## **WHOLE LIFE CONTEXT**

Many homeless women face complex issues that are both internal and external and may overwhelmingly complicate her attempts to move out of homelessness. Yet, most social services specialize in helping people with one specific issue (such as domestic violence, addiction, mental health). While necessary, this fragmentation in the human service system can lead to conflicting requirements for a woman facing multiple challenges which can make it difficult for her to access services. Participating within a fragmented social service system, a homeless woman may come to see herself as a conglomeration of problems to be solved because her interactions with others are all about how and why (or why not) she addresses these issues.

*On The Rise* helps women who have fallen through the cracks of our social system navigate the next stage of her life. Based on individual relationships, we support her as she recognizes, accepts, challenges, and balances the realities and opportunities of her internal, societal, and cultural contexts. Our work with women crosses over specific issues and extends out into our community to guide and support her as she accesses services for specific challenges. By being an active partner with women on her journey, *On The Rise* strives to increase her self-efficacy and improve the effectiveness of our social service system for the most highly marginalized people.