

## **L. The Starting Place Shelter**

1. SAFE's shelter, The Starting Place, provides temporary emergency shelter for people and their families, who are seeking safety from domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
2. A copy of The Starting Place Shelter Policies and Procedures must be shared with clients upon admittance and accessible to residents within the Starting Place Shelter.
3. Beds at The Starting Place are filled on a first come, first serve basis as space and staff capacity allow. SAFE does not keep a waiting list for The Starting Place.
4. Columbia County survivors of domestic and sexual violence receive priority consideration for shelter services at The Starting Place Shelter.
5. Survivors from outside of Columbia County who meet screening criteria may also be eligible to receive services at The Starting Place as space allows.
6. Only people and their families who are in imminent danger of abuse or re-assault and have no other shelter alternatives are eligible to receive services at The Starting Place.
7. Following the screening process, and approval for shelter, stay is 30 days.
8. SAFE does not provide evening, night, or weekend staff at The Starting Place, except through the 24 Hour Help Line.
9. SAFE does not provide transportation assistance to or from The Starting Place.
10. Un-emancipated minors must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian to reside at The Starting Place.
11. People who cannot appropriately be sheltered at The Starting Place include:
  - i. People under the influence of drugs or alcohol

- ii. People unable to care for basic personal needs for themselves and/or for their children (e.g. bathing, dressing, feeding, safety, etc.)
  - iii. People whose circumstances present a serious threat to the safety and well-being of other persons living in the shelter
  - iv. People unwilling to keep the location of the shelter and shelter residents confidential
  - v. People unwilling to live cooperatively
  - vi. People who will not agree to abide by The Starting Place Goals and Expectations
  - vii. People who are unable to be housed in the shelter because of its capacity
  - viii. Unaccompanied, un-emancipated minors
12. The appropriateness of a person for the shelter will be determined by staffing a screening between two or more SAFE Staff.
13. Reasonable accommodations regarding disability and gender are made per fair housing law.
14. Survivors of domestic or sexual violence who need shelter but cannot be housed at The Starting Place will receive safety planning and referral to other appropriate shelter options.
15. SAFE may provide Motel Vouchers for one to two nights, according to the availability of funding, for those eligible for shelter in The Starting Place, if the Starting Place is at capacity and there is an emergency shelter request due to imminent danger. The appropriateness of a person for a Motel Voucher will be determined by staffing a screening between two or more SAFE Staff, and the Shelter Coordinator must be notified the next business day.
16. Screening:
- a. A Starting Place Shelter Screening Form is used to determine if The Starting Place Shelter will be safe and appropriate to meet the client's needs, and to determine if the client will be safe and appropriate to reside with other residents at The Starting Place.
  - b. All portions of the screening form are to be read to the client and filled out completely. Additional questions may be asked if the client's needs are unclear, or if the screener thinks additional risk assessment would be helpful.

- c. The screener should discuss the screening form with the Shelter Coordinator or Executive Director whenever possible to determine if criteria for admittance has been met and if services are appropriate to meet the client's needs.
- d. SAFE maintains a list of people who were evicted from The Starting Place. The eviction list must be checked before the form can be approved.
- e. If the applicant is not approved for shelter, the reason must be noted on the screening form, and the screener should inform the client as to why they were not approved.
- f. If a client is accepted, the screener should refer the client to the Shelter Coordinator or their designee to schedule their admittance. The screener should remind the client to bring personal documentation for themselves and their children, if applicable, to assist in connecting them to resources, and to bring any medications and prescriptions.
- g. The shelter coordinator/DVSA advocate will write the initials of approved residents, with the date and time of arrival and number of children on the designated white board. This information will be updated daily.
- h. Eviction List
  - i. A shelter participant whose stay was terminated by SAFE staff will be placed on an eviction list.
  - ii. Those on the eviction list violated The Starting Place's Goals and Expectations despite having been given the tools and support to address issues.
  - iii. If a client on the eviction list wants to come back to the shelter, a staffing between the Shelter Coordinator and the Executive Director will be held.
    - A. If the client is accepted into the shelter, the participant must be made aware of the concern and must be willing to enter into a contract specific to the concerns prior to entrance into the facility.
    - B. If the client is denied re-admittance into the shelter, they shall be offered referrals to alternate resources.

- i. Reasonable accommodations are made for clients with verifiable aid, service, assistance, disability, therapy, or companion animals. Residents without verification for their animal can place their pet in the temporary care of Columbia Humane Society, (503) 397-4353, through its foster pet program.
  - A. During shelter screening, the Shelter Coordinator will identify space availability and identify compatibility with residents in the designated room.
  - B. During the admittance process, the resident should provide a note from his or her health service provider, such as a doctor or therapist, verifying the need for the animal, and a letter from a veterinarian verifying the animal is up to date with shots and poses a minimal risk to staff and other residents. The resident does not need to disclose the details of their disability, nor provide a detailed medical history.
  - C. If their animal is particularly disruptive or if the resident fails to take proper measures to ensure that the animal does not bother other residents, SAFE may revoke the accommodation. The client may place their animal in the temporary care of Columbia Humane Society or at another location for safe keeping, and if they refuse the client and their animal may have their residency terminated.

## 17. Shelter Admittance

- a. The Shelter Coordinator is primarily responsible for overseeing admittance and orientation to The Starting Place Shelter.
- b. Responsibility for admittance will be delegated by the Executive Director to another full-time advocate in the case that the Shelter Coordinator is not available.
- c. Admittance may be performed between 9:00 am and 3:30 pm Monday through Thursday. Exceptions will be made for victims in immediately life-threatening situations, in which case, the on-call advocate will complete the admittance. The Shelter Coordinator should be notified for follow up and case management the following business day.
- d. Admittance procedure:
  - i. Obtain completed screening form and intake packet

- ii. Greet the new resident, offer food and a beverage, and make them feel welcomed.
- iii. Review all information in the intake packet, fill out and sign each form in the file:
  - A. Adult resident information
  - B. Medication log
  - C. Confidentiality policy and agreement
  - D. Statement of understanding
  - E. Abuser information
  - F. Shelter safety plan
  - G. Case plan to be completed at their first case planning meeting with the shelter coordinator within three days of admittance.
- iv. Complete items on “Intake Checklist/Client Log” and check off after completing:
  - A. Front door combo—write number on form
  - B. Locker and lock—write number and combination on form
  - C. Hygiene bag
  - D. Copy of signed intake papers
  - E. Business card with 24 Hour Help Line
  - F. Note additional items dispensed
- v. Review the “Welcome Packet” with the client including:
  - A. Weekly meeting and group schedules
  - B. Counseling information
  - C. House chores
  - D. My Safety Plan (children)
  - E. Safety planning for situations while living in the shelter (offer safety planning for living in the community when client is preparing to leave the shelter)
  - F. SAFE brochures
  - G. Community Action Team Housing Intake paperwork
  - H. Welcome booklet with rights and responsibilities
  - I. Goals and Expectations
  - J. Emergency protocols
  - K. Resource assistance list

- vi. Schedule case management
- vii. Complete a Client Services Form. Fill in all client statistics and services provided at the time of intake. Check all referrals.
- viii. Familiarize clients with the Shelter
  - A. Indicate exit maps
  - B. Point out location of emergency procedures binder and request that they read as soon as possible
  - A. Show client to their room and allow them time to store their personal items
  - B. Explain shared bedroom and bathroom facilities
  - C. Assign locker and document the locker combination (all medications and valuables must be kept in locker)
  - D. Explain food system for community food versus food the client purchases
  - E. Explain chore system
- ix. Allow client to settle in
  - A. Take them back to their room
  - B. Make sure they have enough bedding
  - C. Ask if they have any questions
  - D. Remind them of follow up care appointments
- x. Document completion of intake in client's file along with any special needs or requests.

18. The Starting Place Goals and Expectations:

- a. Residency at The Starting Place Shelter is contingent upon participants' ability to follow program guidelines. SAFE of Columbia County reserves the right to terminate shelter services for reasons that it deems necessary which are not listed.
- b. Residents must be informed of The Starting Place Goals and Expectations during shelter screening, and must review and sign an agreement to abide by these program guidelines during the intake process. The Shelter Coordinator is responsible for maintaining documentation of their agreement and

progress.

- c. The Starting Place operates with following goals and expectations to ensure success and safety of its residents:
  - i. Live Free from Violence;
    - A. Classes, support groups, and case-management meetings are offered to help support success in living lives free from violence during and after shelter stay.
    - B. The following are strictly prohibited in all SAFE programs:
      - I. Weapons;
      - II. Yelling;
      - III. Cursing;
      - IV. Slamming doors;
      - V. Touching without permission;
      - VI. Throwing;
      - VII. Intimidating body language;
      - VIII. Neglecting children;
      - IX. Spanking children;
      - X. Other forms of violent discipline.
  - ii. Maintain Confidentiality for the Safety of Everyone at the Shelter and SAFE's office:
    - A. SAFE staff cannot and will not give out client information without a signed Release of Information.
    - B. The location of the shelter must never be disclosed.
    - C. Names or information about anyone staying at The Starting Place or receiving services at SAFE must never be shared with anyone who is not SAFE staff.
    - D. Rides must be met off site, at least two blocks from the shelter. Accommodations may be made for medical transportation with approval from the Shelter Coordinator.
    - E. SAFE staff must approve and accompany any visitor to the premises at all times.
    - F. Calls to The Starting Place Phone must go to the answering machine, and may only be answered by the person the caller is requesting.
  - iii. Maintain a Healthy, Safe, and Sanitary Living Environment

- A. Residents will take responsibility for themselves and their own personal hygiene.
- B. Parents will care for their own children.
- C. Residents will clean up after themselves, and their own children, if applicable.
- D. Follow safe food handling and storage procedures
- E. Residents must not take food into their bedrooms
- F. Food must not be left out to spoil.
- G. Keep floors clear of items, and properly store personal belongings
- H. Keep all sharp items out of reach of children (razors, scissors, etc.)
- I. Flammable materials and items may not be used in the shelter including: candles, electric blankets, scented oils, space heaters, etc.
- J. Pick up/wipe up hazardous items/spills.
- K. Bathrooms must be cleaned and sanitized daily by residents
- L. Doors must be secured.
- M. Windows must be secured.
- N. Complete chores as assigned by Shelter Coordinator
- O. Comply with room-checks to ensure residents are maintaining safe, sanitary living conditions.
- P. Residents must sign out when they leave the shelter, and sign back in when they return.
- Q. The Starting Place is equipped with security cameras at all external entrances to the building and in common areas. Security Camera footage is only accessible to SAFE staff through a closed network, and will be reviewed in case of a breach by an outside party or upon report of threatening or intimidating behavior in a common area. Footage is automatically erased after two months.
- R. Each SAFE staff member and Starting Place resident will be assigned a unique building entrance code. The code must be used to enter the building and may not be shared with anyone else. Anyone who does not have a code, must seek SAFE staff approval before entering the building.
- S. All approved non-safe staff and/or non-residents who enter the Starting Place Shelter must fill out SAFE's Sign-In Log, including their name, the time of their visit, and signed agreement to maintain the confidentiality of the location and clients accessing services at the facility.
- T. SAFE procures outside professional services for shelter maintenance and repairs as needed. All contractors must be bonded, submit a list of employees who will be on-site for pre-approval by the Shelter



Coordinator, and all pre-approved service providers must agree to maintain the confidentiality of the location and clients accessing services at the facility.

- U. The Shelter Coordinator will make each resident aware of shelter security features and policies, emergency exits and evacuation procedures in case of fires, earthquakes, etc.
- V. The Shelter Coordinator will conduct regular safety drills to ensure staff, volunteers, and residents are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures.
- W. In the event of an emergency evacuation of the facility, staff and residents are to meet in the parking lot in front of the building, unless otherwise directed, and await instruction from First Responders and the Executive Director or Board Chair. The Shelter Coordinator will ensure that all residents are safe and accounted for.
- X. The Shelter Coordinator is responsible for maintaining a clearly marked, easily accessible first aid station within the Shelter which includes a basic first aid kit, blood borne pathogen and personal protection kit, flashlights, and fire extinguisher.
- Y. If an emergency occurs outside of business hours, residents will call 9-1-1 to report the emergency and then call SAFE's 24 Hour Help Line. The on-call advocate will notify the Executive Director and the Shelter Coordinator to help determine a plan of action.
- Z. If the fire alarm is set off outside of business hours, a Starting Place resident should call 9-11, and let dispatch know if the alarm is false or not. If there is a fire, the residents must immediately evacuate the building and wait in the parking lot until a staff person arrives and helps determine a plan of action. The resident who called 9-11 should also call the 24 Hour Help Line and inform the on-call advocate if the alarm is false or not, and whether emergency response is necessary. Simplex Grinnell will call the 24 Hour Help Line, and the on-call advocate should inform them if the alarm is false or not. The Fire Department will respond and has admittance to the building to turn off the alarm if it is false.
- AA. All prescription and over-the-counter medications are to be kept in the locker of the client to whom they belong. At no time are shelter residents to keep medications in any place other than their locker, including cars, purses, diaper bags, or bedrooms.
- BB. Shelter residents may choose to log their prescriptions or over-the-counter medications on the medication log form. The medication log form is used to assist emergency medical personnel if the client

- experiences a medical emergency.
- CC. Under no circumstances may any resident share any medication with any other resident, staff person, or volunteer.
- DD. Unused medications left behind in the client's locker will be turned into the local police precinct for safe disposal.
- EE. Alcohol, illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia are not allowed on SAFE's premises.
- FF. Returning to the shelter under the influence of intoxicants is strictly prohibited.
- GG. Submit to alcohol/drug screening if requested by SAFE staff.
- HH. Smoking is only permitted in the designated area.
- II. Only adults, 18 and over, are allowed in the smoking area.

iv. Respect Others' Space

- A. Be able to live in community within a dormitory-style home with survivors of any age, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, class, ability, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic.
  - B. Residents must be able to share a room with other survivors, including families with children.
  - C. Parents are responsible for their own children's behavior.
  - D. Residents will participate and be respectful in house meetings.
  - E. Residents will only discuss conflicts or disagreements with SAFE staff.
  - F. If necessary, residents will participate in conflict resolution meetings.
  - G. Residents will respect quiet hours (9 pm to 6 am).
  - H. Residents must be fully clothed in common areas.
  - I. Residents will be proactive during the day in accomplishing their case-plan goals.
  - J. Residents can have one overnight pass per week, must complete and submit an overnight pass form, and received approval from the Shelter Coordinator or their designee.
  - K. Able residents may have to sleep on top bunks, or switch rooms when necessary.
  - L. Residents may bring only one piece of luggage per person that can be carried without help.
  - M. Only approved service animals are allowed—Columbia Humane Society can make temporary living arrangements for pets.
  - N. Owners are responsible for their service animal's care and behavior.
- v. If a resident behaves violently, breaches confidentiality, brings drugs or

alcohol onto the premises, or presents as under the influence of drugs or alcohol and refuses an alcohol/drug screening, they will be immediately evicted from the shelter.

- vi. If a resident has difficulty upholding any of these goals and expectations, the Shelter Coordinator will provide them tools and information to work within program guidelines. If a client is unable to meet program guidelines, they will be given a move-out date, and the Shelter Coordinator will work with them to plan for their exit from the program.
- vii. Parenting classes will be offered to support parents and caregivers in promoting positive behavior for children and using alternatives to violent discipline. One-on-one parenting classes will be offered to parents and caregivers whose children are continually disruptive.
- viii. Residents are considered to have left the program if they are gone more than 48 hours without an approved Overnight Pass. Their bed will be made available to someone else, and their belongings will be collected and donated to a local thrift store. If a situation arises that a client on an approved Overnight Pass cannot return to The Starting Place on their specified return date, they must notify SAFE by calling the 24 Hour Help Line, and the on-call advocate will notify the Shelter Coordinator.
- ix. Residents should feel free to speak with any SAFE staff member with questions or concerns. Written complaints and positive feedback should be filed with SAFE's Executive Director. Client Feedback Forms are available throughout SAFE and by request.

#### 19. Extension of Emergency Shelter

- a. Shelter stay may be extended beyond the initial 30-day Emergency Shelter period up to 60 days.
- b. Extension is based on a client's proactivity in accomplishing their goals, involvement in case planning, ability to benefit from extended shelter stay, and compliance with shelter rules.
- c. Extension is determined toward the end of the allotted time period by the Shelter Coordinator.

## 20. Transitional Housing

- a. Community Action Team, Inc. and SAFE collaborate to provide Transitional Housing within The Starting Place Shelter to assist clients who participate in the Emergency Shelter program in obtaining long-term housing and positive rental history.
- b. Transitional Housing lasts between 60 days and 18 months. There are no extensions for shelter stay after 18 months.
- c. To qualify for Transitional Housing, clients must currently reside in the Starting Place through the Emergency Shelter program, meet SAFE's criteria for extension of shelter stay, complete a housing program intake with Community Action Team, and receive a referral for Transitional Housing from a Community Action Team's Housing Case Manager.
- d. Acceptance into Transitional Housing is dependent on available bed space. SAFE reserves a maximum of eight beds for Transitional Housing, including those occupied by children. An exception may be made for one family with more than eight children, if there are available beds in The Starting Place.
- e. SAFE will keep Community Action Team updated on the number of available beds for the Transitional Housing program.
- f. Clients who are accepted into Transitional Housing are required to pay \$7.50 per bed, per night, per adult (\$150 monthly). Payment for each month is due in advance by the fifth of the month. If a client leaves before the end of the month, they will be reimbursed for unused nights upon departure. If payment is over two weeks late, the client will be evicted from The Starting Place.
- g. Client rent and Community Action Team funds shall be used to support proportionate utilities, maintenance, and case management expenses for the Transitional Housing program.
- h. Clients with no source of income may have their rent waived if they actively participate in a community job-training program, employment search, social security benefits application process, and complete 16 hours of volunteer service per month. The Shelter Coordinator must be able to verify volunteer service hours and progress in the client's case-plan.

- i. During residency, residents will uphold the same goals and expectations as residents in the Emergency Shelter program.
- j. Shelter stay will be evaluated with the Shelter Coordinator during on-site case management meetings on an on-going basis, and monthly by the resident's Community Action Team Housing Case Manager.

## 21. Evictions

- a. The Shelter Coordinator or their designee is responsible for overseeing evictions.
- b. In case an immediate eviction is necessary after hours, residents should call the 24 Hour Help Line and notify the on-call advocate. The on-call advocate should request support from the back-up advocate who will meet them at the shelter and assist in the eviction. Both advocates must remain in the building until the evicted resident has left the premises. The on-call advocate should remain to debrief and safety plan with other residents who may be affected by the eviction. The on-call advocate must immediately notify the Shelter Coordinator for follow up and support of other residents and to update the eviction list.
- c. In cases involving physical violence or threat of physical violence, 9-11 may be called to support staff and the Executive Director and Board Chair should be notified immediately.
- d. If a client wishes to contest their eviction, they are welcome to participate in the grievance and feedback procedures outlined in Section I.