

DRAFT

Combination Core Standards and Program Standards for Women's Shelters

- Policy 1 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER recognizes that all Albertans have an inherent right to respect their human worth and dignity, and intends to ensure that all clients are cared for and treated in a respectful manner.
- Policy 2 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall be consistent with the Ministry's policy on women's shelters.
- a) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER adheres to a set of principles that guide the operations of shelter.
- 1) All individuals have the right to security and protection under the law.
 - 2) All individuals have the right to live free of assault, abuse, and violence.
 - 3) No person should be forced to remain in a violent or abusive home because of the lack of alternatives.
 - 4) The right to integrity of the person includes the right to make informed choices among alternatives in one's own life decisions.
- Policy 3 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER employees are strictly prohibited from using corporal punishment or engaging in any form of conduct which is intended to ridicule, humiliate, degrade, insult, or otherwise undermine the dignity and self-worth of a client.
- a) Notwithstanding the above policy, an emergency intervention as it relates to restrain or control child's behavior in those instances where it is necessary for the immediate protection of the child or other children.
- b) An incident report will be completed on all emergency interventions.
- Policy 4 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER provides informal counseling, information, and referrals and recognizes that a client has a right to make choices.
- a) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER recognizes that a client has a right to receive full information about the services available in order to make choices.
- b) Client's access shelter services and follow MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER Schedule A rules and regulations
- c) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER will obtain a client's consent voluntarily, without coercion or undue influence, and only after the client has been fully informed of all aspects of the service, program, procedure, or other action proposed

- d) The client has the right withhold, give, or revoke such consent.

Policy 5 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER exercises control over the access to, receipt of, storage use and disclosure of information about its clients.

- a) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall not disclose any information pertaining to the personal history or record of a client to any person without the prior written consent of the client, or where applicable, the client's agent, unless authorized by legislation or a specific court order.
 - 1) Notwithstanding the above procedure this does not apply to the disclosure of information to a person whom requires that information in the ordinary course of his/her employment.
- b) Clients are entitled to examine at a minimum, those portions of MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER files, which relate to their personal history or record of stay(s) in the Executive Directors presence.

Policy 6 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER ensures that clients are provided with a fair, equitable and structured process to register complaints, air grievances, and to appeal decisions made by shelter's staff.

- a) Client has the right to appeal a decision, which significantly affects the services provided to her.
- b) Has the matter heard or considered within a reasonable amount of time.
- c) Client will be provided with written notice of the appeal.
- c) It is the responsibility of MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER to ensure that each woman is aware of her right to lodge complaints and appeal decisions of staff.
- d) Agency staff shall make available to the woman upon request, a copy of its Grievance and Appeal Policy and procedures.
- e) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall maintain a record of the outcomes of all-formal client complaints, and appeals.

Policy 7 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER adheres to the following set of beliefs and principals that guide its day-to-day operations.

- All individuals have the right to security and protection under the law.
- All individuals have the right to live free of assault, abuse and violence.
- No person should be forced to remain in a violent or abusive home because of the lack of alternatives.
- The right to integrity of the person includes the right to make informed choices among alternatives in one' own life decisions.

- a) The guiding beliefs or principles are reviewed at least every three years.
- Policy 8 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER provides a long-term safe accommodation to abused women and their children on a 24-hour basis for up to 18 months.
- Policy 9 Basic support Services include crisis intervention, emotional support, counseling, information and referrals, accommodation and child care programming.
- Policy 10 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall admit for service abused women with children.
 - a) Abused women; any women (with children) who identifies as having been physically, sexually, and/or psychologically abuse by her husband, or intimate partner, family member or person known to the woman.
 - b) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall have a written procedure for prioritizing admission to the program based on individual client needs.
 - c) Exceptions may include:
 - 1) Women deemed by shelter's policy and procedures to be better served by other agencies, for example mental health or substance abuse issues.
 - 2) Women under the influence of alcohol or drugs who, in the opinion of the shelter staff; will put the safety of other women and children at risk.
- Policy 11 Services shall be extended to all women who meet entrance criteria regardless of age, race, creed, or socio-economic status, mental/physical disability or sexual orientation.
- Policy 12 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall ensure that services and programs are designed and delivered in a manner which promotes the self-esteem, independence, and individual decision making of abused women and their children.
- Policy 13 Women shall maintain their medications in their apartments unless requested by client or staff to be turned in for safe keeping.
 - a) Medications are kept in a locked cabinet.
 - b) Clients may access medication upon request.
 - c) When medications requested are taken, staff will log it.

- Policy 14 Designated staff of MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall complete a structured intake/assessment process for each new or readmitted client.
- a) Structured intake/assessment process is available upon moving into MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER.
 - b) A structured service plan shall include:
 - 1) The client's perception of service needs
 - 2) Services to be provided.
 - 3) The arrangements by which the client's special needs, including prescribed medication or diet and medical procedure.
 - 4) Objectives of the service, including indicators to determine when objectives are met and the expected duration of service.
 - 5) Where applicable, at a suitable time how an effective transition from one service to another will be made.
 - 6) Referrals to external/collateral agencies where necessary and coordination of services.
 - 7) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall access multilingual personnel or translators, or other specialized services required by the clients, where available.

- Policy 15 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall ensure that to the extent possible, the privacy of clients is respected through but not limited to:
- Use of private offices or rooms to interview or counsel clients upon intake and based on the expressed needs of the individual client.
 - Accommodation of families in their own apartment.
 - Sharing of client information among MRWSA personnel on 'need to know' basis only.
 - Families should be protected from the invasion of their privacy except when the interests of individual family members and/or the interests of society are jeopardized.
 - Prohibiting access to client's personal property, space and communications.

- Policy 16 Exit from MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall occur when one of the following criteria are met:
- a) A woman decides to leave the shelter
 - b) A woman exceeds the maximum stay of 18 months; documented reasons for extending this stay may be approved by the Executive Director and/or 2nd Stage Shelter Supervisor in exceptional circumstances.
 - c) A woman has breached shelter policy regarding the possession of weapons, use of alcohol, drugs or acts of violence within the shelter.

- d) Executive Director and/or 2nd Stage Shelter Supervisor of the shelter has determined that the client's needs would best be served by other agencies.
- Policy 17 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER has a written protocol, developed with Child and Family Services Authority and Social Services Child Welfare staff, that addresses the identification and reporting of suspected cases of children in need of protective services.
- Policy 18 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall report suspected cases of children in need of protective services to Child and Family Services Authority, notwithstanding that the information on which the belief is founded is confidential.
- a) It is the practice of the shelter to discuss with the mother concerns prior to contact with Child Welfare Services at the discretion of the Executive Director or case management team.
- b) All information is kept confidential and is not discussed with persons outside the shelter or with any of the clients.
- Policy 19 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall have a written agency protocol developed with the Police and Children and Family Services designed to:
- Promote a co-operative working relationship between shelter and police and meet the needs of the abused women.
 - Clarify roles and expectations
 - Identify methods of communication
- Policy 20 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER intends to ensure the health and safety of clients by insuring its premises and equipment conform to all applicable health, safety, building and fire codes, by-laws, regulations and legislation.
- a) Public Health Act, Fire, Town of Rocky Mountain House permit (Description below rental accommodation)
- b) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall include:
- 1) Security hardware on all doors providing access to the building.
 - 2) Controlled access to fenced-in back yard areas.
 - 3) Intercom system to screen and permit access to the building.
- c) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall have the following procedures in place to ensure the protection of client confidentiality and security of person.
- 1) Staff shall, under no circumstances confirm admission or divulge the whereabouts of clients admitted for service to the shelter.
 - 2) Shelter staff shall have mother's written permission for children to go on outing without her.
 - 3) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall have written procedures/special precautions to be used

when the shelter staff or clients have received threats or there is concern for safety.

- d) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall have clearly defined duties and responsibilities for all agency staff and shall conduct periodic performance reviews.
- e) MRWSA Personnel shall have the education and/or experience required by their job description.
- f) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall review and shall affirm or modify each position description at least once every three years.
- g) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER will review annually the job performance of service personnel.
- h) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER ensures all service personnel are familiar with and have access to the policies and procedures of MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER.

- Policy 22 Revenues and expenditures shall be summarized at least quarterly and compared with the approved budget. Expenditures shall be adjusted accordingly to maintain spending within the projected budget.
- Policy 23 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER management of funds is accountable to Ministry of Community & Social Services as well as other funders for the expenditure of funding providers.
- Policy 24 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER does not hold clients fund's in trust.
- Policy 25 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER follows Social Services guidelines for rent and shall not charge for any programming.
- Policy 26 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall adhere to Universal Safety Precautions and refer to the communicable disease manual, Public Health Act to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Policy 27 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall ensure at minimum one staff member at each shift has a current First Aid Certificate or equivalent.
- Policy 28 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER ensures all program equipment; materials and supplies used in the ChildCare are age appropriate for the children.
- a) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall ensure that all cribs and playpens used to accommodate infants or children meet federal and provincial safety standards.
- Policy 29 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER adheres to regulations of fair employment practices and contractual relationships with its staff as stipulated by Labor Standard's Act.
- a) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER has written personnel policies which outline personnel practices, working conditions, insurance

protections for personnel; union management relations if applicable; wages and benefits; grievance procedures; disciplinary procedures; screening, recruitment, and training of staff.

- b) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall ensure that all staff have written job descriptions which shall include but need not be limited to the following:
 - 1) Position Title
 - 2) Qualifications
 - 3) Position duties and responsibilities
 - 4) Reporting relationship and levels of authority
- c) Written documentation will include but are not limited to the following screening and recruitment procedures for all staff who work directly with clients to assess personal suitability, skills, and interests:
 - 1) Review of application forms and resumes
 - 2) Personal interview
 - 3) Criminal record check/vulnerable record check
 - 4) Child welfare check
 - 5) Reference checks

Policy 30 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER offers all new staff orientation, training and development for all personnel and volunteers with respect to our objectives, resources, policies and services; the dynamics of abuse, and the needs and cultural differences of the clients MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER serves.

Policy 31 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER ensures that the function and responsibilities of the governing body shall be clearly specified as distinct from Agency personnel.

Policy 32 All client files are retained a full six years.
a) Files older than six years are destroyed by the authority of the Ministry of Community & Social Services.

Policy 33 MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER stores files in a locked secure area to guard against unlawful destruction, loss and unauthorized removal and access.

Policy 34 A record for each client shall be kept current from the point of intake to termination of services.
a) Shall include and not be limited to:

- 1) Women's Shelter information Client Form
- 2) Service Plan
- 3) Case Notes and Services Provided
- 4) Exit interview, where possible
- 5) Documentation of requests

- b) All case notes shall be initialed and dated by the author.

Policy 35

MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall evaluate its performance and the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the services provided at least once every three years.

- a) The evaluation shall, as much as possible, involve current and past clients, board members and agency staff.
- b) MRWSA 2ND STAGE SHELTER shall use evaluation results to make changes in its programs whenever possible and practical.