

## **SAFETY AND RESPECT: GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN LIVING IN THE SHELTER**

We know that you have come to shelter to escape domestic violence that is painful, difficult and traumatizing. It's very common for people to turn to substances, have trouble sleeping, become depressed, deal with anxiety, or have other normal but difficult consequences or reactions from what they've survived. If you are dealing with any of these issues, please visit with an advocate. She'll listen to and support you, and help you connect to whatever available resources and assistance you need. Shelter is meant to be a safe, supportive place to heal.

We are all women and anyone staying at the shelter is here because of hard times. We are all related and it's important that everyone try hard to get along, be understanding and support each other.

Living with others can be difficult. Everyone has their own habits and ways of doing things. Some people are naturally quiet or may be very upset about what is going on in their lives. We might mistakenly think the person is stuck up or snotty. Others may be very outgoing and want to share their experiences with you. Whatever the kind of person, it is important that we try to respect the rights and individuality of others.

There may be women staying here who are different from you. Women with different spiritual and religious beliefs, economic differences, women from other tribes or races, women whose sexual orientation is different from yours, older women, women with disabilities or special needs. ALL of you are here to escape violence and be safe. ANY woman who is seeking safety is welcome here and all of us, including you, have a responsibility to behave respectfully.

We do not want to control you the way your partner has been controlling you. Rather than lots of "rules," we ask for mutual respect and consideration. The few rules we do have are designed to ensure the safety of women and children residing in the shelter.

### **RULES:**

1. Children are sacred and not to be hit or called names.
2. No alcohol, other drugs or drinking/drug use in the shelter.
3. No weapons – toys or real.
4. Pick up after yourself.

If there are other rules or possible changes that would make you or your children feel safer and more comfortable during your stay in shelter, please discuss them with an advocate. You can also visit with other shelter residents during house meetings, which will be described later in this booklet. We cannot promise changes will be made, but we will do our best to accommodate you.