



### **LONG-TERM RELATIONAL APPROACH**

Trauma, such as experiences of physical and sexual abuse and violence, has damaging effects on individuals and societies. Many women and transgender/nonbinary folks 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 one's 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 they have in their lives are with abusive partners, drugs, or voices in their heads. Often these individuals 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 program participant is given time, space, dignity, respect, and choices to develop their own personal agency and to build relationships with staff that are not predicated on pre-determined program outcomes, but on meeting their individually-expressed needs and goals.

### **WHOLE LIFE CONTEXT**

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

*On The Rise* helps those who have fallen through the cracks of our social system navigate the next stages of their lives. Based on individual relationships, we support them as they recognize, accept, challenge, and balance the realities and opportunities of their internal, societal, and cultural contexts. Our work with women and trans/nonbinary participants crosses over specific issues and extends out into our community to guide and support them as they access services for specific challenges. By being an active partner with a participant on their journey, *On The Rise* strives to increase their self-efficacy and improve the effectiveness of our social service system for the most highly marginalized people.