SAFETY & WELL-BEING IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

24TH ANNUAL NEW YORK SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONFERENCE

RiseBoro Community Partnership

Housing Supportive Services

Kristine J. Montañez, Vice President

Services:

Wrap-around services that help stabilize households and individuals with significant histories of trauma, homelessness and/or housing instability, and mental and physical health challenges.

Challenges:

Increase in unmet mental health challenges
Lack of funding/support for clinical interventions
Staff feeling unequipped to deal with actual, real-time crisis

Support:

Structural and process changes at a programmatic, divisional, and organizational level
Capacity building and skills development
Clarity around expectations

Intervention from The Network:

Safety & Well-Being Training Series

- Monthly virtual trainings with a focus on several aspects of safety, including trauma-informed service delivery, harm reduction, de-escalation and crisis intervention, restorative justice, and how to develop organizational culture that builds well-being and safety.
- Community of Practice sessions where various members of a supportive housing program ecosystem (social services, property management, security, admin staff) across organizations share best practices, lessons learned, and build shared expertise

My Feedback

- As member of the COP
- As Leadership Liaison

Lutheran Social Services of New York

We transform communities by collaborating with individuals, families and leaders to dismantle the causes and effects of persistent poverty and social injustice.

Low Barrier Admission Policies

..... Emerging Staff Concerns

SHNNY answers the call!

NASW Guidelines for Social Worker Safety

- Organizational Culture of Safety and Security
- Prevention
- Office Safety
- Use of Safety Technology
- Use of Mobile Phones
- Transportation
- Comprehensive Reporting Policy
- Post Incident Reporting and Response
- Safety Training
- Student Safety

NASW
National Association of Social Workers

The Importance of LISTENING

When staff do not feel heard.....

- **Decreased Productivity**
- **Burnout/Low Commitment**
- **Increased Turnover**
- **Poor Collaboration**
- **Damage to Employer Brand**

What's Different about the Safety & Well-Being Training Series & Community of Practice?

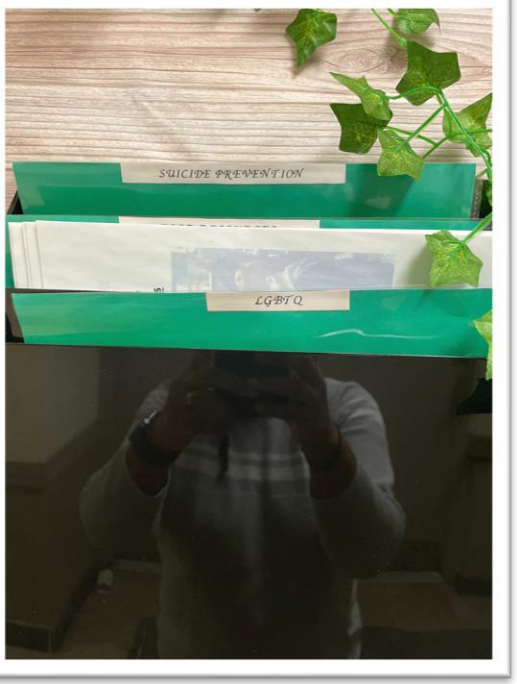
-Building on Theory – Concrete Tools

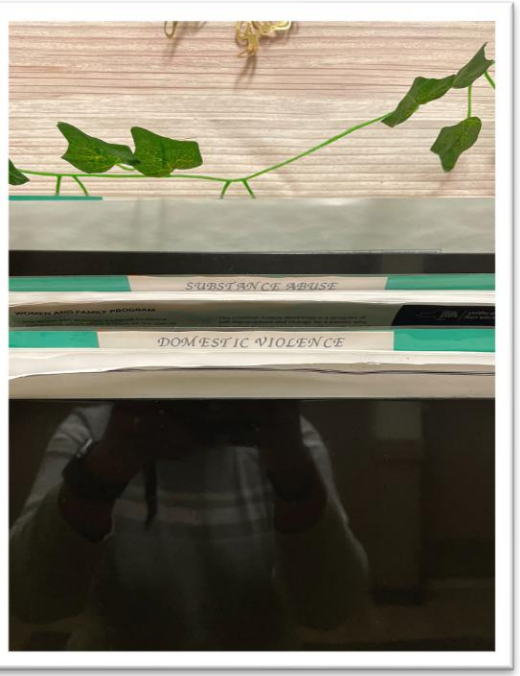
-Developing a Network – Sharing Resources

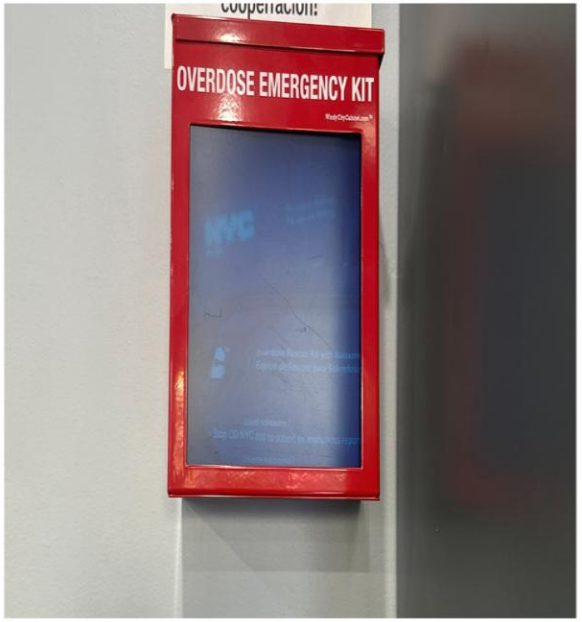
-Training and CoP Participants – Who Should Attend?

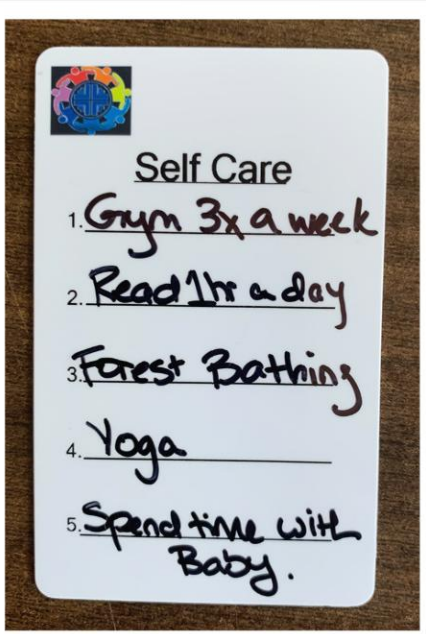
-Leadership buy in is Critical!

Results









ESI EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE GROUP
Public Safety EAP
Educators' EAP
Higher Ed EAP
HealthCare EAP

Takeaways

- Debrief
- Know Thyself
- Tapping Out
- Restorative Justice
- Asking Questions

Engagement is the Intervention!

Relationships are the Intervention!

Dignity is the Intervention!

THANK
YOU

Community Access

Promoting an Organizational Culture of Safety & Well-Being

1974-2024

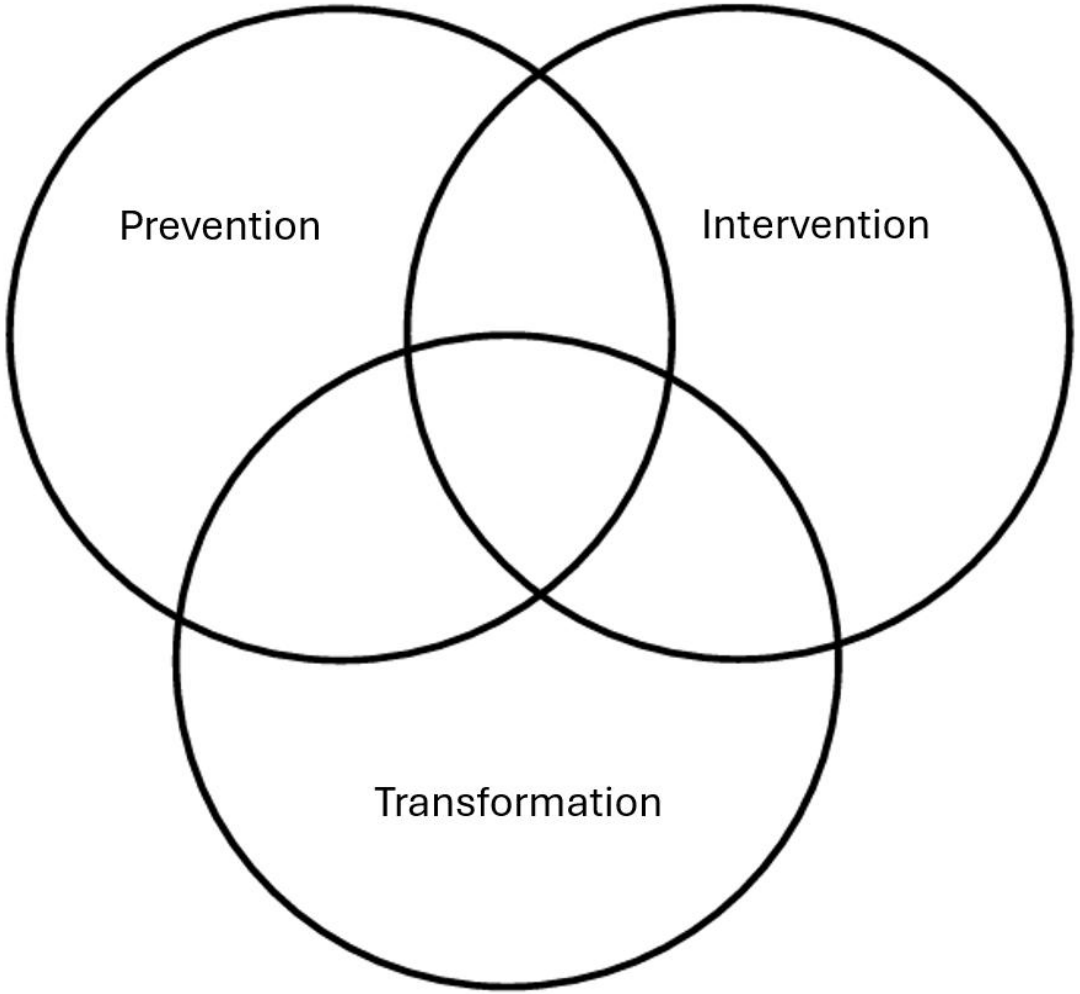
COMMUNITY ACCESS

Some of our Assumptions

- We will never be able to rid our community/programs 100% of violence
- Individuals with mental health concerns are more likely to be targeted/victims than to perpetrate violence– at the same time we can't ignore that the potential for violence exists
- There are challenges to promoting safety while working within supportive housing
- We are all responsible for promoting a culture of safety
- "Keep it Complex" vs. "Keep it Simple"

1974-2024

COMMUNITY ACCESS



"Whose Security Is It Anyway? A Toolkit to Address Institutional Violence in Nonprofit Organizations," 2017

Prevention

- Working to create conditions that promote safety and reduce risk for violence
- Preparing for the possibility of when violence/harm occurs

<u>We all play a part in prevention</u>

Prevention: Topics

- **Values-Based Approach**
- **Workplace Safety Committee**
  - Communication
  - Safety Planning
  - Policy Review Calendar
- **Staff Hiring & Training**
- **Staff Wellbeing**
- **Tenant Involvement**
- **Environmental Design**
- **Crisis planning**

Safety Planning

Site Safety Planning-

- Adapted & evolved over time with feedback and ideas from programs and staff
- Has had real outcomes for programs, e.g. cameras, walkie talkies, etc.
- Site safety grid – Individualized for programs

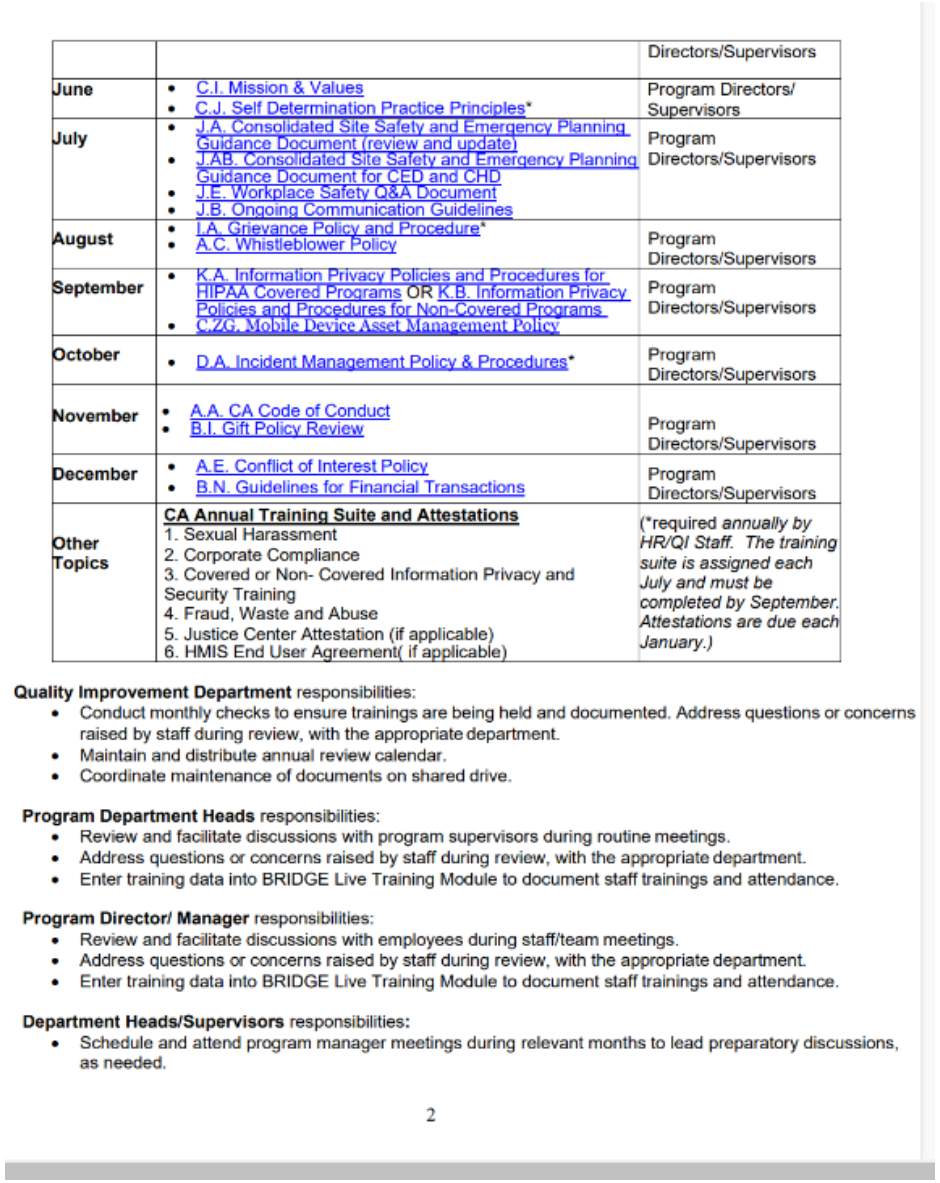
Individual Safety Planning:

- Protocols/guidance developed: e.g. bring cell phone if going to an apt and have a concern of potential incident/safety concern

*Challenge: To ensure it does not become a rote task, to check a box

Policy Review Calendar

- As more policies and protocols are added over time, it can become overwhelming to ensure they are reviewed, and absorbed



		Directors/Supervisors
June	• C.I. Mission & Values • C.J. Self Determination Practice Principles*	Program Directors/ Supervisors
July	• J.A. Consolidated Site Safety and Emergency Planning Guidance Document (review and update) • J.AB. Consolidated Site Safety and Emergency Planning Guidance Document for CED and CHD • J.E. Workplace Safety Q&A Document • J.B. Ongoing Communication Guidelines	Program Directors/Supervisors
August	• I.A. Grievance Policy and Procedure* • A.C. Whistleblower Policy	Program Directors/Supervisors
September	• K.A. Information Privacy Policies and Procedures for HIPAA Covered Programs OR K.B. Information Privacy Policies and Procedures for Non-Covered Programs • C.ZG. Mobile Device Asset Management Policy	Program Directors/Supervisors
October	• D.A. Incident Management Policy & Procedures*	Program Directors/Supervisors
November	• A.A. CA Code of Conduct • B.I. Gift Policy Review	Program Directors/Supervisors
December	• A.E. Conflict of Interest Policy • B.N. Guidelines for Financial Transactions	Program Directors/Supervisors
Other Topics	**CA Annual Training Suite and Attestations** 1. Sexual Harassment 2. Corporate Compliance 3. Covered or Non- Covered Information Privacy and Security Training 4. Fraud, Waste and Abuse 5. Justice Center Attestation (if applicable) 6. HMIS End User Agreement(if applicable)	(*required *annually by HR/QI Staff. The training suite is assigned each July and must be completed by September. Attestations are due each January.)*

Quality Improvement Department responsibilities:
- Conduct monthly checks to ensure trainings are being held and documented. Address questions or concerns raised by staff during review, with the appropriate department.
- Maintain and distribute annual review calendar.
- Coordinate maintenance of documents on shared drive.

Program Department Heads responsibilities:
- Review and facilitate discussions with program supervisors during routine meetings.
- Address questions or concerns raised by staff during review, with the appropriate department.
- Enter training data into BRIDGE Live Training Module to document staff trainings and attendance.

Program Director/ Manager responsibilities:
- Review and facilitate discussions with employees during staff/team meetings.
- Address questions or concerns raised by staff during review, with the appropriate department.
- Enter training data into BRIDGE Live Training Module to document staff trainings and attendance.

Department Heads/Supervisors responsibilities:
- Schedule and attend program manager meetings during relevant months to lead preparatory discussions, as needed.

2

Staff Wellbeing & Appreciation

- Wellness Fund
- *CA Shout Out & Project Thank you*
- Direct Service Worker Support Group 1.0 & 2.0
- Staff presentations at All-agency meetings: Roles &Responsibilities to combat "Us vs. Them”
- Letters of commendation from the Incident Review Committee
- Agency provides Time Off for the staff who enters an apartment and finds a tenant who passed away

Intervention

What happens in the moment when SH#t hits the fan (and following)

Intervention: Topics

- Supervision
- Key Practices Re: Policy/Guidance Development
- Harm Reduction Tools & Overdose prevention
- Tracking & Data
- C.A.S.T. (CA Support Team)

A Sampling of our Guidance Document topics

- Responding to Identify Based Harms From Program Participants
- What to do when Someone is Arrested
- Understanding K2
- Understanding and Responding to Sexual Assault
- Sexual Attention from Program Participants
- Responding to Physically Threatening Behavior
- Understanding Suicide and Suicide Prevention
- Understanding and Responding to Interpersonal Violence/DV

Transformation

Working to transform the social conditions that perpetuate violence

Transformation: Topics

Fighting against the Institutional Violence of our Systems

- Early adoption of low-threshold housing and focus on eliminating discrimination in housing entry & exit
- Advocate against AOT/IOC
- Funding peer-led Advocacy Department & peer training center
- Fight police discrimination and police response to people in mental health crisis
- Crisis Respite Center and Soteria
- Staff Wellbeing
- Organizational Commitment to Racial Equity
- Community Building

Group Exercise: Who is Responsible for Safety?

- Senior Leadership
- Direct Service Workers
- Program Managers/Supervisors
- Property Management/Building Supers/Real Estate Development
- Funders
- Tenants

Senior Leadership

- Develop policies and procedures related to safety with as much input as possible from staff/tenants
- Ensure high quality and regular training that enhances skills and knowledge related to trauma-informed skills/environments, respectful communication, de-escalation skills, safety practices and protocols
- Develop guidance, and tools for staff to implement policies and procedures
- Work with Real Estate Development to ensure buildings are developed with trauma and safety in mind

Direct Service Workers

- Utilize a respectful, empathetic, trauma-responsive approach with tenants
- Develop person-centered, strengths-based relationships with tenants
- Attend trainings to enhance skills, including ones that help develop effective communication, de-escalation skills and safety practices
- Work on developing insight and tools for one's own "soft spots", triggers, etc.

Housing Managers/Program Directors

- Utilize hiring practices that include assessing alignment with agency values, respect, empathy for tenants, and natural inclination towards conflict resolution/de-escalation
- Discuss self-care, burn-out, vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue in team meetings, and supervision and ensure staff develop self-care practices
- Lead program safety planning meetings on a regular basis
- Assess building for issues related to safety & f/u with Property Management to address
- Join organizational committees that relate to safety, to contribute to the enhancement of organizational safety practices

Takeaways:

- Others: Funders, Tenants, Property Management, Real Estate Development, Facilities Management.

- Promoting safety is a shared responsibility.

- It can be enticing to focus on blaming other groups of workers other than our own for why things aren’t safe but safety is everyone’s responsibility and everyone’s role is important.

A few key take-aways

- Even as we commit to this work, we recognize we will never get it all right or reach 100% organizational safety & wellbeing. We must keep trying!
- Community Building builds social cohesion, and impacts broader social change
- We all have a part of play in promoting safety
- Communication - breaking down the "Us vs. Them"
- It is important to fight the violence of the system

Q & A

- What questions do you have?

THANK YOU!

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Restorative Justice Community of Practice

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BRC – focused on addressing the feeling of staff and clients that "nothing happens after"

- Serving clients with profound histories of trauma
- Encountering situations in which harm is caused, or escalates
- Using CPI to de-escalate a situation but unsure where to go from there
- Everyone wants accountability – but no one has a consistent definition
- Primarily focused on what we can do – versus relying on outside systems to manage post conflict resolution

Life Cycle of Harm

- Pre harm stages (Use trauma informed care, pay attention, client engagement academy)
- Escalation and explosion – Stop the harm (Use CPI/de-escalation)
- Recognize the consequences of harm
- Make repair for the harms

What this might look like

Client is angry over a meal that is served 15 minutes late. They throw a dish on the floor breaking it and use profanities towards the cook.

A supervisor and another peer partner with the cook who is upset, they ask the cook about their experience, and what they might want to see happen. They explore numerous options.

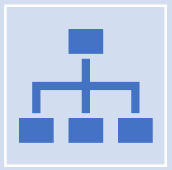
A peer and a case manager meet with the client. They check in on their thoughts about the event, and gauge what happens next

Over the course of several meetings the client comes to apologize to the cook, and the cook agrees to accept the apology. In addition the client agrees to assist with hanging artwork in the dining room

Accountability from Creative Interventions

The word “accountability” can also bring up all kinds of images and feelings for different people at different times. Often, we think of accountability as linked to punishment, “paying” for what someone did, or even going to prison.

We are trying to have a different way of thinking about accountability – one that is more positive, that is tied to responsibility and change, but not to punishment and revenge. One that can be driven by connection and care rather than fear and anger alone.

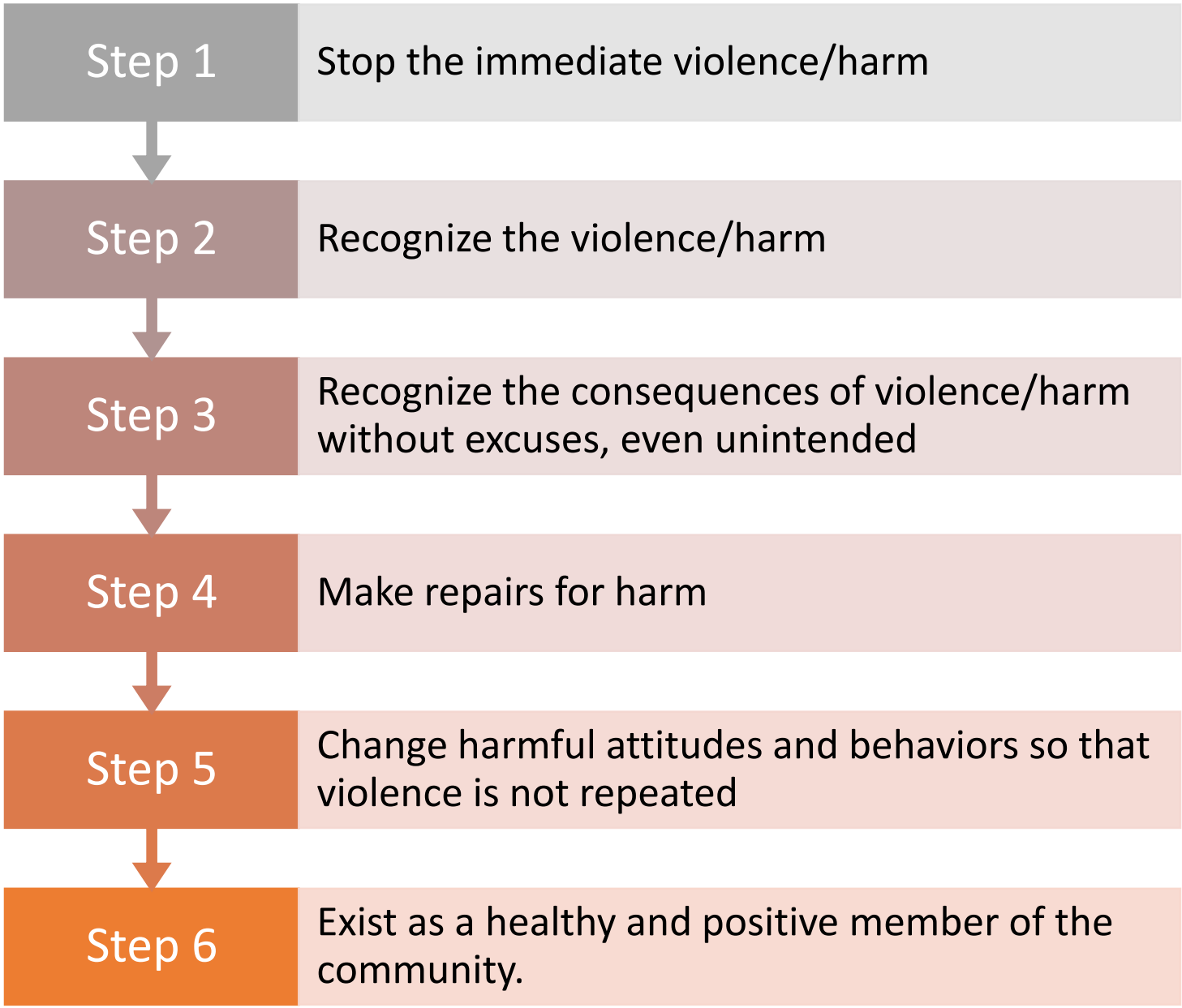


What does accountability look like and why is it hard?

Accountability & Restoration

The goal of this process isn't to determine if anyone is a good or a bad person. It’s to address behaviors that cause harm and determine what can be done to repair the harm.

Accountability Staircase



ACTIVITY – How to give a sincere apology

- With specific details of the harm (steps 1 and 2)
- Without excuses (step 2)
- With understanding of the consequences of the negative behavior on the survivor and the community (step 2 and 3)
- With intended or requested repairs (step 3)
- With a commitment to never repeat the behavior/harm again (step 5).
- With knowledge that repeating the harm will result in consequences.
- Without the apology being for self-gain.