

Emotional Well-Being: Sample Questions to Ensure Better Accommodation

To better accommodate an individual's needs the following questions can be asked *following* intake to provide information about how staff can best respond when a survivor is having an emotional crisis:

- What are situations that are particularly difficult for you or make you feel unsafe or upset (*i.e., noise, not being listened to, loneliness, being teased, contact with family, being alone, laughter, yelling, crying, being touched, time of year, time of day, particular dates/holidays, certain words, crowds, malls, bus stops, doors open/closed, smells, sounds, contact with certain people, etc.*)?
- What signs do you notice when you are beginning to feel stressed and out of control (*sweating, breathing hard, sleeping a lot, restlessness, crying, avoiding people, feeling hyperactive, eating more, eating less, etc.*)?
- If you are anxious or angry and those feelings are getting so intense they may be impacting your safety or another person's safety, how would you prefer that staff members assist you?
- What has been particularly helpful to you in the past when you had a difficult time with your thoughts and/or feelings (*such as more time in a quiet area, physical exercise, talking to a friend or family member, taking a bath or shower, meditation, reading, leaving the room, listening to music, journaling, reading, medication, etc.*)?
- What has not been particularly helpful to you in the past when you had a difficult time (*such as being asked to stay in a room, not being taken seriously, noisy environment, etc.*)?
- Is there a person who has been helpful to you when you were overwhelmed or distressed? Would you like to call that person if you get distressed here? Do you have that telephone number? Would you give us written consent to call this person if you are in great distress and we cannot seem to help?
- Have you noticed any triggers that you associate with being anxious or angry? If so, what are these triggers?
- Do you have coping strategies to deal with difficult memories? Group living can trigger difficult memories especially if you were ever hospitalized for mental illness or have been in treatment for substance addiction. Are there any situations that might trigger difficult memories for you here? Let us know if there are ways we can offer emotional support to you during your stay.*

- *If room checks are part of the routine at the shelter:* Is there anything we can do to make the room checks comfortable for you?
- If you are taking medications and have concerns about them during your stay please let us know. Sometimes an abusive partner controls medication. An abusive partner may tamper with meds, steal meds or withhold meds. If you take any medications, need them and were not able to bring them with you to shelter, let us know. We can provide you with information and referrals or advocacy to better accommodate you during your stay. Please also advise us if you think your medication(s) is not working effectively for you or if there are any side effects from the medication(s) that we should know about to better support you during your stay. If you need or have reminders to keep your medication schedule let us know how we can help you.*

From *Real Tools: Responding to Multi-Abuse Trauma*

By Debi S. Edmund and Patricia J. Bland

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