

"Please standby for Realtime Captions" >> Good afternoon, good morning, hello everybody. Welcome to the bi monthly affinity discussion. I will be the moderator for today's call. We are so thrilled that we will be joined by teams from three classes today, classes F, G, H. We are happy to have you here and we are looking forward to a stimulating conversation. This is the first of three discussions in our affinity series that will be exploring shelter rules. An interesting and hot topic for many of us now. As always affinity discussions provide a format where we can have an interactive dialogue with all of you amongst our peers and with faculty and staff and guests. We're going to encourage all of you to participate and let us know what you're thinking as much as you can, as much as an audio call allows. We're hoping we'll be able to have some really active and engaged discussion. We want to encourage sharing and brainstorming ideas of everybody here which is why we subtitled peers and mentors just a phone call away. The way you can participate in the conversation today is press star 1 and let the operator know you have a comment or something you would like to share or you can send us an E-mail. In our fish bowl today we have several of our faculty and staff from the advocacy learning center. Liz, Beth, Diane, Sandra. Welcome to all of you. It's good to have you here today. Before we jump in and get into this hot topic let's hear from Liz about some of the technical aspects of today's call what if do we need to know as we go through the call today?

Thanks. As you prefaced a moment ago because this call has phone lines muted for participants while the fish bowl speakers are engaging in dialogue, we want to hear from you at any point. Just know that all you need to do is press star 1 on your keypad and it will get you into the operator cue. After a moment or two we'll do our best to incorporate you into the conversation. Recognize that that is possible at any time. Anyone who would prefer to send comment or question by E-mail send one to advocacy@praxis International dog. Or if you have a glitch to tell us about, send it to advocacy@prexies international.ORG. Since this is recorded you can review any time.

Thank you. It's good to have those reminders and know you are there backing us up. We have a fascinating conversation to start today. We'll continue over the next three calls of the discussions. As advocates we have grappled with issue of shelter rules for years. As we move through advocacy learning center together this is an ideal topic for us to explore as we work towards creating change that strengthens advocacy and promotes ultimate social change around violence against women. Shelter rules are typically created as an attempt to prevent bad or harmful situations or events from happening or to protect the people in the shelter. Rules do this by controlling behavior. Ironically abusers also use rules to control behavior in domestic violent situations. We have not set out to recreate abusive or controlling environments but somehow we seem we risk that happening at times in our shelters. Over the course of the next three calls we are going to explore this reality and encourage all of you to put on your thinking caps and think honestly and reflectively about where we're at around this issue. First we'll look at the historical perspective. How was it when shelters first opened? When and how did shelter rules develop? We'll look at the most common problems that were identified in a study called meeting survivors' needs, multistate study of domestic violence shelter experiences. Then we'll

consider recommendations A do we do? Where do we start? Through that we'll have examination of several state coalitions who have undergone discussion and exploration with programs about the possibility about a different approach to shelter rules. We are hoping we can come up with practical applications about changing shelters and address some of the challenges and possible resolutions as well as give you resources that can support your own thinking and action around this topic. We know it's going to be a very thought provoking dialogue. We also wanted to make sure that's very practical and useful for you as we strengthen our social change advocacy work. To that end, we are very excited to have a guest with us today who is going to help guide us in that conversation. Anne Menard is an activist who has worked on research issues affecting violence and sexual assault survivors since the 1970s. Her focus has been on survivor defined advocacy and public policy and research affecting women and families especially those in poverty. After serving as a senior consultant to the family violence prevention and services program of the US department of health and human services during 2005 she returned as director of national resource center on domestic violence a position she previously held from 1994 to 1999. Prior to this national level work Anne led Connecticut coalition against domestic violence and in the early 1980s codirected Connecticut's largest domestic violence shelter and was also actively involved in grassroots sexual assault advocacy. Anne has a wealth of experience and knowledge that I think will be helpful for us today. Welcome Anne, we are so happy to have you here with us today.

I am very happy to be here.

Let's jump right in. I know people have thoughts and ideas on this issue including yourself. Again we are really hoping that everyone on the call today will let us know what you think, what your thoughts and questions are. We are going to start off with asking Anne to talk a little bit about a study that NRCV conducted in 2008 titled meeting survivors' needs a multistate study of domestic violence shelter experiences. Everybody was sent a summary of the findings. That might be good to reference as we listen to Anne and have this conversation today. Anne can you tell us about that study and what were things you learned through it?

Again, thanks to everyone that is involved in pulling these calls together. One of the reasons I am happy to be here is I consider this to be a really important timely and I think fascinating topic. I am really pleased to have an opportunity to be part of your conversation. I know I'll be talking a lot at the beginning but I really look forward to hearing others' comments, thoughts, questions, anxieties about this whole area of our advocacy. Let me give you an overview then I know I will have an opportunity later to talk about some of the specific findings. The meeting survivors' needs shelter study was developed by national resource center on domestic violence working collaboratively with Dr. Eleanor lion at the ewe con school of social work. We designed to help fill gaps in our current knowledge about range the services domestic violence shelters provide, needs and experiences of survivors who turn to shelters for help and the types of help those survivors receive at shelter programs. Data were collected in late 2007 and early 2008 through surveys completed by over 3400 residents of 215 domestic violence shelters located in eight states. Researchers chose these states to maximize geographic population,

rural, urban, sub urban, economic diversity. Large sample size, 3400 respondents, inclusion of programs from eight states. The variety of communities in which shelters themselves were located and diverse needs of those they serve make this a reasonable reflection of shelters across the nation. That's important to know. Shelter residents were asked to complete a written survey at or near their entrance into the shelter and again at or near their exit from the shelter. Materials, survey instruments were translated into 11 languages to complete accessibility. Most were completed in English or Spanish. They asked about 38 different possible areas of interest probing survivors entry experiences, their needs, extent to which their needs were met as they defined them, any conflicts or problems with rules they encountered, changes they attributed to their shelter stay, the ratings of help they received including difficulties experienced during stay and respect and support survivors received from shelter staff. In addition to the enormous amount of data collected from survivors programs that were participating provided information about their capacity, number of beds, staff and other information like that and the services that they provide. Researchers collected census data about regions served by the shelters. The shelter studies showed shelters play a critical and positive role for a vast number of residents and in the lives of shelter, survivors that seek shelter. That's important to know as an overall finding of the shelter. It also showed to our topic today that some survivors struggle with shelter rules in a couple of areas in particular including eligibility for admission such as survivors with teen-age boys, those with arrest records, whether they would be admitted to a particular shelter, what they would do in residence related to rules with curfew or chores, and how long they may stay. Time limits that might be attached to particular shelters. The study and voices it captured suggested there are important questions we can ask about the role of rules and in other settings in which we have contacts with domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.

That's remarkable to have 3400 respondents and also get information from the program. That gives a lot of validity to the study I would imagine Anne. Thank you for summarizing that. Before we go into detail about some of the findings I am curious what led you to even include questions about shelter rules in the study?

That's a great question. Historically as you said in your introduction, during the 30 years shelters have existed rules were developed to ensure the safe and smooth operation of the shelter. No violence, watch your kids, let us know where you are. Rules were typically created as you said to control behavior. Often they are made as an attempt to prevent bad or harmful situations or events from happening in this communal living setting. Advocates have repeatedly said rules were created often because of a single instance. So one time something happened and shelter staff or management made a rule to try to prevent the recurrence of that one time event. For example, a teen boy came into the shelter with his mom and he acted out and something bad happened or some women were afraid or felt unsafe, whatever. Women stayed out at night and staff were worried. So a curfew was created for everyone including those residents who worked at night. So you could begin to see some of the conflicts that arose. You can usually trace rules, every single rule that exists in shelters back

to a specific event that occurred either at that shelter or in another shelter in the state. Again, we have these great networks where we learn from each other's experiences. There was also a lot of transfer. It didn't even have to happen in your shelter. Something happening in a neighboring shelter even in another state, rules became more frequent and kind of built on each other. That's kind of historically where rules came from. Also there have been three main influence from my particular interest in shelter rules and this discussion and why we included the shelter rules questions in the shelter study in particular that I want to share. One influence was the documenting our work project initiated by national resource center on domestic violence in early 2001, 2003. We were responding to the fact that we had very little information about what we do, why we do what we do, why we do it the way we do and what values and assumptions still underlay our approaches. We weren't doing a very good job of documenting our work hence the title of that project. We also wanted to support critical thinking about all aspects of our advocacy. NRC, national resource center, worked with Dr. Warrior, Eleanor lion, a number of great advocates work at the local level and state coalition level as well as allied researchers on framing a set of assessment tools on critical tools to support our thinking of work, particularly in the shelter context. In the context it felt important to include questions about admission criteria for services. Who gets in the door? Who is excluded. Other access issues related to disability, life circumstances. For example what happens when a survivor has a criminal record? Access issues related to language, sexual orientation and other issues. This led to critical thinking questions like who gets excluded from your services? Questions programs could ask themselves. Who gets excluded? Do these intake policies and practices affect different groups of survivors differently? Is there any disproportionate impact we need to pay attention to? What happens to survivors when they done make with in the door? What supports is the program providing or are they left on their own. We also included in this assess assessment and critical thinking tools questions about rules in the shelter. At that point in 201, 203 we identified 21 rules pretty common in shelter programs. This led to questions about what are most common reasons residents are asked to leave? What are implications for survivors in danger? How can relatives be involved in the process of looking at shelter rules? It involved a lot of people. It was really interesting. When we were given the opportunity to design and implement shelter study we built on that earlier work in the documenting our work project and pulled a lot of the assessment and critical thinking questions into the study. For me there are two personal places that have given me insights in our ongoing examination in the implication of shelter rules. I grew up in a family of ten in a house with one bathroom with a bath and shower. Privacy, conflict, sense of fairness. I was the oldest girl so I had my own closet sized room until I left for college at which point my next older sister was waiting outside with things to move in before I packed for college. Everyone shared room. I get this. It's joys, challenges, needs to manage. Individuals respond to chaos and shared responsibility very differently even in a family. Never mind when communal living involves different families in different stages of crises. This leaves me very sympathetic to our inclination to try to create order in a naturally chaotic environment of a communal domestic violence shelter environment. The second perspective I brought, continued to bring to discussions about

shelter rules is that of someone who would not have been able to comply with several of the well intentioned rules in place at the shelter I had the privilege to be coordinator of in the mid 1970s. While I was there, I had my son. He was a great kid. But as a kid he was a better. He would not stand in one place and moved a lot once he could walk. It was physically impossible for me to keep my eyes on him at all times which was one of my shelter rules unless I restrained him which would have run me foul of another expectation if not a rule. We started talking about our rules to a person. This was in 1978 or 1979. To a person, all of us staff, majority of formerly battered women and or sexual assault survivors alcoholics, one former prostitute, one woman with six kids, two immigrants, each of us could think of a reason we would have been screened out or been asked to leave our shelter. We had a great shelter with incredible advocates who were so passionate about this work. As a result of this discussion, we began having a conversation and talk to residents and rethought a lot of things. We did this in a much more clunky and unsophisticated way than Missouri coalition and Washington State coalition shelter rules reduction initiatives which I know you are going to be hearing about. It produced wonderful resources and tools. Still we began that conversation. For me this has been a almost 30 years conversation. Including questions about shelter rules was a no brainer when we came to designing the shelter study.

I appreciate that historical overview and it's important to acknowledge the sensitivity of having this conversation which you so eloquently describe because of the desire to be helpful and to be protective and balanced and fair and the challenges of communal living. I think your reflection about what you went through at the shelter you worked at with co-workers is very telling and probably a lot of us have been in similar situations where we might not be able to follow the rules in shelters we have worked. It also speaks to a lot of what we promote. We really encourage critical thinking and thinking in broadways about social change that are very connected to individual experiences that when we come together collectively we can create that lasting change. It's a good moment maybe to remind all of our participants on the call today that we want to hear from you and see what you are thinking, what your experiences have been, what you have tried in your community or are considering trying. Please let us know. Press star 1 and tell the operator that you have a question or comment. Or E-mail to advocacy@praxisinternational.org. While we pause I want to apologize. I had said that the summary of the study Anne is talking about was sent out to people in publicity but it's actually available on the class page and the protected class page of the website. If you were looking in the publicity, sorry, it's not there. It's on the website. You can access it and you might find it useful during this conversation or afterwards. While we're paused let's also see if any of the other people in the fish bowl have a comment or a thought that relates to what Anne has shared with us around this study and the history of some of how she and the study came to this point. Pre I can, Liz, Beth, Diane, Sandra, anything you want to add?

There was something Anne said that I was moved by and took me back to an experience with shelter rules. Whether you are doing this with a research specialist or on your own there was one thing that was common. That was

the listening to survivors. If we really listen to what survivors have to say whether it's the woman with six children, the immigrant, the person who was a prostitute, whatever their background is, they bring valuable perspectives to us and help us to remember whose shelter is it anyway? It's really not our shelter. It's the shelter of the survivors. Taking the time to listen to what survivors say can really help us as we struggle with what should those guidelines be. I really like that term guidelines verses rules.

That's a great point, Sandra. Again that certainly feeds into so much of what we talk at the advocacy learning center about. We are doing this work with women and with survivors. That's essential for social change. Thank you for highlighting that. Pria, Beth, Liz, Diane, anything else you would like to add to the conversation the this point? Okay. I will take that silence to mean you are thinking about these deep considerations. I encourage all our fish bowl participants and also all of our people who have called in today as participants to let us know what you are thinking about. Anne, as people are thinking about these challenging issues and interesting points you are making, I wonder if you could tell us more specifically about what you found in the study and what you learned that survivor say about shelter rules?

I will be happy to. Again, I was happy to pull out the piece that was referenced earlier, survivors' responses to shelter rules, findings from needs study. We specifically pulled out the findings, most of the findings. I found others that I will review as well. As we all know shelter residents face a variety of problems and challenges attributable in large part to their sudden change of circumstances, living in close proximity with other families which again unless you have been in a big communal situation of a large family or some other type of situation like that, it's really foreign, as well as the crisis that led them to seek shelter in the first place and their interest and need to attend to their children's reactions. These are all things that create particular challenges in creating a safe and supportive shelter environment. In this study, meeting survivors' needs study, survivors noted a range of challenges including and again I relate to these from my own experience as well, finding privacy, getting along with other residents, understanding and complying with shelter rules. You will see that's something that emerged as a key finding. There is the issue of complying or being able to manage under the shelter rules. There was also an issue. We heard a lot that residents and survivors had trouble understanding what the rules were. So that's important as well. Respondents to the survey were asked about a variety of problems that the literature or research and again experience of advocates suggest are possible in shelters. They were also asked whether or not the problem that they encountered was resolved. Because problems come up all the time. That can't be the only measure. We want to know whether there was support or commitment to try to resolve problems as they arose. Those were two important things we looked at. Problems with shelter rules included issues with time limits. 16% of shelter residents reported having problems. 50% reported that those issues were resolved. That's a good thing. But 50% indicated that those issues were not resolved. Curfew. 14% identified a concern about curfew. 61% had issues resolved. Child

discipline and monitoring, 13 13% experienced, 16% had them resolved. Chores. 13% experienced it was a problem problem.

Before you go into detail we have a couple comments.

This is a good time. I was just going to go into those in more details. Great time to be interrupted.

Great.

First we have a question or person in the cue. Let's first hear from that person operator and then there was an E-mail comment sent in too.

We have a comment from a native Alaskan.

This is dawn. My question was when you gave the shelter visitors the survey, did you ask or did you get any feedback as to whether or not they felt that it was a requirement that they fill it out upon being accepted for services?

Excellent question. There was a lot of attention paid during the survey to have it be disconnected with any decisions. These are women who were able to walk through the door. So they were in shelter. ThereWe provided a lot of training and guidance on how do this that acknowledged and honored the fact that folks were in crisis. So they weren't provided an opportunity to participate in the study until they were through the initial crisis that brought them to the shelter door the first day or night. The responses were totally confidential. They completed the survey. They had an envelope. They put it in a box that the staff sealed and then that was sent directly to the researcher. That was stressed, that their responses are confidential. Their privacy was protected. This is designed by folks that had been doing advocacy for a long time. It was totally voluntary. We were really pleased with the number of survivors that participated. This is another thing that I think maybe goes to your question. The survey had a lot of quantitative questions. They checked things important to them. Then there were spaces for survivors to write, say what they needed to say. An amazing number of survivors spent time writing and wrote a lot. So that I think added incredible richness to the responses and provided more context and all of that. We also got comments that survivors were very pleased to be asked.

Okay.

So not only were people not feeling coerced. They were thrilled and felt very validated to be asked about what their experiences were. I hope that answers your question.

It does. I had one more question. Because our coalition serves Oklahoma tribal programs we only have four tribes that have shelter programs. So most of the tribal programs have contracts with the shelter services that are provided by state programs. So something that we were wanting to assess was were there any cultural needs that the shelter visitors had that maybe weren't met? Then also a second question was did you bring

those needs to the attention of shelter staff? Did you ask any cultural specific questions?

We did. I am focusing on the shelter rules questions today but there were questions related to the extent to which the resident survivor felt respected based on their culture. I can't remember the exact questions. There was a question about was their religion respected? Did they feel that the various things that were important to them about who they were, were the staff and volunteers they had contact with respectful. There is all sorts of important information that was shared there. We also asked questions that went to outcomes. In other words what one of the questions was, which folks particularly responded in writing to, what would you have done if the shelter would not have been available to you? Women talked about I would have been killed. I would still be living under a bridge with my kids. Things that we know as advocates are realities but for women to say in this study, to be so direct about what would have happened if they had not been able to secure shelter when they did. They were again both very validating data about the critical role shelters are plays in survivors' lives as well as lots of information about rules and other areas as well that speak to issues we need to pay attention to, engage in critical thinking, talk to survivors about more, look at making some changes.

Thank you.

Thank you, Dawn for those questions. They're very important. Let me read the E-mail comment that was sent by Jeanette at Mount Gram safe house. I am afraid I don't remember where that is. Beth, feel free to pipe in to let us know what state that's from. Jeanette writes we tried no rule situation in our shelter that. Was a failure. Residents were unhappy and staff were not enjoying their work. We switched to reduced rules program. We have very few rules, health and safety related. We have no curfew, no age, sex restrictions for entry, etc. Thank you for sharing that experience. Jeanette is from Arizona.

Arizona has been doing interesting work in this area.

Anne do you want to respond?

Yes. I know this is the first of a three part conversation. I know colleagues from Missouri and Washington State, two state coalitions and of course they're member programs that have engaged in a thoughtful process to look at shelter rules and again I think you will be getting a copy of how the Earth didn't fly into the sun, Missouri's. They were very pleased to help the Missouri coalition publish this. It documents how a process of looking at rules and reducing rules as opposed to just eliminating rules can be structured. Again as I think the findings of the study I am talking about today urges us to do. There are survivors in our shelters that are struggling within some of the rural structures that we have. But as the E-mailer said just jumping to no rules is maybe not the best response. Certainly a process that engages in critical thinking includes survivors in the discussion and helps build a sense of confidence and consensus around what makes sense for each particular shelter.

I think that's important. No one now is proposing anything actually. We are just trying to establish a foundation of understanding and think through together as you have demonstrated that you did so wonderfully on our CDV in Missouri and Washington and other communities were just eager to hear what people are thinking and struggling with and put our thinking caping to. Thank you Jeanette for sharing that example and Dawn for asking the questions. We hope that many, many others of you will E-mail your thoughts or questions or examples to [advocacy@praxis International International.ORG](mailto:advocacy@praxisinternational.org) or join conversation by pressing star 1 and let the operator know you would like to share.

We do have another one.

Great. Go ahead.

It comes from deaf unity. Go ahead.

Hi everyone. This is Veronica Clark from deaf unity in Madison, Wisconsin. I have a question as I am listening regarding the study. I don't think disability was mentioned in regards to the study. I was wondering if disability in general or specific to the deaf and hard of hearing population, if those populations were considered? Were there questions regarding accessibility to those in the shelter given to participants? I appreciate the question about cultural sensitivity. Because of the deaf community we are looking at cultural sensitivity as well. I am thinking of the specific needs of all the individuals or victims that utilize shelter. How did that work into this study? If there were special needs that were brought attention to that had to be addressed throughout the study or not? Thank you.

Absolutely, yes. I am smiling at the questions because of course we should be accountable to all of those questions and all of those interests. I think we did a pretty good job. When we looked at access issues, disability was one. Again, the rules. We are looking at rules and access issues from a number of perspectives. We are interested in again criminal history, criminal records, whether there were physical barriers to access. The structure of the first part of the study was what were you looking for when you reached out to shelter? We didn't presume to know what that was. There were 38 or 54 or some amazing number. We thought Oh, survivors won't be interested in answering this. And they were very discerning in what they said. In the second survey we asked how many of those needs were met. For example one of the questions was were you looking for help around your disability or the disability of a child? That was something that a survivor could say yes, I am looking for help or assistance around this. Then they were given a second opportunity after they had been in the shelter to identify whether they got those needs met, whether they got assistance. That's where we uncovered that some needs were being met more consistently than others. It also helped us match, not match, identify where there was a mismatch between what survivors and different kinds of survivors because we did have demographic information about respondents, what different survivors were looking for when they reached out to a shelter, what they received or what wasn't met. Again, the full report is 300 pages long. There is

really lots of data there. We looked at all the issues. Shelter rules was just one piece. It wasn't a shelter rules study. That was just one of the things we were concerned about. We were concerned with needs, experiences, how survivors identified needs, how it might be different than what we prioritize as programs. Like we think here is what you need. Protection orders wasn't the first on the list. Housing was. Those kind of things. What concerns and interests they had related to their children, etc. There is again lots of information. Western very pleased that 3400 survivors shared thoughts and feelings with us and shelter rules was one of those areas. We did a companion study two years later that looked at nonresidential services and we tried to look at ultimate learnings that we had in the first study. So for example we over sampled culturally specific programs. We had our culturally specific resource center partners identify culturally specific programs in the states that maybe weren't part of the coalition and so weren't identified. Again we also had disability rights partners. I think we did a better job capturing the voices and experiences of a broader set of populations.

This is Beth. I wanted to remind people as soon as I started digging into this survey, a little while back I couldn't start reading, when you said it was 300 pages, I know it was because you can't stop reading and it takes a long time to read through. You kindly put us two links on our website that I think would be interesting for people to download. One is the findings survivors responses to shelter rules which is what we are focusing on. But there is another link that gives a summary of all the findings which is also very fascinating. For all of you saying what else did you ask, I encourage you to jump on that link tapped gives a great overview.

There is executive summary and there is the full report. Do you want me to go back? This will probably take about five minutes or so. It's just specific findings around time limits.

That would be helpful. I am not clear. Is there another person in the cue Shane?

That was the last one in the cue.

Great. Thank you Veronica for those questions and Beth for reminding us about resource we have available on the website. Anne, if you could please finish your description of some of the findings I think that's going to stimulate even more comments and questions.

Great. This piece that I did send out and am referencing now is three pages so it is more accessible for busy advocates. Specific findings. There are four areas in particular, time limits, curfew issues, child discipline issues, chores. Time limits. This won't be a surprise to anyone. Many residents felt time limits were too short, inflexible or not explained clearly with appropriate notice. I think that's a real important feedback. Many noted that time limits didn't take into consideration that finding other living arrangements was difficult. One survivor wrote not my fault, apartments were full and I couldn't observe them. The shelter needs to realize some people have nowhere to go. Some felt time limits forced them to go back to the abuser. I was there 90

days which is 60 days longer than most shelters. Then I ended up back in my abusive relationship because I had nowhere to go. One said she felt overwhelmed in anxiety worrying about the time limit. We continued to hear this a lot. 50% of survivors who identified time limit issues felt their problems were resolved. Hopefully the person wasn't clear on what the time limit was and got more information and other folks maybe got additional help as they were leaving. The curfew issues also rose high here including conflicts with work and church. One noted it was embarrassing to leave occur much because of the occur -- church because of the curfew. I had not thought of that. That was really important for many of us to hear. Another stated evening service, church functions, visits with the daughter. Some felt that the curfew was too early. "We are grown women. 8:00 is ridiculous. ". There was unequal enforcement. One was kicked out when they came home at 9:05. Others believe it should be flexible. Mothers and children should be able to spend time together at Christmas. Others noted it should be extended for weekends. When we listen to survivors we'll hear different perspectives. Some survivors validated there is a good reason that some of the rules exist. The one that particularly irritates me, I will be honest, is because of rules related to curfews that women are forced to quit their jobs. That is so counter. We'll get to this. I would be interested in other people's analysis or critical thinking around what it means when we have a shelter rule that requires women to quit a job in order to stay in shelter. The children's discipline issues as you can imagine, we got complex feedback. Survivors reported problems with other residents' child monitoring. One complained some parents left other parents to discipline and monitor children. That would suggest they're in support for rules or guidance and understanding if motors or parents needed -- mothers or parents needed to be responsible. Another said the following. I felt some of the children were totally out of control with parents taking advantage of everything good that this home represents and so much disrespect to the other people and staff. I love children and understand that they're just that, children. As far as I am concerned there is no excuse for certain parents. There is some interesting tension there. How do we respond to that? Others talked about I cannot do chores and watch my children at the same time. They felt like they were compromised with rules that competed with one another. This sometimes had a cultural connection and sometimes didn't, culturally specific. Prohibition against punishment. One commented by children wanted to run over me because they knew they couldn't be spanked. Another wrote he is my child, I think I should be able to spank if I want. These are complex. Listening to survivors will not necessarily give one answer. But the challenge is balancing different ideas about parenting, cultural challenges about practicing as well as a concern about children being safe and supported. Chores. Again, not a surprise to most of you, feeling chores were unequally enforced or that exceptions were not considered. One wrote because of my health condition I am not able to lift and drag a commercial mop or furniture or inhale bleach or insecticide. Another said the day supposed to mop with ammonia, I am three months pregnant. Another said there wasn't enough structure. I felt I had to respond to other residents and not staff. The rules around chores conflicting with expectations around jobs and children, very hard to hold on a full time job and make time for my children and do chores. How do all these things interact in individual or individual families' lives is the collected. Overall the problems survivors identified that

were most likely to be resolved with conflicts with other women. That may or may not be rule related. 73% of those reported were resolved. Issues with contacting their partner. That's an area where there are frequently rules. The majority felt those issues were resolved within their time at the shelter. Issues with child discipline and monitoring, over 50% as well as issues with curfew. Language and communication. The problems that were least likely to be resolved were feelings that customs were not respected. That goes to one of the earlier questions. Experienced by 5%. A small but important number. For those 5% only 39% felt those issues were resolved while at the shelter. The policies on teen boys was reported by 4% of the survey respondents and less than half had those issues resolved. Issues with the available food which is a problem for 13% of the respondents. Less than half felt those issues resolved. Getting privacy was another area. That's a hard one to resolve actually. That's information I included on the summary of the findings. When I was looking again today there was another thing I wanted to share. We also asked as another indicator of satisfaction whether or not they would recommend this shelter, the shelter they stayed at, to a friend and reasons for why they would not recommend the shelter to a friend included that they don't agree with many of the rules. Because of their experience with the rules they would not suggest this as an option to a friend who needed this kind of support. Other responses were because some staff don't understand when you are running for your life. Every situation is unique and needs to be evaluated individually. I liked the place but the staff would set someone back to a point unable to recover. I want to remind you that I am talking about today on the things where there were concerns raised by survey respondents. There was lots of positive affirmation about the role that shelters play in the lives of survivors. I don't want to skew your understanding or make you feel bad. What this says is there is a lot here that survivors are asking us to look at. We can probably do a better job of balancing needs of communal living with the needs of individual survivors who reach out to shelter.

That's really helpful, Anne. I am very taken by the word that you used a few times. That it's very complex. Certainly in both understanding findings as well as thinking about what we are doing and might do differently is not simple. This is why we so appreciate your time in helping us think this through today. I again want to give anybody who is on the -- to encourage anybody on the call to press star 1 with a comment, question, example, thought. We want to hear from you. We have appreciated everyone's participation so far as well as if you would rather E-mail your comment to advocacy@praxis International.ORG. Then we'll trade and have discussion with you that way. Anne's raised a lot of really interesting information. I wonder if anybody in our fish bowl has thoughts or comments as you listen to what Anne has been describing?

This is Beth. I have one more question about findings that I am curious about because I have been brainstorming with quite a few programs over the last couple months. This particular issue comes up a lot in conversations around shelter rules. That's this wider area of confidentiality and whether we have shelters that are in confidential locations or not which then trans poses into rules that shelters have around who can come, can extended family and friends be a part of your life while at the shelter, answering tell phones, giving out numbers,

ride sharing and transportation where do you get dropped off and picked up. All of those impact women's lives tremendously in shelter. I wondered if any part of the study had insight into findings about what survivors indicated about their experiences there?

It reminds me of one of the findings I thought was really particularly interesting. Where there were differences across different demographic groups. That was one of the options in what you were looking for when you reached to shelter. And tell us how much of this help in this area you received when you are at the shelter. One of the options was help reconnecting with my community that. Was endorsed. People said yes that's what I was looking for and may or may not have received support in that area. Another one I think goes to your question was getting help for my partner, my abusive partner which dealt with the reality that many survivors remain in contact with their abusive partner because of children, interest in ongoing relationship because of court mandates or whatever and that they want their partner to change their abusive behavior. So it was interesting to us. Again, these are folks that have been doing this work for a long time. It was interesting how frequently survivors identified those types of issues. Contact with family and friends also came up within the context of the shelter rules and there was clear frustration on many survivors' parts. We know that isolation is a tactic, isolating victims and survivors from -- victims and survivors from their community and friends is a tactic used for safety reasons. We often have rules or requirements that say they cannot contact anybody for reasons you said. They might disclose location of the shelter or whatever. I think those issues are more complex and some of the rules are silly because of the number of individuals with cell phones which is almost everybody. The ability to make calls and not have it on the shelter pay phone or the shelter office phone. That I think would by itself cause us to need to rethink that. I think the critical thinking we have done beyond advocacy, beyond leaving which is acknowledging that many survivors, not all, want our help in staying safe and staying connected to an abusive partner but getting help for that abusive partner. Again, that's another set of critical thinking I think brings us back to shelter rules and what are we saying, what is our message in the rule, how justified or reasonable is it in the context of survivors and their children's lives today as they live them today. I don't know if those are just some things I thought of in response to what you shared.

Again, you are giving us a lot of wonderful food for thought. Thank you for that question, Beth. It makes me think of our principals. Are we creating an experience that's liberating or dominating for survivors? I think your findings and points you are raising really give us pause as we consider that. We do have another question that was e-mailed into us from Kim at safe house center. I will read this to you and see Anne what you think and then encourage other people in the fish ball, faculty and staff, to respond too. Do you know what the outcomes have been for shelters who have eliminated assigning chores to residents? What suggestions do you have for reducing this rule as it is a huge one for us? I know we'll explore what we can do in future calls but certainly any thoughts you have at this point Anne, Sandra, Beth, Pria, Diane would be helpful. Anne, do you have a response?

What a great question. I don't know but I will find out. This has been fairly recent, this focus on rules. But I don't know whether any individual shelters or any states that have engaged in a process of reducing rules is sort of thinking about that have done that in a way that has allowed them to capture any particular impact. Again it also raises the question of what is your goal? What is your goal in this? What would a success measure be? Would the success be that obviously the safety of the shelter remains high but the comfort level also remains high, that is an interesting question. I don't know that anyone's done that. We should do that as more and more programs are using in this direction. We could actually easily try to figure out a way do that under national resource center's evidence project which is giving us a platform from which to continue our evidence that are practices, particularly practices that we are changing in response from survivors that those changes in practices are in fact responsive to what survivors identified for us. Thank you for that. I will look around to see if anyone has measured impact of reduction and rules. If I find something I will send that to Liz and her colleagues.

There is one more thing I would say. There is a link on our website like I mentioned. Anne has graciously offered to mail each of you a hard copy of the Missouri project to reduce shelter rules. It's called how the Earth didn't fly into the sun. I love that title.

Greatest title ever.

I have to say it should win an award. It's a beautiful manual. You will get a hard copy of it. I think it's chapter 4. They talk about kind of the bumps and hurdles around curfew and chores and watching children and discipline and all those kinds of pieces are talked about. If nothing else, Kim, it might unEarth a lot of discussion on your part if you read that as a team and kind of talk further about what would happen if we did this. You will be receiving that in your mailbox.

The other thing I want to mention, one of the things we did as a result of some of the findings in the study is try to identify to raise some up and identify technical resources. It became clear more so than we expected that problems arise in any kind of communal living system. Problems are going to arise. One of the things that impacts survivors' experiences in the environment is not whether it is problem free which would be unrealistic but whether when problems arise there is a way to respond to them. It raises a question. That was one of the recommendations included in the study. Shelters really should be making sure their staff have good strategies. Whether that's conflicts between residents or between residents and staff with a rule or expectation or guideline, whatever, that staff are prepared and confident and have a full tool box of how to engage in constructive resolution so that that conflict, that unresolved conflict doesn't negatively impact an already stressful situation. I think all of us recognize that we would hope that shelters would never be necessary for anybody. But they're important that they exist now. We want to try to make them as helpful and comfortable for folks as possible. That was the making sure that there is a strategy for dealing with conflict and whether it is volunteers or staff working

in shelters, we would need to make sure they're prepared to respond. >>
This is Sandra.

Really quick before you respond, we have someone who has been waiting patiently for a while.

Okay.

Let's invite them in and have them make their comment then let's hear from Sandra and Anne.

This is from mid land house shelter. Go ahead.

Hi. I have a question. One of the things we have done is reduced a lot of our rules and we're seeing great success with that. But one of the things that we have reduced was overnight stays. Before it had to be something major for somebody to have an overnight stay. We now have lifted that. As long as they're communicating with us and there is a reason for it even if the reason is hey I really need to get out and have a break, that's fine. But sometimes we don't know who is coming or who is going and then we are trying to serve them as advocates and we're growing frustrated with not being able to meet with people. I wondered if you have any thoughts on that or from your study you saw or if anybody in the fish bowl would have thoughts on more how to reduce our stress as we are trying to serve the clients?

Great question. Anne, do you have thoughts?

Yes. This is Anne. I hope that you will be able to be on the second and third of the calls where again the folks on the Missouri coalition who were one of the first to explore this in an organized way and then document their process which we were happy to help support as well as Washington State coalition who again have been very intentionally working with programs around this and to see if that issue's come up for them. I don't remember that coming up as a specific issue other than rules that prohibited people from staying connected with their community and their families but not so much what's the alternative to a rule that restricts that. Again, I would encourage you to be on the second and third call and to see how that's come up for programs in those two states. That's a great question.

Sandra, what are your thoughts? I know you are about to jump in. If it's related to this or something else, go ahead.

I was wanting to jump onto something Anne said about being prepared with staff or volunteers or whoever is in the shelter. I think when we have rules so much whether it's around chores or overnight stays or whatever it is then we set ourselves up to have conflict. When we give the power back to survivors and give the power to find resolution to the survivors and the role of staff is not enforce a rule but to help find solutions, it seems to work better because now we are not in the role of enforcement. Survivors have been in situations where they have been living under power and control and that's what batterers use for power and control. On some level we need some rules. When we give back power to

survivors to decide how it will work and our role becomes that of helping those very survivors solve those problems, they usually work it out because we don't have chore assignments in our shelter. Visiting other shelters, I have seen people do creative things. When people decide they want to do a chore, they get something for it. I don't know about that. There are lots of things going on around the nation for people to do away with chores. I think we are a group of very creative advocates and we think about it in different ways and we can come up with amazing solutions.

That's a great remainder. Thank you, Sandra, even though this is a thorny and complicated issue we really have many programs or states that have grappled with it and come out using some important different methods and I think all of us have the ability to solve these challenges. Anne, do you have thoughts about what Sandra raised?

I think it's a great point. One of the things that's exciting to me and others I think is that so many individual programs and state coalitions and the culture specific resource center partners are engaging in critical thinking about shelter rules but also other aspects of how we interact with survivors, what assumptions we make about what they need versus actually asking them what they need. The relationship between individual survivors and their families and communities that it's just creating a really fertile ground for us to, I think, examine the extent to which what we are currently doing now today is responsive to what survivors' lives are like and what they need. Again, we are part of a movement that has ways to share information within states, across states. It's much more likely that we are going to benefit from the good thinking that occurs in Missouri or Washington State or Vermont which is another state that's done a lot of work in this area. A lot of programs have done this regardless of whether their coalition has engaged in it. I am excited about the questions being asked even if we don't quite have the answers. And I am excited because I am seeing growing commitment to as we did at the beginning of this movement and many programs have continued to do see survivors as not recipients of service but partners with us in figuring this out. I think issues that seem most confusing to us, if we bring them to survivors and say what should we do? We are trying to balance this in the shelter. That's what we did in 1978. Here is our dilemma. How do we balance all these things? They were really helpful. The survivors were really helpful. It's their space too. Anyway, I just appreciate all the things reflected in that comment.

It's very validating, Anne, to have you describe your thought process and approach you have used through your work. As moderator I tie back content to what we discuss in the learning center. You are really touching on core principals of social change advocacy that we promote through the ALC. Certainly this piece of working with women and engaging in dialogue versus guidance or advice is central to being able to create social change. On the issue of being responsive and the challenges some shelters or communities face we have a comment that was e-mailed to us. It says we are working with other partners on the question of how we can expand housing options for domestic violence victim survivors and struggling with what would survivors here use and how can we as a community afford and provide it? We have 27 emergency shelter beds in an aged congregate

shelter but easily over 30 domestic violence calls to 911 on average everyday. We know from conversations with survivors and advocates that the rule such as leave the shelter to look for work quote unquote by 7:30AM and return by 4:30 to parent your children or do chores these rules are causing many women to refuse to use the shelter. But we have had no success in convincing nonprofit operator of the shelter to alter those rules because the staff are convinced they must use those rules with their highly challenged poor and poorly educated residents, quote unquote. Any tips as we continue to grapple with this and seek change and new options? This writer says she knows other sessions will address this. Any thoughts that Anne, Sandra, Diane, Pria, you folks want to share at this point in response to this? Anne?

Sure. There is a lot in that question, in that reflection on challenges faced by both the community and programs trying to be helpful and survivors themselves actually. The national resource center on domestic violence convened housing innovation think tank last week in Seattle where we had the opportunity to bring together folks from around the country, allied programs around the country, that appeared to be doing innovative housing work. Very different. Using federal and state housing vouchers to create affordable housing or greater access for domestic and sexual violence survivors because some are dual programs. They were responding to the broader set of issues. Building housing, creating housing, doing more coordinated housing advocacy in one of the programs in Washington DC, it had created a building for longterm housing two years plus with no barriers. In other words, no one gets screened out. The program has organized itself to be responsive to mental health, substance abuse torque a range of issues -- to a range of issues often seen too complicated for emergency shelters to respond to. There are a lot of people trying to think about how do this. There is no easy answer. Obviously there are so many where housing is priced out of everybody's reach, never mind whose landlord may be hesitant to rent to if they check the protection database or pull the criminal records and engage in what is technically discriminatory behavior. It's a very complex area. We are trying to both learn from folks who have ventured again with interesting sets of partners and with some access to new funding streams in this area and figure out again how to help other folks learn from these innovations that are occurring again in pockets of communities. But this this was a problem 30 years ago and it remains a problem. Other than we're right there with you trying to understand how we can museum our work forward to expand the options.

Thank you, Anne. I am having problem with static. I think it's my phone. I hope I didn't cut you off. I am having a hard time hearing. I am wondering if we can ask Sandra to comment on this too.

It's a very complex issue. I wish I had a magic and and box of answers for you. But I don't. I think that the next calls will be very helpful but I think that looking through strategies and looking through the policies and procedures on how nonprofits organize in trying to find something within those policies that may be helpful for you and keep working towards educating the systems. But it's very complex. It's really a challenge across the nation. I wish I had better answers for you but I

am kind of at a loss. It's a challenge that we are all facing and chipping away at every single day.

We'll be moving through this together as we move through the calls. It is so stimulating to think of all that's been raised. Anne, you have raised wonderful information for us and we have gotten great questions and participation from our programs today. Before we wrap up, I wonder if you can share with us your thoughts about where do you think we can go from here?

Well, I think you can learn as much as possible from the experiences again of the folks you have invited onto your next calls. The Missouri coalition. The gift they provided, they embarked on a thoughtful collaborative project between the coalition and member programs. They gave it the time it needed. They documented their process. I think there is a lot to learn. They would be first to say this is what we did in Missouri. You need to figure out what you need to do wherever you are. They were generous in sharing their experiences. I think Washington State also has -- one of their particular contributions has been how to think about how the physical design of how shelters or any kind of residential programs impacts of experience of survivors. They're building dignity website which if people haven't been on that you can get to it through the Washington State coalition website. But also I think if you do buildingdignity.ORG you may get there as well. Those are great resources. That would be the first thing, just to learn from folks who have gone here and discovered that while it was hard the Earth didn't fly into the sun. I think there is lots of reasons to be encouraged. Then I think we'll also look forward to continuing to learn from all of you as you go through these experiences and make changes and see what happens and continue to get feedback from survivors about what difference it makes. Continue to engage in critical thinking. Not be scared to go there but go thoughtfully and carefully and take advantage of the guidance that already exists.

That's a very encouraging and helpful summary. Thank you, Anne. I wonder if Sandra or Beth, Diane, Pria, if you have final thoughts you would like to leave participants with today?

This is Beth. The only thing I think I would add to Anne's thoughts were to also open the conversation up wider than your usual net. I think when I was hearing the comment that we received via E-mail about the struggles they're currently having with shelters, I would encourage you to invite them into these calls or have your own dialogue and facilitate it in the same way that you can have open conversations with as many as possible. The more brains we have behind this, the better the outcome usually is. Most of what I found is there aren't typically ill intentioned rules. They all came from a good place in thinking. And they may not have ended up in a good place. Sometimes it just takes us thinking through together and be gentle and kind to each other to say what would this look like if we didn't have it? What are our fears? What are our challenges around it? Once you start opening those cans of worms then it all starts pouring out. Then you can put it together.

Very helpful. Thank you. Sandra, Diane, Pria, any final thoughts for us?

This is Diane. I was going to add to what Beth said in a remainder to us that we can also give -- remainder to us that we can give it a try. Try this for six months and visit it and see how it works. I think that can be comfortable to people.

Let survivors know you are doing that. I think it's a great comment.

Sandra, Pria?

Everyday is a new opportunity. There is incredible advocates out there to reach out to. Keep on doing the work.

Those are very encouraging words from all of you as we really mull over all the important issues raised today and all the future conversations that we plan to have around this issue. Before we wrap up, I think Beth or Diane has some announcements?

I do. I have two lovely announcements. One is to remind people that we will continue the dialogue if you haven't gotten that message already today. But we are going to continue talking on this topic two more times. The next date to mark in your calendar is August 1. Then the third of the series will be September 5. Then the next time we all come together collectively as three classes will be at our keynote lecture which will take place July 17. Those are the three dates to mark in your calendar. Remember your evaluations at the end of the call. And have a phenomenal day.

You mentioned in passing but just so people will know that the document for Missouri, Anne has graciously offered to mail that out. So you do have the link to that. But you are also going to be getting a hard copy in the mail so it can be really useful for you in your considerations about how to address and do our best by shelters in the context of our social change advocacy work. Anne, I can't thank you enough for the important work you are doing and the thoughtful attention you have brought to the issues of how we can look at shelter rules and look at our work with survivors in the context of shelters to be able to have environments and work that really honor women and their experiences and move us forward in our social change advocacy. Thank you so much for being on this call today.

It was my pleasure. Thank you.

Thank you too all of our fish bowl participants and especially to our participants who e-mailed or called in with your thoughts or your questions. We hope you will keep thinking and keep identifying questions or thoughts or examples and that you will be a part of our dialogue together around these issues as we move forward. Thanks to everybody. This call is now over. [Event concluded]