

# “Thinking Shelter”

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## Distance Learning Course

June 2007

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The educational materials that follow are supported by funding from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Children’s Administration, Division of Program and Policy. The points of view presented here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

# Part 1: Refresher on WAC 388-61A



State regulations for  
domestic violence shelters and supportive services  
contracted by DSHS

# What is a WAC?

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“WAC” = Washington Administrative Code

The WAC are regulations and rules adopted by state agencies to carry out laws passed by the state legislature.

# What is WAC 388-61A?

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- ❑ Regulates services and operations by agencies contracted by DSHS to provide domestic violence shelter and supportive services.
- ❑ Provides minimum standards for these contractors.

# Why should I care?

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Understanding the WAC can help you do your job.

- ❑ *Why?* Because any DV program contracting with the Washington State DSHS has to meet the requirements laid out in WAC 388-61A.
- ❑ *How does that matter in the Big Picture?* Understanding the environment in which your program operates can help you support the safety and self-determination of domestic violence survivors and their children.

# What does WAC 388-61A cover?

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- Service Model
- Supportive Services Standards
- Confidentiality
- Training
- Facility Standards

# Self-Study

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Take a minute now to review WAC 388-61A. Use this link:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=388-61A&full=true#388-61A-0140>

Read these sections:

- ❑ Service model, WAC 388-61A-0230.
- ❑ Supportive services standards, WAC 388-61A-0270.
- ❑ Confidentiality, WAC 388-61A-0310 through -0340.
- ❑ Training, WAC 388-61A-0350 and -0370.
- ❑ Facility standards, WAC 388-61A-0390 through -0630

On the next few slides, we will cover highlights of the above sections.

# Service Model

## WAC 388-61A-0230

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Minimum standards for the services and practices must use an empowerment model that

- ❑ Promotes safety for victims and their children
- ❑ Is survivor-centered
- ❑ Offers options and support for the survivor's decisions



# Supportive Services Standards

## WAC 388-61A-0260 and -0270

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- ❑ Sheltering is more than just providing a bed. This section outlines the minimum services to provide for adult residents and their children.
- ❑ Safety planning, problem solving and dealing with crisis are some of those services.
- ❑ Participating in services cannot be a requirement for staying in shelter.
- ❑ Services must respect each person's right to self-determination
- ❑ Services and resources must be available to children/youth at shelter too!

# Confidentiality

## WAC 388-61A-0310 through -0340

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- New as of May 2007.
- The survivor's personal information and confidential communication are protected.
- Protecting confidentiality is so important that it takes precedence over an agency's desire to share information with its partners or funders.

# Training

## WAC 388-61A-0350 and -0370

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- ❑ Because the advocate's work is so important, advocates are required to obtain initial and annual training.
- ❑ Advocates (paid and volunteer) and supervisors have specific training requirements.
- ❑ Training should cover certain topics, such as empowerment-based advocacy; advocating with systems (for example, the criminal legal system); history of domestic violence; safety planning; and providing services to individuals from marginalized populations.

# Facility Standards

## WAC 388-61A-0390 through -0630

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- ❑ This section outlines the minimum health and safety requirements for the shelter's facility (such as kitchens) and what it physically provides for residents (such as food).
- ❑ For example, shelters are to store medications in a way that is inaccessible to children, and to provide culturally appropriate food when possible.

# Questions about the WAC?

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- ❑ You are welcome to call WSCADV, or your agency may want to call your DSHS contract manager.
- ❑ Now, we will shift gears to look at where all these shelters came from in the first place...