

I would say that one of the major issues that I have encountered well working with clients is the lack of housing options for individuals and families. When we receive countless calls from community partners as well as from individuals seeking emergency and long-term housing. Safe housing can give a survivor a pathway to freedom, there are many barriers that prevent victims from maintaining or obtaining safe and affordable housing. Many survivors have faced economic abuse as part of the violence, meaning that they have not had access to the family finances, have been prohibited from working, their credit has been damaged. Victims often face discrimination in accessing or maintaining housing based on the violent and criminal actions of perpetrators. Additionally, victims are limited in the types of housing they can access because of their unique situations, they may not be financially able to afford the cost of living (making 3x the monthly rent) or having 2 years work history (most of the time survivors have not been allowed to work). Many housing/ homelessness assistance programs have barriers that inadvertently exclude victims of violence. One of these barriers is that the programs are not trauma informed therefore they do not understand the complex trauma that survivors have endured which can result in altered and at times difficult behaviors. Housing was one of the biggest issues for a Mom and child that I was working with in our shelter. The client was referred to our program from the Tribal Domestic Violence program here in Klamath Falls. Their program doesn't have a shelter and they reached out to us to see if we would be able to provide shelter for her and co-advocate with the tribe agency to assist this family. This particular client has been living with her abuser in another country for the past 10 years, she has attempted to flee him on multiple occasions with every intent of never going back when the barriers became too strong, she would return to him for in her words "the sake of her child". In the process of working with this client she disclosed that she has been struggling with an over abundance of historical and generational trauma, along with childhood sexual assault. During the time that she was in shelter we were able to assist her with the following, clothing vouchers, financial support (phone cards, bus passes and assistance with back utility bills), assistance with filing a restraining order on her husband along with court support. We were also able to assist her with locating employment and adequate housing. Prior to coming into shelter, she had been living in another country for 10 years, her abuser had kept her completely isolated from her family and friends. This made it hard for her to apply for employment or housing having such a huge gap in her resume. Speaking of barriers, when I was working with this client, she disclosed that she had several barriers against her when it came to being self-sufficient, a family had used her information to gain utility services when she was out of the country which led to her not being able to get utilities in her name when it came time for her to start looking for housing. I was able to assist her with calling the utility companies and providing them with the documents needed for them to write her bill off so she was able to get utilities in her name. This was a huge relief for her and meant that she could start looking for housing. This client was motivated and wanted to be self-sufficient, we looking for housing and applied to everything that was within her income restrictions, at the start of her housing search she had a small income, there wasn't much available in her price range. Once she found a place that fit all of her needs (price range, location to bus route and safe location) Marta's house was able to provide her the financial assistance to pay for the application fee. The client was approved for the apartment and we were in the position to assist her 1st, last and deposit to secure the apartment for her, this was a big relief to her because she had stated that if she had to come up with the money on her own it would have taken her months to save up the initial fees and by then the apartment would have been rented out already. We were able to assist her with several months of financial assistance to subvert her rent which helped her not only get on her feet it also provided her the chance to start saving money. Adequate housing and assistance getting into

housing is all that this client needed in order to be independent, self-sufficient and successful. This client is continuing to make progress every day and like she said all it took was for her to know that she had a safe place to lay her head every night along with continued support. At this point the client still randomly calls to check in with me just to let me know that her and her child are doing. They are still in the house that were able to financially assist with getting her into and she still working at the same job and her and her child are thriving. Once we are able to assist clients with the barriers that they have which in most cases is housing they are able to thrive and no longer rely on programs to assist them with services in order to be independent.