

DASH's Safe Housing Model and Management Structure:

Preserving Survivor and Staff Self-Determination and Dignity



DASH DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

Objectives

- Describe how DASH uses a low barrier, voluntary, trauma-informed approach to service provision
- Discuss the results from a collaborative process and outcome evaluation
- Demonstrate how DASH is using transformational coaching in response to the process and outcome evaluation

Presentation Outline

- I. About DASH
- II. DASH Core Beliefs
- III. DASH Model
- IV. Program Evaluation
- V. Transformational Coaching
- VI. Questions

I. About DASH

Inception of DASH

- Incidence of domestic violence on the rise
- Affordable housing crisis in Washington, D.C.
- Survivors being denied access to safe housing programs
- Need for a new type of safe housing in 2006

DASH Mission

DASH is an innovator in providing access to safe housing and services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their families as they rebuild their lives on their own terms.

DASH Programs

- **Cornerstone**: A 43-unit emergency-to-transitional site-based safe housing program;
- **Empowerment Project**: A transitional-to-permanent scattered site safe housing program; and
- **Housing Resource Center**: Innovative non-residential homelessness prevention services offered through a variety of assistance and housing advocacy programs including the **Survivor Resilience Fund** (a flexible funds program), where grants are given to help survivors maintain housing.

II. DASH Core Beliefs

Core Belief #1: Housing is a Human Right

DASH believes that all survivors of abuse, regardless of their circumstances, should have access to safe housing.

This includes survivors of:

- intimate partner violence
- sexual assault
- sex trafficking
- same-sex DV
- stalking
- homelessness

As well as survivors with:

- physical and mental disabilities
- chemical addictions
- mental illnesses
- undocumented citizens
- differing family configurations

Low Barrier Access

PRACTICE

BELIEF

Core Belief #2: Self-Determination

DASH believes:

One's housing stability should never hinge on their engagement in services.

Survivors are far more likely to make meaningful change when program engagement is voluntary.

The critical work of program staff (especially Advocates) is to establish trusting relationships with survivors built on mutual respect, transparency and honesty.

BELIEF

Voluntary Services

PRACTICE



Core Belief #3: DV is a Trauma Experience

DASH believes experiencing DV/SA:

Psychologically changes a person's belief in themselves.

Diminishes a person's ability to trust.

Hinders a person's ability to make decisions for themselves, organize and mobilize to accomplish goals.

Decreases a person's sense of safety and intense fear.

**Trauma-Informed
Services**

PRACTICE

BELIEF

DASH Theory of Change

- 1) Survivors with complex needs are best served by programs which are highly individualized, relational, and adaptable;
- 2) The higher the degree to which programs are designed to be trauma-informed, flexible and individualized, the less control staff has to create specific survivor outcomes; and,
- 3) Staff therefore require an equivalent degree of autonomy, support, and skill-building in order to best meet the complex needs of survivors and effectively meet the organizational mission.

III. DASH Model

DASH Model

The model creates a framework which:

- supports our core beliefs and approach to achieving our mission
- articulates our beliefs and binds them together
- enables a process for staff to make decisions in the gray
- encourages continuous growth and development for staff
- leads to survivor empowerment

Principles

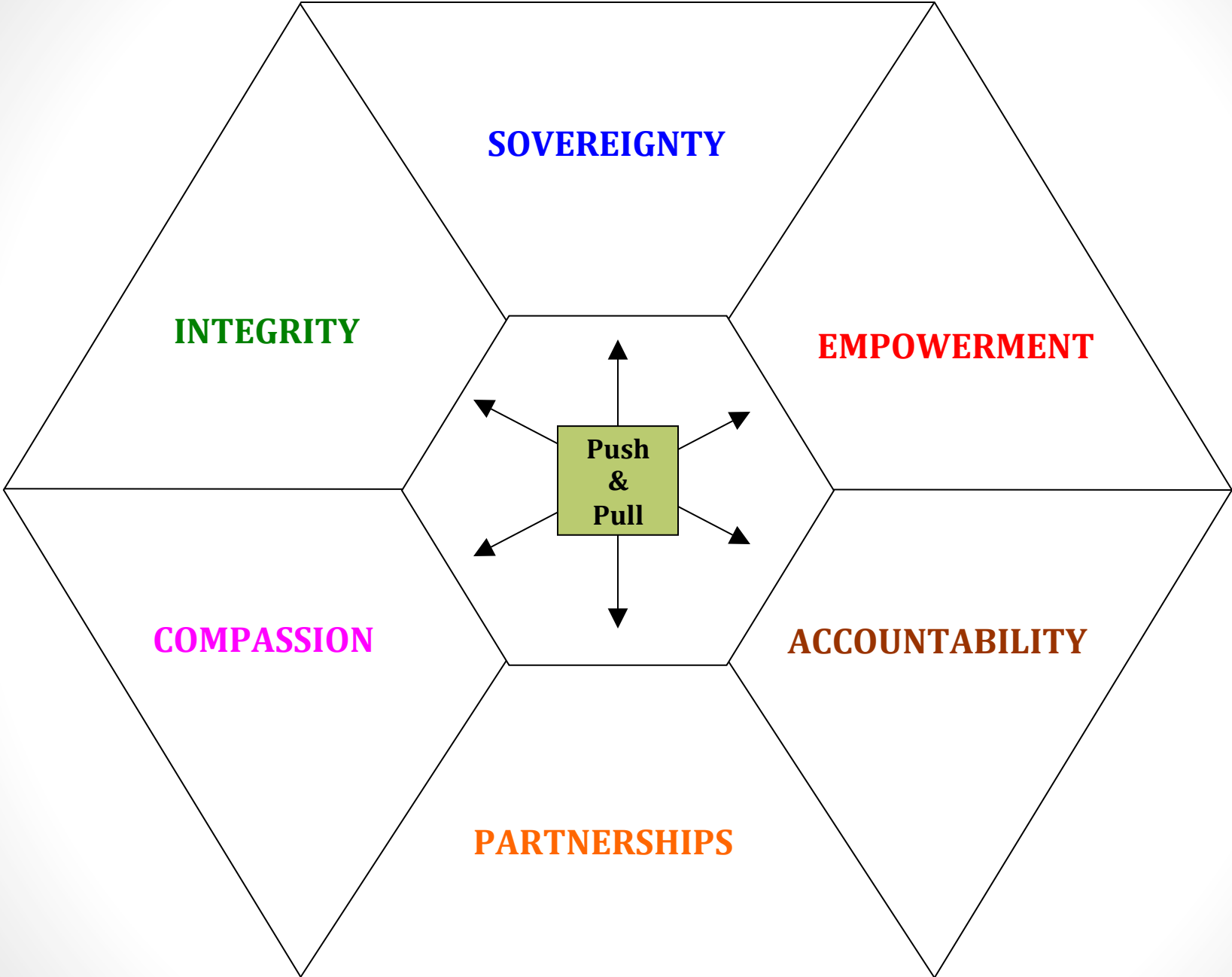
- **Sovereignty:** Having the freedom and responsibility to determine what is right for yourself and be self-governing.
- **Integrity:** Behaving consistently with the values you promote; striving to know yourself and behaving authentically.
- **Empowerment:** Owning and giving voice to your own power to get your needs met, and helping others to do the same.

Principles

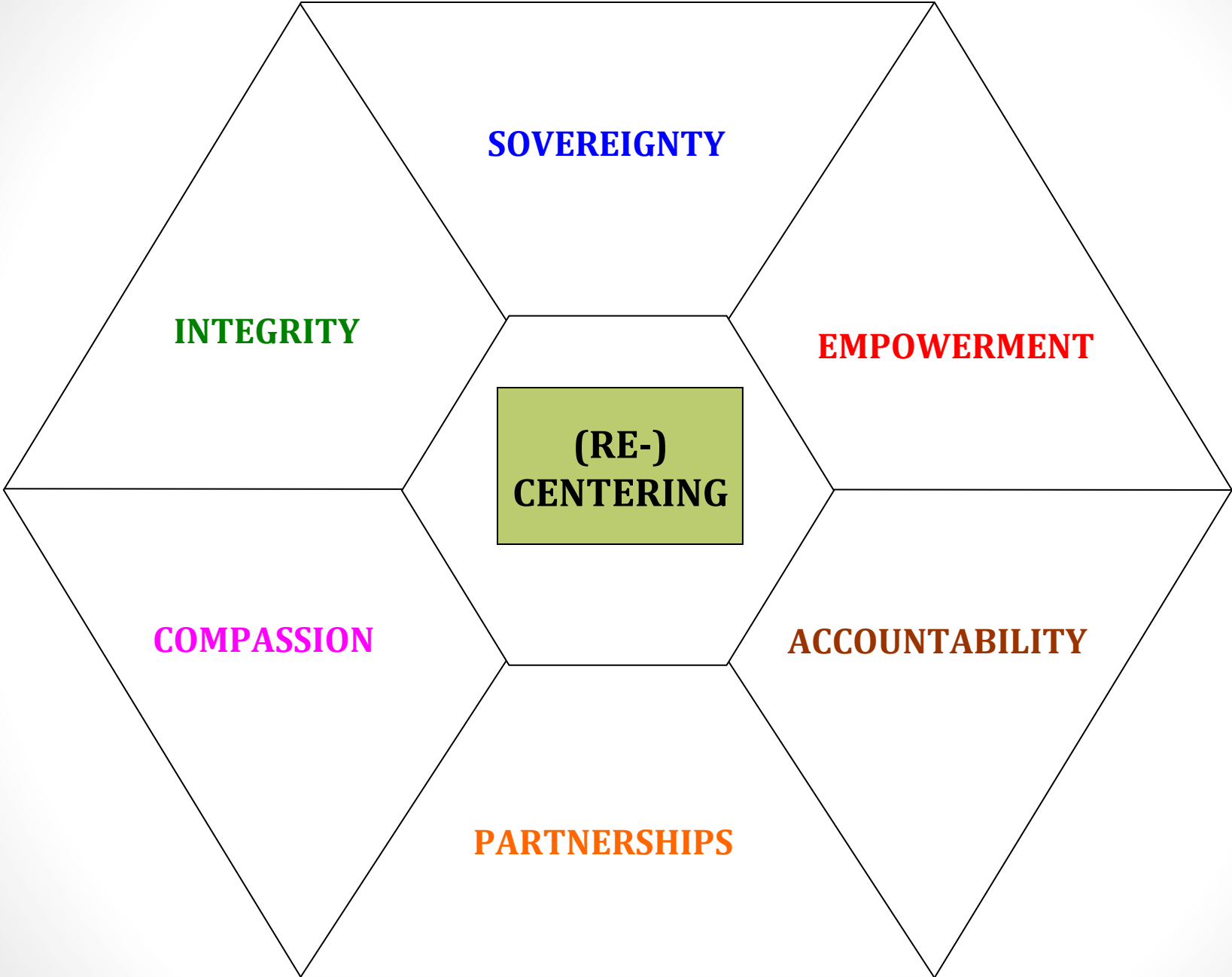
- **Partnerships:** Having mutually cooperative and respectful relationships with those with whom you interact.
- **Accountability:** Being responsible for maintaining ethical standards and clear boundaries in the course of daily interactions.
- **Compassion:** Having empathy for others who are vulnerable to help them get their needs met, and doing the same for yourself.

Principles

- **(Re-)Centering:** The process of negotiating change, conflict, and challenges in order to find balance to move forward the way you want.







SOVEREIGNTY

INTEGRITY

EMPOWERMENT

**(RE-)
CENTERING**

COMPASSION

ACCOUNTABILITY

PARTNERSHIPS

DASH Management Model



Advocate Team

**

Program Directors

**

TA Team:

Clinical Director & Addictions Specialist

**

Deputy Director

Admin Team

Property Manager

**

Executive Director

DASH Management Model

Program Directors: provide program supervision and support around administrative issues and meeting program goals and objectives.

TA Team staff: provides the following support related to their area of expertise:

- Coaching for Advocate staff
- Program and policy oversight
- Ongoing training and resource development
- Consultation and guidance on challenging issues

IV. Program Evaluation

Evaluation Question

How does the DASH organizational structure and organizational culture influence survivor empowerment through staff behaviors?

Evaluation Design

Transformative, Multi-level, Exploratory-Sequential
(QUAL → quan) Mixed Methods

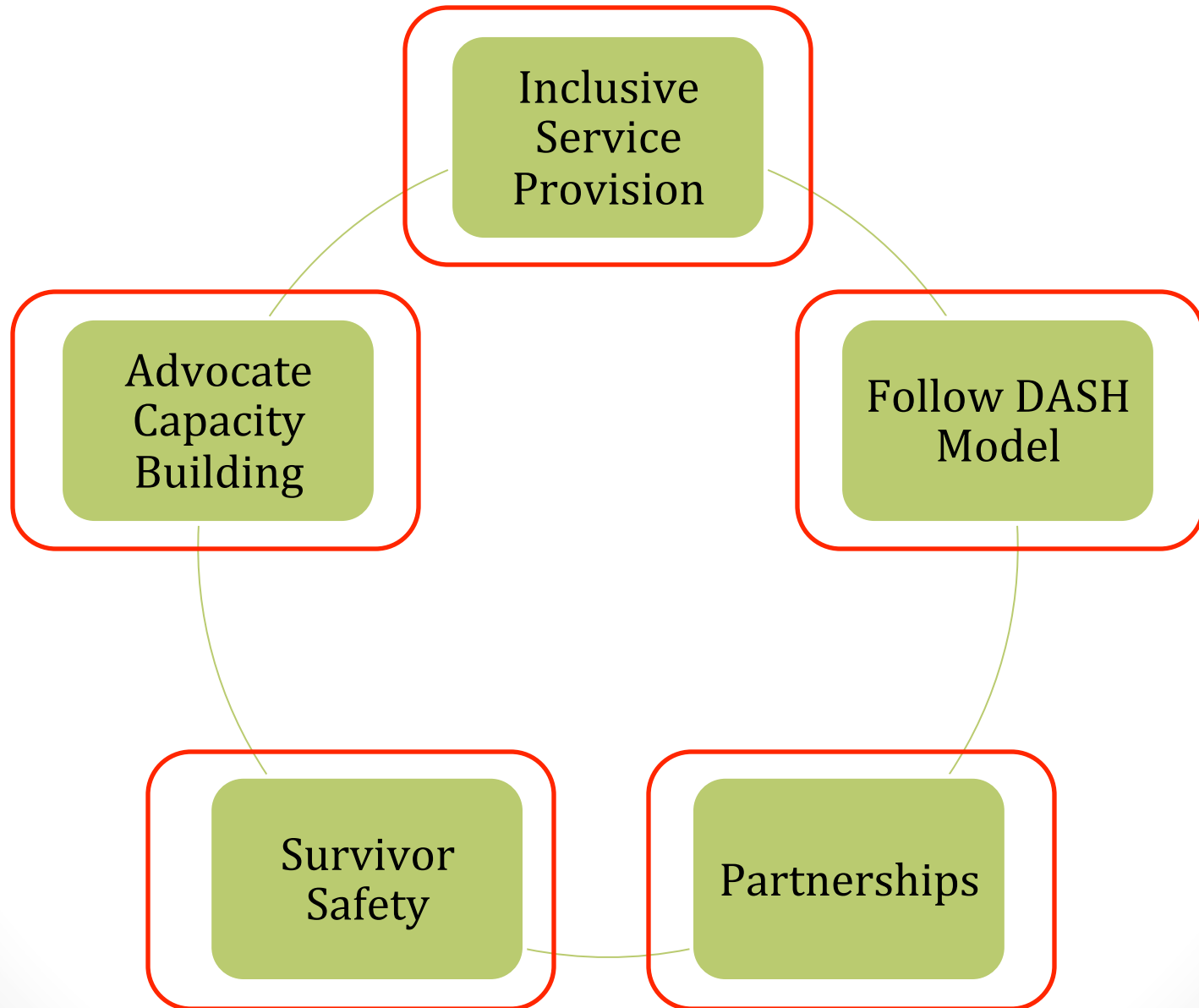
- Phase 1, Stage 1: Document Review (QUAL)
- Phase 1, Stage 2: Staff Interviews (QUAL)
- Phase 2: Survivor Interviews (quan)

Phase 1, Stage 1: Document Review

Document Review Methods

- Reviewed 10 organizational documents
 - 153 total pages
- Inclusion criteria:
 - Explicit expectations for employee behavior
- Conducted an inductive content analysis
 - Preparation
 - Generating codes
 - Search, review and define themes

DASH Policy Expectations



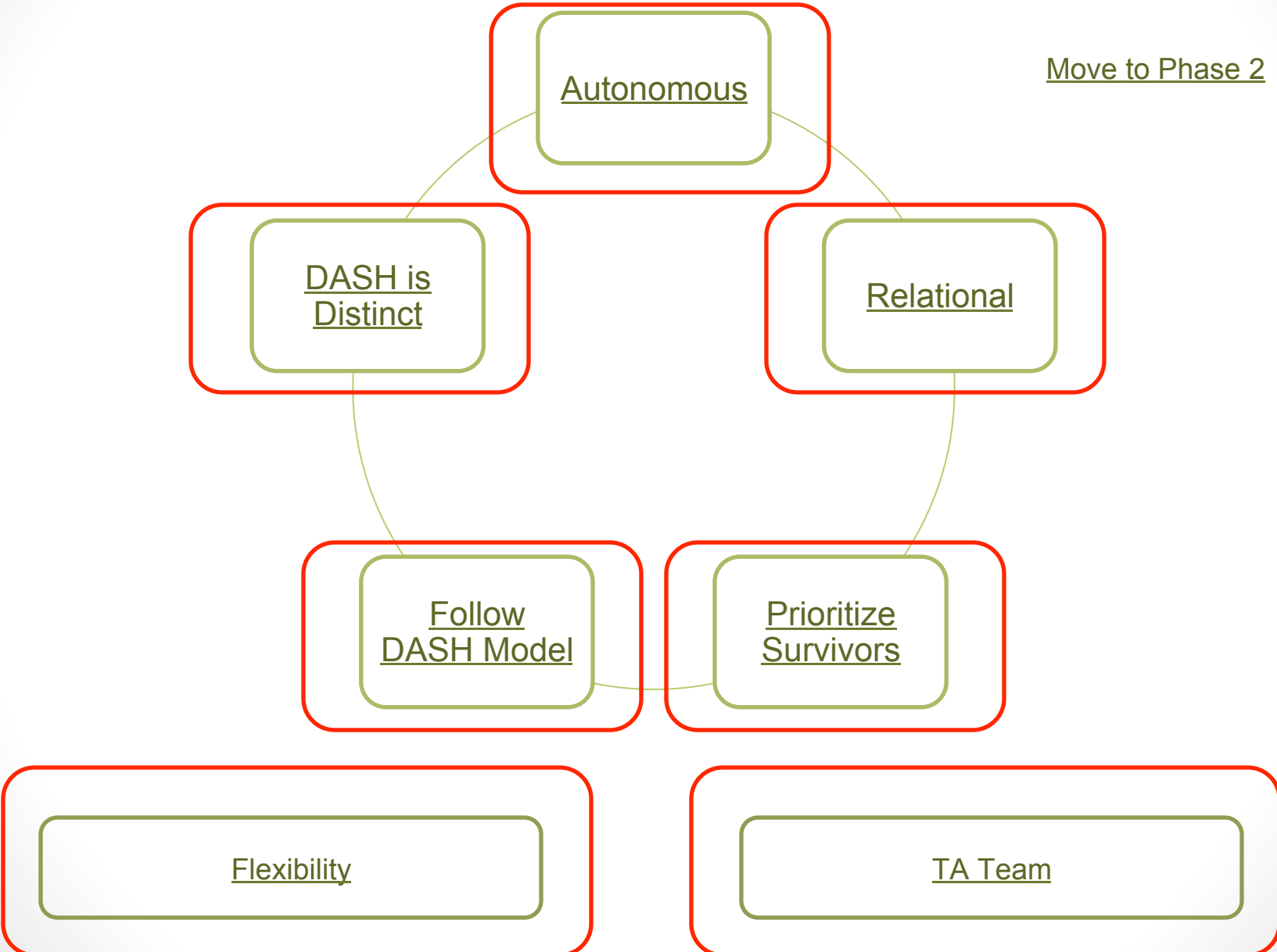
Phase 1, Stage 2: Staff Interviews

Staff Interview Methods

- Inclusion criteria
 - Provided direct service or supervision
 - Currently employed for at least 2 weeks
- Sample
 - N= 12 DASH staff
- Conducted an inductive thematic analysis
 - Familiarization
 - Generated codes for behavior and structure
 - Search, review and define themes

Cultural Norms

Move to Phase 2



Autonomous

“One thing I really enjoy about my work here is that **we are given a lot of kind of freedom in terms of what I do on a day-to-day basis.** Which I think in a certain way is a support because I don't come in to work every day with a list of what I'm supposed to do. **[It] allows me to kind of interpret the model and be a little bit creative with the work that I do.**”

(Chanel, Direct Service)

Relational

“Then also with staffing, I feel like it's a known factor that we're all partners in this process. And DASH's perspective is that one person just doesn't go around making all the decisions. That it really takes a partnership among staff to, you know, address a concern, give their perspective, and then come up with an outcome as a group.”

(Temple, Supervisor)

Prioritize Survivors

“I feel like survivors are the #1 priority. They are the most important people, then we come next. It's not about, ‘we have to do this,’ and ‘we have to do that,’ and ‘we're important.’ No, they are the most important people. **I think they're valued more than any other program I've ever worked in.**”

(Rebecca, Supervisor)

Follow DASH Model

“Like I said, you have to be kind of like a sociopath to not buy into those principles. **But I know that when people express something less than complete faith in the value of the model that they kind of get their head bit off.**”

(Elizabeth, Direct Service)

DASH is Distinct

“And I do think that in terms of its functionality, on its worst day it represents a marked improvement over the status quo anywhere else I've been.”

(Raquel, Direct Provider)

Flexibility

“A lot of the policies expect for you to use your best judgment. A lot of the policies may suggest things, but it's not cut and dry. You know, so it allows you to be able to draw from these policies and procedures, and use the model, and use the compassion, using your own best judgment, with integrity and sovereignty and your professionalism – to move forward.”

(Joy, Supervisor)

Mixed Effectiveness of TA Team

“I think it can be counterproductive sometimes. Because the way that the technical assistance grid was made, **it's not working as it was created to be.** It was created to be used to support the advocates who essentially will work with the survivors. How it's being used now is, the **TA staff has been providing direct service.**”

(Joy, Supervisor)

Phase 2: Survivor Interviews

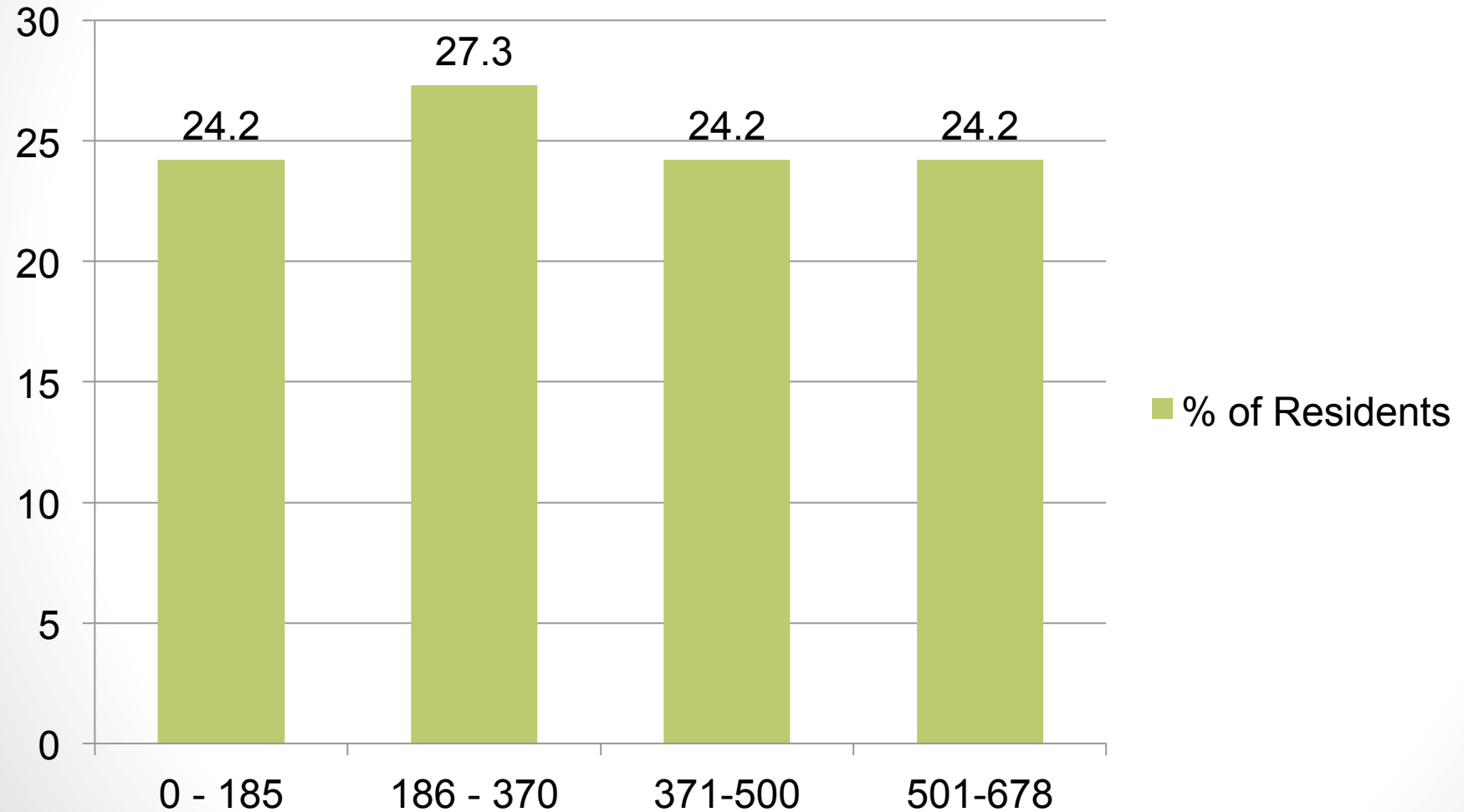
Survivor Interview Methods

- Inclusion criteria:
 - 18+
 - Received housing services for 2 weeks
 - Name on lease
- Recruitment
 - Active and passive recruitment
 - 80% participation rate
 - 41 possible, 37 recruited, 33 interviewed

Survivor Characteristics

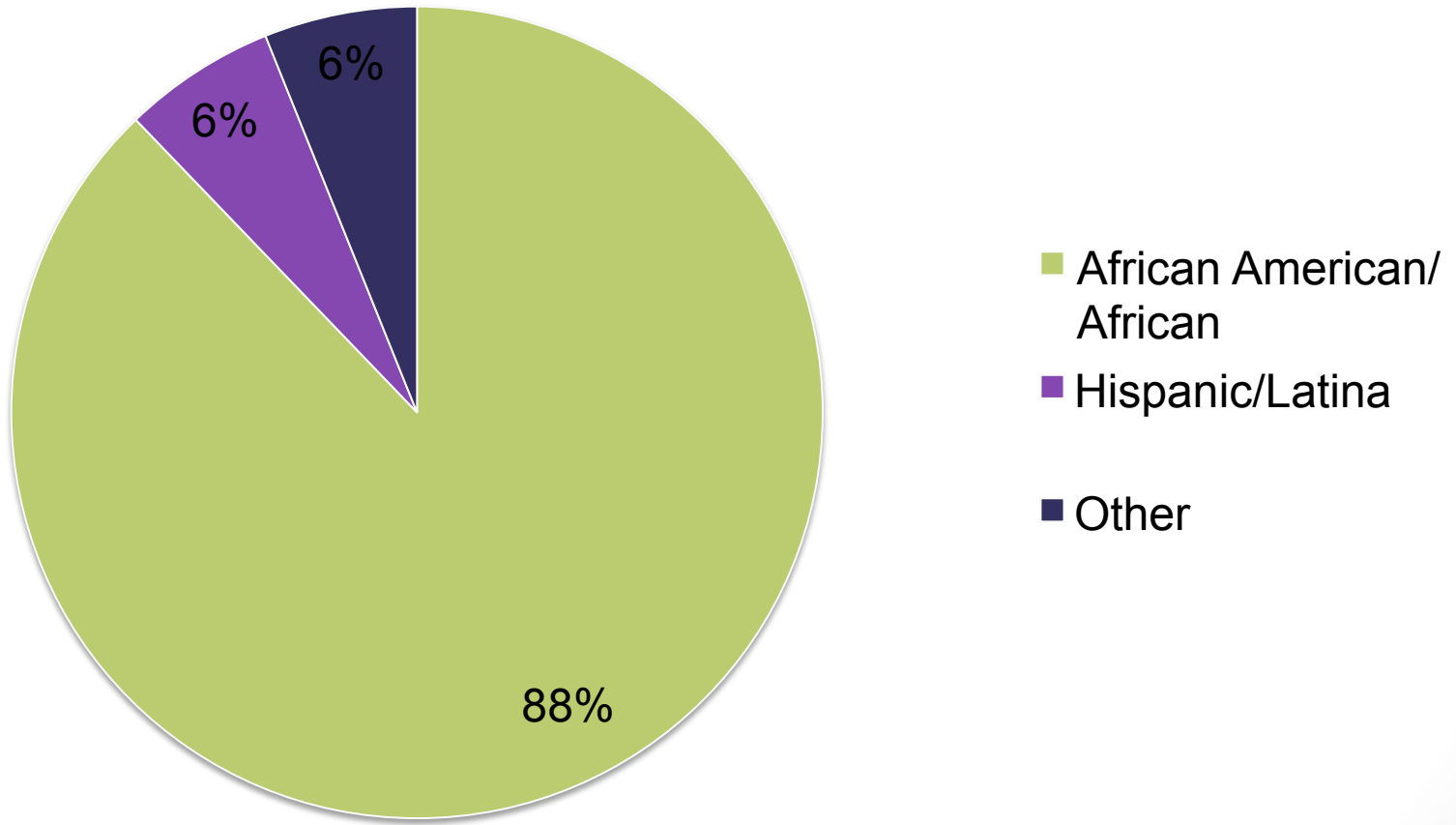
Length of Cornerstone Stay

Number of Days at Cornerstone



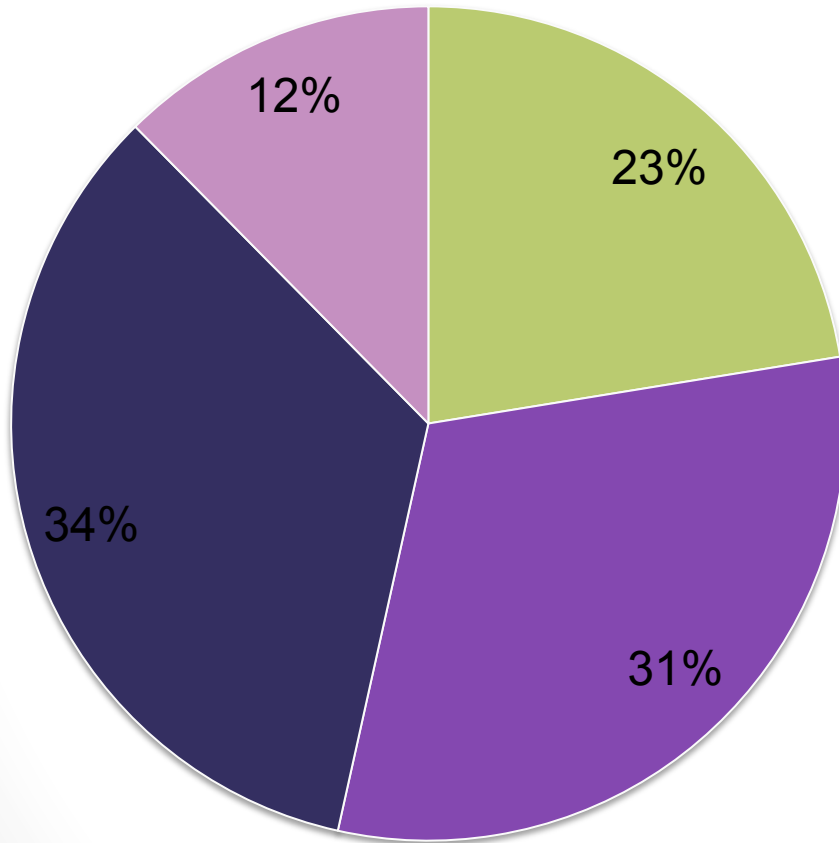
Race

% of Residents



Education

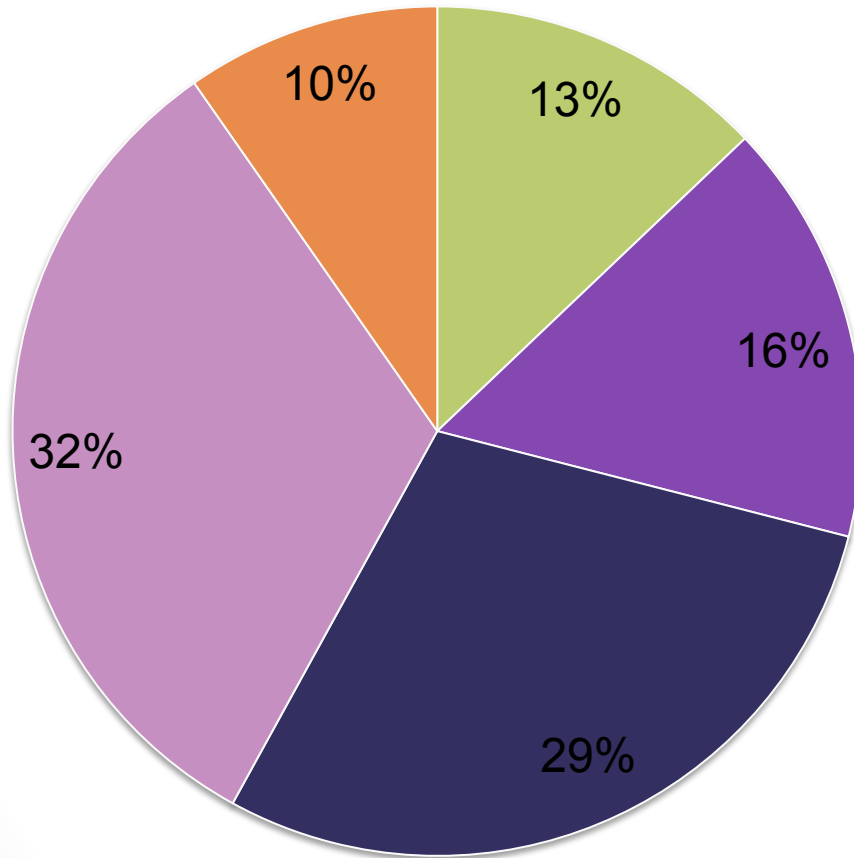
% of Residents



- Less than a high school degree
- High school Graduate/Vocational School
- Some college
- College degree or higher

Employment Status

% of Residents

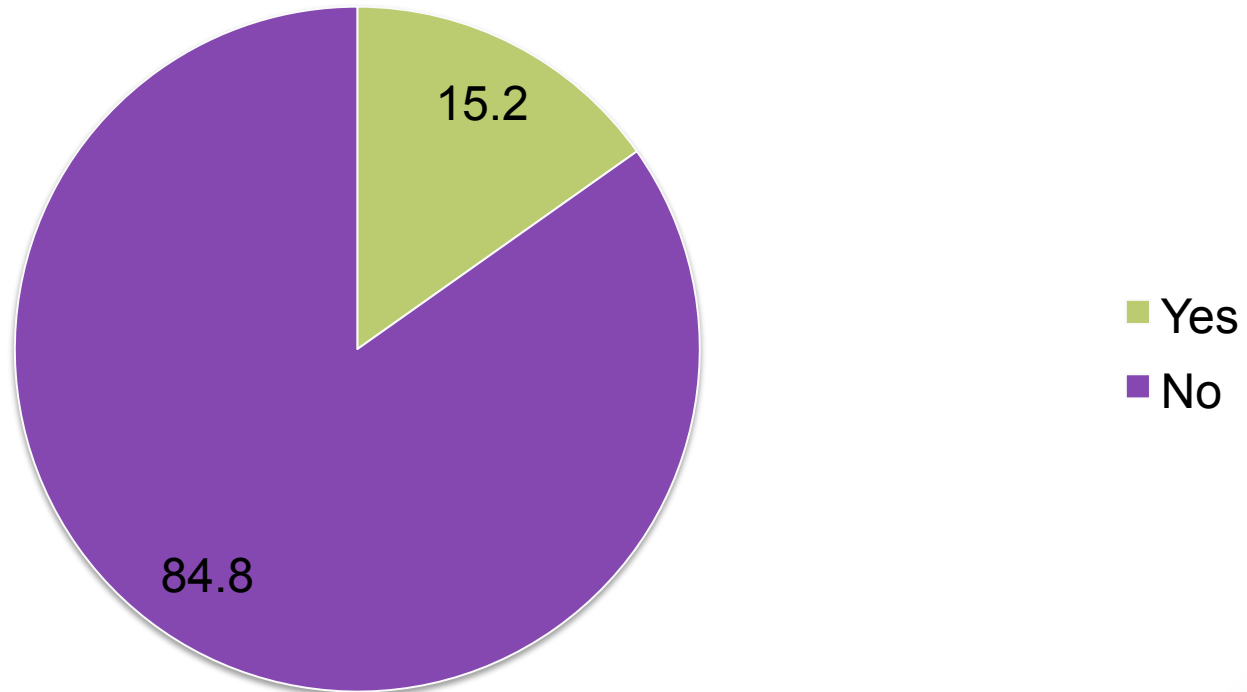


- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Unemployed
- Student
- Other

Physical Health

Do you consider yourself to have a physical disability or disabling condition?

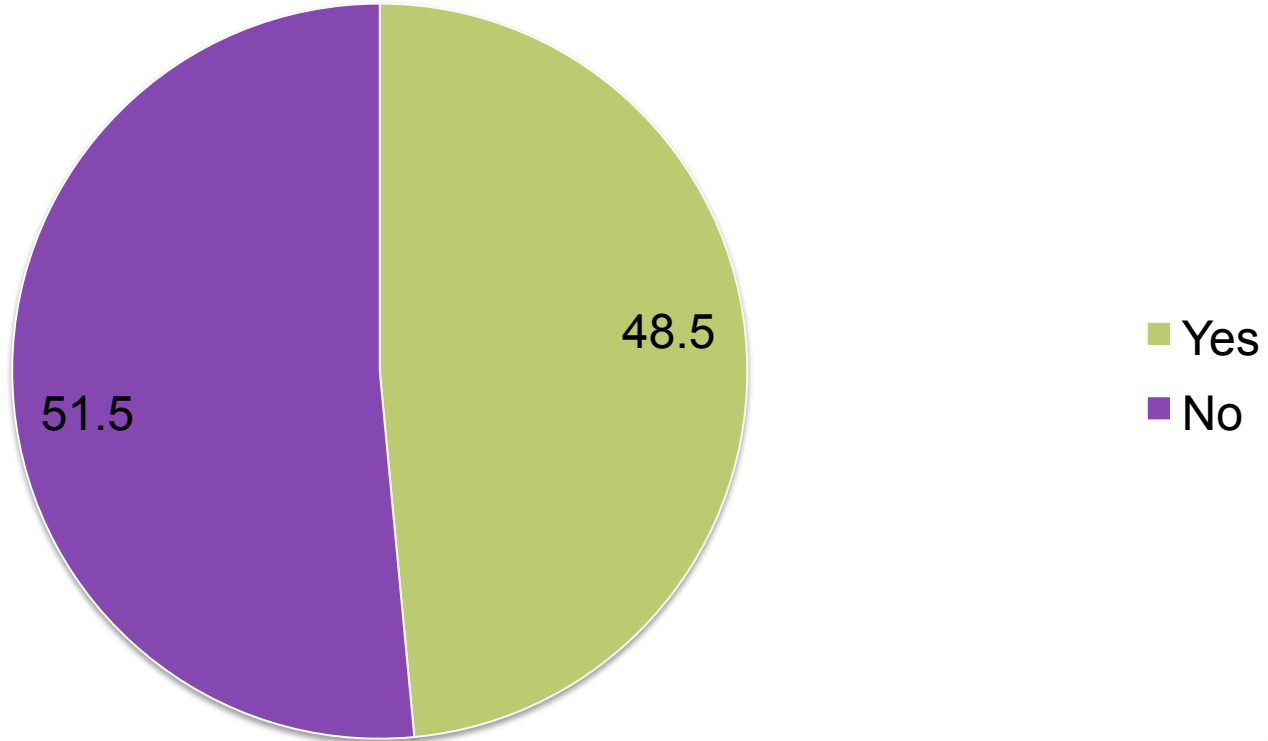
% of Residents



Mental Health

Do you struggle with mental health issues?

% of Residents



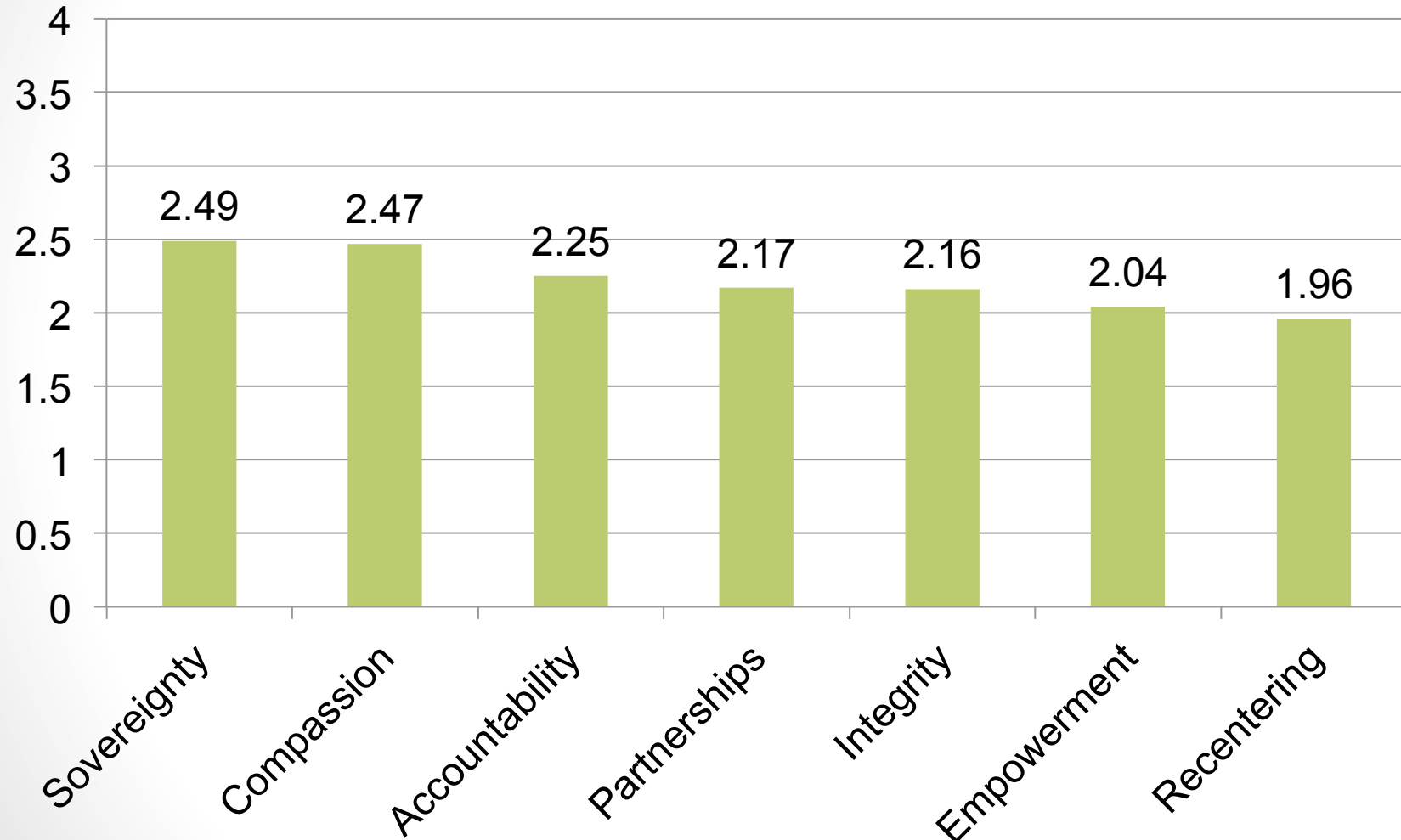
DASH Model Practices

Subscale	Sample Items	# items	M(SD)	α
Sovereignty	Encourage me to be who I am	4	2.49 (0.71)	0.89
Empowerment	Worked with me step by step to accomplish my goals	6	2.04 (0.93)	0.94
Accountability	Respond to my needs promptly	4	2.25 (0.88)	0.89
Partnerships	Made me feel like we were working as a team	4	2.17 (0.99)	0.91
Compassion	Listen to me	6	2.47 (0.77)	0.92
Integrity	Are consistent with me	3	2.16 (1.05)	0.91
(Re)centering	Help me more forward when I feel stuck	5	1.96 (0.87)	0.88

Response Scale: 0 (Not at all true) to 4 (Very True)

DASH Model Practices

Mean Scores of DASH Model Practices



Employee Behaviors Increase Empowerment?

DASH Model
Practices

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graph LR; A[DASH Model Practices] --> B[Survivor Empowerment]; C[DASH Model Practices] --> D[Empowerment-Related Safety];
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Survivor
Empowerment

DASH Model
Practices

Empowerment-
Related Safety

Survivor Empowerment

Subscale	Sample Items	# items	M(SD)	α
Confidence	I am much more able to achieve goals I set for myself	9	3.26 (0.96)	0.95
Connections	I know more about the community resources that I might need	8	3.11 (0.96)	0.90
Consciousness	I have a greater understanding of how common DV is	4	3.07 (1.06)	0.85

RS: 0 (Not at all true) to 4 (Very True)

Survivor Empowerment

	Pillai's Trace	Wilks' Lambda	F(df)
Sovereignty	0.66**	0.34**	16.08 (3,25)**
Empowerment	0.43**	0.57**	6.38(3,25)**
Accountability	0.44**	0.56**	6.43(3,25)**
Partnerships	0.70**	0.30**	19.60(3,25)**
Compassion	0.57**	0.43**	11.02(3,25)**
Integrity	0.65**	0.35**	15.48(3,25)**
Recentering	0.54**	0.47**	9.60(3,25)**

**p < 0.01; Note: controls: frequency of participation, and length of stay

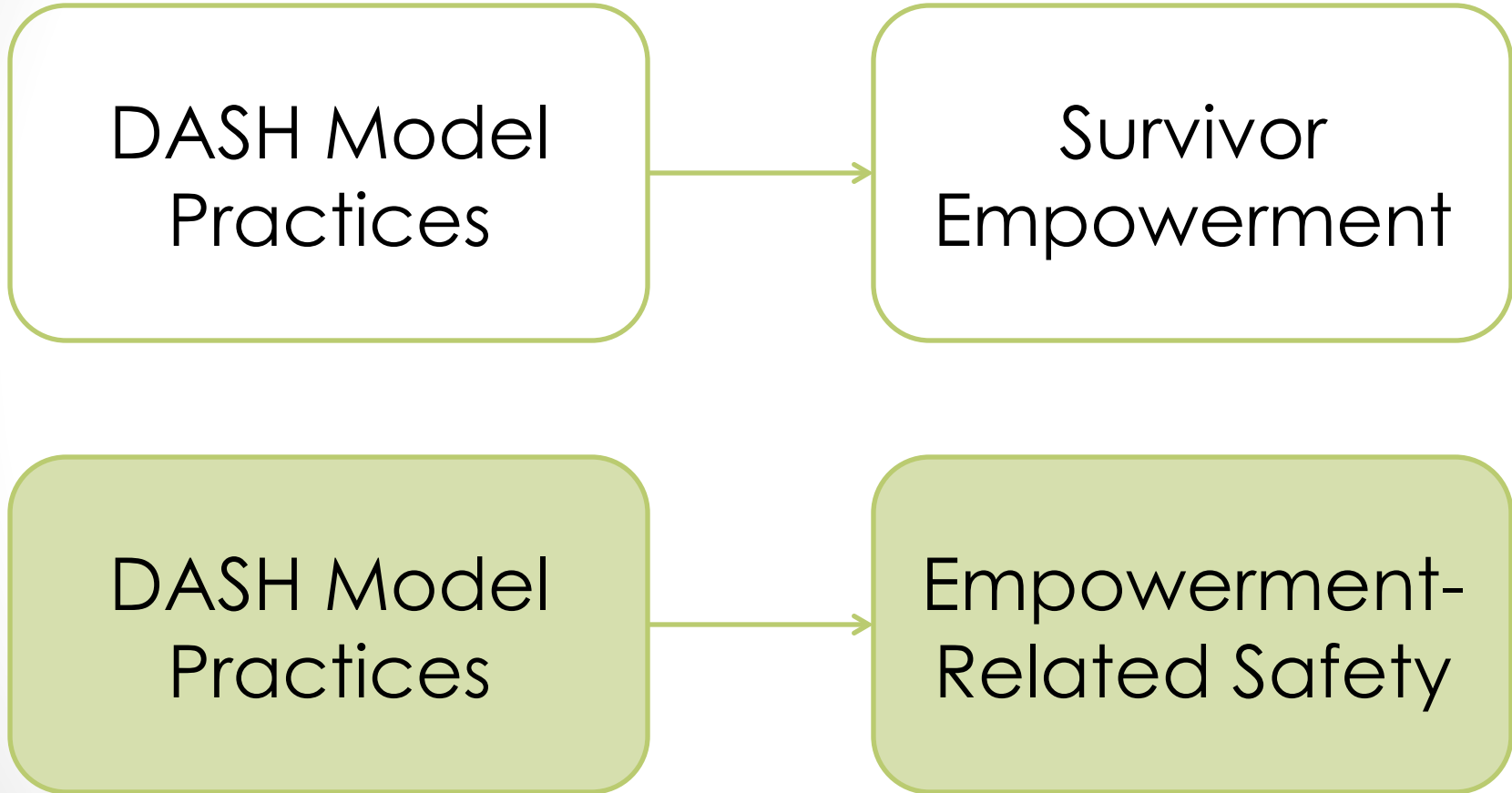
Employee Behaviors Increase Empowerment?

DASH Model
Practices

Survivor
Empowerment

DASH Model
Practices

Empowerment-
Related Safety



Empowerment-Related Safety

Subscale	Sample Items	# items	M(SD)	α
Internal Tools	I can cope with whatever challenges come at me as I work to keep safe.	6	4.30 (0.70)	0.86
Expectations for Support	I feel comfortable asking for help to keep safe	4	3.95 (0.97)	0.79
Trade Offs	I have to give up too much to keep safe	3	2.28 (1.06)	0.57

RS: 1 (never true) to 5 (always true)

Empowerment-Related Safety

	Pillai's Trace	Wilks' Lambda	F (df)
Sovereignty	0.59**	0.41**	12.12(3,25)**
Empowerment	0.50**	0.50**	8.43(3,25)**
Accountability	0.29*	0.72*	3.21(3,25)*
Partnerships	0.51**	0.49**	8.82(3,25)**
Compassion	0.39**	0.61**	5.41(3,25)**
Integrity	0.32*	0.68*	3.97(3,25)*
Recentering	0.27*	0.73*	3.04(3,25)*

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; Controls: frequency of participation, and length of stay

Evaluation Summary

- DASH policies and procedures were in alignment with the core beliefs
- DASH model is deeply engrained in the organizational context.
- The cultural norms and flexible policies supports use of practices derived from the DASH model.
- Consequently, the greater use of practices that reflect the DASH model, the more likely clients report empowerment

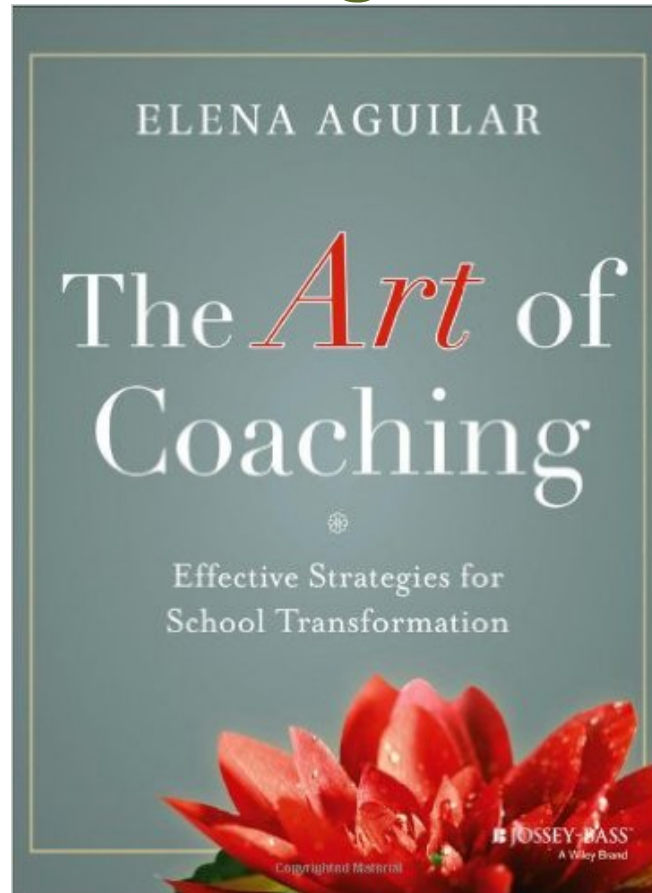
V. Transformational Coaching

Decision for Coaching

- Model from best practices in education system
- Based on needs that arose from the evaluation
- Transformative process-for Advocates, Coaches, DASH as a whole, housing programs for survivors
- Strives for equity-everyone's needs are being met
- Determines strengths to build from, needs for improvement and what shaped those strengths and needs

Elena Aguilar's Transformational Coaching

www.elenaaguilar.com



DASH's Coaching Mission

To **develop excellent advocates** and leaders who can develop trusting relationships with their colleagues, **refine their reflective capacities**, and **build their emotional resiliency** to effectively work within a highly autonomous and flexible environment to best meet the individual needs of survivors they serve.

DASH's Coaching Vision

Advocates will benefit from coaching by:

- Improving communication skills
- Surfacing and interrupting inequities
- Enhancing professional judgment
- Developing conflict and change management skills
- Increasing emotional intelligence
- Increasing use of DASH Model
- Increasing critical thinking skills

DASH's Coaching Vision

Program directors and managers monitor the extent to which coaches:

- Effectively strengthen advocate team's skills
- Support transformative practices
- Surface and interrupt inequities

DASH's Coaching Vision

Coaches will feel:

- Effective
- Empowered
- Proud of their work

Coaches will be:

- Engaged in rigorous learning
- Supported in their work by coworkers

Long term goal: Coaching will improve survivor outcomes.

Core Values

- How we do the work
- How we treat survivors and
- How we care for ourselves while working
- When we aren't living in tune with our core values we can feel off center, upset and inauthentic
- When we aren't in tune with the DASH model our work can be off center, conflictual and inauthentic
- Coaching is about surfacing our core, personal values to enhance our work and to recognize when our beliefs are hindering our efforts

(Re-)Centering

- Finding the clarity, focus, and wherewithal to balance competing demands and pressures on us; working to keep grounded in the midst of chaos.

Coaching:

- We apply a growth mindset and we take the long view.
- We recognize that practicing transformational coaching and changing behaviors, beliefs and being will take time.
- We apply a systems thinking approach to support the Advocates and DASH in change because we believe that the whole is greater than the sum of its part.

**“Our feelings are our most
genuine paths to
knowledge”**

- Audre Lorde

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