Sanctuary Implementation is a multiyear process. System change is reputed to take at least seven years – we are trying to do it in three by applying a clear, trauma-informed, evidence-supported methodology that is designed to bring about change in the whole organization.

The unique aspect of Sanctuary is its emphasis on the need to understand the impact of psychological trauma on client’s attitudes, emotional states, cognitive function, social adjustment and behavior and to integrate that understanding into the standard operating procedures for the treatment setting, including clinical treatment, programming, disciplinary policies, and other responses to problematic behaviors.

The most troubled clients – children and adults - are usually those who have experienced a significant past history of trauma, abuse, and neglect. Essentially, the role of developing a stronger, safer, and healthier treatment community is to enable that community to manage and contain the most troubled clients by providing them with what is a corrective learning experience while simultaneously offering all people in the environment an approach that is conducive to learning and growing [1-8].

Services provided by the Sanctuary Institute:

The Implementation of the Sanctuary Model is executed through a combination of trainings and consultations provided by the Sanctuary Institute Faculty members that move an organization through a series of steps to align the practices, attitudes and philosophies of an organization toward a trauma-informed perspective. There are several manuals that will are made available to staff to assist in the implementation:

- The Sanctuary Implementation Guide
- The Sanctuary Direct Care Staff Training Manual
- The Sanctuary Indirect Care Staff Training Manual
- The Sanctuary Psycho-education Manuals
- The Sanctuary Standards

There are four components of service delivery in addition to manuals and other written support materials. These four components are outlined below.

The Diagnostic Assessment

The process of implementation begins with a diagnostic assessment of the organization. This assessment typically involves a two day on-site observation and interview process which is used
to generate a report outlining the organization’s strengths and weaknesses along eleven domains. These domains align with the seven Sanctuary Commitments and the four components of S.E.L.F.

**Summary of Diagnostic Assessment Process**

This is a brief overview of the intent and objectives of the site visits we need to conduct prior to the training. Our goals for this activity are as follows. 1. Conduct brief information session for organizational leaders on the Sanctuary Model and the implementation process and answer any questions you may have. This can be fairly informal. 2. Conduct a brief baseline assessment of your organization’s current position and assess what might be some of the strengths, challenges and opportunities in front of you as you begin to implement the Sanctuary Model. 3. Develop a better understanding of your current thinking about implementation, such as which programs you will be starting with and how you hope to progress in the implementation process. To this end we have developed a two day process, which we see as rather fluid so that it can be adapted to each specific setting.

The following components are helpful in allowing our faculty a clear snapshot of the program:

- Materials review:
  - Website and marketing materials (to better understand the population and services your organization provides)
  - Admission or exclusionary criteria
  - Treatment philosophy
  - Mission, Vision. Values statements
  - Leadership/Management philosophy or guidelines
- Interviews with as many as possible and as applicable from this list:
  - A direct care staff
  - A client
  - A social worker
  - A Psychiatrist
  - A Parent
  - A Teacher
  - Some key leadership personnel
  - HR, Q/A or PI staff
- Observations of:
  - A unit, classroom, etc.
  - A treatment team meeting or staffing.
  - A treatment or psycho-education group of some kind.

Our focus is primarily in two areas that form the core of Sanctuary, SELF (Safety, Emotion Management, Loss and Future) and the Seven Sanctuary Commitments (Nonviolence, Open Communication, Emotional Intelligence, Social Learning, Social Responsibility, Democracy and Growth and Change). Throughout the assessment we will be trying to see what your strengths, challenges and opportunities are along these dimensions.

Once we have digested all of this we will provide you with a written report of the impressions formed from these observations and some thoughts on the challenges and opportunities that
may present themselves. This report will provide the jumping off point for the facilitated work groups during the five day training.

**The Five-Day Sanctuary Institute:**

*An Intensive Educational Experience*

The second step of the implementation process involves intensive training of an organization’s identified leadership at a multimodal, dynamic five day training. Participants will leave the training with an understanding of the philosophical components and tools of the Sanctuary Model. These leaders who attend the five day training become what is referred to as the “Steering Committee”. The members of the Steering Committee are charged with using the components, tools and materials provided to lead the creation of a trauma-sensitive culture for staff and youth across all organizational and treatment domains.

During the training, the Steering Committee engages in prolonged facilitated dialogue that serves to surface the major strengths, vulnerabilities, and conflicts within the organization. By looking at shared assumptions, goals, and existing practice, staff members from various levels of the organization are required to share in an analysis of their own structure and functioning, often asking themselves and each other provocative questions that have never been overtly surfaced before. Many of these questions have not been raised before because participants have never felt safe enough to say what has been on their mind or in their hearts, even after many years of working together. Although the continual focus is on the fundamental question of “Are we safe?”, participants quickly learn that in the Sanctuary Model being safe means being willing to take risks by saying what needs to be said and hearing what needs to be heard. Safety is understood as occupying four domains, all of which must be in place for an individual or an organization to be truly safe: physical, psychological, social, and moral safety.

The five day training provides an in depth examination of the Sanctuary Concepts and the Sanctuary Toolkit as well as the opportunity for small groups to work with Sanctuary Institute faculty consultants to apply the theoretical concepts and the tools to the specific settings in which they will be implementing the model.

Participants look at the change process itself and are asked to anticipate the inevitable resistance to change that is a fact of life in every organization. They look at management styles, the way decisions are made and conflicts resolved. In the process of these discussions, they learn about what it means to engage in more democratic processes on the part of leaders, staff, and clients in terms of the simultaneous increase in rights and responsibilities. They evaluate the existing policies and procedures that apply to staff, clients and families and ask whether or not they are effective in achieving their shared goals. They are asked to learn about and become thoroughly familiar with the psychobiology of trauma, the way PTSD and other trauma-related disorders present in the children, adults and families they work with and begin to think about the implications of that knowledge for treatment. They also learn how high levels of stress in the organization can impact relationships, emotions, and decision making at every level of the organization. They develop an understanding of the conceptual tool for organizing treatment - “S.E.L.F.”. They learn about vicarious trauma, traumatic reenactment and the importance of
understanding themselves and providing support for each other. And they are introduced to the components of the Sanctuary Toolkit.

**Outline of Five Day Leadership Training Curriculum**

The Sanctuary Institute is an intensive educational and training experience that teaches the basic tenets of the Sanctuary Model and provides an opportunity to practice the tools as well as offers opportunities for exploring the ways in which the concepts will be adapted to the specific issues related to a facility’s racial, gender and cultural makeup of its population.

- **Day 1: Sanctuary Commitments**
  - Objective: Establish a philosophical frame of reference for participants with examples that allow them to see parallels to their own work.
  - Review organizational assessment
  - Teach elements of the Sanctuary Toolkit

- **Day 2: Psychobiology of Trauma**
  - Objective: provide theoretical framework for using trauma-informed treatment by reviewing the ACES study, biological responses to trauma, video clips as demonstrations
  - Facilitated group processing of knowledge
  - Teach elements of the Sanctuary Toolkit

- **Day 3: Parallel Process**
  - Objective: provide theoretical framework for recognizing parallel process and collective disturbance.
  - Facilitated group processing of parallel process
  - Teach elements of the Sanctuary Toolkit

- **Day 4: Implementation and Certification**
  - Objective: Detailed description of review of implementation and certification process
  - Facilitated group discussions
  - Teach elements of the Sanctuary Toolkit
  - Develop plan for addressing vicarious trauma

- **Day 5: Planning, Review, Research, Outcomes and Leadership**
  - Objective: Prepare Steering Committee to start Sanctuary Implementation and development of Core Team
  - Review of existing research, expected outcomes, and Sanctuary leadership guidance principles
  - Facilitated group discussions with all faculty and Steering Committees present

**The Core Team**

**Assembling and Developing a Core Team:**

The Sanctuary Steering Committee is instructed to go back to their organization and create a Core Team – a larger, multidisciplinary team that expands its reach into the entire organization. It is this Core Team that will be the activators of the entire system. The Core Team is equipped with a number of manuals that assist them in the implementation process. They also receive on-going consultation to guide them through the process of Sanctuary Implementation. This process takes several years to really get traction and then continues – hopefully – forever. The Core Team
should have representatives from every level of the organization to insure that every “voice” is heard. It is vital that all key organizational leaders become actively involved in the process of change and participate in this Core Team.

The Core Team can be comprised of several dozen people that may constitute the entire staff of smaller organizations. However, in larger organizations the Core Team will by necessity be a representative body. This requires a team composition that is diverse along every dimension that comprises the organization: age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, profession, class, education, status, etc. The responsibility of Core Team members is to actively represent and communicate with their constituents and to become trainers and cheerleaders for the entire organization. The Core Team works out team guidelines and expectations of involvement for individual team members as well as a meeting schedule and decides on safety rules for the constructive operation of the team itself. The Core Team is ultimately responsible for the development of an implementation process aimed at including the entire organization in the change process. The ultimate goal is to take meaningful steps to change the organization’s culture and engage as many staff as possible in that process [9].

As discussions begin in the Core Team, participating staff begin to make small but significant changes. Members take risks with each other and try new methods of engagement and conflict resolution. They feed these innovations and their results, back into the process discussions. The Core Team must always maintain a balance between process and product. It is not enough to talk about how we will change things. We must also make actual changes in the way we do business. The Core Team therefore not only plans together how best to share what they are learning with the larger organization, but also plans how to train all agency personnel and clients in the Sanctuary principles, how to integrate the Sanctuary Toolkit into the day-to-day operation of the organization and how to evaluate how these initiatives are taking hold in the organization.

Through the implementation steps of the Sanctuary Model, staff members engage in prolonged dialogue that serves to surface the major strengths, vulnerabilities, and conflicts within the organization. By looking at shared assumptions, goals, and existing practice, staff members from various levels of the organization are required to share in an analysis of their own structure and functioning, often asking themselves and each other provocative questions that have never been overtly surfaced before. As this happens, the development of more democratic, participatory processes begin to emerge. These processes are critical because they are most likely to lend themselves to the solution of very complex problems while improving staff morale, providing checks and balances to abuses of power, and opening up the community to new sources of information.

It is essential to look at the implementation process on two levels. We want to ensure people are behaving differently, but we also want to pay close attention to how we are implementing change. The Core Team is responsible for making sure the Sanctuary Tools are introduced to staff but they are also responsible for making sure that gaps in implementation are identified and addressed. If Community Meetings are not happening in certain programs, why not? If Safety Planning is not taking place, what went wrong? Was the training done correctly? Is leadership pushing the change? Confronting these problems together is an essential part of
implementation. Always looking at what we do, as well as how we do it is the key to lasting change.

Leadership Commitment
Real change is difficult and challenging for everyone in the system. Experience has taught that courageous leadership is critical to system change and without it substantial change is unlikely to occur. This change process, however, can be frightening for people in leadership positions and they rightfully perceive significant risk in opening themselves up to criticism, in leveling hierarchies and sharing legitimate power. The gains are substantial, but a leader only finds that out after learning how to tolerate the anxiety and uncertainty that inevitably accompanies real change. It should also be noted that change does not occur just because a leader wants it to occur. Leaders may be willing to share power with others, but this does not necessarily mean that others are always willing to assume power and the responsibility that comes with it. There are always forces in systems that push against change in order to maintain a steady state equilibrium known as the status quo. Although staff and clients may indicate they want a greater voice, creating the conditions in which others have a greater voice is not always welcomed. It is easy to stay in or slide back to a familiar and comfortable arrangement. Since few of us have much real-life experience with operating within democratic systems, learning how to be an effective democratic leader necessitates a sharp, often steep and sometimes painful learning curve.

Creating Shared Assumptions, Beliefs and Values
In the third implementation step, the Core Team must identify the most important organizational values and honestly surface and identify areas where the organization is not actually living those values. The discussions about shared assumptions are likely to begin with an assumed consensus – particularly on the part of leadership - that is actually false. In reality, profound conflicts are likely to have been bubbling under the service for quite some time but have never been clearly articulated and may be completely unrecognized by people in charge, although these conflicts – the “elephants in the room” provide the background, constant “noise” in the system. The Core Team must surface these conflicts, evaluate the impact of these conflicts on the functioning of the program, and decide on the values they are willing to share – and act on – together. Then the Core Team will have to develop a statement on how they would like the staff and administrators to view their clients, each other, and the organization as a whole. Through this shared group experience, the Core Team members experience open and transparent decision making and the personal feedback that is so valuable in a functioning therapeutic community[9].

Becoming More Democratic
Didactic presentations and discussion will help the Core Team members learn about what it means to engage in more democratic processes on the part of leaders, staff, and clients, particularly in terms of the simultaneous increase in rights and responsibilities. They must learn about the basic principles that go into creating and sustaining a therapeutic trauma-informed community. They evaluate the existing policies and procedures that apply to staff and clients and ask whether or not they are effective in achieving the goals that they strive for. The team begins to draft a program constitution and develops a comprehensive plan for the steps they will take to close the gaps between the organization they want to be - based on their constitution - and the
organization as it exists in the present. This constitutional process will focus on inclusiveness, participation, rights and responsibilities, decision-making, conflict resolution, rules and norms, consequences for deviant behavior, responses to stress and to violence, responses to vicarious traumatization and self-care, and continuance and maintenance of normative standards.

**Teamwork and Collaboration**

The next focus of implementation is on teamwork, collaboration and systems integration. The Core Team develops a vision statement for how they believe the work groups or teams should function together to produce a more integrated system. They then develop a plan for the steps they will take to improve teamwork and collaboration in order to make that vision a reality. The team also begins the process of developing a statement of expectations for staff around their responsibility to confront each other in a constructive manner and initiate a plan to increase the conflict resolution resources within the organization.

**Understanding Trauma and Its Impact**

Studying and understanding concrete information about the impact of trauma on individuals, families and systems is vital for creating a trauma-informed system. Supplementing didactic and experiential training, Core Team members are expected to read and report on key articles about the psychobiology of traumatic stress, child maltreatment, family violence, community violence. Discussion focuses on the ways in which the knowledge about traumatic stress needs to be integrated into the existing policies and procedures of the organization including the effects of exposure to vicarious trauma on the staff and its impact on organizational function.

**Using S.E.L.F.**

The S.E.L.F. framework is a trauma-informed tool that helps to orient staff and clients around the tasks necessary to heal. S.E.L.F. is an acronym that represents the four interactive key aspects of recovery from bad experiences. S.E.L.F. provides a nonlinear, cognitive behavioral therapeutic approach for facilitating client movement through the four critical aspects of recovery: Safety (attaining safety in self, relationships, and environment); Emotional management (identifying levels of affect and modulating affect in response to memories, persons, events); Loss (feeling grief and dealing with personal losses), and Future (trying out new roles, ways of relating and behaving as a “survivor” to ensure personal safety and help others) . Using S.E.L.F., the clients and staff are able to embrace a shared, non-technical and non-pejorative language that allows them all to see the larger recovery process in perspective. This accessible framework demystifies what sometimes is seen as confusing and even insulting clinical or psychological terminology that often confounds clients and line-staff, while still focusing on the aspects of pathological adjustment that pose the greatest problems for any treatment environment [10-12].

In the next phase of implementation, the Core Team develops a plan for consistent review and response to incident reports that identify safety breaches. They will identify what client behavior and what staff behavior can lead to the loss of Safety. In most cases, staff have already had

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1 When applied to adults, the acronym originally used was “S.A.G.E”. representing similar concepts: Safety, Affect Management, Grieving and Emancipation. The references included here were written about adults in treatment before the different words were adopted by the children’s programs and now by the Sanctuary Institute.
training in restraint reduction and de-escalation techniques that are complementary to the Sanctuary principles. Sanctuary emphasizes the creation of a nonviolent environment with normative standards so clear and socially supported that violence is far less likely to emerge. The Core Team will develop an intervention plan to use with each other in situations where Emotion is high and escalating. They will develop a policy for the thorough debriefing after any incidents of violence or Loss and develop a plan to train staff in the area of grief work. They will review and revise grievance procedures as well as job descriptions and performance reviews to reflect the emphasis on safety and emotional management. The Core Team will outline how the organization should address issues relating to Future, both for themselves and in their clients. This involves an ongoing dialogue with each other and with the clients about what it takes to build a better future, to change the trajectory of one’s life from what it has been to what it can be, an opening up of other possibilities. They will develop an outline for constructing treatment plans and case reviews using S.E.L.F.

Assessment and Formulation
The Core Team needs to decide what they need to assess in the population they are serving in order to provide more trauma-informed services. They will design a written description of the assessment process that ensures that all team members contribute to the process and receive the information generated from the process. Since it is evident that the traumatic history, if it is ever gathered, frequently is “lost” over time, the Core Team will also develop a plan to ensure that the trauma history gathered and is reviewed and discussed at all relevant team meetings.

Staff Training and Supervision
Sanctuary will not be effective unless everyone in the community is on the same page. The Sanctuary Institute has developed a training curriculum for use in organizations. This curriculum covers the psychobiology of trauma, parallel process, S.E.L.F as well as the Sanctuary Toolkit. Although this curriculum is provided, the Core Team will need to develop a delivery plan to ensure that all staff are trained in the area of traumatic stress studies. Consistent with therapeutic community practice, this training should include all members of staff, even those not directly involved in treatment. The training plan also needs to include a plan for embedding the curriculum material into the orientation program for new staff.

One of the early tasks of the Core Team is to develop a plan for clinical staff training in the area of trauma theory and trauma-specific interventions as they are relevant within the organization. As the staff become more clinically sophisticated, it will be possible to introduce trauma-specific treatment approaches that are likely to bring about better outcomes for the clients. This may mean specialized training for professional staff or it may mean developing a plan to link with those resources in the community. The Core Team will also work on developing supervision guidelines to assist staff with the adverse effects of working with traumatized people and they will also identify procedures and practices to incorporate into the organization to protect staff from the adverse effects of vicarious traumatization.

Client Participation
One of the challenges for the Core Team is to develop a plan for increasing the clients’ participation in the service delivery plan and implementation. Staff may be reluctant to
encourage active participation on the part of the clients because they fear losing control. But self-governance is a critical aspect of recovery and people in treatment must have multiple opportunities for learning and rehearsing new behaviors within a contained environment. Included in this discussion should be a plan for increasing the involvement of all family members and community supports.

**On-site Consultation and Technical Assistance**

A Sanctuary Institute faculty member will be assigned to each site that participates in the Sanctuary Institute. In order to maintain momentum for the team, phone calls will be held each month with the Sanctuary Institute Faculty to foster the building of community among the many steering committee or core team as well as to support the sites in completing the tasks in a timely manner, trouble shooting and answering specific questions related to the implementation process.

The Core Team’s main function is to learn about the model from the Steering Committee and consultants and inform the implementation process through thought and action as Sanctuary is implemented into the existing organizational culture. In conjunction with the Sanctuary Institute faculty, Core Team members will assist with staff training as well as the development of agency implementation and roll out plans. Additionally, Core Team members will participate in disseminating the concepts and tools of the model to children and families including the delivery of the S.E.L.F. psychoeducation curriculum. The Core Team will also provide support to the staff as they learn to use the philosophy and tools of the Sanctuary Model, remaining mindful of the challenges of organizational change.

At the request of the Steering Committee and the Core Team, faculty consultants can arrange for specific presentations that facilitate the process of implementation at various points along the way.

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