

**ACWS**

Alberta Council of  
Women's Shelters



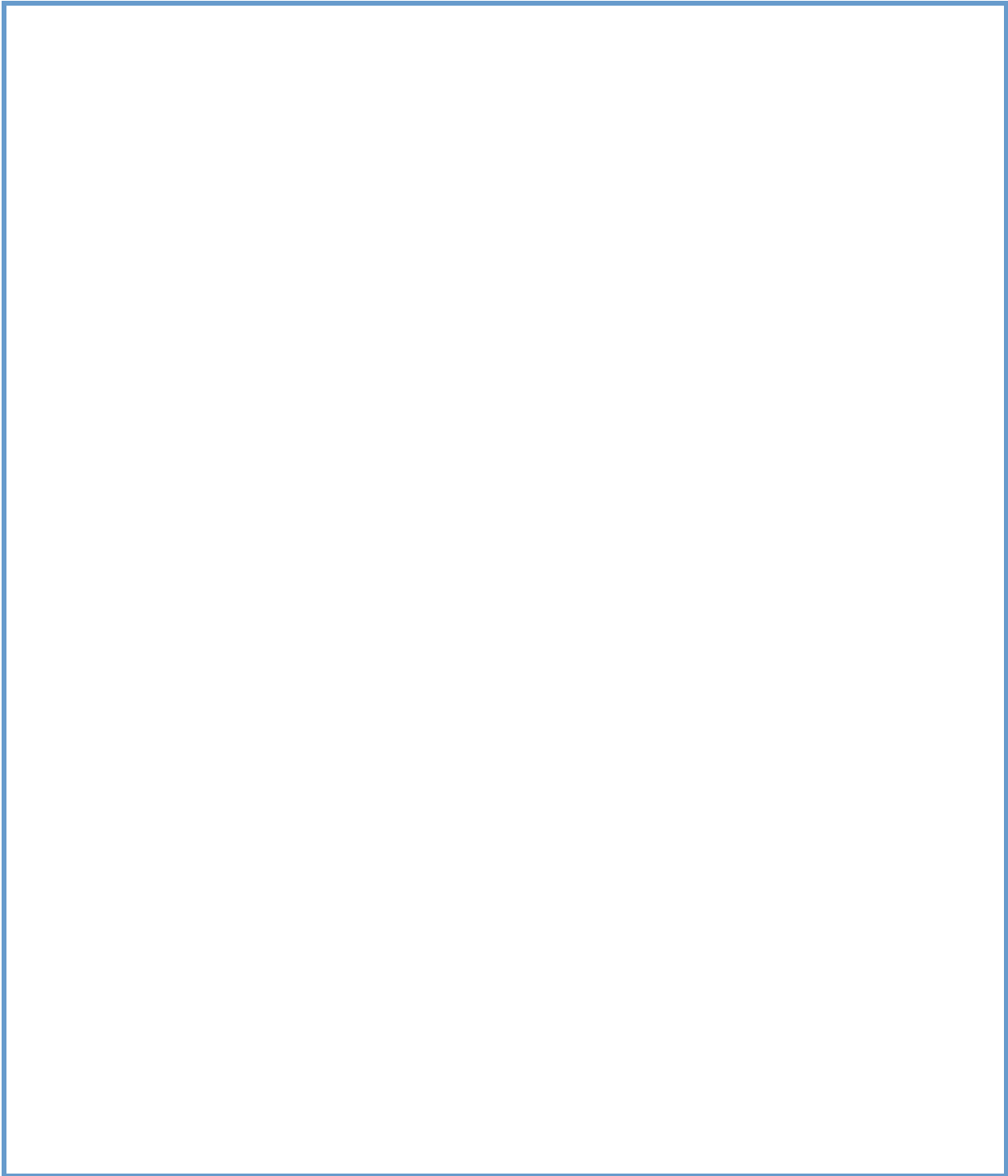
**Level 1:  
Foundations**

**Case Management  
Foundations Workbook  
Module 1**

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*Notes*



## Introduction

Welcome to Case Management Foundations Module 1.

Use this Workbook to capture your thoughts, reflections, ideas, or insights as you go through the eLearning module.

## Acknowledgements

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) wishes to acknowledge the traditional territories on which we live, work and play. We recognize that all Albertans are Treaty people and have a responsibility to understand our history so that we can honour the past, be aware of the present, and create a just and caring future.

We honour the courage and strength of Indigenous women. We honour them as life givers and caregivers as we honour and learn from their continuing achievements, their consistent strength, and their remarkable endurance.

We acknowledge that this course, Case Management Foundations, was created on Treaty 6, 7, and 8 lands, as well as the six Métis regions of Alberta. We dedicate this education to all the women and families who inspire us with their courage, strength, resilience, and kindness. We thank the many individuals whose work, input, and expertise have contributed to its development.

ACWS benefits from the wisdom, expertise, and innovation of our members across Alberta, who provide front-line support to individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse. This project could not be completed without their generous support and knowledge-sharing. Case Management is an evolving practice and the ongoing input and feedback from ACWS members, both individually and collectively, has made and will continue to make this course relevant for, reflective of, and responsive to the Alberta context of domestic abuse shelter practice. Special thanks to Stepping Stones Crisis Society for providing specific exercise content for this course.

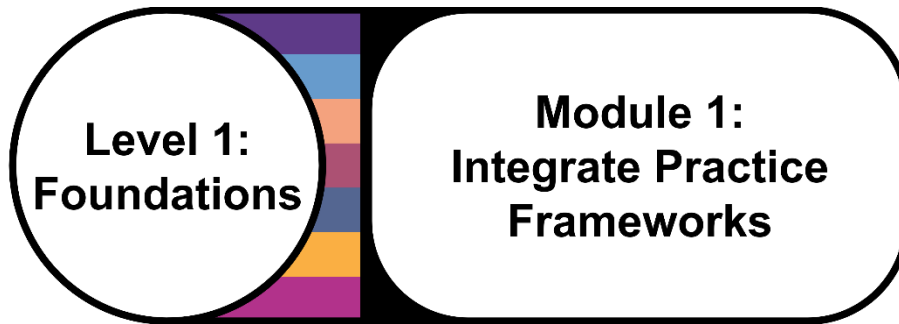
We would also like to acknowledge that this educational offering is made possible with funding and partnership from the Government of Canada under the Community Services Recovery Fund, and from the Ministry of Children and Family Services.



Questions, ideas or suggestions? Contact [learning@acws.ca](mailto:learning@acws.ca)

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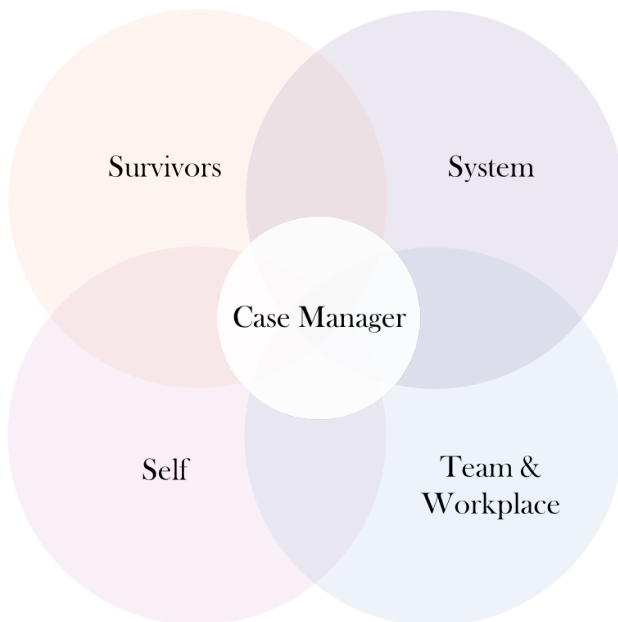
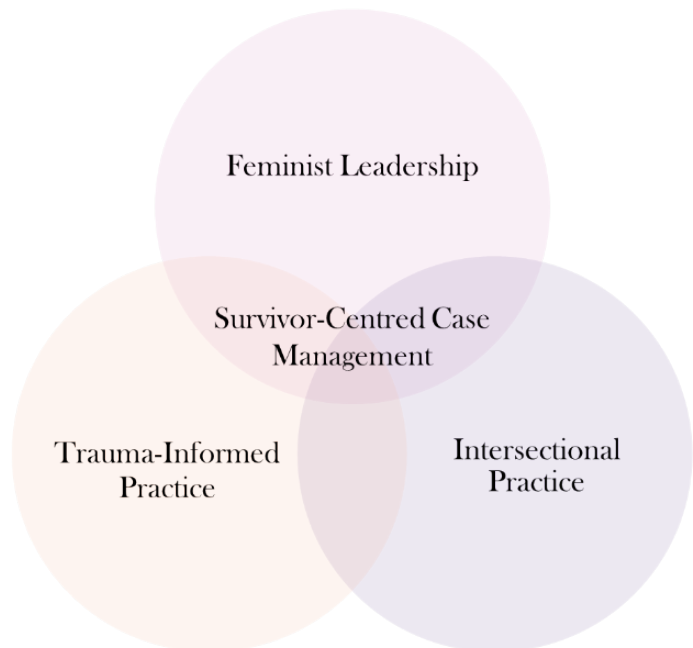


## Module 1: Integrate Practice Frameworks

### Lesson 1: Frame your learning

An effective Case Manager prioritizes survivor-centred approaches, informed by three core frameworks:

- Feminist leadership
- Trauma-informed practice
- Intersectional practice



As Case Managers, we participate in four important relationships:

- **With the self:** as a human being and as a professional
- **With the survivors:** as a supporting partner
- **With the team and workplace:** as a colleague and employee
- **Within the broader system:** as an advocate

## Lesson 2: Feminist Leadership



### Stop & think

You've heard of feminism. You're familiar with the concept of leadership. But have you heard about feminist leadership before? What is it, and how does it apply to case management?

**Feminist leadership** [is] oriented to a different arrangement of the human order: re-distribution of power and re-distribution of responsibilities. Fighting societal inequities. Changing economic and social structures, beginning with the transformation of psychic structures. Bridging personal freedom with collective freedom. Aiming at cooperation instead of competition. ... in feminist leadership equity, mutuality, and absence of sex role behavior should be visible. Feminist leadership should promote (or even rehabilitate) emotionality and the value of relationships. Feminist leadership renounces external paraphernalia of power and their influence.

— *ADMIRA, a women's organization in Bosnia and Serbia*

## Feminist leadership principles

Buchanan and Mayszewski (2023) identified the essential elements required for successful feminist leadership:

1. Recognize and challenge power dynamics
2. Apply an intersectional lens
3. Cultivate emotional intelligence
4. Listen deeply and with curiosity
5. Adopt a stance of cultural humility
6. Recognize and interpret communication cues
7. Engage in reflective practice
8. Facilitate difficult conversations
9. Invite and provide feedback
10. Build healthy relationships

**Belinda:** A safety plan can be an important tool for you to use to enhance your well-being and your child's. Since we developed your safety plan, have you found it useful?

**Sarah:** Yes, I try to remember what we discussed but it's been difficult with everything else going on. I'm forgetting things and feel overwhelmed all of the time.

**Belinda:** I understand. Let's talk this through. Are there ways we can scale it back to make key points easier to remember? Or should we add or remove anything? Please know safety planning takes practice, so be gentle with yourself. The priority is safety for you and your child.

**Sarah:** Um... That sounds good, but I'm not sure what exactly to do...

**Belinda:** I do have a professional responsibility to be transparent with you. As your Case Manager, if I believe there are concerns for the safety or well-being of your child, I have a duty to report. I will be honest with you and tell you if I have these concerns and there will be no surprises. I will keep you informed every step of the way.





**Write it out**

Take a moment to capture your initial thoughts, feelings, and reactions to this interaction between Belinda and Sarah.

How does Belinda's approach impact the dynamics of the conversation?

What factors might have influenced Sarah's response in this interaction?

How might you approach similar situations?

Embodying feminist principles means using our power and skills in ways that are fair and inclusive as we work toward equality and uphold human rights for everyone.



**Stop & think**

What did you notice about the feminist leadership principles?  
What themes were repeated throughout?

Are there areas where you can further integrate these principles into your interactions with yourself, survivors, colleagues, and the system?

What is ONE thing you're committed to doing going forward?

...**feminist... leadership** is... women and women's organizations **sharing power, authority, and decision-making** in our common pursuit of social, legal, political, economic and cultural equality.

— *DisAbled Women's Network Ontario (DAWN)*

## Lesson 3: Trauma-informed practice

A **trauma-informed approach** acknowledges the **prevalence and impact of trauma and violence on survivors**. It involves understanding how trauma and violence can shape behaviour, and providing tailored support that prioritizes safety, trust, empowerment, and resilience.

While our brain processes stressful events in similar ways, our reactions to stress and trauma show up in many different ways.

### Ten key principles

Trauma-informed practice is shaped by a deep understanding of how interpersonal violence and victimization affect an individual's life trajectory and development (Elliot *et al.*, 2005).

1. Recognize the impact of trauma on behaviours
2. Identify trauma recovery as a primary goal
3. Employ and empowerment model
4. Centre survivors' choices and control
5. Commit to relational collaboration
6. Create a safe and inclusive healing environment
7. Emphasize survivors' strengths
8. Minimize the possibility of re-traumatization
9. Adopt a stance of cultural humility
10. Solicit survivor input and feedback



### **Talk to your team**

Start a learning conversation with your team to share your thoughts and seek input from others!

How might you apply the 10 key principles to foster a positive therapeutic relationship with survivors?

Where in your work could you further integrate these principles? Consider how to involve the principles in relationship to yourself, survivors, colleagues, and the system.

A failure to recognize trauma exposure in survivors has the potential to rupture the working alliance and contribute to feelings of invalidation and self-blame.

## Lesson 4: Intersectional practice

**Intersectionality** is a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking.

— Kimberlé Crenshaw



### Stop & think

Why would intersectionality be important in your work as a Case Manager?

## The journey starts with ourselves



### **Write it out**

Make a list of your social identities.

Some of these may include roles you hold such as: parent, volunteer, neighbour, coach, sports team member, worker, religious/community leader, etc.

Some include inherent identity factors such as: race or ethnicity, religion, age, physical and mental abilities, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, nationality or immigration status, etc.

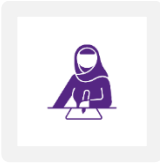
Next, reflect on the various ways those identities become visible or more keenly felt at different times. In which areas do you hold power? In which areas do you experience disadvantages? How do these identities and lived experiences impact your behaviour? Or the way others perceive or treat you?

## Eight enablers

Intersectional practice reflects adherence to eight enablers rather than a prescribed set of processes or procedures (UN Women, 2022).

1. Reflexivity
2. Dignity, choice, and autonomy
3. Accessibility and universal design
4. Diverse knowledges
5. Intersecting identities
6. Relational power
7. Time and space
8. Transformative and rights-based

Intersectional practice is an approach and a mindset. It is not just a toolkit. It is a way of thinking, reflecting, and working.



### Write it out

In your own words, jot down three key points for each practice framework. What recurring themes do you notice? How are these practice frameworks interrelated? How does understanding these connections enhance your effectiveness as a Case Manager?







## Lesson 5: Put it all together

By focusing on survivors' **resilience, capabilities, and strengths**, we can foster a sense of agency and self-efficacy in their journey toward healing and recovery.

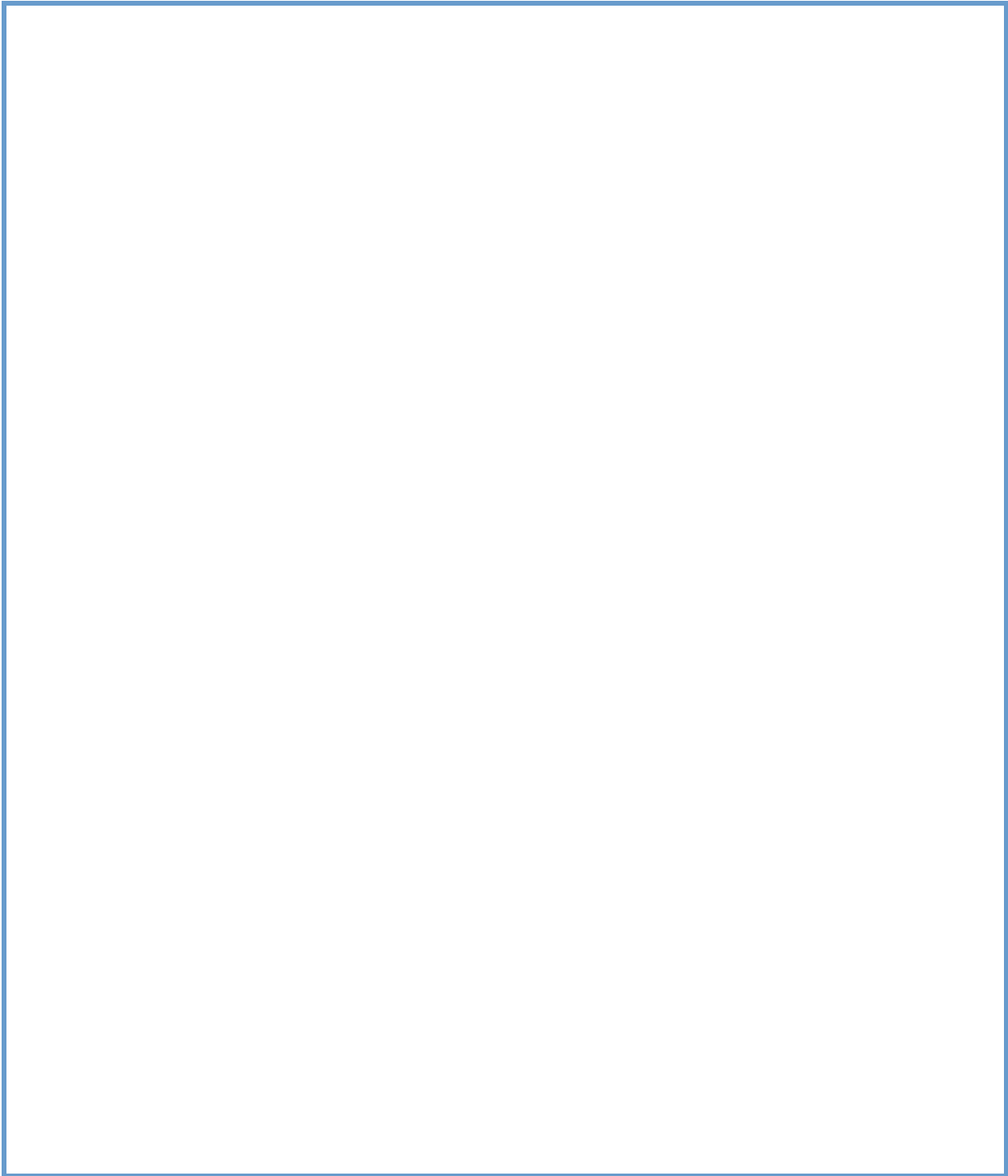


### Write it out

What are your biggest takeaways from this module?

What is ONE thing you'll implement in your practice right away?

*Notes*



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### Module 1

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