

Please meet Jeri Jefferys - a licensed clinical social worker and long-time staff member at Women's Center.

Q: Jeri, how long have you worked at the Women's Center?

A: I am proud to say that I have been with The Women's Center for almost 25 years. I started as a volunteer, then case manager and now I'm a Program Director. There have been many changes over the years as we have grown and adapted to meet the changes, challenges and needs of our community.

Q: Where is the shelter located, and who does the Women's Center serve?

A: Today we are a safety and stabilization center located near downtown Raleigh. We serve over 850 women experiencing homelessness, sexual assault, domestic violence and trauma each year. We are open 365 days per year.

Q: What are the primary issues women coming into your agency face?

A: Many of the women we serve have significant mental/behavioral health challenges and a profound number, over 91%, of women who present at The Women's Center have been sexually assaulted. These women also have other challenges such legal issues, mental illness, substance use, chronic illnesses, and complex post traumatic syndrome disorder.

Q: What services does Women Center offer women seeking help?

A: The Women's Center provides a safe, low barrier, healing, engaging environment to facilitate stabilization, linkage to support services and ultimately transformation.

Our services include critical basic needs such as community rooms, meals, personal products, clothing, financial assistance, personal storage, computer/phone/Wi-Fi/office support, assistance with transportation, and medication assistance. We also provide comprehensive case management focusing on document acquisition, connecting with vital community services, employment and housing preparedness.

Our clinical services include onsite primary care, behavioral health screenings, assessments/referrals, crisis counseling, HIV/STI testing, brief treatment interventions, assistance with disability claims, and support services involving hospitalizations and guardianships. Lastly, we offer an array of educational, support, and social enrichment activities ranging i.e. Dress for Success, AA, a legal clinic, breast cancer awareness and women's health, coping with stress, self-defense, yoga, arts & crafts, etc.

Q: How can the Women's Center support CASA tenants?

A: For almost 16 years, the Women's Center has supported one of CASA's properties, Oak Hollow, by providing comprehensive support services to 10 formerly homeless families with one disabled family member.

I am onsite at least twice a week in a welcoming community room setting, providing comprehensive wrap around services and clinical case management. I am on call 24/7/365. Families also have access to The Women's Center programs and services.

Q: Is there something you can share with us during this troubling time in our world?

A: Today we are in the frightening unknown territory of the Corona Virus pandemic. Today our doors are open, and we are continuing to do what we do best. Today we will provide a safe place to rest, the basics to survive, and guidance on the next steps to take. But most of all, today we will provide a listening heart.
