



# A Lotta Love

## Glorimel Rodriguez's Experience

### Karen M. Gil Internship, Fall 2020



#### About A Lotta Love (ALL)

- A Lotta Love is a nonprofit organization that transforms homeless shelters for women and children into a place of hope and possibility.
- They are an all-volunteer organization where 100% of the donations they receive go directly out to the shelters they serve.
- They have two clinical psychologists on their board who conduct research to assess the impact of the organization on residents and staff.

#### My Role

- My mentor is the director, Charlotta Sjoelin, and my main tasks include writing/editing grants that help fund the organization and working hands-on with the shelters to transform spaces into welcoming environments.
- For my hands-on work, I delivered room kits, which are packages that contain essentials like toiletries, blankets, pillows, etc., to a homeless shelter in Chapel Hill. I also had the opportunity to help renovate a space that will be used to house women escaping domestic abuse. I put together beds, tables, and other furniture.



#### Significance of Work

- Interventions to improve one's physical environment have significant impact on physical and psychological recovery, offering a sense of comfort, stability, normalization, and empowerment to take control over personal healing (Stroup, 2014).
- ALL's research shows that the changes they make to shelter environments have a direct positive impact on improving safety, healing, and hope.
- Shelter residents who transition out of a shelter where ALL have worked receive inspiration and recognition that they are worthy of a nice environment. They also take the personal items we supply as a source of comfort and ownership in their future plans.

#### Assessment of Impact

- Resident/staff verbal feedback qualitatively assesses the impact of the renovations on both residents and staff.
- Formal intake and follow-up surveys quantitatively measure the influence/effect of the renovations on residents.
- Surveys were developed based on the most current research by two clinical psychologists on the board.
- Questions assess how hopeful, safe and prepared for the future the residents feel and to what extent the physical transformation to their environment affected them feeling respected, dignified, and healed.
- Surveys are distributed at intake, and after 1 month (4-6 weeks).



#### Results

- All target areas - hopefulness, preparedness, and safety - have consistently improved directly as a result of the changes ALL have made at the shelters.
- Residents reported feeling 1.7 times safer, 1.3 times more prepared, and nearly 1.2 times more hopeful.
- 92% reported the transformed spaces made the shelter feel like a place for healing, and 97% reported the transformed spaces made them feel dignified and respected.

#### How I Use ALL's Research

- When writing grants, it's important to include the research in order to show potential grant supporters that ALL's work truly makes a difference in people lives.
- Research shows that our work makes a positive impact on resident's well-being.
- A Lotta Love is the only non-profit organization that addresses the critical need to improve the quality and appearance of homeless shelters.

#### Takeaways

- I have gained knowledge on the process of writing grants and how to reach out to foundations that offer grants.
- I have a better idea of how nonprofits use their resources to make meaningful changes on the lives of others.
- My writing and communication skills have improved as a result of the time I spent writing grants and talking to family foundation staff.
- I have learned about the effects that homelessness and domestic abuse have on individuals and how ALL helps many residents have a better outlook on their futures.