

MCUM'S NARRATIVE

CORE THEMES AND VALUES

Regarding the self-sufficiency side of MCUM, our programs must not violate these values. They are as follows:

We believe in our clients and their ability to succeed. They may struggle because of their environments, conditions, or circumstances, but not because they are not capable or are inherently flawed.

Our clients are fighting a battle that is familiar to us all: scarcity. Poverty is a type of scarcity, but we have all experienced scarcity in one way or another. This leads **to relationships based on understanding, compassion, trust, and co-investment.**

Our program **focuses on our clients' strengths** and the attributes they possess that can help them problem-solve and improve their circumstances. Our program is **neither judgmental nor punitive.**

Our clients are the experts on their own situations and are more than capable of deciding what is best for them. To that end, our program is **client-led, client-directed, and highly flexible.** We listen, we encourage, but we do not *require* things of our clients. **We meet people where they are.**

We work hard to cultivate **relaxed, friendly, and approachable environments and relationships** based on trust. Our compassion and desire to see our clients succeed (as well as our support for one another) is genuine and is the backbone of our programs.

CORE THEMES AND VALUES

Providing direct resources not only promotes greater success in other programs but is also a moral imperative.

We strive to uphold **unconditional positive regard for our clients**. We may not always love what they *do*, but we maintain a deep respect for who they *are*.

We strive to help our clients attain "**healthy interdependence**," which includes a network of healthy community relationships and a support system to help them maintain their self-sufficiency.

We encourage our clients to define success for themselves, and we honor their unique aspirations. Clients not only guide the process, but also determine their own starting and ending point.

JUDGMENT-FREE

COMPASSION

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

CLIENT DRIVEN SUCCESS

FLEXIBILITY

EMPATHY

BALANCING OUR RELIGIOUS TIES

While we are a secular organization that is welcoming to all faiths, we do receive a large portion of our funding and volunteer support from local churches and congregations. Therefore, it is important that we not separate MCUM from its religious affiliations entirely. Rather than stressing that we are a secular organization, instead say that we are an inclusive resource center that welcomes volunteers and clients of any faith.