



Mandatory Reporting: Sample Scripts to Use with Clients December 19, 2024

Sample Script: Notifying a Client that you are a Mandated Reporter

Programs with mandatory reporting requirements and staff who are mandated reporters must ensure that clients are informed about this legal role at the start of services (and ideally reminded later on), so they can make informed choices about what information to disclose to their providers.

The sample script below offers one way you can address this topic:

“It’s important that you understand how I handle any information you tell me. Please know I can’t share your information without your permission. This includes not sharing with your family, immigration officials, or anyone else. That is why I ask you to sign a Release of Information so that you can tell me what I am allowed to share and who I am allowed to share it with.

There are just a few exceptions to this. We are required by law to report:

- *When a child is being abused, neglected, or exploited, or has been abandoned;*
- *When an adult who can’t protect themselves due to a disability or who is very old is being abused, neglected, or exploited;*
- *Or if someone discloses that they are likely to kill themselves or harm someone else.*

In these rare cases, we must break confidentiality to protect someone’s life or safety.

Do you have any questions or concerns?”

Sample Response to Disclosure from a Child or Vulnerable Adult

Mandated reporters should be proactive and assure the child or vulnerable adult that they can handle the information. The following is an example of how you can respond to a disclosure:

“Thank you for telling me. That must have been difficult. I’m glad you included me so that I can try to support you. I will need to let someone know, and we will take it step by step.”

You may need to adapt this script based on the child or vulnerable adult’s age and the circumstances. Since there are unknown factors in the reporting process, be sure to not promise anything specific.

The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0052 and Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.