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Sample Critical Incident Procedure:

### Mandated Reporting (Non-Emergency) Procedure

This section addresses individual disclosures of child, elder, or dependent adult abuse and neglect that does not present an immediate danger to the client or those around them. If this is a situation where there is an immediate danger, please follow all instructions in the Emergency Procedure.

Depending on state-specific laws, your staff may be categorized as Mandated Reporters and required to contact CPS/APS and/or law enforcement when there is suspected abuse or neglect. Failure to do so creates both personal and organizational liability.

**Definitions:**

* Mandatory reporting is the process of telling officials at a designated government agency about known or suspected abuse, abandonment, neglect, or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult when required to do so by law.
* A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 (regardless of marital status).
* The definition of a vulnerable adult includes the following two categories:
  + Elder adults aged 60 years or older.
  + Dependent adults aged 18 to 59—this category is defined differently by specific state laws but generally includes adults with a developmental, physical, or mental disability; living under guardianship; and/or residing in care facilities.

**Examples:**

* A minor discloses physical or sexual abuse by their caregiver.
* A 15-year-old reports a sexual relationship with a 23-year-old.
* An adult client tells you that they have been using their 75-year-old grandparent’s bank account to pay their bills without their knowledge or consent.
* An adult with Alzheimer’s is left home alone for several days.

**What to do:**

Please see [LINK TO: YOUR AGENCY’S MANDATED REPORTING GUIDELINES] for detailed steps and decision-making around mandated reporting. More resources on mandated reporting are available above in the Resources section of this toolkit. Below is a summary:

1. Identify the risk as a crisis, not an emergency. Ensure your safety; leave any situation that is dangerous.
   * Determine if you have safety concerns and make a report. Collect information relevant for reporting—including the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the individuals involved; the date(s) of the incidents; and the names, ages, and schools of all children in the home (if filing a CPS/CWS report).
2. Seek internal support. Collaborate with [SUPERVISOR NAME] before making a report.
3. Determine if you will inform the individuals involved that you are making a report. If so, consider making the report in collaboration with the client.
4. Call the appropriate hotline. Most states have dedicated but separate hotlines for children and vulnerable adults. In [YOUR AGENCY’S STATE], you can reach CPS at [XXX-XXX-XXXX] and APS at [XXX-XXX-XXXX].
   * Provide only the factual information you have about the case. Tell the CPS/APS caseworker you don’t have information if asked a question to which you don’t have the answer.
   * Note the name of the CPS/APS worker contacted. Request the referral number for your documentation.
   * In some states, a written report must be submitted within 24 to 48 hours, in addition to contacting the hotline.
5. Support the individual’s ongoing safety through safety planning.
6. Refer to appropriate resources such as external medical or mental health providers, legal supports, etc.
7. Debrief with your supervisor and seek any personal support as needed.
8. Document the situation in a case note and a critical incident report.

**Common Questions When Making a Mandated Report:**

When making a mandated report, hotline workers will gather as much information as you have available. You must still make a report even if you do not have all of the following information.

* What is your name, contact information, and relationship to the victim?
* What is the incident information? This includes what happened, where and when, any witnesses, and a description of any injuries sustained.
* What is the victim’s demographic information? This includes name, age, sex, language, address, telephone number, school, current location, developmental delays, physical disabilities, cultural considerations, etc.
* What is the demographic information for other children or individuals living in the home?
* What is the demographic information for caregivers?
* What is the demographic information for the person responsible for the alleged abuse or neglect?
* What is the demographic information for any witnesses to the event?
* Any there any other environmental hazards or weapons in the home which may impact the victim or caseworker’s safety?
* Are there any family strengths, supports, or other protective factors?

**Case Consultation:**

In the event of a non-emergency disclosure of child or vulnerable adult abuse, seek case consultation from your direct supervisor and/or:

* [SECOND DESIGNATED OFFICE CONTACT NAME] at [XXX-XXX-XXXX]
* [THIRD DESIGNATED OFFICE CONTACT NAME] at [XXX-XXX-XXXX]

**Staff Training Resources:**

(*Consider resources on DV, mandated reporting, and safety planning in addition to any internal resources, forms, and policies*.)

* [RESOURCE 1]
* [RESOURCE 2]

**Relevant Client Resources:**

* [RESOURCE 1]
* [RESOURCE 2]

**Reporting Hotlines:**

* File a CPS report:
* National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453
* [STATE-SPECIFIC ONLINE REPORT WEBSITE]: [WWW.XXX.XXX]
* File an APS report:
* [STATE-SPECIFIC ADULT ABUSE HOTLINE]: [XXX-XXX-XXXX]
* [STATE-SPECIFIC ONLINE REPORT WEBSITE]: [WWW.XXX.XXX]

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