

## **Abuse Prevention Policy**

### **The Larrabee Center, Inc.**

The Larrabee Center is committed to providing safe and respectful environments that support the well-being of all individuals receiving services. The Larrabee Center seeks to institute guidelines, policies and resources for staff and enforce zero tolerance for those actions which may jeopardize the health, safety, or welfare of any individual receiving services.

Screening and hiring procedures provide safeguards to eliminate from considerations any candidate who demonstrates behavior that indicates a high risk for violating this policy. Screening and background information required to comply with Iowa law depends on the position and its level of involvement with individuals receiving services. Hiring procedures dictate the verification of criminal background checks, dependent adult and child abuse record checks, and any required credentials of personnel. Checks are completed prior to delivery of service and are maintained in the personnel file. Verification that new employees are not excluded from federally funded healthcare programs is completed prior to hire and on an annual basis for all employees.

All programs are designed to encourage safe interactions between staff and people receiving services. The following guidelines are meant to maintain effective safeguards while upholding the dignity of the individual, and respecting their ability to direct their own life.

All service staff and their supervisors receive training on Dependent Adult Abuse Reporting. Employment Services staff and their supervisors also receive training on Child Abuse Reporting. Employees receive the training during the orientation process and follow current regulations regarding renewals thereafter. All employees will receive training on this policy at hire and annually thereafter as part of the agency's annual refresher training.

Programs have an established staff to person receiving services ratio consistent with identified individual needs for services and supervision and with applicable state and federal regulations.

Abuse prevention training is provided to ensure that staff understand what constitutes abuse, signs and symptoms of abuse, and their responsibilities to protect individuals receiving services from abuse and neglect. Staff receive training on topics including maintaining professional boundaries, ethics and code of conduct. The Larrabee Center's Code of Conduct outlines expectations for staff to exercise safe, responsible and respectful behavior in their interactions with individuals receiving services.

Positive and professional relationships are maintained between employees and clients. Staff will provide fair treatment to all individuals served, sensitive of individual differences. Ethical guidelines mandate that all staff maintain a balance between learning about and providing for individual needs, but with sufficient personal distance to maintain objectivity and professionalism. Staff are completely responsible for the development of such a relationship. Staff are responsible for maintaining the dignity and respect of all individuals served. Positive reinforcements and positive behavioral interventions should be utilized in interactions. Recognize the boundaries of your responsibilities, providing only the directions and support for which you are trained and qualified.

The Larrabee Center's service provision may allow appropriate physical contact with clients and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. In general, physical contact should be limited to actions such as handshakes or high-fives and only with expressed consent. In situations where hand-over-hand instruction is necessary, consent will be given before an employee would initiate physical contact.

The Larrabee Center does not tolerate abuse, neglect, or mistreatment of clients served in any program. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer services. Further, The Larrabee Center will fully cooperate with law enforcement throughout the investigation and resolution of mistreatment or abuse incidents.

**Definitions:**

**Abuse or molestation** means any physical, mental or moral harassment, assault or intimacy of a sexual nature even if consensual, including improper touching, of a client.

**Inappropriate touching** at work is unwelcome, nonconsensual physical contact that violates personal boundaries and creates a hostile work environment.

**Reporting:**

All service employees are mandatory reporters and must comply with Iowa's Mandatory Reporting requirements. As appropriate, service staff complete Adult and/or Child Abuse Mandatory Reporter Training and recertification as required by the State. All employees of The Larrabee Center are required to comply with this and related policies regarding abuse and are expected to report any violations or suspicions of violation of this policy immediately. Reports of any suspected abuse or violation of this policy are to be brought to the supervisor immediately. Supervisors should notify the Executive Director immediately of the report. The supervisor and Executive Director would assist in filing a report with DHS following timelines and guidelines set forth by DHS in the Dependent Adult Mandatory Reporter section in the Administrative Procedures. The Executive Director would be the designated investigator for all complaints and allegations and would be the designated person who administers, monitors, and enforces policies, procedures and trainings for this policy. All reports and investigations will comply with confidentiality and HIPAA policies as well as corporate compliance in regard to dealing with law enforcement and media.

## **Abuse Prevention Policy Acknowledgement**

I have read and understand The Larrabee Center's Abuse Prevention policy and agree to abide by its terms and conditions throughout the course of my employment. I understand that my failure to follow the terms of this policy could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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Employee Signature

Date

**(This Copy remains in Employee's Handbook)**

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Employee Signature

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**(This Copy for Employee's Personnel File)**