



Reporting

All staff must be aware of the warning signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, know how to respond appropriately, and report suspected cases immediately.

STEP 1: Recognizing Signs of Abuse

- Train all staff and volunteers at least annually on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse in children and grooming behaviors in adults.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to hold each other accountable in all interactions under Massachusetts law and organizational policy.
- Review signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect at staff meetings, professional development days, and in supervision.
- Provide ongoing training to staff and volunteers, both in-person and online.
- Connect with your local DCF office and other child abuse prevention organizations in your community.

STEP 2: Responding to Allegations of Abuse

- Maximize opportunities to talk with staff about youth protection issues and policies to build comfort with the topic of child abuse.
- Use supervision to support staff in coming forward to discuss concerning behaviors, or to report suspicions, observations or disclosures of child abuse.
- Reinforce and remind staff that how adults respond to a disclosure of abuse can impact the recovery of the child and youth.
- Certify that staff and volunteers know reporting suspected abuse affords protections for the reporter under Massachusetts law.
- Ensure staff and volunteers who report suspected abuse will not be subject to any adverse action by the organization or their colleagues.

STEP 3: Reporting Suspicions of Abuse

- Establish clear reporting policies and procedures and ensure they are reviewed by all staff at hire and at least annually.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of how to make a report, whom to notify, how to complete required documentation and adhere to confidentiality.
- Train all staff and volunteers on when, how, and to whom to report suspected abuse or disclosures of abuse.
- Guarantee staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to report under Massachusetts law and your YSOs internal protocols.
- Determine your YSO's communication and public relations policy, including how to respond to allegations, and disclosures of abuse committed by any employee.