

PROCEDURE

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Procedure Name:	Employee Safety Procedure	
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Applicable to:	Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Staff	

SUBJECT: Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Employee Safety Procedure

PURPOSE: The purpose of this procedure is to outline Brevard C.A.R.E.S. procedure for maintaining a safe workplace. The personal safety of each employee of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. is of primary importance. To the greatest degree possible, Brevard C.A.R.E.S. management provides necessary procedures and training for the personal safety of all employees to promote a safe and healthy culture throughout the organization. This procedure also ensures that the needed resources are provided to achieve the goals of this safety procedure and to set a high standard for safety practices. This procedure outlines the protocols and steps taken by the Brevard C.A.R.E.S staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children and families referred and prompt quality access for families to the services. The proper application of this policy will ensure that Brevard C.A.R.E.S. meets its commitment to ensure continuity of care for families using a family-centered, consumer driven, strength-based approach to care in keeping with the wraparound principles of care.

PROCEDURE:

Introductory Statements:

This operating procedure outlines the appropriate measures that Brevard C.A.R.E.S. has implemented to protect the safety of all persons who are in Brevard C.A.R.E.S. facilities or on its grounds. There are safety mechanisms outlined in this operating procedure that address safety and communication protocols for staff while off site and to train staff on any potential risks that are encountered on site, in the community or in the client's home. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. has a security system to deter facility break ins and provide secure monitoring ongoing.

It is essential to the employees of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. and to the families served that a safe and healthy workplace is maintained at all times. The management staff ensures the outlined procedures are adhered to and implemented by all employees. A primary goal of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. is to diligently protect staff from harm and in an effort to do so, has developed this Employee Safety Procedure. While it is the intent of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. to provide a safe environment for employees, it is the responsibility of all staff to make a concerted effort to contribute towards and maintain a safe work environment. It is also the intent of Brevard

C.A.R.E.S. to properly manage any incidents that do occur so as to minimize impact to staff and other forms of loss. A well-managed workplace and safety program benefits the agency and staff in countless ways. It is the expectation that each and every staff member become familiar with and adheres to the procedure as well as be an active participant in the workforce safety procedure.

Definition of Harm:

Staff are required to report any unsafe condition or threats received immediately. Employee threats can be defined as (but are not limited to) those situations in which the employee's wellbeing or safety is threatened by any act that includes a physical assault, threat (verbal or written), any behaviors or action which could be interpreted by a reasonable person as harmful, any act which harms or endangers the safety of others, and any act which results in aggression towards, the destruction or damage of any property; (company, personal or otherwise.) It is the responsibility of every Brevard C.A.R.E.S employee to report acts of threats or violence to the proper authorities and take these threats seriously.

Employee Safety Training:

Providing training to employees is a critical factor in maintaining a safe work environment. For this purpose, each Brevard C.A.R.E.S. employee is provided with Employee Safety Training upon initial hire. Thereafter, this training is provided on an annual basis and/or upon changes in processes, procedures or assignments. This training will also be provided when an employee's performance or behaviors indicate that additional training is needed. Training can take the place of formal ("classroom") training, practical ("on the job") training or computer based training. Other relevant training topics that are identified that require special expertise (for example Domestic Violence training) shall be arranged in coordination with community providers whenever possible.

Director of Prevention and Diversion Screening and Assignment of Acute Referrals:

It is the responsibility of the Director of Prevention and Diversion to screen and determine the level of all new referrals received into the program in accordance with Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Operating Procedure 1005. If the referral is determined to not fit the entrance criteria of the program, the Director of Prevention and Diversion shall adhere to the procedure outlined in Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Operating Procedure 1004. At any such time that the specified referral is accepted into Brevard C.A.R.E.S. and if the Director of Prevention and Diversion identifies a potential safety concern or risk to the employee, the Director of Prevention and Diversion will ensure that the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff member is accompanied by another staff member. The Director of Prevention and Diversion may also opt to accompany the assigned employee to allow for further assessment of the situation and analysis of risk.

If the employee does experience a threat, the agency may consider temporarily relocating the employee's workstation to a different area, screen incoming calls to the employee, provide an escort or any other protective measures deemed necessary and appropriate. Employees should also reference the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Operating Procedure 1018 in reference to Crisis and Safety Planning when necessary.

Some Warning Signs of Potential Violence:

- Covert or overt threats of harm;

- Actions of others that are intimidating or instill fears in others;
- Presenting as delusional, disoriented or unreasonable, or the perception that the entire world is working against the individual's goals and objectives;
- Not taking criticism well, holding a grudge (especially against someone in an authority role);
- Having a history of violent and explosive behavior;
- Having an extreme interest in, or obsession with weapons or carrying a concealed weapon without having the legal authority and permit to do so;
- Criminal history or charges associated with violence, and
- Concerns themselves with or affiliates with known gang members or criminals.

Enhancing Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Staff Safety when Serving Domestic Violence or Violent Crime Perpetrators or attending to other high risk cases:

- The employee will report direct or indirect threats from any person as these could escalate into serious incidents later on.
- In many instances, a perpetrator of domestic violence is also a family member seeking services through Brevard C.A.R.E.S.
- All assigned staff should exercise due caution and diligence when interacting with both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence.
- Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff shall consult with the Child Welfare Domestic Violence Advocate regarding the safety of the victim/survivor and children prior to contact with the perpetrator. The focus of the consultation should be on understanding the perpetrator's behavior(s) and the extent to which they are predictable or able to be controlled by the presence of a safety management provider. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff shall not disclose the location of a domestic violence shelter. The safety plan for the parent who is a victim of domestic violence may not be shared with the perpetrator.
- There is a concern about safety and or if the perpetrator/batterer is scheduled to attend the Family Team Conference; the meeting is to be held at the agency office or in another public place versus the home of the family with available staff on site and secure a security guard if necessary. If this is not possible, ask a co-worker or supervisor to be present during any interaction.
- If the meeting is to be held at the office, then staff on site will be alerted that a perpetrator has entered the building to access services and family meetings will be held with direct observation of other individuals and the use of agency security monitoring devices will be utilized.
- When visits are held in the field or in the home, staff will alert the non-emergency contact number for the presiding jurisdiction to increase patrol of the area and also the appearance of an officer or patrol car may have served as a deterrent to the individual.
- Assigned staff will ensure heightened awareness of the surroundings when leaving the meeting place and ensure parking in a well-lit place with a pre-determined safety plan in the event of an emergency.
- Assigned staff will ensure prior notification to immediate supervisor that a potentially dangerous client is visiting the office or if off site, provide the time and place of the meeting and whenever possible arrange another staff member to be present.
- Assigned staff will ensure access to cellular phone and emergency numbers at all times.
- The immediate supervisor will be notified of the exact location and expected time frame if completing a visit with the family in their home when the perpetrator is scheduled to be present or if there is reasonable suspicion that the perpetrator may be present.

- Assigned staff will ensure accessible exits when meeting with the perpetrator.
- Assigned staff will never engage in any verbal confrontation or debates with the perpetrator.
- Assigned staff will ensure adherence to the crisis and safety plan if the family has one in place.
- Assigned staff will always utilize the 911 emergency numbers or contact Law Enforcement at any time that the circumstance is warranted as a first step.
- Brevard C.A.R.E.S. management will provide support and encouragement of collaborative relationship building with service providers and other community agencies in order to provide additional consultation on domestic violence assessment and intervention. Cross training will be considered whenever possible.
- All employees building key card will be used when entering and leaving the building, the employee calendar will document all scheduled home and field visits with the expected timeframe of the offsite visit with location and contact information.
- All employees must check in while off site and secure a code word to use in an emergency for needed assistance. The code word would be used as an alert of danger (in lieu of making the statement) so as not to tip off the batterer.
- Since Brevard C.A.R.E.S. provides services for perpetrators and victims of violent crimes in the same facility, the monitoring and management of these populations to ensure psychological and physical safety is paramount. Separate Family Team Conferences will be held when working with this population. Any Injunction for Protection, Chapter 39 Injunctions or Restraining Orders that have been issued will be adhered to and additional technical assistance and consultation will be sought out through the Child Welfare Domestic Violence Advocate. Consultation can be held with Law Enforcement if necessary and appropriate.
- The victim will receive education involving the dynamics of domestic violence, information regarding the impact of domestic violence on self and family and on local domestic violence laws.
- Other appropriate assistance will be provided based on individual need and availability.
- The agency will not support or tolerate acts of domestic violence perpetrated by or against clients while they are currently receiving services at the agency.
- The agency will not tolerate any acts of violence perpetrated by clients on any employees in agency offices, facilities, work sites, vehicles or while conducting agency business. This includes the display of any violent or threatening behavior by a perpetrator (verbal or physical) that is likely to result in physical or emotional injury or otherwise places an employee or client's safety at risk.

Enhancing Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Staff Safety during an Active Shooter Event

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, management should be prepared to:

- Take immediate action.
- Remain calm.
- Lock and barricade doors.
- Evacuate staff and clients via preplanned evacuation route to a safe area.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommends the following practices for coping with an active shooter situation.

- **Run:** If there is an accessible escape path, staff should attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind.
 - Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
 - Leave belongings behind.
 - Help others escape, if possible.
 - Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
 - Keep your hands visible.
 - Follow the instructions of any police officers.
 - Do not attempt to move wounded people.
 - Call 911 when safe.
- **Hide:** If evacuation is not possible, staff should find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find them.
 - The hiding place should:
 - Be out of the active shooter's view.
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in the staff member's direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door).
 - Not trap them or restrict their options for movement.
 - To prevent an active shooter from entering the hiding place:
 - Lock the door.
 - Block the door with heavy furniture.
 - If an active shooter is nearby:
 - Lock the door.
 - Silence cell phones.
 - Turn off any sources of noise.
 - Hide behind large items.
 - Remain quiet.
 - If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:
 - Remain calm.
 - Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location.
 - If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- **Fight:** As a last resort, and only when a staff member's life is in imminent danger, they should attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throwing items and improvising weapons
 - Yelling
 - Committing to their actions

When law enforcement arrives, their purpose is to stop the active shooter(s) as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard. When law enforcement arrives staff should:

- Remain calm and follow the officers' instructions.
- Put down any items in their hands.
- Immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers.

- Always keep hands visible.
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or directions when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises.

When possible, staff should provide the following information to law enforcement or the 911 operator:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter(s)
- Number and type of weapons held by the shooter(s)
- Number of potential victims at the location

Once staff have reached a safe location or an assembly point, they will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Staff should not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed them to do so.

An active shooter in the workplace may be a current or former staff member, or an acquaintance of a current or former staff member. Intuitive managers and coworkers may notice characteristics of potentially violent behaviors in an employee. Staff should alert the Executive Director and Human Resources if they believe an employee or coworker exhibits potentially violent behavior.

Staff typically display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. If these behaviors are recognized, they can often be managed and treated. Potentially violent behaviors by a staff member may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism; vague physical complaints
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
- Depression/withdrawal
- Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures
- Repeated violations of company policies
- Increased severe mood swings
- Noticeably unstable, emotional responses
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
- Suicidal; comments about “putting things in order”
- Behavior which is suspect of paranoia
- Increasingly talks of problems at home
- Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace; talk of severe financial problems
- Talk of previous incidents of violence
- Empathy with individuals committing violence
- Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons, and violent crimes.

Employee and Management Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of each Brevard C.A.R.E.S. employee to alert their immediate supervisor of any potential safety concerns on the date that the said occurrence takes place. If there are extenuating circumstances that render this step not possible, the employee shall notify the immediate supervisor at the next earliest time available of the safety concern.

It is the responsibility of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. management to follow up and provide intervention for any employee safety issue that has been brought to the attention of management to the extent that the said employee has been provided with resolution satisfactorily to the employee.

Please reference Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Operating Procedure 1023 in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring evacuation or lockdown of the facility.

Safety Check Practices

Each Brevard C.A.R.E.S. employee is required to sign in and out upon entrance and exit from the building via the Employee Sign in Log. All visitors are required to sign in and out upon entrance and exit from the building and follow procedures outlined in Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Operating Procedure 1021. All staff are required to update their calendars daily in the agency database that includes the family name and meeting place. The Director of Prevention and Diversion randomly checks staff's whereabouts and cross references this information with documentation in the agency database and on employee travel logs. Also based on the severity of the referral and at the discretion of the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. management, staff may be required to notify their immediate supervisor upon entrance and exit from a home to ensure staff safety. This is implemented as another safety measure if the employee or supervisor believes the situation may pose additional risk. If at any time that the employee is not comfortable proceeding with a scheduled or unscheduled family meeting due to a safety issue, the employee must notify the immediate supervisor to determine the next action steps. Whenever necessary, the management staff will consult with the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Executive Director for the appropriate course of action.

Documentation of safety concern

It is the policy of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. that a Critical Incident Report be executed for all details related to the incident to serve as documentation of an occurrence impacting the safety of an employee, to assess liability, to identify action steps and to provide necessary intervention. The assigned staff member shall follow all additional procedures as outlined in Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Operating Procedure 1014. If an employee witnesses or directly experiences an incident of theft, burglary, accident, altercation (physical or verbal) injury or other crime on company time or when the employee is engaged in a work-related activity, the employee must report the incident to their direct supervisor and Law Enforcement Agency. The employee is required to obtain a copy of the police report summarizing the incident. Employee safety is of paramount concern to Brevard C.A.R.E.S. and if an emergency arises, the employee *must call 911 as a first response during emergency situations to resolve the immediate issue and then a follow up notification can be made to the direct supervisor.*

**Abuse of Client:**

If at any point while services are being provided a client discloses that he or she has been abused by a staff member, the incident will be immediately reported to law enforcement for an investigation to be commenced. During the investigation process, the assigned staff person that the allegation was made against will be removed from assignment to the family. Upon completion of the investigation, whether the allegation of abuse on the part of the staff member is verified or unsubstantiated, the staff member in question will no longer be assigned to the family or client that brought forth the allegation of abuse.

BFP FOA Risk Management Committee

The Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Executive Director or assigned staff member can request a review of any safety concern or because of any Critical Incident Report generated by Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Each Critical Incident Report is reviewed by the agency's Risk Management Committee on an ongoing basis.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Philip J. Scarcelli".

PHILIP J. SCARPELLI
President and Chief Executive Officer
Brevard Family Partnership / Family of Agencies

APPROVAL DATE: 10/24/23