

CENTRAL METHODIST UNIVERSITY TRAINING

Contact With Minors

Information for those Working with Minors:

The Central Methodist University community has a strong interest in how our society cares for children and the most vulnerable among us and wants to do what it can to prevent the victimization of child and adolescent minors and promote their safety. To further this goal, this packet contains important information individuals must review if they are participating in programs or activities involving minors 1) the University operates; 2) others operate in University facilities; or 3) Central Methodist students, faculty or staff are involved with in the community.

Child Abuse Includes:

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

Emotional Abuse is a pattern of behavior that hurts a child's emotional, psychological and social development and sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, withholding affection, and negligence. If a child is being physically or sexually abused, he or she may be emotionally abused as well.

Emotional abuse may not be recognized by physical signs, but a child will react very strongly through their emotions. The list below describes some of the signs an emotionally abused child may display:

Emotional Signs

- ▶ Low self-esteem
- ▶ Severe depression
- ▶ Aggression
- ▶ Withdrawal
- ▶ Severe anxiety

Neglect- occurs when a parents or caretakers do not provide proper supervision, control subsistence, education as required by law, or other care necessary for healthy development. By itself, lack of financial means to provide for a child is not neglect.

Physical Signs

- ▶ Poor hygiene and/or odor
- ▶ Inappropriately dressed for weather
- ▶ Unmet medical or dental care needs
- ▶ Young children left alone and unsupervised for long periods of time
- ▶ Failure to thrive, malnutrition
- ▶ Constant hunger may beg or steal food
- ▶ Acts as a parent to his/her siblings
- ▶ Arrives early and stays late at school, play areas, or other people's homes

Emotional Signs

- ▶ Extreme willingness to please
- ▶ Oldest child has a parental relationship with his/her siblings
- ▶ Is always watchful, as though waiting for something bad to happen
- ▶ Has learning problems (or problems concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific psychological or physical causes

Physical Abuse is non-accidental injury of a child by a parent or caretaker.

Physical Signs

- ▶ Bruises, welts on face, neck, chest, back
- ▶ Injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- ▶ Unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back
- ▶ Fractures that do not fit the story of how an injury occurred
- ▶ Delay in seeking medical help

Emotional Signs

- ▶ Extremes in behavior: very aggressive or withdrawn and shy
- ▶ Afraid to go home
- ▶ Frightened of parents
- ▶ Fearful of other adults

Sexual Abuse is exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child.

Physical Signs

- ▶ Pain, swelling or itching in genital area
- ▶ Bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area
- ▶ Difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain
- ▶ Stained or bloody underclothing
- ▶ Venereal diseases
- ▶ Refusal to take part in gym or other exercises

Emotional Signs

- ▶ Poor peer relationships
- ▶ Unusual interest in sex for age
- ▶ Drastic change in school achievement
- ▶ Runaway or delinquent
- ▶ Regressive or childlike behavior
- ▶ Fear, anxiety, depression and/or anger
- ▶ Younger children who have been sexually abused may have poor self-esteem and difficulty with close relationships.
- ▶ Older children and teenagers may act out their hurt by using drugs and alcohol or having sex

Guidelines for Working with Minors

DO:

- ▶ Maintain the highest standards of personal behavior at all times when interacting with minors.
- ▶ Whenever possible, try to have another adult present when you are working with minors in an unsupervised setting.
- ▶ Conduct necessary one-on-one interactions with minors in a public environment where you can be observed.
- ▶ Listen to and interact with minors and provide appropriate praise and positive reinforcement.
- ▶ Treat all minors in a group consistently and fairly, and with respect and dignity.
- ▶ Be friendly with minors within the context of the formal program or activity while maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- ▶ Maintain discipline and discourage inappropriate behavior by minors, consulting with your supervisors if you need help with misbehaving youth.
- ▶ Be aware of how your actions and intentions might be perceived and could be misinterpreted.
- ▶ Consult with other adult supervisors or colleagues when you feel uncertain about a situation.

Guidelines for Working with Minors (Continued)

DON'T:

- ▶ Don't spend significant time alone with one minor away from the group or conduct private interactions with minors in enclosed spaces or behind closed doors.
- ▶ Don't engage in inappropriate touching or have any physical contact with a minor in private locations.
- ▶ Don't use inappropriate language, tell risqué jokes, or make sexually suggestive comments around minors, even if minors themselves are doing so.
- ▶ Don't give personal gifts to, or do special favors for, a minor or do things that may be seen as favoring one minor over others.
- ▶ Don't share information with minors about your private life or have informal or purely social contact with minor program participants outside of program activities.
- ▶ Don't strike or hit a minor, or use corporal punishment or other punishment involving physical pain or discomfort.
- ▶ Don't relate to minors as if they were peers, conduct private correspondence or take on the role of "confidant" (outside of a professional counseling relationship).
- ▶ Don't date or become romantically or sexually involved with a minor. Don't show pornography to minors or involve minors in pornographic activities.
- ▶ Don't email, text, or engage with minors through social networking media unless there is an important educational or programmatic reason to do so and you are communicating consistently to all minors in the program.
- ▶ Don't provide alcohol or drugs to minors or use them in the presence of minors.

Reporting: What to do if you suspect a minor has been abused or neglected or is otherwise unsafe.

Reporting child abuse and neglect is **everyone's** responsibility.

Any person may report suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. **Anonymous reports are accepted from individuals who are not mandated by occupation to report.**

CMU Policy Statement

Any employee who in the course of employment suspects physical or sexual abuse of a child is required to report the suspected abuse to the Central Methodist University Title IX Coordinator at 660-248-6214. This would include any employee who, in the scope of the person's employment responsibilities, examines, attends, counsels, or treats such a child. The report should be made immediately, either by phone or in person to the Title IX Coordinator. Any student or visitor who suspects physical or sexual abuse of a child or relating to a University program or activity should provide a report to Title IX Coordinator.

If the suspected physical or sexual abuse is not on the CMU campus, local police authorities should also be notified. If an employee is a mandated reporter per 210.115.1, RSMo, the employee is required to immediately file a report with the Children's Division of the Missouri Department of Social Services via the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-3738. Anyone, even if not a statutory mandated reporter may report to the Children's Division.

There will be no retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of physical or sexual abuse of a child under this policy. Retaliation against any person who reports or participates in the investigation of reports of physical or sexual abuse of a child will not be tolerated. Anyone engaging in retaliatory behavior is subject to disciplinary action.

If you know, suspect or receive information indicating a minor has been abused or neglected, or if you have other concerns about a situation involving the safety of minors, follow the procedures described below:

When making a report, be sure to have the following information:

- Name of the child
- Name of the parent(s)
- Name of the alleged abuser
- Where the child can be located

You will also be asked:

- Is the child in a life-threatening situation now?
- How do you know about the abuse/neglect?
- Did you witness the abuse/neglect?
- Were there other witnesses, and if so, how can they be contacted?

What if you're not sure it's abuse or neglect?

You can call the local Children's Division office to discuss your concerns. They can advise you whether or not to call the hotline. They can also give you advice that might help you help the family in crisis.

Error on the side of over-reporting. If you have the thought, "Maybe I should call..." — DO! Not all calls to the hotline are determined to be abuse/neglect. However, the Children's Division can often provide services and assistance that can help families prevent abuse.

Hotline Number 1-800-392-3738

The Children's Division Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is a toll-free telephone line which is answered 24/7, 365 days a year.

Emergencies: Immediately call Fayette PD at 911.

In addition, one should promptly notify his or her supervisor, program director, dean, or vice president, when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

If someone is suspected of child abuse:

- ▶ All allegations will be taken seriously, with regard for the privacy and confidentiality of all involved. The Camp Director/Adult Leader will keep a detailed record of allegations and action(s) taken to segregate the parties and investigate the matter.
- ▶ The Camp Director/Adult Leader will notify the Title IX Coordinator (660-248-6214) or Brad Dixon, Dean of Students (660-248-6267) immediately.
- ▶ The Camp Director/Title IX Coordinator will notify the parents of any minors involved
- ▶ The Director/Adult Leader shall secure the safety of the minor, segregate the alleged accused from the child, and then present the allegations to the named accused as part of the Director's investigation.
- ▶ The Director /Adult Leader shall treat the accused with dignity, and shall relieve the accused of his/her duties until an investigation is completed.
- ▶ Legal counsel may be involved depending on the initial investigation and severity of the allegation.