



**Justice Center for the
Protection of People
with Special Needs**

Best Practices to Promote An Abuse Free Environment

September 28, 2016

**161 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054
www.justicecenter.ny.gov**

1. Create a Comprehensive Abuse Prevention Policy

- ⇒ Form a workgroup of stakeholders
- ⇒ Conduct external research on abuse and neglect prevention policies and resources
- ⇒ Conduct internal research of current practices on abuse prevention
- ⇒ Draft a comprehensive abuse prevention policy
- ⇒ Submit for review and approval (BOD, stakeholders, other)
- ⇒ Formally adopt policy
- ⇒ Train staff and people receiving services (as appropriate) on policy

2. Provide Effective and Timely Staff Training

- ⇒ Select someone to serve as training manager/coordinator
- ⇒ Provide training on how to recognize, stop and report abuse and neglect, the process for reporting, and the role of the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs
- ⇒ Provide training on individual treatment needs and Trauma Informed Care
- ⇒ Provide training on Code of Conduct and professional boundaries
- ⇒ Offer training on conflict resolution techniques, creative problem solving and stress management
- ⇒ Provide management training on supervision and team development

3. Screen New Hires Thoroughly

- ⇒ Background checks, SEL clearance and other checks as appropriate (SCR, sex offender registry checks, DMV)
- ⇒ Interview candidates in person and include questions to help identify concerns about mistreatment
- ⇒ Check references by phone using pre-determined questions that target mistreatment
- ⇒ Heightened monitoring and supervision during probation period
- ⇒ Establish criteria to consider a candidate with a criminal record

4. Manage Staff Stress and Burnout

- ⇒ Provide crisis intervention refreshers as needed and in a timely manner
- ⇒ Provide opportunities for advancement
- ⇒ Create a committee to study workforce issues and to develop initiatives to address them
- ⇒ Establish a process to support staff returning to work from administrative leave
- ⇒ Offer support with contacting EAP when indicated
- ⇒ Create a culture of celebration
- ⇒ Provide training and support for supervisors
- ⇒ Hold regularly scheduled team meetings for problem-solving, debriefing following a crisis or challenging event

5. Manage Staff Ratios and Turnover

- ⇒ Provide management and team development training for supervisors
- ⇒ Provide opportunities for staff advancement
- ⇒ Set achievable and measureable goals for advancement
- ⇒ Convey that staff are valued
- ⇒ Implement periodic anonymous staff surveys on work satisfaction, challenges and recommended improvements
- ⇒ Facilitate problem solving discussions at team meetings on issues related to staff ratio/turnover
- ⇒ Show staff appreciation regularly in varied ways

6. Address History of Deficiencies/Complaints

- ⇒ Establish procedures for timely response to complaints and remediation of deficiencies including back-up plans
- ⇒ Provide staff training on privacy, creative problem solving, boundaries, other as appropriate
- ⇒ Research untapped resources for plant improvements (grants, fundraising, donations)
- ⇒ Analyze trends (Root Cause Analysis, Failure Mode and Effects Analysis, or other methods)

7. Create an Empowering Culture and Management Team

- ⇒ Provide training on sensitivity and understanding needs of the population served
- ⇒ Evaluate level of inclusiveness (language, decision-making, new projects)
- ⇒ Hold regular program/community meetings: empowering people receiving services to take leadership
- ⇒ Survey people receiving services and staff about agency culture
- ⇒ Acknowledge that abuse can happen
- ⇒ Acknowledge and apologize for mistakes and mistreatment
- ⇒ Provide regular supervision, feedback, follow-up on staff concerns
- ⇒ Provide training for managers on supervision, communication, team development and accountability to staff

8. Address Physical Environment Concerns

- ⇒ Research grants and other resources for plant improvements
- ⇒ Survey people receiving services about the environment
- ⇒ Solicit team support to explore viable alternative solutions (sound screens, privacy screens, room changes, downsize number of beds)
- ⇒ Train staff on privacy issues
- ⇒ Engage people receiving services and families as appropriate in problem solving

9. Address Personal Conditions of People Receiving Services

- ⇒ Data collection and monitoring to effectively assess care, needs, and progress as it occurs
- ⇒ Hold regular team discussions with clinical staff to identify and ensure least restrictive measures
- ⇒ Onsite observations by clinician, at onset of concern, and as needed
- ⇒ Timely training on individual treatment plans, trauma informed care, managing personal reactions and others as indicated

10. Support Welcoming of Visitors

- ⇒ Develop a volunteer program to match volunteers with people who don't have regular visitors and ensure that volunteers understand how to report
- ⇒ Provide training on working with families
- ⇒ Maintain a calendar of community events and resources to encourage community connections
- ⇒ Encourage and assist with planning to attend community events and trips

11. Promote Supportive Interactions Between Staff and People Receiving Services

- ⇒ Share information about staff changes, absences, etc. with people receiving services in a timely manner
- ⇒ Train staff on how to provide choice in day to day living
- ⇒ Train staff on the right to choose and how to support healthy choices without violating a person's rights
- ⇒ Train temp and relief staff on sensitivity to individual needs, listening, reassurance and communication