

# Waynesboro Area YMCA

## Crisis Management Plan

### 01 Definition

Crisis is defined as any occurrence that harms a consumer, threatens the public reputation, or immediate financial integrity of the organization, or that may create a situation of legal liability to the organization or its directors or officers. Examples include allegations or incidents of suspected abuse including consumer-to-consumer abuse, arrest of current or former employee or volunteer for child pornography, etc.

### 02 Key Crisis Management Objectives

- Prioritize consumer protection and safety
- Be proactive, timely, transparent, accurate, consistent, and unified in the messages presented internally and to media, stakeholders, and the public
- Maintain strong relationships with various stakeholders
- Evaluate the organization's policies and protocols and demonstrate to stakeholders and the public how the organization is evolving to correct past challenges and improve the organization's safeguarding efforts
- Prepare for a potential crisis year-round, not just when one occurs

### 03 Once Allegation/Incident Occurs

#### 03A Secure Immediate Safety and Minimize Access

- To the extent possible, ensure the victim-survivor is secure and safe from additional harm or abuse. This could mean moving the individual to another area of the facility or having someone with the individual during this time.
- Follow all mandated reporting requirements and contact the authorities as appropriate. This includes using the Y's Incident Report form and following the reporting timeline found in the Child Abuse Prevention Handbook.
- If the accused person is an employee, follow progressive discipline procedures accordingly. This may involve suspending the accused during the investigation.
- Where applicable, prevent the accused from having further access to consumers until a thorough incident review and/or investigation is completed. Before beginning an internal incident review, verify with local authorities that this will not interfere with their investigation.
- When applicable, notify other employees that there has been a critical incident and the crisis management plan has been activated.

- Notify the board that there has been a critical incident and the crisis management plan has been activated.

### 03B Initial Communication Plan

- The CEO is the designated point person responsible for responding to all inquiries from parents/guardians, the media, and other stakeholders. In the event that the CEO is not available, the HR Director or staff designed by CEO will handle the situation. Guidelines for the CEO or designee are as follows:
  - Contact the YMCA's CEO Hotline to ensure the steps are being taken to follow YMCA guidelines.
  - Prepare a short media statement in advance or anticipation of receiving a media or public inquiry.
  - All oral and written communication should speak with a voice of compassion and confidence.
  - Communicate with employees and volunteers that the procedure in the situation is to refer media and other inquiries to the CEO. A statement with talking points for employees and volunteers may be prepared by the CEO so standard messaging is used.
- As soon as possible, the CEO or designated staff will have an in-person meeting with identified victim-survivors and the parents/guardians for the following purposes:
  - Reassure them that the Y is taking the allegation or incident seriously.
  - Find out what response they desire and be prepared to explain what the YMCA can do.
  - Consideration will be given to reaching out in writing to parents/guardians of all consumers attending the YMCA or the particular program in which the accused offender was involved or had contact with consumers. This message should consider communicating the following:
    - **Empathy Statement:** The YMCA organizational values run counter to this type of behavior and incident.
    - **Facts:** A summary of the incident, including information about any suspensions, investigations, arrests, etc. may be included if this information is determined to be helpful to the organization, the community, and the victim/survivors. Careful consideration should be given to how much information should be given depending on the stage of the investigation. Consulting with the YMCA CEO Hotline and the investigating authority before putting out a statement of facts should be done to ensure that nothing is reported that could hinder the investigation.

- **Contact Request:** Ask parents/guardians to contact the YMCA or the appropriate authorities if they suspect their consumer may have been abused.
- **YMCA Response:** Explain that the YMCA is fully cooperating with the authorities. Describe proactive steps the organization is taking such as offering resources to individuals, hosting a parent/community meeting, training employees and volunteers, and conducting an independent investigation to learn from this incident so the organization can prevent it from happening again.
- Consider whether hosting a parent/community meeting to speak directly with concerned families and directly answer any questions could be helpful. Before holding this type of meeting, the YMCA CEO Hotline and the investigating authority should be consulted to ensure that nothing is reported or discussed that could hinder the investigation.
  - Communicate as much information as you can about the incident.
  - Provide information regarding the proactive steps that leadership is taking in response to the incident.
  - Describe the resources available in the community and give contact information if that is possible.
  - Give parents/guardians a chance to ask questions.
  - Provide parents/guardians with information about how to talk about abuse. This information is found in the Child Abuse Prevention Handbook.

### 03C Ongoing Communication and Response

- Determine how to manage ongoing relations with authorities, parents/guardians, the community, and media relations.
  - Consider adding a designated page to your website with updated details about the incident. Before creating this type of page, the YMCA CEO Hotline and the investigating authority should be consulted to ensure that nothing is reported or discussed that could hinder the investigation.
  - The CEO or designated staff if the CEO is not available, is responsible for communication and outreach efforts. The CEO or designee may delegate various communication and outreach efforts to specific individuals in the organization to handle.

## 04 Promote Prevention at All Levels of the Organization

- Educate parents/guardians on abuse prevention information.
  - Information can be found in the Child Abuse Prevention Handbook.
  - Consider holding a workshop during which parents/guardians can learn how to protect their consumers from abuse.

- Consider bringing in community support to help parents/guardians to process the incident and its aftermath.
- Provide a consumer education program to all consumers involved with the organization on how to protect themselves from abuse and how to express concerns.
- Consider additional refresher training for all employees and volunteers on how to identify and report “red- flag” behaviors that do not rise to the level of suspected abuse. Require this additional training be completed by a specific date.