



Diocese of
Green Bay

Mandated Reporters of Abuse or Neglect

Certain individuals whose employment brings them into contact with children are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect or threatened abuse or neglect to a child seen in the course of their professional duties. Anyone who suspects a child is being maltreated may make such a referral. Persons making reports in good faith are immune from criminal or civil liability. Reports are made to the county in which the child or the child's family resides. Reports can also be made to local law enforcement offices.

Receiving Disclosures of Sexual Abuse From Children

Do...

1. Practice your response before you are in the real situation.
2. Pay attention to your body language. Give the child signal that you are hearing what she/he says and that you can help.
3. Let the child describe what happened in his or her own words. Ask open ended questions (e.g., "Tell me about that").
4. Gather only the minimum amount of information necessary to meet the threshold of reasonable suspicion.
5. Maintain a calm demeanor. Avoid showing embarrassment, disgust, anger or shock. Let the child know it was brave to share something about a difficult subject.
6. Believe the child. It is damaging for a child who is telling the truth to not be believed, and false reporting is uncommon. It is the responsibility of investigators to determine if abuse has occurred.
7. Reassure the child. Children may feel ashamed or less loveable because of the abuse. Tell the child "What happened was not your fault and I'm glad you told me".
8. Tell the child you will do everything you can to protect the child. Be honest with the child about your requirement to respond and about the steps you will take.

Don't

1. Do NOT try to determine for yourself if the allegation is valid or invalid. This is the role of law enforcement and Child Protective Services.
2. Do NOT try to talk a child out of what she/he is saying. If you are skeptical, do NOT express your doubts to the child. This is a task for investigators to sort through, and you can express your doubts to them.
3. Do NOT attempt to find out the details in a group of children. Sexual abuse is not an appropriate subject for classmates to discuss.
4. Do NOT suggest to a child that you think she/he may have been abused. This can be damaging and is problematic in cases in which abuse did happen but the information was elicited through the use of leading questions.
5. Do NOT gossip about these allegations to friends, colleagues, or other professionals. Follow strict rules about confidentiality and remember that legal processes may be entailed.

A person who is mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect will be informed by the county what action, if any, was taken to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the child who is the subject of the report.

Penalty: Persons required to report who intentionally fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect may be fined up to \$1,000 or imprisoned up to 6 months or both.

Persons Required to Report Abuse and Neglect: Mandated Reporters ~ s. 48.981(2):

- Physicians
- Coroners
- Medical examiners

- Nurses
- Dentists
- Chiropractors
- Optometrists
- Acupuncturists
- A medical or mental health professional
- Social workers
- Marriage & family therapists
- Professional counselors
- Public assistance workers, including a financial & employment planner, as defined in s.49.141(1) (d), Stats.
- School teachers (*Religious Education personnel*)
- School administrators
- School counselors
- School employee not otherwise specified
- Mediators under s.767.11, Stats.
- Child-care workers in a day care center, group home, as described in s.48.625(1m), Stats. (a "second chance home"), or residential care center for children and youth
- Day care providers
- Alcohol or other drug abuse counselors
- Member of the treatment staff employed by or working under contract with a county department under s. 46.23, 51.42, or 51.437, Stats., or a residential care center for children and youth
- Physical therapists
- Physical therapist assistants
- Occupational therapists
- Dieticians
- Speech-language pathologists
- Audiologists
- Emergency medical technicians
- First responders
- Police and law enforcement officers
- Court-appointed special advocates (CASA)
- A member of the clergy under s. 48.981 (2) (bm)

Reporting Elder Abuse and Neglect

If someone is in imminent danger, call 911, police, or the hospital emergency room NOW. [To report abuse of an elder](#) (age 60 plus), call your County Elder Adults-at-Risk Helpline. [To report abuse of an Adult-at-Risk](#) (age 18 to 59), call your County Adults-at-Risk Helpline in your home county.

Adults-at-Risk Definitions

Abuse means any of the following:

1. Physical abuse: intentional or reckless infliction of physical pain or injury, illness, or any impairment of physical condition.
2. Emotional abuse: language or behavior that serves no legitimate purpose and is intended to be intimidating, humiliating, threatening, frightening, or otherwise harassing, and that does or reasonably could intimidate, humiliate, threaten, frighten, or otherwise harass the individual to whom the conduct or language is directed.
3. Sexual abuse: a violation of criminal assault law, s. 940.225 (1), (2), (3), or (3m).
4. Treatment without consent: the administration of medication to an individual who has not provided informed consent, or the performance of psychosurgery, electroconvulsive therapy, or experimental research on an individual who has not provided informed consent, with the knowledge that no lawful authority exists for the administration or performance.
5. Unreasonable confinement or restraint: the intentional and unreasonable confinement of an individual in a locked room, involuntary separation of an individual from his or her living area, use on an individual of physical restraining devices, or the provision of unnecessary or excessive medication to an individual, but does not include the use of these methods or devices in entities regulated by the department if the methods or devices are employed in conformance with state and federal standards governing confinement and restraint.