



## Child Protection Policy

BraveBe Child Advocacy Center's leadership and Board of Directors have enacted the following plan to minimize the potential for an abuse incident to occur. Abuse or exploitation in any form will not be tolerated. If an allegation of abuse occurs, we will proactively work with authorities and the family to respond in a prompt and empathetic manner.

BraveBe takes a preventative approach to ensure its employees, interns and direct service volunteers are not abusive or subjected to abuse. Continuous training is provided to ensure compliance and ongoing background screening will be conducted to ensure that all employees and volunteers maintain compliance.

### Hiring Practices and Screening

All prospective employees, interns and direct service volunteers will complete an application that includes questions about criminal history, past work history and education. All applications will be signed by the individual and maintained in their personnel file. All prospective employees, board members, interns, direct service volunteers and others designated by the executive team are subject to a criminal background check and NDHHS central registry check.

BraveBe will conduct a National Criminal History Check and an in-state background check on all prospective employees, board members, interns and volunteers who may have contact with youth while providing direct services support. These record checks will occur annually (bi-annually for board members) throughout the course of the individual's employment or volunteering. In-state background checks shall include a check of the following state registries:

- Nebraska State Patrol Criminal Background Check
- Nebraska Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.
- Sex-Offender Registry
- Nebraska Drivers Privileges Check
- City of Lincoln Warrant Check

BraveBe will complete the initial background checks before the individual has direct contact with any youth. If a background check results in a record being identified, BraveBe will not allow the individual to have direct contact with any youth. All background check documentation shall be maintained in personnel records.

### Training and Education

BraveBe will provide training to all employees, board members, interns and direct service volunteers that include:

- Child abuse dynamics and sexual abuse behaviors

- Reporting and responding to abuse and neglect
- Child sexual abuse prevention

This training must occur within the first year of employment and be included with the individual's record of training in their personnel file. If a new employee, board member, intern, or volunteer has completed a required training course previously, they may submit training certificates to satisfy this requirement.

## Child Supervision

Children who are present at BraveBe Child Advocacy Center will be supervised at all times by employees, interns or volunteers who have been screened in accordance with our policy. There should never be a circumstance when multiple children are left unattended for any period of time. BraveBe aims to provide an environment where a child is not alone with an employee, intern or volunteer. However, at times, direct services may require one-on-one interaction between a child and staff due to the nature of BraveBe direct services, as well as our commitment to respect client confidentiality and privacy. These services may include medical examinations, therapy sessions, forensic interviews and meetings with advocates. All one-on-one interaction between a child and an employee, intern or volunteer will remain observable or interruptible at any time. BraveBe requires two adults to be present for the genital portion of medical examinations.

Young children may request assistance from an adult in using the restroom or changing into a medical exam gown. Staff should inform the non-offending caregiver, if present, that their child needs help in the restroom. If the non-offending caregiver is not present or available, staff, interns or volunteers may assist a young child in the restroom with the door left open and another staff member, intern, or volunteer nearby to observe. At no time will multiple children be allowed in a restroom together.

## Physical Contact and Restraint

BraveBe staff members, interns and volunteers will not initiate physical contact with children. It is not uncommon for a child or non-offending caregiver to ask for or initiate a hug. Depending on your comfort level, it is generally acceptable to reciprocate.

Under no circumstances is physical punishment to be administered to a child served by BraveBe. On rare occasions, it may be necessary to separate or intervene with a child to prevent injury to the child or others. Whenever possible, staff should attempt to diffuse the situation. If this fails, assistance should be requested from the caregiver, or another staff or MDT member. At no time will a BraveBe staff member attempt to physically restrain a child. Law enforcement should immediately be contacted for assistance if a child becomes physically aggressive.

## Transporting Children

BraveBe Staff is not permitted to provide transportation of children for any purpose. On rare occasions, staff may accompany law enforcement or NDHHS when transporting a child.

## Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

All BraveBe employees, interns and volunteers are mandatory reporters and will receive training on reporting and responding to child abuse and neglect. Nebraska Revised Statute 28-711 requires all

persons who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect to report such incidents to the proper law enforcement agency or to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The BraveBe employee, intern, volunteer who observes or suspects child abuse or neglect shall immediately report directly to law enforcement (911) and the Nebraska Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-652-1999). The Executive Director must be notified if the reported abuse took place on BraveBe property or involved BraveBe representatives. If the Executive Director is identified as an offender in a child abuse or neglect allegation, the Director of Program Development must be notified and is responsible for notifying the President of the Board.

### Response to Allegations of Abuse by Staff, Interns or Volunteers

The Executive Director and all BraveBe employees will cooperate with law enforcement and NDHHS regarding the investigation. Confidentiality of the situation will be upheld to the extent of the law. The Executive Director will notify the President of the Board and any key staff to assess and take action regarding the current employment situation of the alleged suspect. Any BraveBe employee who is alleged to have abused a child will be suspended with pay pending the outcome of an investigation by the appropriate authorities. If the allegation is substantiated, the employee will be terminated. If the allegation is against an intern or volunteer, he/she will be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

Should any employee, intern or volunteer be identified as the alleged offender in a report of child abuse or neglect (personally or professionally), the Executive Director must be notified immediately by anyone with knowledge of such report.

As an employee, Board Member, Contractor, or volunteer of BraveBe Child Advocacy Center; I have read and fully understand the above policy. I agree to comply with the provisions and guidelines of this policy. I further understand that failure to comply with this policy may result in personnel action including dismissal, or immediate termination of my involvement with BraveBe Child Advocacy Center.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_