



Keeping UW Campus Communities Safe for Children

University of Wisconsin System

2012

Realities of Child Abuse and Neglect

- 4 children die in the United States every day from child abuse or neglect.
- How often does this happen in Wisconsin?

In 2010, Wisconsin recorded:

- 44,941 allegations made involving 33,436 children
- Out of every 1,000 children 3.7% were victims of child maltreatment

Source: Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, <http://preventchildabusewi.org>
and <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cwo04-07/cwo04-07.pdf>
retrieved 2/3/12

Executive Order #54

All UWS employees must immediately report child abuse or neglect if, in the course of employment, a UWS employee observes an incident or threat of child abuse or neglect, or learns of an incident or threat of child abuse or neglect, and the employee has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur.

Executive Order #54

Reports must be made in person or by telephone to the following:

UW-La Crosse University Police

- **789-9000 (office)**
- **789-9999 (for emergencies only) staffed 24 hrs**

Call 911

- if the child is in imminent danger

Definitions

Employee is any UW-La Crosse (UW System) employee; including students, staff, and faculty.

Child - For purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect, a “child” is a person who is less than 18 years of age.

Abuse of a child includes the following categories:

- ❖ Physical abuse
- ❖ Sexual abuse
- ❖ Emotional abuse
- ❖ Manufacture of Methamphetamine

Definition of “Neglect”

Wisconsin law defines neglect as the “failure, refusal or inability on the part of a *caregiver*, for reasons *other than poverty*, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.”

Types of Neglect

- ❖ Physical
- ❖ Lack of supervision/abandonment
- ❖ Medical (life threatening)
- ❖ Failure to thrive (malnutrition)

Warning Signs of Neglect

Regular or frequent:

- ❖ Soiled clothing or inadequate clothing
- ❖ Hunger
- ❖ Listlessness or fatigue
- ❖ Poor hygiene
- ❖ Untreated medical issues

Behavioral Warning Signs of Neglect

- ❖ Poor relationships, withdrawal from others
- ❖ Seeking attention
- ❖ Low self-esteem
- ❖ Hoarding or stealing food

Using the Warning Signs of Neglect

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ❖ How many warning signs do you see?
- ❖ Are the warning signs regular or frequent?
- ❖ Could the student's physical health be seriously endangered?

“Abuse” as Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as “physical injury” inflicted on a child by other than accidental means by any other person including:

- ❖ Lacerations
- ❖ Fractured bones
- ❖ Burns
- ❖ Severe or frequent bruising

Warning Signs of Physical Abuse

- ❖ Bruises around the cheeks, abdomen, thighs, or midway between the wrist & elbow
- ❖ Bruises that are different colors
- ❖ Bruises that are in the shape of an object
- ❖ Bruises on multiple parts of the body
- ❖ Adult-sized, human bite marks
- ❖ Burns, especially from objects like cigarettes & irons

Using the Warning Signs of Physical Abuse

You can use these warning signs & the questions below to help determine if a report needs to be made-

- ❖ Does the student's explanation for the injury make sense to you?
- ❖ Is the student evasive about sharing how the injury occurred?

“Abuse” as Sexual Abuse

Abuse of a child includes any of the following:

- ❖ Sexual intercourse or sexual contact with a child under the age of 16 or with a 16 or 17 year old child without his or her consent under Wis. Stat. §§ 940.225, 948.02, 948.025, or 948.085;
- ❖ Sexual exploitation of a child;
- ❖ Permitting, allowing or encouraging a child to violate the statute prohibiting prostitution;
- ❖ Causing a child to view or listen to sexual activity;
- ❖ Exposing genitals or pubic area to a child or exposing a child’s genitals or pubic area;

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

- ❖ Extreme secrecy, compliance, or withdrawal
- ❖ An unusual fear of people from one gender or with specific characteristics (e.g., a deep voice)
- ❖ Very seductive behavior
- ❖ Unusual knowledge about sex for age
- ❖ Sexual play with peers that goes beyond curiosity

Questions to consider in evaluating possible sexual abuse

- ❖ Does the child report having sexual contact with another person?
- ❖ Has the child been exploited sexually in some way?
- ❖ Has the child been exposed to sexual content?
- ❖ How is age a factor in these questions?

“Abuse” as Emotional Damage

Emotional abuse is defined as “emotional damage” for which the child’s parent, guardian or legal custodian has neglected, refused or been unable for reasons *other than poverty* to obtain the necessary treatment or to take steps to ameliorate the symptoms.

Warning Signs of Emotional Damage

❖ Physical reactions:

wetting or soiling themselves,
headaches, stomach aches,

❖ Emotional reactions:

sudden fearful behavior, feelings of
having little self worth, inappropriate
emotions

❖ Behavioral reactions:

social withdrawal, difficulty
concentrating, compulsive attention to
detail, rocking, head banging, cruelty to
animals

Warning Signs of Emotional Damage

- ❖ Severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggressive behavior
- ❖ Substantial change in child's behavior, emotional response
- ❖ Development of atypical behavior for age or development

“Abuse” as Manufacture of Meth

It is child abuse to manufacture methamphetamine under any of the following circumstances:

- ❖ With a child physically present
- ❖ In a child’s home (includes the premises of a child’s home or a motor vehicle located on the premises of a child’s home)
- ❖ Under any other circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that the manufacture would be seen, smelled, or heard by a child

How do I know when to file a report?

- ❖ Obtain only enough information to decide whether a report is needed.
- ❖ Suspicion is enough.
- ❖ Child Protective Services or law enforcement will investigate.
- ❖ Inform your supervisor

Reporting: Who & When

Who makes the actual report?

- ❖ The person who has observed or learned of a situation

How soon after I receive the information should I make the report?

- ❖ As soon as possible

How do I inform the child and/or parents that I will be filing a report?

- ❖ Any report you make is confidential. It is not to be shared with anyone other than your immediate supervisor.

Who do I call?

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staffed 24 hrs

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What if I am not sure?

- ❖ It is common for someone to be unsure if a report should be made.
- ❖ It is OK to talk to someone else (supervisor/program coordinator) who can help to determine if a report is necessary; however talking to someone else may not delay reporting of an incident.
- ❖ *Any person making a report of child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability that results from the report.*

What will filing a report be like?

Campus police may ask you the questions like the ones below as part of the initial report. County Protective Services may follow up with similar questions

- ❖ What did you observe? What was reported to you?
 - ❖ Specifics of the reported or observed abuse or neglect
- ❖ Where were you located when you observed the behavior?
- ❖ Do you know the individuals involved?
 - ❖ Information about the child, parents, suspected abuser (names, address, phone number, date of birth)
- ❖ Clothing and physical descriptions of those involved.
- ❖ Any information received from the child
- ❖ Your contact information
- ❖ Who you have discussed the situation with?

Does every report result in action?

- ❖ No

You may not ever learn of the outcome of your report.

Are reports confidential?

Reports should be kept confidential unless a limited exception applies.

In general:

- ❖ The county, local law enforcement may not share any identifying information about a University employee who makes a report
- ❖ The University (and its employees) must keep all related records about the report confidential to
 - ❖ protect child
 - ❖ Avoid interest discussions not tied to a necessary purpose

Common questions after filing a report:

Will County Protective Services or Campus Police follow up with me?

- ❖ Perhaps, if they need additional information

How will I know if the child is safe?

- ❖ You have taken the important first step of making a report. You will need to trust in the systems established to protect the child.

Will my identity be disclosed?

- ❖ **NO!**

Have I satisfied my employment obligation?

- ❖ Yes, if you have reported in good faith.

UWSA Guidelines

No UWS employee making a report of child abuse or neglect in good faith may be discharged from employment, disciplined or otherwise discriminated against in regard to employment, or threatened with any such treatment because that employee made a report in good faith.

Next Steps

- ❖ Review & sign Executive Order #54 Acknowledgement form
- ❖ If you have questions, seek clarification from your supervisor/program coordinator
- ❖ Review this power point as often as needed.
- ❖ Check out the Executive Order #54 website for additional information

Have a safe and fun summer!
Thank you- UW-La Crosse Human Resources