

Abuse/Neglect and Exploitation Policy

As an employee of Endless Options you are considered a Human Service Worker, and thus are a mandated reporter of any suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

According to the State of Maryland Code Section 5-704 (b), if you are mandated to report, you must make an oral and written report to the local department of social services not later than 48 hours after the abuse or neglect is suspected. More information can be found on the DHR website or on the Endless Options website; www.endlessoptions-md.net.

1. Reporting:

- a. If you suspect abuse or neglect is occurring to a child with whom you are working, call your local Department of Social Services (DSS)-Child Protective Service and complete their Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect (the form can be found on the DHR website or on the Endless Options website; www.endlessoptions-md.net).
- b. If you suspect abuse (emotional, physical, and/or sexual) or neglect is occurring to a child with whom you are working, you should contact the office **immediately following your report to DSS, 443-801-9501.**
- c. If you engage in any abusive/neglectful behaviors toward a child and/or take an explicit photograph of your client, you will be **prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.** Endless Options will report your behavior to all State agencies that need to be involved.

2. State of Maryland Definitions:

- a. Child Abuse is defined as the physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed; or sexual abuse of a child whether physical injuries are sustained or not. Sexual abuse means any act that involves molestation or exploitation of a child and includes; fondling, incest, rape, or sexual offense in any degree, sodomy, and unnatural or perverted sexual practices.
- b. Child Neglect is defined as the failure to give proper care and attention to a child including the leaving of a child unattended, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm.
- c. Mental Injury is defined as an observable, identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.

3. Possible Signs of Abused and Neglected Children:

- a. A delay in seeking medical attention
- b. An inadequate or inconsistent explanation of the injury/harm
- c. A previous history of an inadequately explained injury/harm to the child or sibling
- d. An abnormally high frequency of injury
- e. Parental admissions of the injury/harm
- f. Direct parental threats toward the child; and
- g. Avoidance in answering questions

4. Exploitation

- a. We serve children and young adults who cannot protect their own interest.
- b. Endless Options employees are forbidden from exploitation, which is defined as using a minor for profit, power, status, sexual gratification of some other purpose.
- c. Taking photography or videography of a sexual nature or engaging in sexually based activity is defined as sexual exploitation. It is illegal and will not be tolerated by Endless Options.

*****Please refer to handout**