

DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING ABUSE

It is very likely someone in your caseload is dealing with ongoing abuse. They may be the victim of abuse, or they may know someone they suspect is being abused.

Abuse can come in many forms: child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, workplace harassment, and school bullying. The statistics regarding reported incidents of abuse are staggering:

1. Approximately 5 children in the U.S. die every day as a result of child abuse (*Source: Administration for Children & Families, a division of U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*).
2. As of 2018, 52 million people in the U.S. were over the age of 65. It is estimated that nearly 1 in 10 of them suffer from elder abuse every year. (*Source: Nursing Home Abuse Center*)
3. On average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the U.S. — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a year. (*Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline*).
4. Results from the *2017 U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey* showed that almost 60% of workers nationwide are affected by bullying or harassment.
5. Nationwide, about 20% of students ages 12-18 experience bullying. (*Source: The 2017 School Crime Supplement, National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice*)

As a mental health professional, you are ethically, and in many circumstances legally, obligated to document and report suspected abuse. Your obligation to report abuse will vary from state to state and on the type of abuse; however, it is always appropriate to document suspected incidents.

You can use this form to document any incidents of suspected abuse, and you should modify it to your professional needs. In some circumstances you should fill this information out yourself, but in other circumstances you may ask clients or other professionals to fill it out, guiding them as to the appropriate requirements for reporting abuse. Suspected abuse should never be ignored.

Documentation of Suspected Abuse

Today's Date _____

Name and contact information of the person filling out this form:

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

Name of the person who may be abused:

Name _____

Age _____ Gender _____

(If Appropriate)

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

Who is the primary source of this information?

Name _____

Age _____ Gender _____

(If Appropriate)

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

Relation to the person who may be abused _____

Describe the events or circumstances that cause concern:

Describe and/or list any possible evidence of physical harm:

Describe and/or list any possible evidence of psychological harm:

Who is suspected of causing the abuse?

Age _____ Gender _____

(If Appropriate)

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

Relation to the person who may be abused _____

