

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMUNITY CASES

WHEN TO SPEAK UP?

SUMMARY: Understanding the role and responsibilities of mandated reporters in work with minors.

FOCUS AREAS	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Mandated Reporter Role• Organizational Policies• Navigating Complex Decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the role and responsibilities of a mandated reporter.2. Determine if you are a mandated reporter in a given role or situation and understand organizational policies.3. Analyze and navigate challenging and uncertain situations regarding the well-being of others.4. Identify tools, resources, and support networks you can access with questions or to make an official report..

SCENARIO

Mohammed is a sophomore studying finance and psychology. Addison is a senior studying accounting. During their spring break, both of them will be working with a university club that assists at a week-long camp for children between the ages of 12 and 15 from low resource backgrounds. The following scenarios outline specific situations Mohammed and Addison encounter during their work with the community partner organization.

Scenario A

Addison is assigned to be a “student resident assistant” for the girls living in her camp cabin. One of the students arrived on the third day with noticeable bruising around their upper arm and neck. When she asks them about it, they tell her that yesterday they ran into a branch and fell while playing in the woods with other campers. Addison is uncertain about this student’s home situation or their prior history, and is afraid to lean into any stigmas about the student or their family based on their background. She is worried that bringing this up with camp staff might make her seem naive or prejudiced, and is unsure what to do next.

Scenario B

On the first day of camp, Mohammed notices one of his fellow student volunteers is paying extra attention to one of the campers, spending more time with them and giving them extra food during meals. The following day while he is

in the kitchen washing up, through the screen door Mohammed hears the student say to the camper that they want to meet alone after camp activities are finished. This strikes Mohammed as odd, but he is worried about making any accusations. He has heard a lot of stories about the negative impacts of false accusations. He realizes that if he says anything to the student or to their superiors, it will be clear he is implying the potential for sexual misconduct. Mohammed is wondering if he is reading too much into the situation and is unsure what to do next..

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do Mohammed or Addison's roles with the organization or their home organization (such as Notre Dame) make them a mandated reporter? If you are entering into a role working with minors, will you be a mandated reporter?
2. If you are a mandated reporter, what are your specific responsibilities toward the people, especially minors, in your care?
3. What are common situations and circumstances in which a mandated report might be necessary?
4. How do you make a mandated report?
5. What is your first reaction to the scenarios outlined above? Do you feel they require further attention? Do you feel they require a report?
6. If you were in either situation, what might you do to gain more certainty or insight into both scenarios?
7. If you were in either situation, who could or would you reach out to to discuss further?
8. Do you know the standard of certainty for mandated reporting?
9. What are the potential unintended consequences of making a mandated report?
10. How might you deal with the situation in which a report was made or a conversation was begun that turned out to not be a situation of abuse or neglect?
11. What resources are available to help you deal with the consequences of a report, whether it was accurate or inaccurate?

FACILITATOR CONSIDERATIONS

- NAVIGATE UNCERTAINTY. Adults as well as students struggle deeply with the uncertainty of these types of situations. Leaning into the tension, awkwardness, and uncertainty is helpful to do now so that students have a framework for such situations should they arise.
- SEEK SUPPORT AND RESOURCES. Direct students to the resources available to them at Notre Dame, in particular the [Reporting Abuse or Inappropriate Behavior with Minors](#) portal and the [Reporting Process](#) guidelines.
- FIND SUPPORT NETWORKS. Point students toward campus or programmatic resources (e.g., counselors, supervisors, mentors) that exist to support them in uncertain or difficult situations.

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- What's one thing you learned or thought about differently during this discussion?
- If you will be working with an organization in the near future, look into their mandated reporter requirements. Inquire with your supervisor or another leader if needed.