

MODULE

15

AGENCY POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

This section is an opportunity to provide agency-specific policy and protocol information that will guide how advocates do their work. This section includes an outline of information that trainers should gather in advance of the training and review with participants during this section.

LESSON 1: Our Agency's Policies and Protocols and How They Impact Our Work



OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Describe agency policies and protocols
- Describe how agency policies and protocols inform their advocacy work



MATERIALS

- Training agenda (if you create one)
- Flipchart paper or dry erase board and markers
- Pens/pencils and paper for each trainee
- Copies of agency policies, protocols, and other paperwork for each participant



TIPS FOR PREPARATION

- Print or otherwise obtain items listed in the Materials section of this module and make copies for participants.
- Review lesson to be comfortable with the material before the training session.



POINTS TO CONSIDER

- **Customize this section based on your program's needs.**

This module contains recommendations for what policies to cover in training. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and trainers should adjust this list based on agency needs.

- **Draw connections between the policies and the work.**

Policies and protocols are often developed to set organizational standards and help staff have parameters in which to do their work. Beyond simply reviewing these policies and protocols, help participants understand the intention behind these forms of guidance and how they might play out in their work. Policies and protocols become more meaningful when we can understand how they benefit our work.

LESSON 1: OUR AGENCY'S POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS AND HOW THEY IMPACT OUR WORK

OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Introduce the topic by discussing the important role of the agency policies and procedures in providing excellent, ethical, and trauma-informed care to survivors. Review policies and protocols with the group, making sure to address any questions that arise. It can be helpful to infuse discussion of policies throughout the training, in addition to this section. For example, when you review helpline calls, include information on how advocates are contacted, include policy issues like informed consent in role plays, and ask outside presenters to talk about any community protocols. Trainers should make sure to provide copies of and explain the following agency policies and/or procedures:

- Confidentiality policies (including releases of information)
- Informed consent for services; orientation and intake procedures
- Non-discrimination & accessible services (this includes language and physical access among other needs)
- Mandatory reporting policies
- Grievance procedure both for survivors and others seeking services
- Grievance procedure for staff/volunteers/interns
- Documentation of work with survivors and others seeking services
- Advocacy protocols
 - Responding to helpline calls
 - Working with survivors and partner agencies, including how to make referrals
 - Working with survivors connected to other systems such as police or law enforcement
 - Working with survivors and institutions such as schools, colleges, detention centers, prisons, rehabs, etc.
 - Meeting with survivors or their significant others offsite
 - Transporting clients

- Helpline staffing protocols
- Evaluation of services
- Scheduling protocols
- Coaching and supervision
- Debriefing protocols
- Professional development policies

Other items trainers should consider discussing in this section include:

- Are there any limits on the types or groups of survivors and significant others your agency serves?

For example, what is the agency's stance on serving those who have committed sexual violence in the past?

- How does the agency serve staff, volunteers, board members, or community partners (or their family members) if they have been assaulted?
- What service records does your agency keep?
- What paperwork are volunteers expected to complete?
- What is your policy and practice on data collection?
- How are survivors and significant others referred to services within the agency?
- What is the policy around volunteers under the age of 18 years old?

Allow time for discussion and questions and continue to infuse policy and protocol information throughout the duration of the training.

