

Field Safety

The following Safety Protocol is intended to mitigate risk of violence, harm, or injury to staff while working on the street, in encampments, and throughout the general community. Signed acknowledgement of the Safety Protocol will be required for all staff prior to engaging in any direct service work. Further development of safety policy and procedures will be necessary to ensure the team is compliant with regulations for behavioral health providers and in accordance with best practices.

1. Communication with Supervisor
 - a. Staff will ensure their supervisor knows where they will be at all times throughout their shift. This may be done through staff calendars, daily team huddle, and/or direct verbal or written communication.
 - b. Changes to planned engagement routes will be communicated to your supervisor prior to rerouting.
 - c. Staff will inform their supervisor of when they expect to complete engagement for their shift and/or return to the office to ensure they are safe.
 - d. Staff will inform their supervisor when they end their shift on days they are engaged in community engagement.

2. Engagement Locations
 - a. In the event that emergency responders are required at a site, it is essential that all staff know the address of each engagement location to swiftly direct responders.
 - b. Staff will learn as much as possible about an engagement setting before visits using the following practices:
 - i. Staff will review any site descriptions provided in the Referral Form, if present.
 - ii. If no referral was submitted, staff will request information about the intended site from the individual requesting engagement.
 - iii. Staff will observe a site prior to entry.
 - iv. Through observation, staff will identify entrances and exits to a site and confirm nearby safety locations (e.g. businesses, store fronts, organizations) where they can seek safety and assistance if needed.
 - b. Staff will not engage in locations in which they have good reason to believe there is an imminent risk of harm to self or others.
 - c. Staff will inform any collaborating partners of their presence (e.g. front desk staff at a shelter or day center site).

3. Engagement Teams

- a. Staff will conduct engagement with at least one other team mate or a supervisor-approved community partner (e.g. another service provider, engagement worker, crisis responder).
- b. No staff member shall conduct engagement alone unless they have received prior written approval from their supervising Co-Director.
- c. Staff will maintain professionalism at all times presenting as a unified team representing the ORGANIZATION's values while in the community. If disagreements arise while on engagement, team members will use discretion to confer with a supervisor before proceeding.
- d. Prior to conducting engagement, partners will have an agreed upon safe word/phrase and safety plan to swiftly communicate if they feel they need to leave a site due to risk of harm.
- e. Prior to conducting engagement, teams will have a shared safe meeting spot to reconnect in the event of separation.

4. Identification

- a. Staff will always carry identification as an ORGANIZATION employee on them, including their ORGANIZATION badge, business cards, and branded material (i.e. shirt, bag, jacket).
- b. ORGANIZATION badges must be clearly visible at all times while on shift.
- c. Staff will always carry their Florida state ID on their person.
- d. Staff will introduce themselves as ORGANIZATION OUTREACH WORKERS and inform people what they are doing, and why.

5. Cell Phones

- a. Staff will ensure their ORGANIZATION cell phone is fully charged and accessible.
- b. ORGANIZATION cell phones will remain on at all times while on shift.
- c. Emergency numbers, including the duty phone, direct supervisors, and Directors, are saved on ORGANIZATION phones for easy access.
- d. If a staff member's phone is lost or stolen, they will immediately report it to their supervisor.

6. Professional Boundaries

- a. Staff will receive training on Ethical Behavior & Professional Boundaries within 90 days of hire.
- b. Staff are prohibited from sharing their personal contact information (e.g. personal cell phone numbers, email addresses, home addresses, etc) with community members.

- c. Staff will not distribute or lend personal items to community members (e.g. money, clothing) and will only distribute items through approved use of Client Assistance Funds.
- d. Staff are prohibited from engaging in personal, business, romantic, or sexual relationships with any community members served through the program, presently and historically.

7. Engagement Attire

- a. Staff will dress in appropriate, comfortable clothes and shoes for engagement. Do not overdress.
- b. Closed-toed shoes must be worn at all times while conducting engagement.
- c. Scarves, long necklaces, and other items worn around the neck that pose a choking hazard are prohibited.
- d. Badges must be worn on break-away lanyards or on the hip.

8. Engagement Supplies

- a. Staff will be trained to use and carry an Opioid Overdose Prevention kit on their person.
- b. Teams will check to make sure they have enough engagement supplies for their intended community (e.g. harm reduction supplies, hygiene kits, condoms, etc) prior to site visits.
- c. Staff will be trained on Standard Precautions and Personal Protective Equipment in order to prevent unnecessary exposure to communicable disease or bloodborne pathogens within 90 days of hire.
- d. Staff will carry appropriate PPE with them when in the community, including, but not limited to, latex or nitrile gloves and surgical or N95 equivalent masks.

9. Debrief

- a. After completing engagement, staff will debrief with their partner(s) and a supervisor to review significant incidents that may have occurred while in the community. In the event of a Critical Incident or other extraordinary events, staff will alert their supervisor or a director as soon as it is safe to do so.
- b. Supervisors and Directors are required to support staff with any necessary follow-up to ensure staff are safe, incidents are reviewed and recorded, and any changes or additions needed to this protocol are made in a timely manner.

10. Emergencies

- a. In case of an emergency, staff will call 911. Staff will not separate from their engagement partner unless they feel doing so will put

their physical safety in imminent risk (e.g. in an active shooter event).

b. If staff are separated in the field, they will alert their supervisor as soon as it is safe to do so.

c. Staff will reconvene at a pre-established safety location in event of separation. If that location is deemed unsafe, staff will return to the ORGANIZATION office.

d. Staff will report emergency situations to their supervisor or a director as soon as it is safe to do so via phone conversation or a text message exchange, depending on which method is safer given the situation. If staff are unable to communicate directly with a supervisor or a director they will contact the duty phone to apprise the duty officer of the emergency.

e. Supervisors and Directors will keep their phones on them at all times, and are expected to respond immediately to requests for assistance in emergency situations.