

# ABUSE IS A CRIME. TELL SOMEONE NOW.

## What Else Can I Do?

You can call to report abuse if you do not feel comfortable filing a grievance or talking to someone in the facility. Your report will be investigated whether you report it to facility staff or if you call/mail directly. If you are unable to call to report abuse you can send a letter to report. Mail is not censored and can be placed in a sealed envelope in the grievance box and it will be sent on your behalf.

**CALL TO REPORT ABUSE:  
877-244-0864**

**ADDRESS TO REPORT ABUSE:  
700 Governors Drive #2  
Pierre, SD 57501**

Intake Specialists are available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. To report an emergency abuse situation in the evening, on a weekend, or on a holiday, contact your local law enforcement or dial 911.

When you call, you do not have to give your name (unless it is necessary to conduct the investigation), and if you do, your name and your identity will be protected and kept confidential (secret).

**Victim support services are available confidentially and at no cost to you:**

**ABERDEEN: SAFE HARBOR**  
2005 S Merton Street, Aberdeen, SD 57401  
**605-226-1212**

**RAPID CITY: WAVI**  
527 Quincy Street, Rapid City, SD 57701  
**605-341-3292**

**SIOUX FALLS: COMPASS CENTER**  
1704 S. Cleveland Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57103  
**605-339-0116**

**SPEARFISH: ARTEMIS HOUSE**  
P.O. Box 486, Spearfish, SD 57783  
**605-642-7825**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **If I report abuse, will anyone believe me?**

Yes. If you report abuse, you will be believed and your case will be investigated to seek evidence of what happened.

### **Will the person who abused me be allowed to have contact with me?**

No. After a report of abuse is made, the person who is alleged to have abused you is removed from contact with you during the investigation. This does not mean that you will be released from the facility or moved to another facility, but you will be protected.

### **Will the facility punish me or treat me different (retaliate) if I report abuse?**

No. If you make a report of abuse and have told the truth, you will not be punished, treated differently or receive any discipline. You will be protected from further harm and the case will be investigated. If you are retaliated against, report it to a trustworthy staff member immediately and it will be investigated.

### **Will I have to testify in court?**

Investigators will ask you questions about what happened. If the alleged abuser faces criminal charges, then you may be asked to testify in court.

### **Will reporting affect placement status?**

No. Making a report of abuse will not extend your stay in residential care, lengthen your probation term or change your current placement status. You may change facilities if that becomes necessary to ensure your safety.

### **What if I lie about being abused?**

All reports of abuse are taken very seriously and investigated thoroughly. Anyone who makes a false report could be charged with a serious criminal offense. Remember, reporting abuse is not a game and you should always tell the truth.

### **What if the abuse happened at home?**

If the abuse happened at home, at school or in your community, then you should report it to a staff member you trust.



# Break the Silence, Report Abuse

HOW TO REPORT PHYSICAL  
AND SEXUAL ABUSE,  
NEGLECT, AND SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT IN  
RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT

**In a residential treatment or care facility, you have the right to be safe and protected against abuse. Abuse includes physical and sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. We make every effort to keep you safe from harm. Even with the best protections in place, abuse might sometimes happen. It is important that you know what to do if it happens to you or someone else.**

#### **What is physical abuse?**

Physical abuse is something done to you that causes physical pain or injury to your body, often called an assault. It may involve hitting, kicking, punching, choking, shoving or other acts done by an adult or another resident against you.

#### **What is sexual abuse?**

Sexual abuse is a sexual act committed against you or the intentional touching of your body in a sexual way by another resident or staff. Sexual abuse happens when someone asks you to flash or expose the private areas of your body or asks you to engage in sexual intercourse or other sexual behaviors.

#### **What is sexual harassment?**

Sexual harassment is repeated and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one resident directed toward another; and repeated verbal comments or gestures of a sexual nature to a resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer, including demeaning references to gender, sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing, or obscene language or gestures.

## **WE HAVE ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT.**

#### **What if I see or hear about someone else being abused?**

If you see or hear about another resident or someone else being abused, you should report it. All abuse is wrong and everyone deserves to be protected at all times in a facility. You can help others by reporting abuse.

#### **What if the abuser is another youth?**

Other residents in the facility may commit or attempt to commit abuse, which include physical and sexual actions. Abuse by other youth should also be reported. You have a right to be protected at all times from other youth in the facility.

## **WHO IS AN ABUSER?**

It is not easy to know what an abuser looks like.

Abusers can be someone you know, a friend, relative or a stranger. Abusers are not always facility staff members. They can be visitors, volunteers, probation officers, medical personnel, counselors, teachers or other persons in the facility that you meet. Abuse committed by any person against you is wrong and should be reported immediately.

## **NO ONE DESERVES TO BE ABUSED. ABUSE IS ALWAYS A CRIME.**

## **WHO CAN HELP?**

If you are the victim of abuse, there are many people who want to help you. The important thing is to tell someone about the abuse, neglect or exploitation immediately. Do not be silent.

#### **Trustworthy Adults**

In the facility, there are many adults who you see every day that will help you and protect you. If you feel comfortable, you should talk to a facility staff member, counselor, teacher or medical professional and tell them if you have been abused. There are also many adults who may visit you in the facility that also can listen and help such as your attorney, case worker, CRP, probation officer, parent, guardian or other family member.

#### **Facility Grievance System**

LSS recognizes its responsibility to hear suggestions, concerns, complaints or grievances of residents, parents, legal representatives, guardians, concerned persons, and attempt to resolve them.

A resident, a resident's parent or legal guardian, or any concerned person in the resident's life has the right to file a grievance. Persons filing grievances will be treated with dignity, understanding, and respect. In no case will a grievance from a resident result in any reprisal. Persons filing grievances will not be denied service because of a grievance. LSS staff must not attempt to influence a person's statement about the facility in the grievance document or during an investigation about the facility.

Disability Rights South Dakota provides advocacy and support for individuals with disabilities to prevent and/or address abuse and neglect. Reports can be made to them using the information below.

**DISABILITY RIGHTS SOUTH DAKOTA**  
221 South Central, Pierre, SD 57501  
800-658-4782