

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY YOUTH HOME
SEXUAL ABUSE, ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT
HANDBOOK FOR RESIDENTS

Introduction: Crossroads Community Youth Home (Crossroads) is committed to your safety and the safety of staff. While placed at Crossroads, you have the right to complete your stay with dignity and be free from sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and retaliation. Crossroads has a **zero tolerance** policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment within the facility. This means we **DO NOT** tolerate any level of sexual harassment, misconduct, or assault in the facility. Every effort will be made to prevent sexual abuse and sexual harassment from happening at Crossroads. We will take every allegation seriously and each allegation will be investigated. The perpetrator will be punished and the victim will be provided services without retaliation.

There is a Federal Law against sexual assault, abuse, and harassment inside juvenile facilities called the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). This law covers male and female individuals placed in a juvenile facility that primarily serve court involved youth. There are also laws against custodial sexual misconduct. This is when a staff member becomes sexually involved with a resident. All of these types of sexual relationships are felonies and all allegations will be reported to law enforcement for prosecution.

Upon your arrival at Crossroads, you may want to find comfort and want to develop relationships with others. All of this is normal, but there are a variety of relationships that might be harmful. Most staff are here to help you and most residents want to complete their treatment like you, without feeling pressure of any kind from other residents. Not all residents will try to sexually abuse or sexually harass you. We will work with you to do everything we can to ensure you remain safe.

What is sexual abuse? There are two categories of sexual abuse: juvenile resident and juvenile resident or staff and juvenile resident. In either of these cases, it is not your fault if you were sexually abused or sexually harassed. These definitions are outlined further in the handbook. If after you read through the handbook and have questions, feel free to ask a staff member for assistance.

During your stay at Crossroads, consensual sexual relationships are prohibited. Consensual sexual relationships between juvenile residents are against policy. Residents who engage in these relationships will be held accountable through the program's discipline policy. Even though these types of relationships may be something that is desired by both people, they present medical and psychological issues which compromise your safety and the safety of other residents and staff. The spread of sexually transmitted diseases, jealousy between participants and from other residents, fear of homosexuality, and other issues make consensual sex a threat to everyone's safety.

Prevention: *How to prevent sexual abuse/ harassment.* Pay attention to where you are, situations that make you feel uncomfortable, special attention that someone may be giving you, who you tell private information to, accepting loans, or offers of protection, and do not let manners get in the way of

keeping yourself safe. Everyone is vulnerable in these kinds of situations, but they are less likely to happen if you are aware of them. Staff are trained to look for behaviors of residents which may indicate that some form of sexual abuse / sexual harassment may be occurring or residents who are at risk for sexual victimization. Some of these include: changes in routine, mood or behavior, such as eating, hygiene, and sleeping habits; avoiding staff members or staying too close to staff; staying out of the dining area, day area, or outside recreational area; irritability or mood swings, requesting room changes; one resident getting lots of attention from other residents, particularly a younger or weaker resident; never having snack items; and suicide attempts or threats.

Reporting and Investigations: *What to do if you've been assaulted or if sexual misconduct has occurred.* Residents may be involved in an investigation in many ways, including being the alleged victim, suspect, reporter, or witness. Reporting can be done several ways:

1. Report it to any staff member.
2. Report it by calling the Colonial Behavioral Health Certified Preadmission Screening Clinician (CBH CPSC) at 757-378-5555 at any time, or call Avalon at 757-258-5051. You can also contact the Program Manager at 757-890-4145, or the Residential Operations Supervisor at 757-890-4147.
3. File a grievance.
4. Write a letter of complaint.

If you are the victim, request immediate medical attention. Do not shower, brush your teeth, use the restroom, or change your clothing. You may destroy valuable physical evidence.

Crossroads will ensure that a criminal investigation is completed on ALL allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Information gathered during the internal inquiry and investigation will be limited to those individuals on a need to know basis.

Retaliation against offenders who participate in PREA investigations can take many forms, including threats, harassment, infractions, loss of privileges, or asking others to harass or intimidate the resident. Retaliation by staff or other residents due to reporting an allegation or participating in an investigation is prohibited and will also be investigated and, if appropriate, legal charges will be pursued.

Those individuals who fail or refuse to cooperate (except the victim) or those who otherwise take action to obstruct an investigation, including providing false or misleading information, may be subject to disciplinary actions, and if appropriate, legal charges. Making false allegations hurts the process as well as those residents who have been victimized. Also, lying during an investigation does not allow the investigators to get to the truth, minimizing our ability to hold people who have engaged in misconduct accountable or provide services to those who have been victimized.

What to expect: We will work with you to keep you safe. If the allegation is substantiated, we will keep you separated from the perpetrator until they can be removed from the facility.

All staff are required to report the allegation / incident to the Program Manager, who will initiate program protocols.

An investigation may include: a medical exam, a mental health referral, and evidence collection. We will do the best we can to keep the information you report as confidential while conducting the investigation. We expect the same of all juvenile residents involved in the investigation (alleged victim, suspects, and witnesses). We will also ensure that victims receive a referral to mental health services for treatment and counseling. It is common for victims of sexual abuse to have feelings of embarrassment, anger, guilt, panic, depression, and fear for several months or years after the incident. Other common reactions include loss of appetite, nausea or stomach aches, headaches, loss of memory and / or trouble concentrating, and changes in sleep patterns. Seek medical support or support from a counselor or other staff person if you need help managing any of these or other reactions.

Summary:

Did you know?

- Sexual assault usually does not happen spontaneously.
- Sexual assault is a deliberate action against the victim.
- Sexual assault has nothing to do with the victim's present or future sexual orientation.

We want our facility to be a safe environment for staff and juvenile residents. Crossroads staff are trained in what to do if you report a sexual threat or assault. Each report is taken seriously. We will make every attempt to protect sexual assault victims from further harm. We will do everything we can to make sure all sexual aggressors are prosecuted.

Always remember Crossroads has a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual abuse / sexual harassment. This means that we do not tolerate any level of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual assault. Every effort will be made to prevent a sexual incident from occurring. Every allegation will be investigated, every perpetrator prosecuted, and every victim will be provided services.

Crossroads prohibits and will not tolerate any fraternization or sexual misconduct between staff, contractors, interns, volunteers, and residents, or between residents. The agency actively works to prevent, detect, report, and respond to any violation.

Any behavior of a sexual nature between employees and residents is prohibited. Employees shall be subject to disciplinary action under the Standards of Conduct and shall be subject to prosecution under the Code of Virginia. All staff, contractors, interns, and volunteers shall report any suspicion of fraternization or sexual misconduct between staff, contractors, interns, volunteers and residents. Staff are not only required to report, but also may be subject to disciplinary actions if they do not.

Any behavior of a sexual nature by residents is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the program's policy manual. Sexual behavior also may result in criminal charges.

Consensual sexual activity among residents shall not be permitted. If residents engage in this type of activity, one or both residents shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Resident Manual.

Sincerely,

Crossroads Community Youth Home Administration

Resident Signature: _____ Date: _____

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____