

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Mission Statement

S.A.F.E., Inc. believes that everyone has the right to live a life free from violence. We strive to eliminate this social problem and its causes through education and community awareness. To assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children, S.A.F.E., Inc. provides shelter, counseling, advocacy and continued support.

Welcome to S.A.F.E., Inc. We are a temporary shelter for battered women and their children. It is our purpose to provide a safe, temporary place to heal, to think, to learn, and to grow. There is no charge for our services and our staff is available 24 hours a day to assist clients.

S.A.F.E., Inc. does not discriminate based on age, race, creed, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, handicap or religion.

Each client possesses certain rights in regard to her stay at S.A.F.E. These rights are as follows:

- Right to privacy / uncensored communication
- Right to due process
- Right to individualized services
- Right to confidentiality
- Right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Right to self-determination
- Right to not be shamed or blamed for victimization
- Right to be free from abuse
- Right to worship as choose
- Right to legal counsel
- Right to safe and humane environment
- Right to receive services with no regard for age, race, creed, sex, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, handicap, or religion.

A client's bill of rights does not include the following:

- Prevent S.A.F.E., Inc. from discharging person who violates shelter guidelines.
- Obligate S.A.F.E., Inc. to provide services for ineligible person.

Along with a bill of rights comes responsibilities. The client has the following responsibilities while at S.A.F.E.

- Responsibility to treat staff and other clients with dignity and respect.
- Responsibility to keep location of shelter and client information confidential
- Responsibility to know and follow shelter guidelines.
- Responsibility to set goals.
- Responsibility to use grievance process to solve problems.
- Responsibility to be honest about personal situation.
- Responsibility to make choices for self and family.
- Responsibility to educate self about dynamics of domestic violence.
- Responsibility to express feelings and opinions in a responsible manner.
- Responsibility to speak out when they feel their rights are violated and to learn about rights.

GOALS WE HAVE ESTABLISHED FOR OUR CLIENTS

As the staff at S.A.F.E., we are committed to assisting each client in becoming the best person she can be. By providing individual counseling, support group, case management and education, our clients will develop the following behaviors.

Toward Self:

- Develop confidence and self-respect.
- Make independent decisions.
- Gain control of my life.

Toward Her Children:

- Communicate directly with my children.
- Free children from any feelings of guilt about causing the abuse.
- Encourage my children to face reality of the situation.
- Explain that the violence they have witnessed is not normal behavior.

Toward Her Abuser:

- Understand that I am not the cause of his problems.
- Understand that I cannot change him.
- Understand it will be extremely difficult for him to change.
- Realize that I must break away from his control of me.
- Recognize his manipulative tactics.

Other Goals

You will have strategies for safety.

You will have a better knowledge of available community resources.

You will have a better knowledge of the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POLICY

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, as well as volunteer employees with a safe and productive work place. It is recognized that alcohol, drugs or other substance abuse by employees will impair their ability to perform properly and will have serious adverse effects on safety, efficiency and the productivity of other employees, and the organization as a whole. In accordance with that goal, the following controlled substance policy is effective immediately.

POLICY

1. The manufacture, distribution and dispensation of any controlled substance in the work place are illegal and prohibited. Possession or use of any controlled substance is permitted only when the substance is prescribed for the user by a physician and it is being used in the manner prescribed.
2. For the purpose of the policy, controlled substance “includes alcohol and prescription drugs as well as illegal drugs”.
3. Employees may not report to work while under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs that could adversely affect their job performance, jeopardize their safety or that of other persons or endanger the property of S.A.F.E., Inc., Tupelo, Mississippi.
4. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.
5. Any employee who is convicted under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the work place must notify the executive director of the conviction within five days after the conviction is rendered.
6. As a condition with S.A.F.E., Inc. of Tupelo, Mississippi, every employee must abide by the terms of this policy.
7. Alcohol and drug dependency are treatable conditions. Employees with current alcohol or drug abuse problems are encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance for their problems and will not be disciplined or terminated due to their request for help in overcoming a dependency. Information regarding drug and alcohol counseling and the availability of such assistance under the health care benefits plan, if any is noted in the summary of benefits.

8. This policy does not require and should not result in any special regulations, privileges or exemption from normal job performance requirements.

Confidentiality:

I pledge to keep the location of the shelter and the names of the clients confidential. I will respect and maintain confidentiality on all information pertaining to clients who seek help from the program. If I violate this pledge, I will automatically be terminated as a volunteer and possibly prosecuted by S.A.F.E., Inc.

Liability:

I agree to release S.A.F.E. Inc. from all liability for any injury or personal damage I might receive as a result of my volunteer work with the shelter. If I am unable to come to work, I will contact the Volunteer Services Coordinator as soon as possible. If I choose to discontinue my volunteer work with S.A.F.E., Inc., I will submit, in writing, a two week notice. I also understand that if I have not performed any volunteer service within two years of my application, I may be placed on the Inactive list.

S.A.F.E., Inc. volunteers are not allowed to use the agency van nor can they transport clients in their own vehicles.

Background checks:

I give my permission for the release to S.A.F.E., Inc. of Tupelo MS any information from law enforcement files concerning any past history of sex offenses against children with which I may have been charged or convicted.

I understand that the information to be released will concern only charges and/or convictions of carnal knowledge of a child under age 14 years, sexual battery, seduction of a child under the age of 18, touching a child for lustful purposes, disseminating sexually oriented material to children, exploitation of children, carnal knowledge of a stepchild, adopted child or a child of a cohabiting partner, or unnatural intercourse. No information will be released on any criminal record I may have which does not relate to these particular crimes.

I understand that information will be released on any conviction, any pending charges, or any arrests if I have been arrested two or more times. I understand that S.A.F.E., Inc. has the right to require this record check as a condition of employment as a volunteer.

I understand that I will be sent a copy of any information released from your files pursuant to this permission form and that I have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of this information. I understand that this information will be used only for employment purposes and will not be re-disseminated to other persons or used for any other purpose.

Local Background checks:

I understand that S.A.F.E., Inc. will also conduct background checks with the local Police Department, prior to my being admitted to the volunteer program.

Volunteer Trainings:

Volunteer training is offered twice a year and volunteers are expected to attend at least one of these training sessions. Volunteer training is offered on the following topics.

- dynamics of domestic violence:
- effect of domestic violence on children:
- dynamics of sexual assault:
- responding to a sexual assault call:
- crisis call intervention:
- policy regarding subpoenas

Record of volunteer hours:

Volunteers are to sign in/out on the volunteer log in order to document his/her volunteer hours.

S.A.F.E., Inc.

Helpful Hints for Volunteering

Here are a few simple tips to keep in mind as you begin to explore the wonderful world of volunteering. Remember our staff is available to help at any step along the way!

You get out of your volunteer work what you put into it.

Volunteering requires no special degree or prior experience; it's simply a willingness to help.

Be realistic and clear about the amount of time you can commit.

It is easier to start small and increase your commitment than to have to back out because your schedule is overwhelming you.

Visit S.A.F.E. Inc. before committing yourself.

Get a sense of the staff and clients you will be working with and an overall feel for the environment.

Find out about S.A.F.E., Inc.'s purpose.

How does your role as a volunteer fit our mission? Sometimes what may seem an insignificant contribution makes all the difference to the people you are assisting.

Ask about training and supervision.

Will we provide the necessary support for you to be successful?

Enthusiasm is key.

If you are not excited about the program, the chances are that you are not going to be thrilled with giving up time to come here.

Volunteering is an opportunity for personal growth.

Don't be reluctant to request a letter of recommendation, should you decide to list your volunteer service on a school or job application.

S.A.F.E., Inc.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

It is your right:

- To be assigned a job that is worthwhile and challenging.
- To receive the orientation, training, and supervision necessary to do the job.
- To feel that your efforts have real purpose and contribute to the organizations mission.
- To be trusted with confidential information necessary to carry out your assignment.
 - To be kept informed of relevant matters within the organization with which you work.
 - To expect that your time will not be wasted by poor planning or coordination by the organization.

It is your responsibility:

- Not to take on more responsibility than you can handle.
- To meet time commitments.
- To perform the tasks assigned to me to the best of my ability.
- To respect those confidences entrusted to you.
- To be open-minded and respectful towards opinions shared with you.
- To notify the agency in advance of absences or schedule changes that may affect them.