



## Emergency Response, Reporting & Review Policy

### I. Policy

It is the policy Cherish to effectively respond to, report, and review all emergencies to ensure the safety of persons receiving services and to promote the continuity of services until emergencies are resolved.

“Emergency” means any event that affects the ordinary daily operation of the program including, but not limited to:

- fires, severe weather, natural disasters, power failures, or other events that threaten the immediate health and safety of a person receiving services; and
- that require calling 911, emergency evacuation, moving to an emergency shelter, or temporary closure or relocation of the program to another facility or service site for more than 24 hours.

### II. Response Procedures

#### A. Safety procedures

1. **Fires.** Additional information on safety in fires is available online at: <http://www.ready.gov/fires>. In the event of a fire emergency, staff will take the following actions:

Evacuate all people in the immediate area to an area of safety, closing doors against smoke and heat. Test a closed door before opening by feeling near the top. If the door is hot, use an alternative exit. If a room is smoke-filled, keep close to the floor to breathe more easily.

Remain calm and keep everyone together. Do not reenter until the fire department determines it is safe to do so.

Call 911 for the fire department and provide them with relevant information.

Provide emergency first aid as required until emergency personnel arrive.

2. **Severe weather and natural disasters.** Additional information on safety in severe weather or natural disasters is available online at: <http://www.ready.gov/natural-disasters>. In the event of a severe weather emergency, staff will take the following actions:

Monitor weather conditions: Listen to local television or radio or a weather-radio for weather warnings and watches. Follow their directions on the need to change plans and activities, stay indoors, or seek shelter.

**WARNING:** severe weather is either occurring or is imminent. A warning is the most significant and staff must take immediate action to protect people by seeking immediate shelter.

**WATCH:** severe weather is possible as conditions are favorable for the weather event. Staff should plan and prepare for the possibility of the severe weather. Staff should help people change their plans for travel and outdoor activities.

**ADVISORY:** weather conditions may cause inconvenience or difficulty when traveling or being outside.



Staff should help people consider changing their plans for travel and outdoor activities or consider that additional time may be required to complete their plans.

Account for the well-being of all people receiving services.

Inform people why plans and activities are changing and what they are doing to keep them safe.

3. **Power failures.** Additional information on safety during power failures is available online at: <http://www.ready.gov/technological-accidental-hazards>. In the event of a power failure emergency, staff will take the following actions:

Report power failures to the consumer's power company.

Use emergency supplies (flashlights, battery-operated radio).

Account for the well-being of all people receiving services.

Inform people why plans and activities are changing and what they are doing to keep them safe.

4. **Emergency shelter.** Additional information on emergency shelter is available online at: <http://www.ready.gov/shelter>. Some emergencies will be best met by seeking safety in an emergency shelter. Depending on the emergency you may need to shelter in place or shelter outside the disaster area.

Follow directions of local emergency personnel to locate the closest emergency shelter.

If time allows, move to the emergency shelter with a 24-hour supply of medications and medical supplies, medical books/information, and emergency contact names and information.

At the emergency shelter, notify personnel of any special needs required to use the emergency shelter.

Remain calm and keep everyone informed of why events are occurring.

Use of an emergency shelter may include: severe weather, natural disasters, power failures, and other events that threaten the immediate health and safety of people receiving services.

5. **Emergency evacuation.** Additional information on emergency evacuation is available online at: <http://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family>. Some emergencies will be best met by leaving a program site or the community and seeking safety in an emergency shelter. Often the emergency evacuation will be directed by police, fire, or other emergency personnel who will direct people where to seek safety.

Account for the well-being of all people receiving services.

Inform people why they are leaving the program and what is being done to keep them safe.

Follow directions received from administrative staff, police, fire, and other emergency personnel.

If time allows, evacuate with medication and medical supplies, medical and programs books/information, clothing, grooming supplies, other necessary personal items, and emergency contact names and information.

Emergency evacuation may include: severe weather, natural disasters, power failures, and other events that threaten the immediate health and safety of people receiving services.

6. **Temporary closure or relocation.** Some emergencies will be best met by temporarily closing or relocating a program site for more than 24 hours. This decision will be directed by program administrative staff.

Inform people why the program is closing and relocating to keep them safe. Formal notification to the person receiving services, legal representatives, and case managers will be completed by administrative staff.

Follow directions received from administrative staff, police, fire, and other emergency personnel.

If time allows, remove from the program medication and medical supplies, medical and programs books/information, clothing, grooming supplies, consumer funds, other necessary program and personal items, and emergency contact names and information.

Closure or relocation may include: severe weather, natural disasters, power failures, and other events that threaten the immediate health and safety of people receiving services.

### III. Reporting Procedures

Emergency reports will be completed using the program's emergency report and review form as soon possible after the occurrence, but no later than 24 hours after the emergency occurred or the program became aware of the occurrence. The written report will include:

1. It is not necessary to identify all persons affected by or involved in the emergency unless the emergency resulted in an incident to a person or persons;
2. The date, time, and location of the emergency;
3. A description of the emergency;
4. A description of the response to the emergency and whether a person's coordinated service and support plan addendum or program policies and procedures were implemented as applicable;
5. The name of the staff person or persons who responded to the emergency; and
6. The results of the review of the emergency (see section IV).
- 7.



#### IV. Review Procedures

This program will complete a review of all emergencies.

1. The review will be completed using the program's emergency report and review form by Cherish owners.
2. The review will be completed within 30 days of the emergency.
3. The review will ensure that the written report provides a written summary of the emergency.
4. The review will identify trends or patterns, if any, and determine if corrective action is needed.
5. When corrective action is needed, a staff person will be assigned to take the corrective action within a specified time period.

#### V. Record Keeping Procedures

- A. The review of an emergency will be documented on the emergency reporting form and will include identifying trends or patterns and corrective action if needed.
- B. Emergency reports will be maintained at the Cherish business office.

Self-Care after emergencies:

Normal Reactions to an Emergency Event - No one who responds to an emergency event is untouched by it.

### Coping With a Traumatic Event

A traumatic event is a situation that threatens your safety or the safety of others in your environment. Whether you are directly or indirectly impacted by trauma, you may experience intense feelings of fear, hopelessness, or anxiety.

### Common Reactions To Traumatic Events

- Strong emotions including shock, fear, anger, grief, confusion, and horror
- Feelings of helplessness, disbelief, powerlessness, disconnectedness, or aloneness
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Difficulties sleeping
- Nightmares or disturbing dreams
- Intrusive or upsetting thoughts or memories of the event
- Having strong reactions to things that remind you of the event
- Problems with concentration, learning, and decision-making
- Extreme mood swings, irritability, restlessness, outbursts of anger
- Headaches, stomachaches, rashes, or other allergic reactions
- Not wanting to share crisis job-related responsibilities, or relinquish control of the situation
- Feelings of foreboding or impending doom, or feelings of fear about the future



- Increased concern about the safety of loved ones or about your own safety
- Thoughts of death or suicide; persistent feelings of pessimism

## Coping Techniques

- Stay connected to friends and family—many people find it helpful to talk with others about what happened, but even those who prefer not to talk can find comfort in being with loved ones.
- Take care of yourself. Eat well, get enough exercise and sleep.
- Do activities you enjoy or find relaxing.
- Avoid excessive drinking—remember that alcohol is a depressant.
- Try to get back to your normal routine, but be aware that you may need to do some extra self-care.
- Don't make big life-changing decisions for several months.
- Take time to grieve—traumatic events often leave us with a sense of loss.
- Do something positive to help others - give blood, donate food, volunteer.
- Ask others directly for what you need and want.
- Act on facts about what has happened, not speculation or rumors.

## How Do I Know If I Need Professional Help?

In general, professional support is a good idea if you're having trouble coping on your own.

Strong feelings that won't go away, that last longer than a few weeks, or are interfering with normal functioning may be symptoms of depression, anxiety, or a post-traumatic reaction.

Many people do not seek professional help because they blame their symptoms on personal weakness or think that they should deal with their problems on their own. Many people, however, find that counseling helps them deal with their feelings more effectively.

## Caring For Yourself In The Face Of Difficult Work

Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing our work with care, energy, and compassion.

### **10 things to do each day**

1. Get enough sleep
2. Get enough to eat
3. Vary the work that you do
4. Do some light exercise
5. Do something pleasurable



6. Focus on what you did well
7. Learn from your mistakes
8. Share a private joke
9. Pray, meditate or relax
10. Support a colleague

Contact your local public health agency for more information. If you need the phone number, please call MDH at 651-201-5000.

Adapted from "A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professionals," HHS, SAMHSA, CMH 2005, and Idaho State University Institute of Rural Health.

Policy reviewed and authorized by the Cherish owners at a formal Board of Directors meeting

NOTE: Websites from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are included as a resource for additional information. Another useful website is the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/planning-preparedness/Pages/default.aspx> ) and the Minnesota Council on Disability <http://www.disability.state.mn.us/> .

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