



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Includes Code of Conduct and
Forms of Consent and Incident Reporting

Approved by: Board of MeSheWe, Approval date: 2019-04-01, Valid until further noticed

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Definitions

Abuse: is the harming of another person usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that person. Incidences of abuse can be single or repeated acts, omissions or neglect. It can include one or more of the following: physical; sexual; discriminatory; psychological/emotional; neglect and acts of omission; financial and/or material and institutional/organizational.

Child: is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years¹.

Child Safeguarding: refers to a set of policies, procedures and practices that an organization employs to ensure that it is a child safe organization².

Child Abuse: consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. The main categories of abuse are defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, sexual abuse, and exploitation³.

Child Protection: refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labor and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage⁴.

Consent: is an agreement given freely to an action based on knowledge and understanding of what is involved and its likely consequences. Consent can be both verbal or written.

Disclosure: when a child or youth tells you or lets you know in some other way that they have been or are being abused. A disclosure can be direct, indirect or a third-party disclosure⁵.

Emotional Abuse: includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, being made to feel unwanted, or being threatened with abandonment⁶.

Human Trafficking: is the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labor, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others.⁷

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

² Save the Children Child Safeguarding Policy 2014

³ Save the Children Child Safeguarding Policy 2014

⁴ UNICEF

⁵ Restless Development Global Safeguarding Policy

⁶ Violence Against Children Study 2011, UNICEF

Physical Abuse: involves physical act of violence such as being slapped, pushed, hit with a fist (punched), kicked, or whipped, or threatened with a weapon such as a gun and knife⁸.

Protection: includes ensuring that individual human rights, welfare and physical security are recognized, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards.

Safeguarding: is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Sexual Abuse: is any sexual act that is done against someone's will, including nonconsensual sex intercourse (which is rape), attempted acts of nonconsensual sex, unwanted touching, and threatened sexual violence⁹. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material.

Sexual Exploitation: means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual Exploitation of a Child who is under the age of consent, is child sexual abuse and a criminal offence. An underage child cannot legally give informed consent to sexual activity.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989): outlines the fundamental rights of children, including the right to be protected from economic exploitation and harmful work, from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, and from physical or mental violence, as well as ensuring that children will not be separated from their family against their will. These rights are further refined by two Optional Protocols, one on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the other on the involvement of children in armed conflict¹⁰.

Vulnerable Adult: is a person who is or may be in need of care due to mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against harm and/or exploitation¹¹.

⁷ UNODC.org

⁸ Violence Against Children Study 2011, UNICEF

⁹ Violence Against Children Study 2011, UNICEF

¹⁰ UNICEF.org

¹¹ Restless Development Global Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Since its establishment, MeSheWe Hip has aimed to be a child-safe organization. This means that MeSheWe will do all that it can to ensure that the children, youth and adults it works with are free from any form of harm, abuse and/or exploitation. Its programmes and implementation are also designed to ensure safety for children and youth. Anyone representing MeSheWe should at all times adhere to the highest standards of behavior towards children and youth. Wherever there are concerns regarding MeSheWe's staff, volunteers, interns and Board members, they will be investigated honestly and fairly with due regard to internal disciplinary procedures and national legal procedures. Responsibility for the implementation of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy lies with MeSheWe's Operations Unit. However, all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, representatives, partners and Board members are responsible for ensuring that they respect and put into practice this Policy. Child protection and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

MeSheWe has zero tolerance to child, youth and adult abuse and harm. It aims to ensure that everyone associated with the organization is aware of and responds appropriately to issues of child, youth and adult abuse and harm. It aims to ensure that anyone who represents MeSheWe behaves appropriately towards children, youth and adults both in work and outside work and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a part of the organization. It aims to ensure that any concerns raised are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities in a timely manner. Child protection and safeguarding is MeSheWe's effort to ensure that everything within its control is done to ensure the safety and welfare of children, youth and adults it works with.

Purpose

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines MeSheWe's commitment to prevent abuse and harm against children, youth and adults. This Policy is designed to inform and guide staff, volunteers, interns, consultants and Board members in MeSheWe's policy statement and principles. It is mandatory for all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, representatives and Board members. They will all be made aware of this Policy during their orientation to ensure they fully understand it and the need for compliance to the guidelines outlined in this Policy and to all other documents linked to it such as the Code of Conduct (see Annex III) and Human Resources Manual.

To ensure good understanding and successful implementation of this Policy, both soft and hard copies will be shared with all staff, volunteers, interns, Board members, and partners.

Policy Statement

This policy is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and principles. This Policy applies to all children, youth and adults regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religions and applies to all MeSheWe staff, staff of their partner organizations, volunteers, interns, Board members and consultants.

All children, youth and adults who come into contact and interact with MesheWe staff, volunteers and partners as a result of its work, activities, and programmes must be protected and safeguarded from abuse and harm. Child protection and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This key responsibility is enshrined in MeSheWe's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

MeSheWe will therefore endeavor to:

- Maintain a zero tolerance approach to abuse and harm against children, youth and adults. MeSheWe will put in place measures that ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, youth and adults it works with as well as to protect the communities in which it implements its programmes and activities.
- Protect and safeguard all children, youth and adults from harm without discrimination from age, race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnicity, political affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, gender or other status.
- Ensure that all partners and stakeholders directly or indirectly associated with MeSheWe are aware of their obligations to protect and safeguard children, youth and adults from harm and abuse; as well as to respond appropriately and in a timely manner to issues of child abuse and exploitation.
- Ensure all MeSheWe staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, representatives and suppliers are subject to careful and safe recruitment, selection and vetting; and only recruit candidates who are suited to work with children and youth.
- Ensure that anyone who represents MeSheWe creates a safe environment for children and youth who come into contact with the organization; and behaves appropriately at all times towards children and youth and never abuses their position of authority and trust.
- Ensure that child protection and safeguarding is considered during project planning and implementation to determine any potential risks to children and youth associated with project activities and operations.

- Respond promptly and appropriately to all information presented from children, youth, vulnerable adults and other representatives; and it pledges to always believe and act on any disclosure made.
- Establish and maintain systems which promote awareness of child protection and safeguarding, enable the prevention of abuse and harm, facilitate the responding to, reporting of and record keeping of concerns raised.

In addition to the above policy statement, MeSheWe subscribes to a policy of opposing prostitution and sex trafficking because of the psychological and physical risks they pose for women, men and children. MeSheWe personnel and programmes will not promote or advocate the legalization of prostitution or sex trafficking.

Principles

MeSheWe's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is committed to and guided by the following principles:

- **Prevention:** Prevention of harm and abuse is the primary objective.
- **Personal responsibility:** All staff, volunteers, interns, consultants and Board members have a responsibility to protect and safeguard all children, youth and adults at all times, both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand, comply with and promote the Policy. They must always do all they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns of harm and abuse caused and/or potential breaches of this Policy.
- **Openness:** MeSheWe aims to create a safe and conducive environment, where any concerns about abuse and harm can be raised and discussed openly.
- **Transparency and accountability:** MeSheWe aims to promote transparency and accountability to ensure that poor practices and abusive behavior are addressed, and best practices encouraged.

- **Confidentiality:** All disclosures, incidents, allegations, concerns, and investigations will be dealt with on a need to know basis with full confidentiality and all records will be maintained securely.
- **Timeliness:** Timely responses will be stressed in reporting and addressing all disclosures, incidents, allegations, and concerns.
- **Child rights:** The welfare of the child is paramount. Children will be empowered to understand their rights, and made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem or concern. In addressing concerns, the best interest of the child will always be MeSheWe's priority and it will strive to ensure their safety, and emotional and psychological wellbeing.
- **Partnership:** MeSheWe will work together with its partners and the communities in which it implements its programmes to promote child protection and safeguarding within organizations and the wider community.

Child protection and safeguarding

Responsibilities

All MeSheWe staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, Board members, partners and their staff and mentors have a responsibility to ensure safeguarding and protection of children and youth. MeSheWe recognizes it has a responsibility to ensure protection and safeguarding of all children and youth with whom it engages, regardless of the nature of interaction, as well as a duty of care to act in the child's and youth's best interest in the event of being made aware of any harm or risk to a child in the course of working with or outside of working with them.

MeSheWe will appoint two points of contact responsible for matters arising as a result of protection and safeguarding of youth and children. These persons will be responsible for ensuring training to all staff on child protection and safe guarding and will take the lead on all matters pertaining to escalation and reporting of any cases that may arise within the course of duty, as per the set MeSheWe's guidelines. All staff MUST report any cases whether suspected or factual.

All staff, volunteers, interns, Board members and MeSheWe's partners should note the following key responsibilities they have to protect and safeguard children, youth and adults.

1. Observe your environment and the children, youth and adults you interact with
2. Recognize warning signs of potential abuse against a child, youth or adult
3. Respond to a disclosure, incident, allegation or concern
4. Record the relevant information
5. Report the relevant information

All staff, volunteers, interns, and Board members will be trained to be able to fulfill the following duties, recognize, respond, record and report cases of harm and/or abuse. All must be able to recognize the signs of potential harm and/or abuse that could be occurring to a child or youth; as well as when best practices as outlined in this Policy are not being observed.

Step 1 - Respond

To respond appropriately to a disclosure, incident, allegation or concern one must always:

- Ensure the victim is safe and feels safe
- Stay calm - do not show disgust or disbelief
- Listen carefully to what is said, do not interrupt the victim

- Ask who, when, where and what, but NOT why
- Always avoid asking leading questions
- Do not make assumptions or judgments
- Reassure the victim and stress that they are not to blame
- Be honest and explain you will have to tell someone else to help with the situation

Step 2 - Record

Record factually and accurately, without speculation, opinion or assumption the details of concern or disclosure. The person taking the record should try as much as possible to use the exact words used by the victim when disclosing. The victim disclosing should also review the final record and sign it. Information recorded must include the following (see incident reporting form in Annex IV):

- Details of the victim including full name, age/date of birth, address and gender
- Details of the parent or guardian (if victim is under 18 years) and whether they have been informed or not
- Details of the facts of the incident, concern, and/or allegation
- Details of the person alleged to have caused the incident including the name, address and date of birth or their approximate age
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The victim's account, if it can be given, of what happened and how
- Witnesses to the incident(s), their names and contact details
- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is (known to be) fact, opinion or hearsay
- A signature, date and time on the report

Step 3 - Report

It is critical to report promptly the disclosure, incident, allegation, or concern to the relevant focal person. It is everyone's duty to report suspected cases of abuse or harm to protect children, youth and adults. It is then for the focal person (in consultation with senior management) to decide if abuse has taken place. It is important that all disclosures, incidents, allegations or concerns reported, include information about the following:

- Who, where and when it was responded to
- What the outcome of the report was
- Details of any action taken by MeSheWe

- Name of person reporting on the concern, name and designation of the person to whom the concern was reported, date and time and their contact details
- The record should be signed by both the person reporting on the concern and the person receiving the concern

Throughout the entire process confidentiality is critical. Every effort must be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained when an allegation has been made and is being investigated. Only those that need to know should be told.

Procedures and systems to respond to child protection and safeguarding violations

Having procedures and systems in place is critical to ensure smooth and successful implementation of this Policy. The procedures and systems must provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances and define roles and responsibilities. Systems for recording information and dealing with complaints are also needed to ensure implementation and compliance.

The procedures and systems should include:

1. a focal person (and their alternate) with clearly defined role and responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding
2. details of how to respond to concerns about a child's safety or welfare or concerns about the actions of a staff member, volunteer, intern and/or Board member; relevant contact details for social welfare services, police, and health should be readily available
3. a process for recording disclosures, incidents, allegations, concerns and referrals and storing them securely and kept for a specified time. When records are kept for more than 5 years, then the files need to be clearly marked and reasons for the extension period need to be clearly defined.
4. guidance on confidentiality and information sharing, and legal compliance
5. guidance on destruction of records. Records should be shredded in the presence of a senior member of MeSheWe. This action must be taken at the same time as the electronic record is destroyed.
6. a code of conduct for staff, volunteers, interns and Board members; the consequences of breaching the code must be clear and linked to disciplinary procedures
7. safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures that include checks into the eligibility and suitability of all staff, volunteers and interns who have direct or indirect contact with children
8. systems to ensure that all staff, interns and volunteers working with children and youth are monitored and supervised

9. requirements/opportunities for staff, volunteers, interns and Board members to learn about child protection safeguarding in accordance with and as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities

What to do if you're worried a child, youth or adult is being abused

It is not always so obvious to identify abuse. However, during interactions with children, youth and adults at work and/or outside of work one should be able to observe signs of abuse, or changes in behavior which may indicate they are being abused and/or exploited. If one suspects that a child, youth or adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, they should make sure they know who to contact and where to go for help. Always keep in mind is that it is better to help potential victims as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging.

What is reportable?

The standard for reporting suspected abuse and harm is "reasonable cause to believe" which means that one only needs a "**mere suspicion**" that abuse, or harm was committed against a child, youth or adult. If abuse or harm is suspected, trust your feeling and report to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Focal Person.

To report suspected abuse and harm committed against children, youth and adults, a written report on the disclosure, allegation, incident, or concern should follow within 48 hours of the verbal report to the Focal Person. Posters with key messages on child protection and safeguarding should be displayed throughout the MeSheWe office to remind staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and partners of their reporting responsibilities and to encourage reporting.

The following information is necessary when filing a report of abuse:

Information on the victim

- Complete name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Phone number
- Information regarding the victim's competency
- Name, address and telephone number of guardian if victim has a guardian
- Identify any organization that is involved with the victim
- Current location of the victim

Information on the abuser

- Complete name

- Date of birth
- Address
- Phone number
- Type of care does the abuser provide to the victim
- Whether the abuser still have access to the victim

Details of the incident

- Date of occurrence
- Location where incident occurred
- Summary of incident
- Specifics regarding any injuries
- Details of any medical treatment that may have been provided
- Names of any individuals or agencies already notified

Risk assessment

- Details of actions taken to protect the victim
- Information regarding whether abuser still has access to the victim

Other

- If the incident is criminal in nature, were the police notified (jurisdiction and name of officer)
- If it is a case of sexual assault, was the victim (child, youth or adult) taken for examination and was evidence preserved
- The names and telephone numbers of any witnesses who may be helpful to the investigation

It is not the responsibility of staff, interns or volunteers to interview or investigate victims and witnesses if they have a concern about abuse. This is the responsibility of the police or social welfare officers.

Reporting Templates

Safeguarding templates will help MeSheWe to respond, report, and record concerns. A referral system, (including a clear flow chart) should be developed that offers detailed directions to staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and partners on how to respond, what they should record, and when they should report internally and externally to statutory agencies. See below for sample flow charts and Annex IV for incident reporting form template.

Disciplinary procedure for staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and partners

MeSheWe maintains a zero tolerance approach to abuse and harm against children, youth and adults. If suspected of committing abuse and/or harm, staff, interns and volunteers will be suspended pending investigation and if found guilty they will be terminated. Partnerships will be terminated immediately if any members of the partner organization have been found guilty of abuse or harm to others.

MeSheWe will follow its procedures on dealing with gross misconducts.

Categories of abuse and neglect

There are four main categories of abuse and neglect: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Each has its own specific warning indicators.

Physical abuse refers to the use of physical force against someone in a way that injures or causes pain to that person. It is deliberately physically hurting a child. It can take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child, youth or adult. Disabled children, youth and adults also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Some warning signs of physical abuse:

- frequent injuries and multiple bruises
- unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones
- unexplained bruises, cuts, burns or marks
- not wanting to be touched
- human bite marks
- abrasion marks from rope or other restraints, especially on arms, legs, neck, hands, ankles, or mouth
- cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds

Emotional abuse may be verbal or non-verbal and occurs when someone attempts to control another person by threatening, humiliating, or intimidating them. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development (and can adversely affect youth and adults as well). The effects of emotional abuse may take a long time to be recognizable as it has no visible marks or scars. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child, youth or adult that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate; name-calling, and deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they talk. Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social media, online games or mobile phones.

Some warning signs of emotional abuse:

- excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- low self-esteem
- sudden change in appetite, weight loss or gain
- screaming, shouting, yelling, cursing
- threatening violence, withdrawal of food, shelter, care, clothes, or possessions
- name calling, belittling, degrading, cruel teasing
- ridiculing culture or heritage

Sexual abuse occurs when someone is forced to engage in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activity or exploitation without their consent or knowledge. Many victims of sexual abuse do not recognize themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. Forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways is also sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as well as other children.

Some warning signs of sexual abuse:

- bruising, particularly in the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- unexplained difficulty in walking or sitting
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Itching, swelling or pain in the genital area
- poor concentration in class and withdrawal
- sexually transmitted infections or diseases
- early/child pregnancy
- children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age
- children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you would not expect them to have
- children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, children are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation can also happen online.

Some warning signs of sexual exploitation:

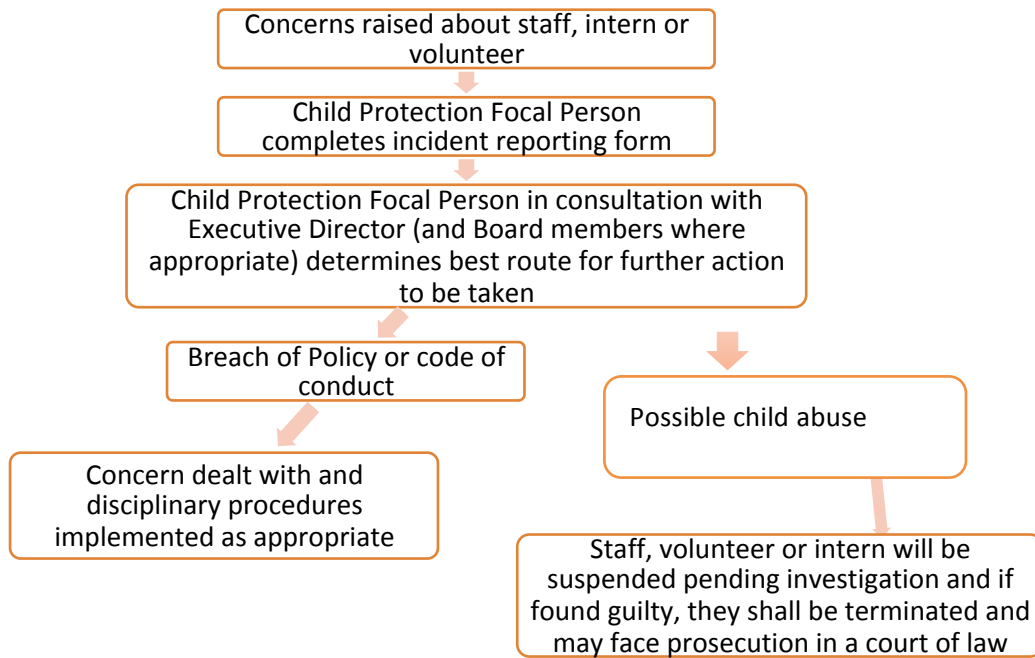
- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for long periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school

Neglect occurs when someone is responsible for the care and well-being of another person but fails to provide for the basic daily living needs (such as food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter) of that person resulting in, or placing them at risk of, serious physical or emotional injury. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. Disabled children, youth and adults also have a higher risk of being neglected.

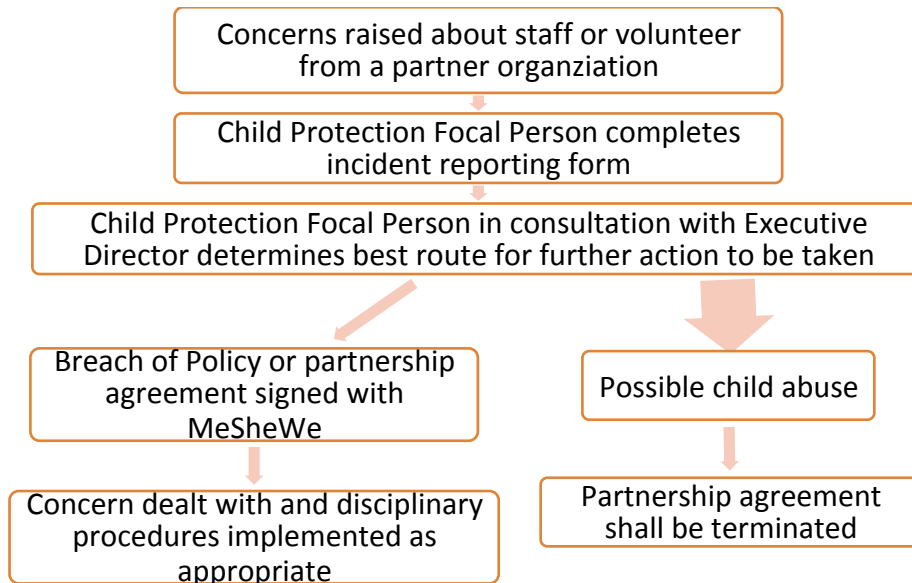
Some warning signs of neglect:

- living in a home that is dirty and/or unsafe and dangerous such as around drugs, alcohol or violence
- left hungry and/or dirty
- poor personal hygiene (for example lice-infested hair; soiled clothing; odors; presence of feces/urine or dirty nails and skin)
- poor physical condition
- unexplained weight loss
- bedsores, skin rashes related to unchanged bedding, or linens
- untreated medical or mental conditions (for example untreated infections, unattended fractures, soiled bandages)
- inadequate living conditions and living space is crowded, child, youth or adult sleeping on a sofa, in kitchen, or living room

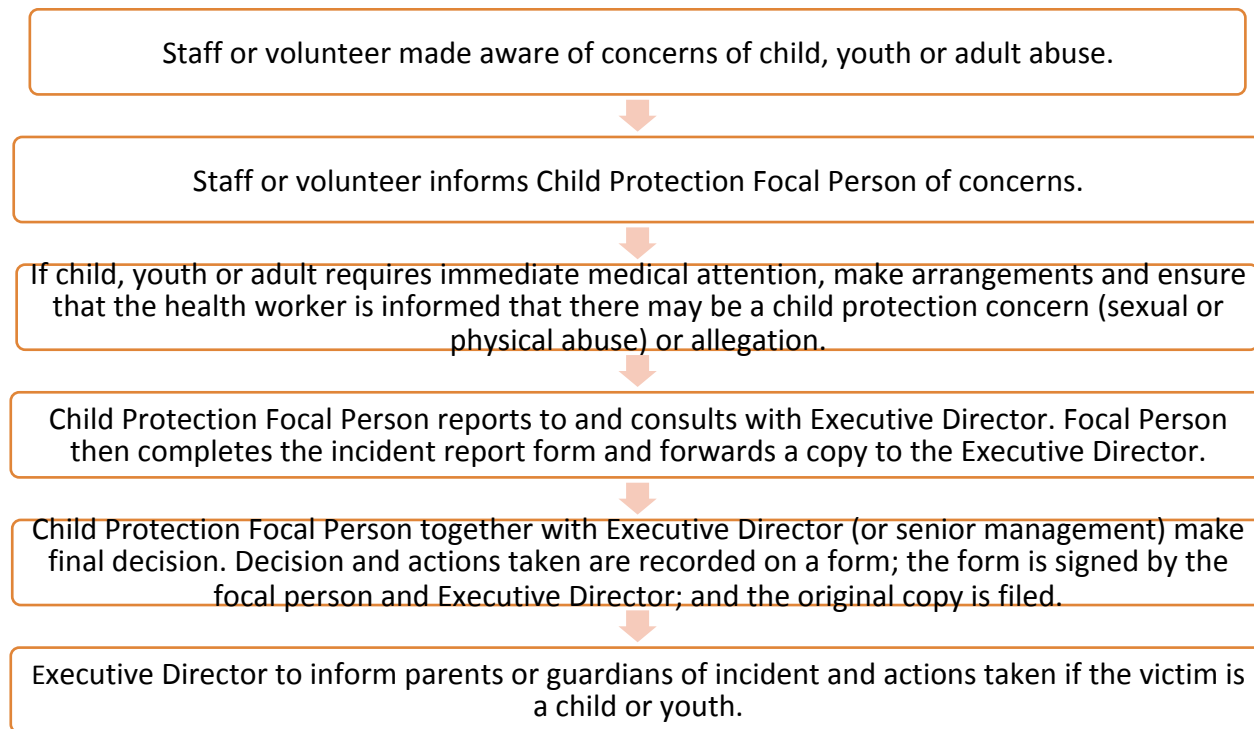
Allegations against a staff, intern or volunteer



Allegations against a staff or volunteer from a partner organization



Concern of abuse



What to do when abuse is suspected:

- Do stay calm and remain non-judgmental. Put your own feelings aside and try not to communicate shock, disgust, embarrassment, or disbelief.
- Do be supportive. Stay close to the alleged victim immediately after the disclosure to provide some sense of safety and security.
- Do assure the alleged victim that they did the right thing by telling you about the allegations. Never tell the alleged victim that you do not believe them.
- Do ensure the alleged victim's safety. Ensure the alleged abuser(s) does not have access to the alleged victim.
- Do explain the requirement to immediately report to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Focal Person (assuming the focal person is not part of the complaint).

- Do assure the alleged victim that someone will always be with them throughout in the process of getting help.
- Do seek privacy, if possible, so the victim is protected from disclosing in public.
- Do listen closely if the victim wants to talk, but do not ask questions beyond what is necessary to protect the victim and preserve evidence.
- Do gather essential information, by asking:
 - What happened? Only enough to establish that abuse or harm has occurred.
 - Where did it happen? Important to know for notifying the authorities, securing the scene and protecting evidence, if possible.
 - When did it happen? If within 120 hours of sexual assault, go to an emergency room for a sexual assault exam.
 - Who is the alleged abuser? If appropriate, ask questions of the alleged abuser.
- Do gather and document basic information on the alleged victim and alleged abuser, as reported.
- Do, when possible, collect relevant logs, schedules, correspondence (emails, text messages, WhatsApp, etc.) etc.
- Do prevent loss or destruction of known evidence.
- Do ensure allegations are not repeated to others.
- Do control contact with the alleged abuser. Contact should be limited to one representative of MeSheWe.

What NOT to do when abuse is suspected:

- Do not interrogate the alleged abuser.
- Do not conduct an investigation. Your job is to keep the victim safe and to report the allegations.
- Do not interview other individuals or staff; that is the role of the police or social welfare officer.
- Do not interpret or edit the information provided by the victim.

- Do not agree to keep the information secret.
- Do not promise that you will not tell anyone, as you may need to do so in order to protect the victim.
- Do not bathe the victim of an alleged sexual assault or rape.
- Do not change the clothes of an alleged victim of a sexual assault or rape.
- Do not wash the bed linens or clothing of an alleged victim of a sexual assault or rape.
- Do not clean the location of an alleged sexual assault or rape.
- Do not go looking for evidence.
- Do not touch physical evidence.

Code of Conduct

All staff, partners, volunteers, interns and Board members will be made aware of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy during their orientation to ensure they fully understand it and the need for compliance to it and other documents linked to it such as the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct ensures that all staff, volunteers, interns and Board members are clear on what behavior is expected and what will not be tolerated at MeSheWe. The excerpt below has been taken from the MeSheWe Human Resources Manual.

MeSheWe is committed to promoting a positive climate of mutual respect, openness, accountability and understanding among all staff. MeSheWe will therefore encourage staff to achieve and maintain high standards of behavior and performance and ensure that disciplinary issues are dealt with fairly and consistently. It will also encourage staff to raise their dissatisfactions with respect to decisions taken concerning them or their working conditions.

General Behavior

1. In all aspects of his/her assignment, the employee is expected to adhere to his/her job description, plus any additional instructions provided by the Executive Director and or Line Manager.
2. The employee must carry out instructions and behave in an orderly and lawful manner in the workplace. Staff have to respect all lawful rules and regulations of the organization including all amendments to the current and the future ones and directives given from time to time.
3. Employees are required to ensure that correct information regarding MeSheWe policies and operations are clearly communicated from the management and among themselves. Staff are expected to maintain a high level of integrity and conduct the affairs of the organization in a transparent manner.
4. Employees should not verbally or in any other way express their individual preference for political candidates and political parties or religion while working or representing MeSheWe.
5. Employees wishing to vie for a political post either at municipal, parliamentary or presidential levels should tender their resignation to MeSheWe from the date of the inter-party nominations.

6. Employees should be aware of their obligations to protect and safeguard children, youth and adults from harm and abuse; as well as to respond appropriately and in a timely manner to issues of abuse and harm.
7. Employees should behave appropriately at all times towards children and youth and never abuse their position of authority and trust.

Respectful Treatment

MeSheWe believes that all individuals in the workplace have the right to be treated in a respectful and courteous manner. While we recognize that everyone is human and may have an occasional lapse, a pattern of such behavior will not be tolerated.

A few examples of behavior that might be construed as disrespectful are:

1. Abusive Language
2. Shouting
3. Swearing
4. Condescending or derogatory tone with someone
5. Internationally hurtful and unprofessional communication

The ability to effectively and respectfully work with your fellow colleague is a requirement of all positions, therefore disrespectful treatment of colleagues, consultants, vendors and others will be treated as a serious performance concern and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Professional Conduct

MeSheWe is committed to maintaining a respectful, safe, and supportive work environment for all its employees, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, tribal status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or marital status. It is MeSheWe's policy that all activities are conducted ethically, in compliance with applicable local laws and regulations.

The following unprofessional conducts are strictly not allowed in MeSheWe and in any areas where MeSheWe conducts its business:

- Any behavior that contradicts the MeSheWe spirit
- Sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and seeking sexual favors
- Alcoholism (during working hours and field visits)/ excessive alcohol consumption and disruptive behaviors
- Engaging in sexual relationships with children and under-aged youth
- Theft, hacking or any activity that contradicts with MeSheWe actions
- Fighting in the work place, field and any public area
- Keeping sensitive information jeopardizing the reputation of the organization or harmful in any way
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years
- Sexually abuse or exploit children and youth
- Hit or physically assault children and youth
- Expose children and youth to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence
- Have sexual activity with a community member. Staff should also never have a sexual relationship with a volunteer or intern.

MeSheWe expects all staff members to act in a manner consistent with MeSheWe core values, and to uphold these values in the following ways:

- Perform his or her duties honestly, competently, within the time required, and without violating any laws
- Implement, follow and obey any and all rules, organizational policies, regulations and work processes
- Carry out all duties and instructions respectfully, professionally, promptly, and diligently
- Maintain MeSheWe interests and confidentiality of documents, information, contacts, activities or business and safeguard at all times all MeSheWe information regardless of its source
- Remember that, even during non-work hours, employees are representatives of MeSheWe
- Devote his or her work time and attention to MeSheWe business to the satisfaction of his or her supervisor, in accordance with MeSheWe policy and expectations
- Avoid any action and, in particular, any kind of political or religious public pronouncement that may have an adverse effect on the integrity and/or impartiality of the organization
- Staff should not misuse MeSheWe property or use such property for personal gain
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children

- Not invite unaccompanied children into private residences (unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger)
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (this does not apply to an individual's own children)
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law which occurred before or occurs during association with MeSheWe
- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child

Consequences of all Unprofessional Conduct

All employees have special trust in the handling of company property. Any employee involved in unprofessional conduct as stipulated in section 10.3 shall be terminated and may face prosecution in a court of law. The employee should understand that in the case of theft MeSheWe may inform the public of his/her termination through newspaper message or other means including publishing his/her photograph in mass media.

Consequences of Financial Property Loss and/or Damage

Any financial or property loss and/or damage should be reported immediately to the respective line manager and Executive Director, to enable both to take appropriate measures. Any delay/failure in reporting such losses will be considered as an intention to steal and will result in serious disciplinary and/or legal action. Staff should not misuse MeSheWe property or use such property for personal gain.

Standards of Etiquette

During working hours the employee must conduct him/herself appropriately and adhere to certain standards of etiquette and conduct namely:

- Dress appropriately
- Not receive irregular visitors
- Respect confidential office secrets
- Follow correct procedure for raising complaints pertaining to work
- Behave appropriately
- Display correct conduct to drinking of alcohol during work hours

Sample list of unacceptable behavior

MeSheWe staff, volunteers, interns, partners and other representatives must never:

1. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
2. Sexually abuse or exploit children, youth or adults.
3. Hit or physically assault children, youth or adults.
4. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
5. Behave in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
6. Have a child or young person with whom they are working with to stay overnight at their home or in their hotel room unsupervised, unless exceptional circumstances apply, and previous permission has been obtained from their line manager.
7. Sleep in the same bed as a child or youth with whom they are working with.
8. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves, for example get dressed, apply lotion on their body etc.
9. Do or say anything that intends to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, youth or adults, or commit any form of emotional abuse.
10. Demonstrate any form of discrimination, unfair differential treatment or preferential favor to children, youth or adults.
11. Expose children and youth to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence.
12. Have sexual activity with a community member. Staff should also never have a sexual relationship with a volunteer or intern.
13. Place themselves in a position where they risk being made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list.

Staff, volunteers, interns, partners and other representatives should at all times (in their private and professional lives) avoid actions or behavior which may be misinterpreted as abusive or harmful.

Annex I: Incident reporting form template

Your name:	Name of organization:
Your role:	
Contact information (you):	
Address:	
Telephone number:	Email address:
Victim's name:	Victim's date of birth:
Victim's ethnic origin:	Does victim have a disability?
Please state	Please state
Victim's gender:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Parent's / Guardian's name(s) if victim under 18 years:	
Contact information (parents/guardian):	
Address:	
Telephone number:	Email address:
Have parents / guardians been notified of this incident?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If YES, please provide details of what was said/action agreed:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else	
If responding to concerns raised by someone else: Please provide further information below	
Your name:	

Relationship to the victim:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Date and time of incident:

Details of the incident or concerns:

Include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay.

Victim's account of the incident:

Please provide any witness accounts of the incident:

Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident:

Name:

Relationship to the Victim:

Date of birth (if child):

Address:		Postcode:	
Telephone number:		Email address:	
Please provide details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident:			
Name:			
Relationship to the Victim:			
Date of birth (if child):			
Address:		Postcode:	
Telephone number:		Email address:	
Please provide details of action taken to date:			
Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If YES, please provide further details:			
Name of organization:			
Contact person:			
Telephone number:			
Email address:			
Agreed action or advice given:			
Your Signature:		Print name:	
Date:			

Annex II: Consent form – use of personal stories and images

MeSheWe will take all necessary steps to ensure that all images are kept securely and only used for the purposes they were intended to.

By signing this release form, I hereby grant to MeSheWe the right to reproduce, display and disseminate in Myanmar, and worldwide and in permanence, in any traditional or digital media format, my story and likeness as detailed below. The photographs are owned by MeSheWe, for the purposes of promoting its programmes focusing on youth development, economic empowerment, reproductive and sexual health, and civic duty. I understand that my story and photographs will not be used for profit of any business.

The story and photographs containing my likeness were captured on (date) _____ in the (town/country) _____ by (writer and photographer’s name(s)) _____. I further confirm that the story captured is truthful and these images are a true likeness of me and they were all taken with my knowledge and consent.

Name of Subject	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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Address and Mobile

IF SUBJECT IS A CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE:

I confirm that I am the legal guardian of the child named above and therefore may grant permission for this subject release on behalf of the child:

Name of Legal Guardian / Relationship to Child	Date	Signature of Guardian
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Name of Witness / Organization Affiliation	Date	Signature of Witness
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Annex IV: Consent form – use of group images

MeSheWe will take all necessary steps to ensure that all images are kept securely and only used for the purposes they were intended to.

By signing this release form, we hereby grant to MeSheWe the right to reproduce, display and disseminate in Tanzania and worldwide and in permanence, in any traditional or digital media format, our images and likeness as detailed below. The photographs are owned by MeSheWe, for the purposes of promoting its programmes focusing on youth development, economic empowerment, reproductive and sexual health, and civic duty. We understand that our stories and images will not be used for profit of any business; and thus, we shall never demand any sum of money for MeSheWe to use our images and/or stories.

The photographs containing our likeness were captured on (date) _____ in the (location including town/country) _____ by (writer and photographer’s name(s)) _____. We confirm that these images are a true likeness of me and they were all taken with my knowledge and consent.

Name	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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Name	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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Name	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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Name	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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Name	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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IF SUBJECTS ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE:

I confirm that I am the legal guardian of the children named above and therefore may grant permission for this release on behalf of the children:

Name of Legal Guardian / Relationship to Children	Date	Signature of Guardian
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Annex III: Consent form – people living with HIV

This form is to ensure that you and/or your family (or other guardian’s) and/or your children understand and agree to have your story – as a person who is HIV positive – published by MeSheWe to promote awareness about children and youth who are infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS.

This means that your name and/or your child’s name and images may appear in any media format, including but not limited to, print (magazines), video, web sites, social media sites, billboards, posters, etc. This form authorizes the use of your name and image in this context. It also permits the use of your image without identifying either your name or your HIV status to promote other MeSheWe programmes and activities.

By signing this form, I hereby grant MeSheWe the right to reproduce, display and disseminate in Tanzania and worldwide and in perpetuity, in any media format, my name and image – ‘likeness’.

The story and photographs containing my likeness were captured on (date) _____ in the (town/country) _____ by (writer and photographer’s name(s)) _____. I further confirm that the story captured is truthful and these images are a true likeness of me and they were all taken with my knowledge and consent.

Name of Subject	Age (if under 18 years)	Date	Signature
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Address and Mobile

IF SUBJECT IS A CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE:

I confirm that I am the legal guardian of the child named above and therefore may grant permission for this subject release on behalf of the child:

Name of Legal Guardian / Relationship to Child	Date	Signature of Guardian
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Name of Witness / Organization Affiliation	Date	Signature of Witness
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