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Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc./ Exceptional Persons, Inc./ Seeds of Hope/ Team
A team venture to help people with disabilities who are impacted by Sexual and/or Domestic Violence

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Introduction

Seeing a need to improve services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault with disabilities and/or mental illness, a trio of agencies - Seeds of Hope, Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Inc, and Exceptional Persons, Inc, collectively combined knowledge and resources to enhance and expand their working relationship. These agencies have had mutual clients and ventures in the past which led to development of a very positive relationship. Because of the outstanding rapport that had been established among the agencies it was believed channeling the three agencies' energies by focusing specifically on the commonalities of domestic violence and sexual assault and how their clientele was affected by those issues would improve service delivery. One of the key elements of this collaboration is the similar philosophies and how persons are treated with respect within all three agencies. The similar philosophy of providing quality services to others through open communication will strengthen the relationships among the three agencies.

These three agencies are committed to working together to improve our own services to survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness. We believe that survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness should be given the same opportunities to access services as survivors without disabilities and/or mental illness. We recognize that in order to provide the best service we need to collaborate as a team sharing resources and expertise. Therefore, we have named this collaboration "Project BEST", B=Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc., E=Exceptional Persons Inc., S=Seeds of Hope, and T=team.

Through out this collaboration we will work to recognize the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and/or mental illness impacted by domestic/sexual violence. Project BEST is committed to change our existing service delivery system and

organizations to better address the needs of persons with disabilities and/or mental illness and are impacted by domestic/sexual violence.

This document is the charter of agreements that Project BEST has developed to aid our collaboration's work together. First is our shared mission and vision, values and assumptions, and agency contributions and/or commitments for our collaborative work. Next are guidelines for how we will maintain a productive working relationship together. This includes agreements on communication, confidentiality, decision making, a conflict resolution plan, and a work plan to help us stay on a productive timeline. Finally we have key terms for this project to aid others in the understanding of our language within the collaboration.

- **MISSION STATEMENT**

Project BEST is committed to ensuring safe, accessible and effective services to people with disabilities and/or mental illness that are impacted by domestic violence/sexual assault by addressing gaps and barriers in our existing services. We will do this by improving the knowledge and skills of our staff, enhancing policies and procedures, and building relationships between our organizations. We are dedicated to cultivating a team approach and changing the prevailing culture of our agencies and our community of Black Hawk County, Ia.

- **VISION STATEMENT**

People with disabilities and/or mental illness who are impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence (survivors) in Black Hawk County, Iowa will experience a safe and accessible service delivery system. Services will be provided through a team approach by knowledgeable, compassionate advocates who are equipped and committed to provide survivors with a range of options to empower them to live their best life.

Values and Assumptions

Project BEST has a commitment to serving people with disabilities and/or mental health who are impacted by domestic/sexual abuse. We have envisioned a world which appreciates survivors with disabilities as valuable members of society. We believe that all people have the right to quality and accessible services therefore we have come together to improve our services. In order to effectively create change we embrace the following core values and assumptions as the foundation for our work.

Our values are that:

- We believe in operating within an empowerment model through a team approach. Through sharing skills, ongoing communication, and shared decision making in order to achieve our outcomes in a positive, enriching, and holistic manner.
- We believe in empowering others to get a sense of power back in their lives through; information, options, encouragement and in taking responsibility back for their life and the path they choose.
- We believe in using people first language. We recognize the importance of putting the person first as everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We value using language such as a person with a disability and or a person suffering from violence. We will strive to educate everyone working within our agencies to understand and use the same language in order to ensure cohesiveness in service delivery for the people we serve.
- We believe in positive inclusive language as we understand some words can be hurtful. It is extremely important to refrain from words that have a negative

connotation. We will do our best to educate everyone in our organizations to use positive inclusive language as defined by the community.

- We value face to face communication amongst our collaborative members because it helps create an atmosphere for team building while valuing each differing opinion offered at the table. This will insure a well rounded thorough discussion and decision making process where all voices are offered with honesty and heard with compassion.
- We will uphold the motto, “Nothing about me without me.” We believe in including someone in discussions which pertain to them. Therefore, we will refrain from meeting about someone without their participation.
- Our collaboration believes in the importance of confidentiality. We recognize that being open and honest with each other can enhance our collaborative efforts and we strive to protect personal and sensitive information.
- Every human being has the right to live safe and free of violence. Safety must be first and foremost in our minds for the people we serve as well as the staff and volunteers providing the services.
- We value that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person” according to the Universal Declaration of human rights. We feel that survivors with disabilities should have the same rights and have the same opportunities as survivors without disabilities.

Our assumptions are that:

- Survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness are important members of our community.
- All people with disabilities and/or mental illness should have equal access to services.

- People with disabilities and/or mental illness have the right to be offered choices to make an informed decision.
- Domestic and sexual assault organizations may not have all the knowledge and accommodations needed to support survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness.
- Disability organizations may not have all the knowledge and accommodations needed to work with survivors of domestic/sexual violence.
- Survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness often have more barriers, more restrictions, and less privacy than survivors without disabilities and/or mental illness.
- Survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness are judged on their disability and are and/or mental illness often not believed.
- Women are more often the survivors of domestic and sexual violence though men can be survivors as well
- Our collaboration is eager to work as a team to improve services for survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness.
- Our three agencies are committed to using the expertise that each agency possesses to come together as a team to break down barriers and injustice occurring with the people we serve.
- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We also want people to feel welcome when coming to our agencies. This is extremely important to building and sustaining a relationship in which everyone feels included, valued, and appreciated.
- Although we prefer the word “survivor”, we understand that “victim” comes from the justice system and means that someone has suffered from a crime. Therefore it is appropriate to use the word victim at times.

Member Agencies and Collaborative Team

Seeds of Hope, Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. and Exceptional Persons, Inc. have come together in Project BEST to help reduce barriers for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse with disabilities and/or mental illness. We have defined ourselves in two teams, the core collaboration team and the full collaboration team: The core collaboration team meets weekly and is comprised of Terri Wymore, Andrea Nelson, Alicia Smiley, and Barb Rindels the program coordinator. The full collaboration team meets monthly and is comprised of the core team members and the Executive Directors: Beth Jackley; Seeds Of Hope, Tom Eachus; Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center inc., and Chris Sparks; Exceptional Persons Inc..

The core team was chosen by the Executive Directors as individuals who would effectively represent the agency. Additionally these members possess the knowledge of their respective agencies to be effective liaisons. They have been designated as the team members who will facilitate the technical elements of the grant and the Executive Directors are available to us for guidance throughout the process. The Executive Directors and the core collaboration meet as a full collaboration monthly to discuss the aspects of the grant to ensure agreement of products and process.

The collaboration team members are excited to learn more about the other agencies to better serve their clientele and fully embody the intentions of this grant. Project BEST recognizes the best way to do this is through developing holistic relationships. In addition to developing the technical elements of the deliverables; the collaboration team members have and plan to continue to support and attend each other's fundraising activities.

Seeds of Hope (SOH)-

<http://seedsofhopeiowa.com/>

Seeds of Hope, the fiscal agent, provides quality education and comprehensive services concerning domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and stalking. Services include a 24 hour crisis line, individual advocacy, support groups, help to get no-contact orders, 911 phones, lock exchange program, child advocacy, counseling, court advocacy, medical advocacy, transportation to find apartments and jobs. In FY 2009 Seeds of Hope served 763 individuals and provided 419 educational presentations in schools. Over 8130 people received agency trainings and presentations to public groups. Seeds of Hope serves three counties Grundy, Hardin, and Black Hawk, with a staff of 14.

The primary focus for Seeds of Hope has been to reach out to other agencies and collaborate to provide services within their agency. SOH doesn't have a shelter and funds are being cut every year so focusing on outreach and collaborating with other agencies such as shelters and many other agencies in the counties served, allows them to provide many other services to more people. Each advocate has a specialized area to provide outreach, for example the substance abuse advocate does weekly groups at two substance abuse agencies as well as the women's half way house for substance abuse.

Beth Jackley is the Executive Director of Seeds of Hope. Beth has been active in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault since 1995 and has served as the Director of Seeds of Hope since 1999. She has served on several boards and committees including the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) Board both as a member and as the vice president. She served as chair of the ICADV restructuring committee, charter member of the domestic violence certification committee, and charter member of the local school improvement committee. Beth currently serves on

the accreditation and advisory committees for both ICADV and the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault. She is a member of the full collaboration team.

Alicia Smiley is the bilingual advocate and Disability Grant Supervisor in Black Hawk County for Seeds of Hope. She has worked for Seeds of Hope for over four years. She has over nine years of experience working in the social services field. She is a Certified Domestic Abuse Advocate through the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She is serving as the supervisor of the Project Coordinator and is a member of the core collaboration team.

Barb Rindels is the full-time Project Coordinator. She began working as a domestic violence advocate in 1992, providing advocacy in domestic violence and sexual assault, crisis counseling, shelter assistant, volunteer coordinator, development of a court watch program, and legal advocacy to obtain no contact orders. From 1997-2001, she was a research project assistant on the National Institute of Justice grant entitled "Alcohol Problems and Violence Against Women." From 2001-present, She is a part-time program manager and domestic violence specialist for the Integrative Services Project at the University of Northern Iowa. While in this position this job she completed two safety audits and agency evaluations. She has worked for the last six years as a Substance abuse specialist/Deaf advocate for Seeds of Hope in the Black Hawk County office. She is a member of the core collaboration team.

Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. (BHG MHC)-

<http://www.bhgmhc.com/>

Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization that has provided an array of community based mental health services and programs to residents of Black Hawk County since 1950 and Grundy County since 1964. Over the

past sixty years, BHGMHC has served over 47,000 individuals and families with an active caseload of approximately 4,500 individuals. BHGMHC has 70 employees dedicated to improving the lives of the people served by providing quality and innovative mental health care. To better serve the community BHGMHC has several services such as consultation, outpatient therapy, education on mental health diagnosis, professional training services, school based programs, emergency services, patient assistance programs, triage nursing, and prolixin-haldol injection clinic. BHGMHC also has a Mental Health Recovery Drop in Center with peer support, a homeless program and outreach services. BHGMHC has collaborated with other services in the community and is excited to be working with Seeds of Hope and Exceptional Persons Inc. on this collaboration.

Thomas Eachus is Executive Director of BHGMHC and has been employed by Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. since 1988 serving as Executive Directors since 1993. A Licensed Independent Social Worker, Mr. Eachus continues to provide mental health services to individuals and families while maintaining active involvement in local and state initiatives to improve the service delivery system for persons with mental health and disability issues. He is a member of the full collaboration team.

Terri Wymore is a community outreach social worker for Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc (BHGMHC). She has been employed at BHGMHC for four and a half years and works in the community based outreach program with chronically mentally ill individuals. Terri has six years of experience working- with individuals with disabilities. She has her Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from The University of Northern Iowa. She is a member of the core collaboration team.

Exceptional Persons Inc. (EPI)-

<http://www.episervice.org>

Exceptional Persons Inc. is a private, non-profit agency which was established in 1957 by mothers, fathers, and families as well as community members who wanted a better life for their loved ones with disabilities. For over 50 years, EPI has remained dedicated to providing exemplary, person-centered services, collaborating with persons served, their families, staff, and communities to promote dignity and well being and help make a positive difference in the lives of people who experience disabilities. EPI currently employs just over 400 people in a variety of capacities. Broadly speaking, they serve two groups of people: adults and children with disabilities (intellectual disabilities, brain injuries, or mental illness) and families with childcare needs. EPI has the goal of supporting people to fully participate in life in their communities. This is accomplished through a variety of services including Community Child Care Resource and Referral, Multiple Sclerosis, Early ACCESS, Transportation, Health Equipment, and Child & Adult Care Food programs.

EPI's Community Services programs provided services to 451 adults and children with disabilities in fiscal year 2010. These services include Community Living Services where people are supported in their homes to develop skills and live as independently as possible. EPI's Children Services, meeting the needs of children with disabilities and their families, including individual and group respite care services. The Employment Services help people find and succeed in employment, matching skills and capacities as well as the wants and desires of the individual. The Day Habilitation Services facilitates meaningful daytime activities giving individuals an opportunity to participate in a variety of opportunities such as; individualized skills training in areas such as health/wellness, leisure, safety, independent living, communication, and community integration. EPI is committed to fully participate in the Project BEST and is excited about this opportunity.

Chris Sparks is Executive Director for EPI. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Graceland University and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Missouri/Kansas City. Chris started with EPI in 1991. He worked as the Assistant Director of the agency until he became the Executive Director on January 1, 1998. In 2009, Chris received his Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Northern Iowa. While working part-time as the Executive Director of EPI, he carried a clinical caseload at the Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. as his MSW field placement. Throughout his career Chris has served a total of nine years in various leadership roles with ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources). He is a member of the full collaboration team.

Andrea Nelson is the Quality Assurance Coordinator for EPI. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion from Luther College. She recently received her Masters of Divinity from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. Andrea has been working in this field for three years. She worked as a direct staff at Opportunity Homes, Inc., an agency providing residential waiver services for two years. In 2009 Andrea began as the Quality Assurance Coordinator at Exceptional Persons, Inc. She is a member of the core collaboration team.

Commitments and Contributions

Seeds of Hope, Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. and Exceptional Persons, Inc. are committed to providing resources for Project BEST. We recognize the need to work together to find ways to support people with disabilities and/or mental illness who experience domestic/sexual violence. We are eager to learn new approaches to integrate change, ensure appropriate responses to survivors with disabilities, and make necessary changes to service provision and organizational culture. We are dedicated to building long-term, sustainable relationships to actualize the mission and vision of Project BEST. Each agency brings unique experience and expertise to this collaboration.

The following outlines each agencies contributions and commitments. First we listed each agency's commitments and contributions to this project and then the commitments of the collaborative members. Lastly we have listed the commitments of the project coordinator.

Seeds of Hope is committed to:

- Maintaining an attitude of openness toward learning and growth
- Open communication among organizations involved in this collaborative project
- Providing space to meet, staff time, staff, and office supplies
- Providing expertise on domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- Providing a representative as a liaison to the collaboration (collaborative representative). This representative will share expertise and be the bridge between collaborative agencies.
- Providing the Project Coordinator
- Providing the Executive Director with time to commit to this project
- Providing financial oversight and reporting to OVW

- The life of the grant project, its phases, and all related activities
- All elements of the planning and development phase including but not limited to: collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning and deliverables
- Creating or adapting policies/procedures to better serve survivors with disabilities
- Amending budgets when needed to accommodate services for survivors with disabilities
- Changing organizational cultures to address issues of access and safety
- Building and strengthening relationships amongst partner agencies

Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc. is committed to:

- Maintaining an attitude of openness toward learning and growth
- Open communication between organizations involved in this collaborative project
- Providing knowledge/expertise on mental health/mental illness
- Providing space to meet, staff time, staff, and office supplies
- Providing a representative as a liaison to the collaboration (collaborative representative) this representative will share expertise and be the bridge between collaborative agencies.
- Providing the Executive Director with time to commit to this project
- The life of the grant project, its phases, and all related activities
- All elements of the planning and development phase including but not limited to: collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning and deliverables
- Creating or adapting policies/procedures to better serve survivors with disabilities
- Amending budgets when needed to accommodate services for survivors with disabilities
- Changing organizational cultures to address issues of access and safety
- Building and strengthening relationships amongst partner agencies

Exceptional Persons Inc. is committed to:

- Maintaining an attitude of openness toward learning and growth
- Open communication between organizations involved in this collaborative project
- Providing knowledge/expertise on disabilities and disability services
- Providing space to meet, staff time, staff, and office supplies
- Providing a representative as a liaison to collaborative (collaborative representative) this representative will share expertise and be the bridge between collaborative agencies.
- Providing the Executive Director with time to commit to this project
- The life of the grant project, its phases, and all related activities
- All elements of the planning and development phase including but not limited to: collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning and deliverables
- Creating or adapting policies/procedures to better serve survivors with disabilities
- Amending budgets when needed to accommodate services for survivors with disabilities
- Changing organizational cultures to address issues of access and safety
- Building and strengthening relationships amongst partner agencies

Full and Core Collaboration Members are committed to:

- Bringing expertise and experience to benefit the collaboration
- Learning from others in the collaboration
- Acting as a liaison to each agency's Board of Directors, Staff, and Stakeholders
- Attending Vera and OVW sponsored events to learn vital information relevant to serving survivors with disabilities, enhancing organizations, and developing best practices
- Attending collaboration meetings and completing deliverables for the grant
- Promoting change within each agency to better serve survivors with disabilities

Project Coordinator is committed to:

- Bringing expertise and experience to benefit the collaboration
- Bringing experience in project management to this collaboration
- Learning from others in the collaboration
- Facilitate the group with empowering management strategies and shared decision making
- Facilitating conflict resolution within the collaboration to resolve problems amongst this partnership
- Attending Vera and OVW sponsored events to learn vital information relevant to serving survivors with disabilities
- Working with the Vera representative assigned to the grant
- Reporting and communicating with OVW

Communications Plan

Project BEST believes that open communication among the full and core collaboration teams is essential in order to have a positive working relationship. We define open communication as being forthright, honest, and direct about issues involving this project or affecting this project in accordance with the confidentiality plan (page 28). We believe in having open communication in order to inform our team on important issues, enhance our relationships, and guide us in our work together. Project BEST has determined that face to face communication during meetings is the most effective way to accomplish tasks and to share pertinent information for the collaboration. Other ways to communicate outside of the face to face meetings shall be through phone calls, text messaging, emails, and use of Google docs an interactive site which facilitates multiple users to create accounts, post, read and edit documents.

Another integral part of Project BEST is obtaining full commitment to this project from the Board of Directors and staff of each agency involved in this collaboration. Later in this section of the charter you will see outlines for how communication with agency Board of Directors, supervisors, or staff that are not directly involved with the full collaboration team meetings will be done.

Below we outline this collaboration's communication plan. First you will find the guidelines for internal communication within Project BEST team members. We begin with the face to face meetings for the full collaboration team which is the Executive Directors of the three agencies and the core collaborative team. Second will be communications regarding the core collaboration team which is the project coordinator, SOH supervisor, EPI quality assurance coordinator and a BHGMHC outreach worker. We will then explain how this collaboration will utilize phone calls, text messages,

emails, and Google docs followed by Intra agency communication. Finally we will discuss external communications outside of our three agencies such as with Vera, OVW, and the media.

Internal Communications:

Face to face meetings-

Full Collaboration-

Project BEST benefits from the close involvement of the Executive Directors which ensures their buy in. The Executive Directors are supportive of the core team's work as well as being actively engaged in the development of the documents for this grant. The core members feel comfortable talking to their Director, updating them and seeking their guidance between meetings. This collaboration has developed a working relationship which utilizes the strengths of the individual members as well as ensures full agency participation.

The first Wednesday of every month the full collaboration team meets for 2 hours to talk about what the core team has been working on and discuss the key issues of our collaborative work. We discuss the concepts regarding; domestic/sexual violence, intellectual disabilities, brain injury, mental health, and the collaboration among our agencies. Also we have discussion about activities, deliverables, policies, services and other important topics pertaining to this grant. These meetings give the core team the ability to meet with the Directors to ensure all members of the full collaborative are in agreement.

Team members may bring other important issues to the table during the monthly meeting. For example, Mr. Eachus, Executive Director from BHGMHC, brought to the attention of the full collaboration team an article about an Iowa Supreme Court

ruling allowing the mental health records of a victim to be opened by the defense, as the abuser is claiming self defense because of the survivor's mental illness, even though this is his third domestic violence offense. This is an example of the important issues that the full collaboration team may need to keep mind when shaping policies or procedures for our organizations.

One week before the meeting an agenda will be prepared by the Project Coordinator and distributed. Meeting notes are prepared after every meeting and sent to the full collaboration team for approval within three business days. After the meeting the Project Coordinator prepares the documents or activities for the full collaboration team. It is then shared with the core team to review and change as necessary. After the core team has agreed upon the documents or activities, the Project Coordinator sends the final draft to the full collaboration team for review and approval.

Core Collaboration-

The core collaboration team meets once a week for two hours at minimum, rotating the meetings at each agency involved or other sites as chosen by the group. A second meeting may be needed to complete the desired tasks; these meeting will be decided upon by the core collaboration team at the first scheduled meeting. At these meetings the core collaboration team will have discussions about issues, key concepts, services, and make decisions on deliverables. The Project Coordinator will develop and write the documents in Google docs. Then the core team members can word smith these documents in Google docs between meeting times.

Meeting notes will be taken and disseminated within three working days by one of the members of the core collaboration team. After the core collaboration team reviews and approves these meeting notes the notes are sent to the full collaboration team for review. Meeting notes may also be shared with supervisors

of the core collaborative team member to help the supervisor understand what their staff person is doing.

Emails-

The preferred way of communication outside of face to face meetings is through emails. Emails will be used for sharing information, asking questions, and making suggestions about deliverables. Important issues raised in email are brought to the next face to face meeting for critical conversations and decision making.

Full Collaboration-

All collaborative members will respond to general emails by courtesy copying (CCing) everyone in the group within 3 working days. Members will respond to emails pertaining to grant deliverables, which are sent out as attachments, within 10 working days. In addition, the Project Coordinator will put "response needed by (date)" in the subject line to alert the full collaborative members when the deadline is for responding to the email regarding attached documents. Everyone in the full collaboration will be asked to use the "out of office" or "on vacation" reply in emails when on vacation or gone for a length of time so collaboration members have reasonable expectations regarding response time to emails and grant deliverables.

Core Collaboration-

Emails with questions will be sent to all core team members regarding the project and will be responded within 3 working days. Everyone in the core collaboration will be asked to use the "out of office" or "on vacation" reply in emails when on vacation or gone for a length of time so collaboration members have reasonable expectations regarding response time to emails and grant deliverables.

Phone calls or text messages-

Phone calls or text messages can be used by the full collaboration team if needed Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6 pm for sharing information, emergency or last minute decisions, or communicating with the members of the full collaboration team if needed for travel or financial approval.

Google Docs-

Google Docs is an interactive site which facilitates multiple users to create accounts, post, read and edit documents. The core collaboration team decided to use Google Docs to work on the wording of deliverables for this grant. The core collaboration team will check the documents in Google Docs at least twice a week to make changes, corrections, or comments in a highlighted color. These changes are brought up at the next face to face meeting for concept development and approved by consensus according to our decision making plan on page 30. The full collaboration will have access to Google Docs as needed.

Intra-Agency Reporting-

It is vital to keep the Board of Directors and staff of each agency informed about this project to insure buy in and cooperation during the needs assessment, strategic plan and create a climate of change in our organization. Staff of each agency will become aware of project activities quarterly through members of the core collaboration team sharing information during staff meetings and sharing progress reports. The Board of Directors will be informed of activities related to the grant, deliverables for the grant, or other important matters of the collaboration through the Executive Directors. If it becomes important to share more details, the Executive Directors will involve core collaboration team members to present to the

Board of Directors. Also progress reports will be prepared by the Project Coordinator every three months to be used for the presentation to the Board of Directors or staff at the agency.

We understand that the work of this project differs from our “normal” work responsibilities. As such, our supervisors may not understand what is involved in this grant project. In order to keep the direct supervisors informed of what their staff person is doing; the core collaboration team member will update them verbally, send meeting notes, and a quarterly progress reports as needed. At times the Executive Director may need to help keep the supervisor informed in order to alleviate any problems. If necessary a core collaboration team members may invite their supervisors to a full collaboration team meeting as needed to help them understand what the core collaboration team member is involved with during this grant. It is expected that the member of the core collaboration team will notify the Project Coordinator to include the supervisor in on the agenda of the meeting.

External Communication:

Communication with The Vera Institute-

Communication with The Vera Institute is extremely helpful to our collaboration to develop concepts, process questions, and give guidance on grant deliverables. This is done through phone conference calls, site visits and trainings. The Project Coordinator shall be the primary contact person to communicate with the Vera Program Associate for our grant through emails and phone conference meetings biweekly or more often as needed.

Communication with Vera is not limited to the project coordinator. The Vera Program Associate may have need to communicate with any full collaborative member as she deems necessary through emails (CCing the program coordinator),

phone conferencing, and face to face meetings. When the Vera representative communicates with other collaborative members the program coordinator should be made aware of it.

Communication with Office on Violence Against Women-

Project BEST will communicate with the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) through the project coordinator or the Executive Director of the fiscal agent, Seeds of Hope. Communication with OVW happens in a variety of ways such as emails, over the phone, fiscal reports for the grant, or at a grant sponsored event such as a workshop or conference. Another way we communicate with OVW is through the GMS reporting system which is a program accessed via the internet to report the activities of the grant every 6 months. When communicating for the collaborative regarding any important issue, the project coordinator will follow the direction from the full collaboration and then contact the OVW Representative for this grant.

Media Communication Plan

Project BEST strives to make a positive and systemic impact on our surrounding communities. We understand that it may be necessary to reach out to the greater community through the local media in order to achieve our goals. Furthermore, members of this collaboration may be sought out to give a comment on future, and unknown events. Below we have laid out our plan for proactive, reactive and crisis communication.

Proactive communication

Project BEST understands there may be times when the collaboration benefits from informing the community about our project through the media. The full collaboration will plan the purpose of calling the media, what will be said, which type of media to contact, and who will be the spokes person. We wish to ensure a consistent

message across the entire project team; therefore talking points have been developed (See Appendix A) It is expected that members of the collaboration will not contact the media without the full collaborative's discussion and approval. At different stages of the project the media talking points or other press releases will be changed or developed according to the activities of Project BEST. The Media Specialist at EPI will be accessed in helping develop messaging to the media at this time. OVW will be notified of any press releases or website publications before the release. When collaborative members contact the media regarding Project BEST the Executive Directors will be the main representative for each agency (see media contact chart in Appendix A). However, they may choose a representative from the agency to communicate to the media utilizing the media talking points. The Project Coordinator will be the Primary contact with the media for Proactive communication in regards to Project BEST (see appendix A).

Reactive Communication

Should the media contact a member of the core collaboration due to an interest in the project, the collaborative member will direct them to the Project Coordinator and their respective Executive Director. Talking points have been developed by the full collaboration which the Project Coordinator will utilize. It is expected that members of core collaboration, except the Project Coordinator, will not communicate with the media. They will refer the media to the Project Coordinator and their respective Executive Directors. The project coordinator and Executive Directors are permitted to give information from the preapproved talking points without contacting the full collaboration first.

If the media is interested in information outside of the talking points, the project coordinator or Executive Directors will contact the full collaboration to develop further communication. Preferably, this will occur face to face, however phone, text and email will also be utilized. Those members who are not available will be informed via email. At this point, the full collaboration may need to follow individual

agencies policies on communication with the media. Katie Slade, the Communications & Development Director at EPI will also a resource to help with messaging and content.

Crisis Communication

In the event of an emergency or crisis situation involving a survivor with disabilities and/or a mental illness, as it relates to this project; the members of this collaboration will refer to their respective Executive Director who will utilize their agencies crisis communication plan. The Executive Director will make every attempt to contact the other Directors for input or information. However, in the interest of time, the Executive Directors will proceed without communication with other Executive Directors if needed. This collaboration has full trust in the expertise of the Executive Directors in relating to the media. We also acknowledge that media contact, in the event of a crisis, would be focused on individual agencies and not this collaboration.

Confidentiality Protocol

Project BEST believes that confidentiality is vital in providing a safe and comfortable environment for our agencies, collaboration members, and people we serve. We recognize that during our work we may reveal sensitive information regarding our representative agencies, collaborative work, and/or personal information. We realize that this agreement is among our full collaboration team for the sole purpose of protecting our collaborative work to help aid the collaborative process. Therefore, we are committed to creating an environment to allow for beneficial information sharing. This is a working document and as such may require future alterations depending on the different phases of our collaborative work in order to protect people and the information we gather.

During our work together we must consider that some information could fall under the guidelines of mandatory reporting requirements. Therefore the following guidelines provide a foundation for our work showing how Project BEST is committed to uphold confidentiality including guidelines for how to share information while keeping mandatory reporting in the forefront of our minds. Our full and core collaboration team members commit that information will be held in strict confidence to the extent possible. Listed below are Project BEST's commitments starting with confidentiality for our members, our agencies, and the people we serve. Then we discuss our requirements for mandatory reporting.

Confidentiality-

Confidentiality among collaborative members

Project BEST feels confidentiality among our collaborative members is important. We acknowledge that our work together may bring about the disclosure of personal information. As individuals it is essential for us to know that our own disclosures will be

treated with respect and care. Therefore our members have agreed that any personal information of a sensitive nature that is shared will be considered confidential and will be safeguarded by our group.

Confidentiality of agency information

We acknowledge the importance of keeping detrimental or sensitive information about our agencies confidential. In order to not damage our collaborative partnerships we agree to be sensitive to politically charged information regarding our agencies. We agree to hold the details in confidence with regard to equal access, safety, financial performance, and/or organizational commitment from the community but it may be shared with OVW and/or the Vera Representative to better serve the project.

Confidentiality of people we serve

Project BEST collaboration members understand that providing individual case management is outside the scope of this grant. Survivors with disabilities/mental illness are especially vulnerable in relation to their safety, and strict boundaries regarding mandatory reporting will be important in maintaining their personal confidentiality. Although in order to inform the work of the collaborative we may use hypothetical examples only in order to enhance the project. Therefore we will not have issues with maintaining confidentiality of people we serve or mandatory reporting.

Mandatory Reporting-

Project BEST regards confidentiality with the utmost importance but we understand that each agency must abide by their own rules as required by the State of Iowa and other regulatory boards. After multiple conversations our full and core collaboration members decided that each of us must adhere to our own rules concerning mandatory reporting. (see appendix B) We understand that a person's confidential information could fall

under mandatory reporting rules and must not be shared openly among our collaboration team. We agree to only share hypothetical examples in order to aid the collaborative process and to withhold any identifying information such as names, locations, descriptions, or other details that could become identifiers. We recognize that we live in a rural, close-knit community and it would be easy to recognize anecdotal stories that may reveal identities.

If we come across a situation which triggers a report during this project it will be up to each individual to follow their agency guidelines; which is why we must be very strict about using hypothetical stories. Although we have determined the need to adhere to our respective mandatory reporting guidelines as outlined by the state, we understand that during our needs assessment we will need to revisit mandatory reporting again. Below we have listed each agency's rules for mandatory reporting as our state governs each of our agencies differently. In Appendix B we have listed the state definitions for dependent adult abuse and mandatory reporter regulations.

Exceptional Persons Inc.-

EPI employees that are direct support workers and supervisory staff are required to follow the Iowa State Code 232 and 235 for child and/or dependent adult abuse (see appendix B). A staff member suspecting a dependent adult is being abused will contact his/her supervisor and/or the on-call supervisor. After which the supervisory staff will contact the Department of Inspections & Appeals which investigates any reported abuse of a dependent adult living in a Licensed Residential Care Facility. The Department of Human Services is contacted for with allegations involving any person served by EPI. Furthermore, EPI is required to disclose to DHS all incidents involving a person they serve. These include, but are not limited to, falls, bruises, incidents requiring first aid, hospitalizations, etc. DHS determines if these incidents require further investigation and

if the person involved is considered a dependent adult.

Seeds of Hope-

According to the Iowa State Code, advocates are not mandatory reporters. Therefore SOH staff is considered “permissive reporters” similar to any citizen who doesn’t fall under the mandatory reporter list. (see appendix B) However SOH does have strict confidentiality rules to follow, federal regulations under the FVPSA, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 USC 10402(a)(2)(E), VOCA, Victims of Crime Act (42 USC 10601-10604), and the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence/Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault require advocates working for Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Centers to hold the clientele's personal information confidential even under subpoena.

Seeds of Hope considers that any confidential information to be in the person’s control and to be released only under their willingness to release it in writing according to Iowa State Code 915.20A (victim counselor privilege). Seeds of Hope’s policy regarding releases is not to accept any other agency release and only accept a Seeds of Hope release signed and discussed in person between the person and advocate. Even then only information identified by the person on the written release will be released.

Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center-

BHGMHC professional staff are required to follow Iowa State code 235B for dependent adult abuse and code 232 for child abuse (see appendix B). Staff take the Iowa’s mandatory reporting training and are required to re-certify every five years. Most professional staff will talk with other professional staff and/or supervisors in the office about what they are going to report and ask for their feed back before reporting but this is not required.

The agency’s mandatory reporting training gives responsibility to the Department of

Human Services (DHS) to conduct investigations about dependent adult abuse issues. DHS requires that in the case of any reasonable belief that a dependent adult has suffered abuse by a care taker, then a report must be done orally within 24 hours of becoming aware of the situation and a written report must be made within 48 hours of the oral report. Rules about confidentiality and privilege communications are waived during the dependent adult abuse assessment process. All mandatory reporters are obligated to cooperate and assist upon the request of DHS whether or not they made the initial report.

Decision Making Protocol

Project BEST recognizes that everyone has a voice and it should be heard. Each individual is valued and respected for her/his opinion and expertise. We also believe that having open communication between all members embodies the vision of the project and facilitates the best possible outcome. Therefore, decision making within our collaboration will be by consensus. Below you will find our process for decision making and who has the authority to make final decisions.

Decision Making Process

Decision making amongst the collaboration for Project BEST is a collective process with open communication with everyone expressing their opinion as we value every one's expertise in their field. We know this is time consuming but we feel everyone must have a voice in the process until consensus is reached. We know we have reached consensus by utilizing a gradient scale to reach decisions and/or assess the direction of a conversation when needed.

Steps towards consensus:

- open discussion to understand each person's view on the subject
- identify each differing opinion
- decide if we need more information to assist our decision
- the project coordinator asks everyone where they are at on the scale of 1, 2, or 3

The following is the scale that will be used:

1 = no, we need more in-depth conversations

2 = maybe, but needs more information/work

3 = yes, happy with the decision, satisfied with the result

We use the above gradient scale to assist in our process for decision making among our collaborative members. When someone in the group is at a 1, then we need to have more in-depth conversations about the subject or if we need to make changes. When someone is at a 2, then we may need to table the discussion until we have more information and discuss it again once all the information has been shared. If we are all at a 3, then consensus has been reached. To make sure we are not being hasty in our decisions, the project coordinator again checks to make sure if everyone feels comfortable with the decision and if we can move on from this subject. We all say yes or 3 again, then we move on to the next subject or decision.

Decision Making Authority

Core Collaboration team-

The core team has the authority to create documents and activities for the project. The core collaboration team consists of the project coordinator and a member from each collaborating agency. We meet weekly to discuss concepts and decide what will be written in the deliverables. The core collaboration team sets the direction of the collaboration's meetings and work time. We decide what information and when we need to share with the full collaboration team, agency board of directors or agency staff. The core collaboration team also makes the day to day decisions related to the deliverables. We also have the authority to manage our time and decide when and where to have our meeting.

Full Collaboration team-

The full collaboration team is made up of each agency's Executive Director and the members of the core collaboration team. The full collaboration team meets once a month to discuss key concepts and to make decisions on the final deliverables before sending to Vera Institute of Justice or OVW. Also the full collaboration team will make

recommendations on changes to organizational policies, procedures, programming, services, budgets, and any other decisions related to this project. The Executive Directors hold the authority to make the actual changes in each agency that is recommended from the full collaborative. We recognize that some policies may need to involve the Board of Directors. It is up to the Executive Directors to involve their Board when needed.

Project Coordinator's-

The Project Coordinator will make decisions such as logistics related to meeting space and time, supplies, and agenda. She makes these decisions with input and open communication with all members of the full and core collaboration teams. The Project Coordinator may make decisions regarding expenditures related to the grant with the full awareness of the fiscal agent.

Fiscal Agent's authority-

The fiscal agent is Seeds of Hope, the domestic violence and sexual assault agency involved in the collaboration. The fiscal agent makes final fiscal decisions and grant budgets for this project.

Agency Board of Director's authority-

In order to enhance our response to survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness, recommendations for agency changes may be suggested by the full collaborative. At times the Executive Directors may need to involve the Board of Directors in making changes to policies, procedures, budgets, and programming changes for their respective agency depending on the scope of those changes. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Directors to decide when the Board of Directors is needed.

Decision making regarding “Others”-

We may also need to bring in others from our agencies outside of the full collaboration team. When this becomes necessary the full collaboration team will discuss the need for an outsider to be involved and why they are needed. For example, members of the full collaboration team can utilize EPI’s Communications & Development Director for communication with the media if needed.

Conflict Resolution

As a collaborative team, Project BEST recognizes that we share common goals for the grant. We also recognize that conflict is inevitable when agencies work together because we bring differing opinions, perspectives and priorities to the collaboration. When conflict arises we agree to discuss issues face to face. We agree to have these discussions with all members with whom the conflict may be with, "nothing about me without me" will be our motto to resolve conflicts. We also believe that, even in conflict, we will gain knowledge which will enhance our work.

Project BEST believes in the following values involving conflict:

- We will take responsibility of our own thoughts and feelings regarding the conflict
- We will separate problems from people
- We will actively listen and communicate with other team members
- We will treat each other with dignity and respect
- We will be open to hear each others' opinions
- We will not allow or participate in behind the back talking
- We will look for the "degrees of truth"...no one is totally wrong or is totally right. We will instead focus on what we agree on.
- We agree to not act on assumptions but instead ask for clarification

The full and core collaboration team members agree to take the following actions toward a common ground:

- (1) Parties in conflict will meet, with open communication, to clarify the problem. If a resolution cannot be reached the Project Coordinator will facilitate a meeting with all parties involved; whether it is a core collaboration team

member, Executive Director, other full collaboration team member, or others from our agencies.

- (2) If the conflict is with the Project Coordinator; the person with the conflict will contact the Grant Supervisor who will facilitate a meeting with the people involved.
- (3) If the conflict cannot be resolved at the initial meeting we may table the conflict, if necessary, revisit it at the next scheduled meeting.
- (4) If no common ground can be met after following the steps above we may need to address the conflict at a full collaboration team meeting. At that time, if no agreement can be reached then the Project Coordinator will contact the Vera Representative and OVW as needed.

Work Plan

Project BEST was awarded funding through OVW for the purpose of improving services to survivors with disabilities. We are dedicated to the work of this project and understand that the grant cycle allows us three years to accomplish our work. However, we intend to continue this work beyond the grant cycle because of the importance and dedication we have to this issue. This work plan is only an estimated projection and some revisions may be necessary. We also understand that each phase must be approved by OVW before moving on to the next phase and OVW may take up to 45 days to approve each submission.

Listed below are the required deliverables with an estimated completion time:

- Collaboration Charter (April 2010 to October 2010)
 Send Charter to OVW: October 2010
- Needs Assessment Plan and Tool Development (November 2010 to March 2011)
 Send Plan to OVW: March 2011
- Conduct Needs Assessment (April 2011 to June 2011)
 Write and send report to OVW (July 2011 to August 2011)
- Strategic Plan (September 2011 to November 2011)
 Send plan to OVW: November 2011

Implementation phase (December 2011 to September 30, 2012)

Glossary of Key Terms

Advocate-someone who helps protect and maintain a person's rights, give information and assistance, and/or change systems to provide for some one's rights.

Accessibility- Accessibility can be viewed as the "ability to access", possible benefit of some system or entity and absence of discrimination. Accessibility is often used to focus on people with disabilities and/or mental illness and their right of access to entities. Providing equal access to services, designing environments to accommodate the widest range of potential users and provide the widest range of individualized solutions as well as identifying community supports.

Barriers- the obstacles that survivors with disabilities face getting the assistance that they need.

Board of directors-a group of people who are elected to oversee activities of an organization such as establishing manuals, policies, procedures, budgets, and appointing the chief executive.

Brain Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury- A head injury, either minor and major (traumatic) that results in a disruption of brain activity. A brain injury can be termed "mild" or "severe" and can affect a person's personality, mood and can alter a person's ability to function independently.

Confidentiality- The agreement between parties which assures that information shared, either verbally or written, will not be repeated or shared without authorization.

Core collaboration team/members - Project coordinator and the selected staff from

BHGMHC, EPI, and SOH who have been identified as primary representative for the agency to facilitate change in our organizations. These members work day to day on building relationships between the agency staff, project's documents, collaborating together on work such as the needs assessment, and strategic planning. They are forming the foundation for this grant to operate successfully.

Day Habilitation- programs that last at least 4 hours a day, it's purpose is to help educate the individuals to learn tasks and skills.

Department of Human Services(DHS)-a state agency that helps provide services to the community to assist children, adults, and families with reporting abuse and investigating abuse. DHS also provides income and food stamps to families or individuals who qualify and case management for individuals or families who need assistance.

Dependent adult- according Iowa Department of Human Services: "Dependent adult" means a person eighteen years of age or older who is unable to protect the her/his own interests or unable to adequately perform or obtain services necessary to meet essential human needs, as a result of a physical or mental condition which requires assistance from another, or as defined by department rule. DHS has a formula during intake to conclude who is or is not a dependent adult and if the abuse is something that warrants an investigation.

Deliverables- products associated with this grant. According to "inspired project teams" these include any tangible item that is produced to complete the project. Deliverables not only include finished products like a finished written report or models for system change, but also include interim or draft products that the project team may need such as tools, outlines, drafts of written documents, and flowcharts.

see: www.inspiredprojectteams.com for more info.

Direct Support Professional-A person who supports people with disabilities to lead a self-directed life. Support may be offered at home, school, work, and in the community.

Disability- We agree with the newest definition developed by the World Health Organization, disability is not something that a person has but, instead, something that occurs outside of the person—the person has a functional limitation. Disability occurs in the interaction between a person, his or her functional ability, and the environment. A person’s environment can be the physical environment, communication environment, information environment, and social and policy environment. (www.accessingsafety.org)

Domestic Violence (DV)- A purposeful pattern of assaultive or coercive behaviors to achieve compliance or control including a variety of tactics that may or may not cause physical injuries, some criminal and some not, carried out in multiple episodes. These include physical, psychological attacks, economic coercion, terror, and intimidation over the victim and/or their children.

Empowerment- This is people working together and sharing skills, coordination through continual communication, and shared decision making to achieve the same outcome. As well as helping others get a sense of power back in their lives through information and options, respectfully encouraging them to take responsibility and action for their lives on the path they choose for themselves.

Executive director- Tom Eachus, Beth Jackley, Chris Sparks-a person responsible for the business and administrative aspects of an agency involved in the project.

Fiscal agent-the agency which is in charge of the grants finances (Seed of Hope)

Full collaboration team/member-consist of Executive Directors from each agency and

the core collaboration team members who will all work together to make the collaboration a success, each person's thoughts, feelings and opinions will be taken into consideration for this collaboration. This team will make the final decisions and are the agent of change in our organizations for Project BEST.

Harassment-ongoing and unwanted verbal or non verbal behavior toward someone, including but not limited to offensive or insulting conduct.

Intellectual Disability (ID)- formally known as mental retardation-(MR), this is conditions which limit a person's ability to learn and function in daily life. A collection of intellectual limitations that affect a person's ability to function in everyday areas. Mental retardation is diagnosed by looking at two main things- the ability of a person's brain to learn, think, solve problems, and make sense of the world (called IQ or intellectual functioning), and whether the person has the skills he or she needs to live independently (called adaptive behavior, or adaptive functioning).

Licensed Residential Care Facility--A licensed residential care facility (RCF) is a facility that is licensed by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals and provides 24 consecutive hours accommodation, board, personal assistance, and other essential living activities to persons who are unable to independently care for themselves because of physical, mental, or emotional disabilities, but do not require the services of a registered or licensed nurse except on an emergency basis. Residents of a licensed RCF may participate in State Supplemental Assistance programs and may be eligible for Medicaid funding.

Live their best life- a provider, such as an assistant, counselor, community outreach worker, or advocate helping someone achieve their best life. It is when a provider helps

the person become the best that they can be with the least restrictions.

Medicaid Home and Community based Waiver- a state and federal program that helps people with disabilities live in the least restricted, safe environment. This is normally a house or apartment. Individual must meet certain requirements and the facility must meet requirements.

Mental Health- is a broad category, encompassing the emotional stability, behavioral regulation, and/or cognitive functioning of a person. Encompassing how a person thinks, feels and acts; how a person looks at themselves or their life, including making choices, handling stress, and relating to others. Specific diagnoses include anxiety, depression, and various personality or behavioral disorders. While there is debate around the specific causes of mental health limitations, it can be understood that both biology (chemical or genetic differences) and outside causes (trauma, society), can have an intense effect on human emotions and behaviors. (www.accessingsafety.org)

Mental Illness- refers to severe mental health problems in adults. A serious mental illness pursuant to section 1912(c) of the public health service act, adults with serious mental illness SMI are persons:1-age 18 or over and 2-who currently have, or at any time during the past year had a diagnosable mental behavioral or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-(version)IV 3- that has resulted in functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. (Federal Register Volume 58 No. 96 published Thursday May 20, 1993 pages 29422 through 29425.)

OVW- The federal Office on Violence against Women

Project BEST- our project's name, B for Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health, E for Exceptional Persons Inc., S for Seeds of Hope, and T for team. Project BEST is committed to ensuring safe, accessible and effective services to people with disabilities and/or mental illness who are impacted by domestic violence by addressing gaps and barriers in our existing services.

Project coordinator- individual assigned to a certain project in order to facilitate meetings, coordinates activities, and gives direction.

Relationship building- cultivating a bond with others

Sexual Assault(SA)- unwanted sexual act including:

- Inappropriate touching,
- Vaginal, anal, or oral penetration
- Sexual intercourse that you say no to
- Rape
- Attempted rape
- Child molestation

Sexual assault can be verbal, visual, or anything that forces a person to join in unwanted sexual contact or attention. Examples of this are voyeurism (when someone watches private sexual acts), exhibitionism (when someone exposes him/herself in public), incest (sexual contact between family members), and sexual harassment. It can happen in different situations: in the home by someone known to the person, on a date, or by a stranger in an isolated place. Rape is a common form of sexual assault. It is committed in many situations — on a date, by a friend, a partner or an acquaintance and can be by a stranger as well.

Shared resources- sharing what we know to help all agencies involved in the collaboration, for example sharing building space, and sharing staff time towards this project.

Social worker- professional that helps people navigate through the systems (local, state and federal government). A professional of academic discipline committed to the pursuit of social welfare and social change, works towards research and practice to improve the quality of life, and to the development of the potential of each individual, group and community of a society.

Stalking- constant, ongoing, harassing behavior involving following, calling or watching someone when it is not wanted, and the person is in fear for her/his safety

Substance abuse- the misuse of medications (prescription or not) alcohol or other illegal substances. Also known as drug abuse refers to a pattern of use of a substance that is not considered dependent but can become dependent on the substance which causes problems in the person's life.

Supervisory staff/direct supervisor/supervisor-someone who oversees direct support workers they normally work more in an office setting

Survivor- someone who has survived domestic and/or sexual violence against them

Team Approach- Our three agencies are committed to using the expertise each agency possesses to come together and collaborate as a team to resolve any barriers and injustice occurring with the people we serve. Some people may only use the word collaborate but we think "team" is more conducive of a strong working relationship.

Vera- Vera Institute of Justice

Victim- a person who has suffered from a crime

sources: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov>

<http://dictionary.reference>

<http://www.inspiredprojectteams.com>

<http://accessingsafety.org>

Appendix A: Media Talking Points and media contact list

A variety of useful comments are listed below for responding to the media. These talking points are to be utilized by the Program Manager and/or Executive Directors if and when they communicate with the media.

Remember when talking to the media be truthful when giving information and only give confirmed facts and statements. Be yourself, remain calm, prepared and concise. Be respectful of others concerns, talk about the collaboration and how we are combining our expertise to create a better system. Stay away from negatives about the agencies and people involved and remember that anything you say could be used by the media. Please do not talk outside of the talking points or place blame on others. Don't be defensive to the questions or statements that are asked. Avoid guessing about the facts or giving out personal information and do not show any of the agencies in a negative light.

Talking Points-

- A grant from the Federal Office on Violence against Women (OVW) was awarded in Black Hawk County to Seeds of Hope, to collaborate with Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center Inc., and Exceptional Persons Inc.
- The collaboration started in October 2009.
- The grant is specifically for collaboration between these three agencies to identify gaps within our organizations to improve our services for people with disabilities and/or mental illness impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault.
- The collaboration is called Project BEST - B:Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center Inc., E:Exceptional Persons Inc., S:Seeds of Hope, T:Team.

- According to National Statistics, 85% of people with disabilities will be impacted by abuse in their life time. Therefore the purpose of this project is to:
 - Address gaps and barriers between our three agencies to ensure a safe, accessible and effective services to people with disabilities and or mental illness who are impacted by domestic violence or sexual assault.
 - Improve the knowledge and skills of our staff, enhancing policies and procedures.
 - Build sustainable relationships between our agencies.
 - Cultivate a team approach and change the prevailing culture of our agencies and our community in Black Hawk County, Ia.

- Project BEST believes anyone with or without a disability and/or mental illness should have the same access to all services that are available in their community to better their well-being. This requires having safe, accessible, and non discriminatory environments, organizations and resources necessary for all people to live their best life.

Media contact list:

Name	Organization	Reason for contact
Barb Rindels (Project Coordinator)	Seeds of Hope Black Hawk county office: 2055 Kimball ave. suite 355 Waterloo, Ia. 50702 319-272-1400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Media Contact for Project BEST. • Proactive, Reactive and Crisis Communication
Beth Jackley (Executive Director)	Seeds of Hope Main office: 604 8th street Grundy Center, Ia. 50638 319-824-5522	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Media Contact for Seeds of Hope and Media Contact Project BEST. • Proactive, Reactive and Crisis Communication
Tom Eachus (Executive Director)	Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center 3251 W. 9th St Waterloo, IA 50702 319-234-2893	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Media Contact for BHGMHC. • Media Contact for Project BEST • Proactive, Reactive and Crisis Communication
Chris Sparks (Executive Director)	Exceptional Persons, Inc. 760 Ansborough Ave Waterloo, IA 50702 (319) 232-6671	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Media Contact for EPI. • Media contact for Project BEST • Proactive, Reactive and Crisis Communication
Katie Slade (Communications & Development Director)	Exceptional Persons, Inc. 760 Ansborough Ave Waterloo, IA 50702 (319) 232-6671	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource for Media Communication

APPENDIX B: Dependent Adult and Mandatory Reporter State Definitions-

According Iowa Department of Human Services: "Dependent adult" means a person "eighteen years of age or older who is incapable of adequate self care due to mental or physical conditions and require assistance from other people. As defined in Iowa Code section 235B.2, "dependent adult abuse" includes five categories of abuse as the result of the willful or negligent acts or omissions of a caretaker:

- ◆ Financial exploitation
- ◆ Physical abuse (including assault and unreasonable confinement or punishment)
- ◆ Sexual abuse
- ◆ Sexual exploitation by a caretaker
- ◆ Denial of critical care (which may also be committed by the dependent adult)"

Dependent adult abuse does not include allegations involving:

- ◆ Domestic abuse in a situation where the victim is not "dependent."
- ◆ People who are legally incarcerated in a penal setting, either in a local jail or in the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Person Responsible for Abuse:

Iowa Code section 235B.2 defines "caretaker" as a related or non-related person who has the responsibility for the protection, care, or custody of a dependent adult as a result of assuming the responsibility voluntarily, by contract, through employment, or by the order of the court.

A mandatory reporter is:

A person who examines, attends, counsels or treats a dependent adult and reasonably believes they have suffered abuse. Below is the list of who is a mandatory reporter

according to by the Iowa State Code Section 232.69:

- ◆ All licensed physicians and surgeons.
- ◆ Physician assistants.
- ◆ Dentists.
- ◆ Licensed dental hygienists.
- ◆ Optometrists.
- ◆ Podiatrists.
- ◆ Chiropractors.
- ◆ Residents or interns in any of the professions listed above
- ◆ Registered nurses.
- ◆ Licensed practical nurses.
- ◆ Basic and advanced emergency medical care providers.
- ◆ Social workers.
- ◆ An employee or operator of a public or private health care facility as defined in Iowa Code section 135C.1.
- ◆ A certified psychologists.
- ◆ A licensed school employees, certified para educators, or holder of a coaching authorization issued under Iowa Code section 272.31.
- ◆ An employees or operators of a licensed child care center, registered child care home, Head Start program, Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Grant program under Iowa Code section 217.12, or Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success – Healthy Families Iowa program under Iowa Code section 135.106.
- ◆ An employees or operators of a licensed substance abuse program or facility licensed under Iowa Code Chapter 125.
- ◆ An employees of an institution operated by DHS listed in Iowa Code section 218.1.
- ◆ An employees or operators of a juvenile detention or juvenile shelter care facility approved under Iowa Code section 232.142.
- ◆ An employees or operators of a foster care facility licensed or approved under Iowa Code Chapter 237.
- ◆ An employees or operators of a mental health center.

- ◆ Peace officers.
- ◆ Counselor or mental health professionals.
- ◆ An employee or operator of a provider of services to children funded under a federally approved Medicaid home- and community-based services

more information about Iowa regulations can be found at:

www.legis.state.ia.us/Rules2.html