

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, NY = MC3

- (1) Collaboration**
- (2) Change**
- (3) Cultivation**

MC3 = LIFE at RCIL & Catholic Charities



What does MC3 stand for?

MC3 is working in Montgomery County, NY to improve services and tools for individuals in our community with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence/sexual violence. We envision a community where victims/survivors have access to safe, accessible, effective services to meet their needs.

MC3 (Collaboration, Change, Culture)

Collaboration -We will strive to understand each other's roles so that we can find opportunities and make necessary changes based on each agency's experience. We are devoted to work on the process and remove barriers to provide an accessible environment where survivors feel comfortable and safe.

Change - We will speak and act with the best interest of our community survivors in mind. Everyone in MC3 is empowered to share ideas and suggestions to improve results. We will remain open-minded and review our processes with the intent of accepting constructive criticism.

Cultivation - We are committed to our community and to holding each other accountable by learning from our misunderstandings and working towards improvement. The intention is that we grow as a team while we navigate together to resolve each situation with the best of intentions.

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This project was supported by grant number, O-OVW-2021-36006 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Chapter #1

Vision Statement

Domestic Violence survivors in Montgomery County, NY will have access to comprehensive and seamless services, regardless of social status or disability. Our focus will remain person centered by providing a safe, and accessible environment. We understand that there are obstacles to overcome when collaborating with victims/survivors who experience domestic violence in our community. We are committed to improving adaptable and sustainable services.



MC3's Mission Statement

To reach our vision, MC will:

Provide solutions to strategically improve universal accessibility and racial equity for all participants.

Embrace each organization's role and gain an understanding of expertise through trust and transparency, so that warm referrals can occur, and no one will be left behind.

Develop tools to reach out, effectively communicate and educate all people with disabilities in Montgomery Country NY about abuse and the services we provide.

Educate our domestic violence staff at both LIFE at RCIL and Catholic Charities. We will provide barrier-free crisis and healing services to people with disabilities that are not re-traumatizing to the individuals involved.

Identify ways to preserve our work servicing victims/survivors of domestic violence by creating sustainable change that will continue after this grant is complete.

Chapter #2

Values and Assumptions

Values are ideas about what is right and wrong, normal, and abnormal, proper, and improper. Our values will guide us through every aspect of our collaboration and help navigate us through difficult barriers to ensure we are considering all factors when we are working with victims/survivors of domestic violence.

Assumptions are drawn from our past experiences, and patterns that are created in the environment. We use assumptions to predict what will happen in the future. Our assumptions are based on our community and prior experiences. To pave the way for change, it is important to know what to expect when working with people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence. This will allow us to have a better sense of how to handle a situation or assist us in making recommendations for change.



Values:

Strong morals are important to making the community feel safe and welcoming. In working with victims/survivors, we are committed to the following values:

- ***Integrity:*** The actions of MC3 will be held to the highest morals and principles as we engage with consultants, providers, and survivors.
- ***Accessibility:*** We believe that all people should have access to services where barriers are removed, and the individual's needs are at the forefront.
- ***Transparency/Accountability:*** MC3 members will honor our commitments to one another and to those people we serve.
- ***Cultural Responsiveness:*** MC3 will strive to understand the unique needs of all cultures, disabilities, and races.
- ***Trusted Confidants:*** Compassion will be at forefront of each discussion; we will speak the truth with sincerity while approaching ideas with fairness and teamwork as we are trying to accomplish the same goal.
- ***Ethical Services:*** We will provide services that are confidential, trauma informed, safe and accessible to all.
- ***Tenacity:*** MC3 members are passionate about our work and are committed to exploring all available options to support our work and those that we serve.

Assumptions:

We have identified the following assumptions as beliefs that will influence, affect, and guide our work together:

- Women report domestic violence at higher rates than men.
- People with disabilities under-report their experiences of domestic violence and experience sexual violence, stalking and trafficking at higher rates than people without disabilities.
- Members of the community are unaware of the rates of violence against persons with disabilities.
- In Montgomery County NY, 580 people with disabilities who experience abuse have no effective service options available to them.
- LGBTQ persons with disabilities experience high rates of domestic violence.
- Many times, people with disabilities face abuse by those in charge of their wellbeing.
- By understanding each other's role, MC3 will be better informed to work together and support people in our community that require assistance with domestic violence.

Chapter #3

Introduction of Agencies





LIFE at RCIL provides relevant, creative, and innovative leadership to advance the civil rights of individuals with disabilities and advocates for social progress that allows for all human beings to be integral, participating members of our society.

As a civil rights organization, LIFE at RCIL offers a wide range of independent living and advocacy services for and most importantly with people with disabilities. Together, we strive to promote the fact that it is a basic human right to participate in society as self-determining individuals, choosing our own paths and contributing to the advancement of our families, our professions, and our communities.

Independence is the key to the successful achievement of our goals. LIFE at RCIL helps disabled individuals of all ages, ethnicity, race, and sex to obtain community support and services they need to live independently. Whether this means getting an education, obtaining competitive employment, or living in one's own home, our programs are designed to provide a full spectrum of support and advocacy.

With more than 2,200 employees in 38 counties across Upstate New York, LIFE at RCIL is the largest independent living center in the state and one of the largest in the nation. This dedicated and committed staff works every day to promote individual rights and the unique abilities of each person. Through all stages of life, LIFE at RCIL is there to ensure that individuals have the services and support they need to thrive on their own terms.



Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, NY

Catholic Charities has provided services to our most vulnerable populations since 1976. Those we serve include children, those struggling with mental illness and/or substance abuse, poor, abused victims and the homeless.

Our Services

Catholic Charities is committed to active witness on behalf of the scriptural values of mercy and justice. Catholic Charities, recognizes human need at all stage of life, respond to all persons regardless of race, creed, or lifestyle, with a special emphasis on the economically poor and vulnerable. Catholic Charities serves and empowers persons in need, advocates for a just society, calls forth and collaborates with women and men of goodwill in fulfillment of its mission. Catholic Charities works in partnership with a wide range of service providers, law enforcement, court systems and the community at large allowing us to meet the needs of each individual victim. Each has their own unique circumstance providing short- and long-term support to empower freedom from physical, sexual, economic, emotional, and psychological abuse.

Domestic Violence and Crime Victims Services

In 1992, Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties NY began their commitment to helping victims of Domestic Violence in Montgomery County NY. A few years later, we began serving innocent victims of other crimes, such as assault, robbery, arson, and DWI, *with the assistance of Office of Victims Services. The following free and confidential services are available to ALL victims: Crisis intervention and Safety Planning, Individual Supportive Counseling, Legal Advocacy in Family and Criminal Courts, Personal Advocacy, help with Department of Social Services, Housing and Employment, Transportation, Information and Referrals, Bilingual, Bicultural Staff and Services, Support Groups, 9-bed Safe house, 24-hour Crisis Hotline, Victim's Right Assistance, 911 Cell Phone Program, OVS Claims Assistance.*

Contributions and Commitments

Both agencies have a wealth of knowledge, and we understand that this is a collaborative effort to work together to make a difference in the communities we serve. We want to empower victims/survivors with a disability experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking (hereinafter referred to as victim/survivor) and give them the opportunity to make the changes they need. The best part about working with victims/survivors is helping them understand they will ultimately be heard and supported.

To succeed and evolve, we must make the necessary changes. Making changes has positive benefits, but it's not always easy. Stepping into the unknown and experiencing new things can be uncomfortable. To make a difference, we will take the time to focus on the foundation of our work. Leveraging our strengths and focusing on new opportunities will enable us to better serve people with disabilities. We are committed to planning, reflecting, and expanding our thought processes for individuals that suffer violence or abuse.

MC3 agrees to an open dialogue on capacity, service improvements and new concepts. Both agencies have agreed to work on this project with innovative ideas to solve puzzle pieces to improve community services.



Commitments of LIFE at RCIL

We will work to become better acquainted with Catholic Charities so we have a better understanding of the crisis work they provide and learn how we can effectively support victims/survivors. In 2021, Catholic Charities serviced over 2,000 hotline calls. By partnering together, we can combine our resources to handle all victims/survivors in our community.

LIFE at RCIL will provide disability related services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We will identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities that experience violence and abuse. We can do this by engaging with the community through focus groups and by understanding and listening to individuals and their needs.

We will learn how Catholic Charities was created and gain a better understanding of their philosophical underpinnings. We commit to spending time educating ourselves in the different services they provide. This will help us become a unified team so we can deliver assistance to more individuals in our county. We will oversee the planning and creating content for the collaboration meetings. We will create and revise all relevant documents and ensure that the approval process is on track to provide effective results.

LIFE at RCIL will appoint several staff members who will be dedicated to and managing the project. We will comply with all requirements of the approval process.



Catholic Charities Commitments

Catholic Charities will provide trauma experience to this collaboration. This will lead to more effective services for people with disabilities exposed to domestic violence. We are committed to including LIFE at RCIL in community events and educational activities for people with disabilities experiencing domestic violence.

Catholic Charities staff will attend weekly meetings and contribute to the development of project deliverables. We will respond to any requests for input by the Project Coordinator outside of the weekly meetings in a timely manner so we can remain on track with our deliverables.

We will commit to learning from LIFE at RCIL, to gain a better understanding of the services they provide. We plan on educating ourselves on the updated language dialog, including phrases that are commonly used within LIFE at RCIL so we can better communicate with Victims/Survivors.

Catholic Charities will designate multiple staff members who are dedicated to this project and will provide supervision as well. We will fulfill all requirements of the grant process.



Commitments from all Applicable Parties

Together, we can better serve people with disabilities who experience domestic violence in their communities. It takes the full commitment of many people to bring about the innovation needed for positive change. Not only is commitment required from both agencies, but it must support the population by providing commitments that match the dynamics of residents within the county.



Executive Leadership has the authority to approve all changes to their organizations such as:

- Hiring, supervising, and removing any representative from the project.
- Providing fiscal administration of the budget and submitting fiscal reports to OVW.
- Approving and signing MOU's.
- Reviewing and approving policies and project budgets for each of their organizations.
- Executive Leadership can review deliverables.

Contributions & Commitments of MC3:

- MC3 will meet weekly throughout this project and each organization must have one member in attendance to hold the meeting.
- If the Project Coordinator cannot attend the meeting, the meeting will continue if we have representation from both organizations. A member of MC3 will take meeting minutes.
- We will determine if virtual or in-person meetings are appropriate and will reschedule if necessary.
- If an MC3 member cannot attend a meeting, they must provide adequate notice. If there is an unforeseen circumstance, a last-minute text or email to the Project Coordinator or other member of the MC3 is acceptable.

Project Coordinator Commitments:

The Project Coordinator will be involved in every aspect of this project and will effectively communicate with the collaboration by committing to:

- Submitting and editing all project deliverables to Activating Change, in a timely manner, including all site meetings.
- Communicating all information from Activating Change to MC3, the Project Coordinator will incorporate all documents for the best language to make the grant inclusive to all parties.
- Coordinating, facilitating, managing, and directing all MC3 activities. The Project Coordinator will lead and guide the work of MC3, as well as being responsible for communicating with all external associates.
- Serve as a central support for all collaboration members.
- The Project Coordinator will attend the all-Site meetings for Activating Change and will share the information with MC3.

Commitment to the Community

Montgomery County, New York has a population of 49,292 (2020) of which 14.7% are Hispanic. To better understand their culture, we to address the barriers that may stand in the way of reporting cases of domestic violence:

Household Dynamics – We need to consider how the previous generations relate to the occupancy of the family home.

Family Relationships – We will gain a better perspective on the values of the culture and how it relates to the social changes that the family model has experienced in the last few years.

Awareness of Cultural Differences/Customs and Beliefs/Religion – We will understand how culture plays a role in the family. Latinx are highly group oriented, with a strong emphasis on family.

Gender roles – Typically men are the primary earners while the women oversee the domestic duties and caring for the children. We will recognize how this can impact a victim/survivor.

Chapter #4

When working together, sometimes disagreements arise, and no easy solutions are found. We often hesitate when we need to make a decision because we are afraid of making the wrong choice. In case of disagreement, all members of MC3 will be involved in the decision-making process. To be fair, we agree to gather all relevant information, identify alternatives, weigh evidence, and choose a decision-making style that includes everyone's perspective.



Decision Making Style

MC3 will use Consensus Style to make decisions that impact the direction of this project. We think this is the most effective management style to use, as it takes into consideration everyone's opinion without forcing a decision and it allows for a good faith effort to achieve compromise.

Our weekly MC3 Collaboration meeting provides us the opportunity to share feedback and have open discussions. We realize these discussions can lead to disagreements that will require us to employ our chosen decision-making style.

We believe that using a gradient scale included in the consensus to help identify the level of opposition is helpful in determining our commitment to a decision, as we value all opinions and perspectives from our team members. We feel it is important to do our due diligence prior to polling for solutions. By using this four-step process, we will have a consistent approach:

- 1) *Gather all the relevant information* – ask open-ended questions, take time to do additional research.
- 2) *Identify the alternative* – brainstorm and produce multiple suggestions.
- 3) *Weigh the evidence* – discuss the pros and cons of the top decisions.
- 4) *Choose an alternative* – poll the team and determine the best course of action.

Gradient Scale for Decision Making

MC3 will use the gradient scale of decision making (listed below) as it provides options that can open the door for further discussions. Every collaboration member will express their position on the gradient scale by choosing a number and providing a rationale for their decision. The Project Coordinator will track everyone's decision and if a member of MC3 is absent, the Project Coordinator will follow up in an email or phone call to ensure all opinions are heard. We will use the polling method to identify the level of agreement or disagreement.



- 1 - Agrees
- 2- Minor Points of Contention
- 3- Slightly Disagrees
- 4-Disagrees

Gradient Polling Scale for MC3

1) *WHOLEHEARTLY AGREES WITH DECISION* - If MC3 agrees to the idea/suggestion/recommendation, we will proceed forward with the decision, with no further discussion.

2) *AGREE WITH DECISION/MINOR POINTS OF CONTENTION*- We may need to clarify any misunderstandings and ask open-ended questions to engage in additional dialogue.

3) *MORE DISCUSSION NEEDED*- The team will spend additional time obtaining more information and determining the root cause that is

preventing us from moving forward. We may need additional time to discuss the issue.

4) A MEMBER DOES NOT WANT TO PROCEED- The Project Coordinator will lead the discussion on how the decision will impact our community and agencies. We will take time to reflect on other people's opinions and differences by looking for alternative solutions.

*MC3 will move forward with a decision if everyone is below a 3. If anyone is at a 4, we will continue with our discussion until we reach an agreement. If we struggle to reach a consensus, we will take a break from the issue and revisit once we have obtained more information and approach the issue with a fresh outlook. If necessary, we will consult with our Technical Assistant (TA).

Decision Making – Collaboration Level

To be successful in collaborating, we need to work in unison to overcome our differences. We recognize that the ultimate goal is to better serve people with disabilities who experience domestic violence; therefore, we have to put our titles behind. We will offer a forum that allows everyone the opportunity to feel safe in an environment that allows them to speak freely. We encourage different views, as each member brings a wealth of experience, and we will give each member the authority to practice the following:

Any member of MC3 can initiate decision making and the gradient scale for polling at any time. Using specifics and explaining the why behind your point will set the stage for an open discussion.

- Each collaboration member will discuss any issue that needs clarification. We encourage educating others and relevant experience to prove a point.

- If a member of MC3 needs additional information, they can request it. We will welcome the research and agree to allow extra time for discussion.
- Everyone will set the direction of the collaborations' work by approving deliverables and requesting any changes that are necessary.

Decision Making Project Coordinator

Good decisions drive our collaboration, and the Project Coordinator will help MC3 members use critical thinking to make the best decisions for success. Project Coordinator duties include:

- Day-to-day activities on the grant projects, such as scheduling meetings/events, determining what information to share with the team, deciding the best way to communicate with the collaboration. All these factors are critical to keep the grant process on schedule to help guide us to our end goal of improving our services for victims in our community.
- Determining when we need to use the expertise of the technical assistant. There may be times when we cannot come to an agreement and need an unbiased opinion to help direct us or clarify questions we may have. The Project Coordinator will lead and coordinate a discussion with our TA and determine when it is necessary to bring in another point of view.
- A routine can become stale. The Project Coordinator can decide what type of methods are helpful in involving the collaboration on thought-provoking discussions. Perhaps deciding what level of participation is necessary to help us reach our best potential. This could include holding an innovative meeting, completing a questionnaire, or playing a game to engage the team and to keep the ideas flowing.

Decision Making Lead Agency

Life at RCIL is the lead agency on this grant, and they can decide on:

- Decide on the Final Budget Modifications.
- Life at RCIL will hire, replacing and managing the Project Coordinator (1 Full-Time Employee).
- Has the authority to replace or terminate MOU partner.

Executive Leadership from both partner agencies has decision-making authority to:

Determine who will represent their organizations, based on the input from the team pertaining to their ability to commit to the work and participation in meetings and activities.

- Hiring, supervision and termination of collaborations of MC3.
- Approval and signature of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's), contracts, and so forth.

Chapter #5

Conflict Resolution

Together, we can be a powerful support system for our community. We agree we need to be transparent with each other. Not being honest with each other creates unnecessary resentment. Through open communication and freedom of expression, we can understand each other better and eliminate confusion and prejudice. We will respect all perspectives and believe that all roles and experiences are essential in working on this project. MC3 commits to openly discussing offensive topics and agrees to put the needs of the community first.



Conflict Resolution Values

All stories and experiences shape our thoughts and values. Certain experiences can make someone feel resistance to change, which can lead to bad feelings and misunderstandings. Identifying the issues that are holding back your conflict can help you deal with your emotions and deepen your understanding.

We remain ***ethical*** by being honest and doing what is right for our victims/survivors, even though it may not always be the most convenient or easiest path to take. Our vision and mission statement guide us in making the right decisions.

Eliminating hierarchy in this project keeps everyone on ***equal*** footing and allows them to share their opinions without fear of egos getting in the way.

We will ***listen*** to other parties' views and concerns and strive for a win/win solution.

We will ensure ***participation*** from all members. There is no right, or wrong way and we will exercise a no judgement zone.

Compromise is essential to understand each other's ideas and opinions and to reach amicable solutions for the benefit of the partnership.

Organizational. Personal. Philosophical.

MC3 recognizes it will require time and resources from both organizations to effectively close the service gap and implement the changes. We need to get the most out of this project together, and by being honest and open, we agree to talk about our problems and our feelings. We will avoid tension by talking about our fears and frustrations so we can get used to uncomfortable conversations.

Change can be difficult to navigate when opinions are already formed or when you are happy with the status quo. As members of the collaboration, we support each other and listen to each member without bias. Our diverse backgrounds represent different philosophies and thought processes; however, we are driven by our mission and vision to maintain integrity and guide our teams to resolve conflicts.

We can express conflict in different ways. There are several factors that can cause concern. For example, personality differences, perceived inequality, and poor communication. We welcome each of these challenges as an opportunity to learn from each other according to the framework created by the team. We are confident that we can solve any problem we encounter.

MC3 will Resolve Conflict by doing the following:

- We will not persuade others in group meetings, we will actively listen, define problems, and reflect on our own. Taking a step back allows us to think about how others might perceive the situation.
- Accept ownership for the role each of us plays in creating conflict and think about what else we need to reconsider to come to an agreement.

- Be honest, even if you know it is an unpopular opinion. Experience shapes our beliefs. It's important to realize that this means thinking differently about things.
- Use opposing perspectives to learn from each other. See differences as learning opportunities and take turns by being both a teacher and a student.
- By detaching the person from their problems and working towards a common resolution, we agree to focus on goals rather than different personalities. By remembering the core of what we do and why we help others, our differences seem less meaningful.

Handling Conflict Between Agencies

The members of the collaboration are professionals, and we look forward to working together, but we understand conflicts can arise. Therefore, we agree that a dispute resolution process is necessary. During the dispute resolution process, the Project Coordinator will contact each member to determine if the issue can be resolved within the scope of cooperation or if outside mediation is required. We always do our best and, by doing so, we agree to:

Hold each other accountable for our words and actions. We take responsibility for what happens because of our decisions and hold ourselves accountable.

- Respect each other and focus on common goals.
- If necessary, (TA) or Executive Leadership will resolve issues that cannot be resolved within the collaboration.

- The Project Coordinator will notify MC3 of any outcome.

Procedures for Dealing with Interagency Disputes

Systems for resolving disputes between individuals or groups include the use of negotiation, and diplomacy to resolve disputes. We commit to productively resolving disputes by following these steps:

- Acknowledge that a conflict exists.
- Use our decision-making process to get a consensus.
- Determine if the conflict must be discussed immediately or if we can take time to think about it.
- MC3 will identify a facilitator.
- We will allow each member to explain their point of view.
- The team will discuss the pros and cons of each recommendation.
- If we cannot come to a solution, the Project Coordinator will reach out to the TA for directions.
- If outside mediation is required, the Project Coordinator will discuss any outcome with the collaboration.

Project Coordinator and Dispute Resolution

The Project Coordinator will lead the discussion towards dispute resolution. We agree to outline the pros and cons of the proposed decisions and take time to have tough conversations while overseeing the discussion of alternative solutions. We will schedule and revisit the issue at another time, if necessary.

If a conflict arises between the Project Coordinator and an associate of MC3, the member and the Project Coordinator will meet informally to discuss the issue, and decide whether to raise the issue with the team.

MC3 will choose a team member to mediate the meeting and the team will decide how to move forward. The team will use the gradient scale polling method to help reach an agreement. This can be found on page 21 of the charter.

If we cannot resolve the issue within the team, the Project Coordinator will bring the issue up to the TA to request mediation. All outcomes will be discussed with MC3.

Chapter #6

Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality is at the core of what we do, as safety is paramount for survivors. If someone entrusts us with personal information about domestic violence, disability, mental health, or other personal issues, it is our responsibility to retain that information at all costs so that people can count on us for support. Lack of confidentiality can spread rumors, lead to misunderstanding, embarrassment, anger, resentment, and may discourage victims/survivors from coming forward in the future. People with disabilities rarely report abuse or neglect, so it is especially important to protect their information, as it can worsen their emotional and physical condition if they come forward.



Confidentiality Agreement – Victims/Survivors

With confidentiality, it is important to understand that a breach may put a victim/survivor at further harm or may impact their life and livelihood. MC3 will only share information on a need-to-know basis. We will always refer to our values to help guide us to decide on the greater good of each individual seeking assistance.

When it is necessary to enter personal information into the database, entries of victims/survivors will be coded into a system and appointed a private number to ensure privacy. Each agency will determine the best way to assign codes to their entries. When using electronic correspondence, we agree to use the code system to protect confidential information.

When discussing very personal information with victims/survivors, it is our role to seek the best way to assist, particularly when they are in unsafe situations. We will adhere to strict guidelines and protect every victim/survivor's information by encrypting emails and having a secure database.

Individuals may not be comfortable sharing personal information, especially in the first meeting. It can take time for someone to gain trust to confide in you. If an individual is uneasy sharing information, such as personal details of the situation, we will respect this decision. We will collaborate with all victims/survivors to find a solution that works for them.

We must demonstrate confidentiality by first acknowledging that the information is sensitive and private with the victims/survivors. We agree to explain the steps we will take to ensure they are safe at the beginning and end of each appointment. All victims/survivors have the right to understand the process and decide after being provided with the information necessary to make an informed decision.

MC3 is committed to protecting victims/survivors by paying special attention to the following:

- We will give extra thought to clothing and other accessories associated with our respective logos when meeting with victims/survivors in public places. We do not want others to draw attention to the fact that they may receive services from us.
- If we encounter a victim/survivor in a public place after hours, we will wait for them to acknowledge us. We want to avoid any intentionally unsafe situations, as safety is our priority.
- If a victim/survivor receives services from us, we will not share this information with anyone including another family member or spouse, without an authorization to release information signed by the person receiving the service. This is consistent with existing regulations, followed by each agency.
- We agree to meet where people feel safe and in accessible spaces. We want them to feel at ease discussing their situation in a place that is convenient and comforting for them. However, the safety of everyone involved must be considered and prioritized. For example, if meeting in the home of a victim/survivor puts anyone in danger, including staff, we will avoid home meetings.
- We agree to listen and be attentive to body language cues, as well as verbal responses. We will ask the victim/survivor what they need to feel safe, not only physically but their emotional needs as well. Additionally, we will ensure that we are meeting the accessibility needs of those we serve. By discussing a safety plan with the survivor, we will ensure they always have a connection to a support system.

Confidentiality – Agency Level

It is very unusual to have two different agencies come together to work in this capacity. While we are working on sustainable change within both agencies, we may need to share ineffective workflows or processes or other information that could impede progress. It is critical that we are truthful about our shortcomings and our accomplishments, so we can determine what changes need to be made to improve results. Therefore, we agree to exercise confidentiality and carefully consider what information leaves our group and reaches our peers outside of the collaboration. The following are examples of special considerations we need to consider:

- Agency policies, procedures, or protocols that are not related to the work of the collaboration.
- Politics of partner agencies.
- Personal information about any staff person from either organization.

Mandatory Reporting



New York State has outlined which Human Service Professionals (page 37) are responsible to report based on their occupation. The Justice Center has outlined certain situations and departments that are required to follow specific guidelines when it comes to reporting abuse of older adults and adults with disabilities.

Human Service Professionals are passionate individuals dedicated to transforming lives and building healthier communities. They are ingrained in institutions around the world. Human Service Professionals work in schools, hospitals, and medical centers, non-profits, private organizations, and government agencies, just to name a few. Human Service Mandatory Reporters abide by regulations set forth by the Justice Center and have a responsibility to report vulnerable people in certain incidents when they have reasonable cause.

In New York State (NYS), both Catholic Charities and LIFE at RCIL *are required* by law to report child abuse or neglect. In our roles, we must consider each adult case individually, and commit to discussing all options with victims/survivors we work with. We do not have any Human Service Professionals who are required by law to report in our collaboration. We do not expect any potential conflicts.

Potential Risks and Advantages of Mandatory Reporting

People may not report due to factors such as housing, finances, as this can put someone at risk of feeling isolated. Each person has the right to make their own decisions and is allowed freedom of autonomy once they are provided with resources and information. We will rely on our values to help guide us when discussing Mandatory Reporting with victims/survivors. Below are factors to consider:

Potential Risks of Mandatory Reporting:

- It may discourage victims from seeking help. We need to consider all factors and angles the victim/survivor may experience if they report, discuss all potential circumstances.
- Could damage reputations and/or relationships. Determine how it will impact the family dynamic, custody, relationships, friendships, and so forth.
- There could be a potential conflict between family, professionals, clergy. Be truthful and explain that they may need to go to another church, physician, or other potential professional based on the conflict of interest.

Advantages of Mandatory Reporting:

- Removes a victim/survivor from harm. It allows the victim/survivor to have another level of security, knowing that they have the law on their side.

- The decision is made for the victim/survivor. When torn between reporting or not reporting, the decision made as to whether a Social Service Professional is required to report is based on the recommended guidelines.
- As a referral source, you will have an active role in the involvement assisting the victim/survivor. Both LIFE at RCIL and Catholic Charities are devoted to providing resources and help when working with a victim/survivor.

New York State Requirements

Overview of requirements for Human Service Professionals Provided by the New York State Justice Center for the protection of people with special needs. The following information is designed for Human Service Professionals.

Human Services Professionals are those who may not see a person receiving services daily, but who interact with the individual while providing professional services. For a full list of Human Services Professionals that are mandated reporters, please see the guidance document: An Overview of Reporting Requirements for Human Services Professionals. This can be found on the link below:

https://www.justicecenter.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2019/11/reporting-requirements-for-human-services-professionals_v2.pdf

Protection of People with Special needs Act

- Creates the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs.

- Establishes the Vulnerable Persons' Central Register.
- The protection of special needs act requires that certain people identified as Mandated Reporters, to report reportable incidents involving vulnerable persons to the Justice Center's Vulnerable Persons Central Register **VPCR**.

Who is considered a vulnerable person?

The Act defines a vulnerable person as a person who, due to physical or cognitive disabilities, or the need for services or placement, is receiving care from a facility or provider agency within the systems of the state Oversight Agencies.

There are three general types of reportable incidents:

Abuse: Abuse is an action by a custodian against a person receiving services that causes or has the potential to cause injury or serious protracted impairment of the physical, mental, or emotional condition of a service recipient. There are seven categories of abuse: physical abuse; sexual abuse; psychological abuse; deliberate inappropriate use of restraints; use of aversive conditioning; obstruction of reports of reportable incidents; and unlawful use or administration of a controlled substance.

Neglect: Neglect is any action, inaction or lack of attention that breaches a custodian's duty and that results in or is likely to result in death, physical injury or serious or protracted impairment of the physical, mental, or emotional condition of a person receiving services. Most commonly, neglect is the result of a custodian's lack of attention or failure to function as required by his or her responsibilities. Neglect can include, but is not limited to, failure to provide proper supervision; failure to provide adequate

food, clothing, shelter, medical, dental, optometric, or surgical care; and failure to provide access to educational instruction.

Significant Incident: Any incident, other than an incident of abuse or neglect, that because of its severity or the sensitivity of the situation, may result in, or has the reasonably foreseeable potential to result in, harm to the health, safety or welfare of a person receiving services. Types of significant incidents identified in statute:

1. Conduct on the part of a custodian that is inconsistent with an individual's treatment plan, educational program, or accepted treatment practices.
 - Unauthorized seclusion
 - Use of time-out
 - Inconsistent administration of medication
 - Inappropriate use of restraints
2. Conduct between persons receiving services resulting in harm or the potential for harm.
3. ANY other conduct identified in regulations of the State Oversight Agencies.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities:

“Reportable incident” shall mean the following conduct that a mandated reporter is required to report to the Vulnerable Persons' Central Register (VPCR):

- 1) Physical Abuse
- 2) Sexual Abuse

- 3) Psychological abuse
- 4) Deliberate inappropriate use of restraints
- 5) Use of aversive conditioning
- 6) Unlawful use of administration of a controlled substance
- 7) Neglect
- 8) Significant incident

What is reasonable cause? Generally, means that based on all the evidence, facts, and circumstances known or are readily available to you, it is rational to think that the service recipient was subjected to a reportable incident. If a reasonable person would have a rational or sensible suspicion that an event that qualifies as a reportable incident may have occurred, that is enough to require a report to the Justice Center. Conclusive evidence that a reportable incident occurred is not required.

When deciding whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a reportable incident has occurred, you should consider the following when assessing the reliability of information:

- Your own observations
- Trainings
- Experiences
- Common Sense
- Assess if the service recipient suffered an injury

Some things to consider for an incident to be reportable, the service recipient does not need to suffer harm for the incident to be reportable. The potential for harm must also be reported even if the reportable incident occurred at a different facility or program from where you are employed. Once you have been made aware that something has occurred, you are required to report the incident to the VPCR.

Multiple Reporting Exception

Where multiple reports to the VPCR would be made regarding the same incident, you are not required to report the allegation to the VPCR when **BOTH** of the following are met:

- You know that the incident was already reported to the VPCR; AND
- You know that you were named in the report as a person with knowledge of the incident.

To have actual knowledge, you must have direct and clear awareness that the report was made, and that you were named in the report by:

- Being present at the time the report was made and seeing or hearing the report.
- Being notified by the reporter that the report was made.

When is Reporting Required: Immediately

Immediately means right away.

- Reporting may be delayed to prevent harm or follow internal safety procedures.
- “Going off duty” does not justify a delay in reporting.

Please note, a report that is delayed more than 24 hours may be considered an obstruction of reports.

Reporting upon discovery means that one of two things has happened. Either you witness a suspected reportable incident or another person, including a service recipient or family member, provides you with

reasonable cause to suspect that a service recipient has been subjected to a reportable incident.

State Oversight Agencies

Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) –

Coordinates services 128,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities including: intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, down syndrome, and other neurological facilities.

OPWDD funds some of these facilities and some programs but does not certify them. ***These are not under Justice Center Jurisdiction:***

- Community Residence (CR)
- Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA)
- Certified Day Habilitation
- Article 16 Clinics

Examples include pre-vocational services, supported employment, sheltered workshops and Medicaid service coordination.

Certified Programs under Justice Center include:

- Inpatient Treatment Programs
- Private Psychiatric Centers
- Community Residence and Crisis Residences
- Residential Treatment Facilities for Children and Youth

Office of Mental Health (OMH) – Promotes mental health with a particular focus on facilitating recovery for persons throughout the lifespan who are receiving treatment for serious mental health.

Examples of ***Justice Center Jurisdiction*** include:

- Inpatient treatment programs
- Private psychiatric centers
- Community residents
- Crisis residents
- Residential treatment facilities for children and youth
- General hospital inpatient programs licensed by the department of health

Examples of programs ***not within the Justice Center*** include:

- OMH operated programs or facilities located in state correctional facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and community supervision.
- Docks and secure treatment facilities known as sex offender treatment programs located within OMH state operated psychiatric centers.

Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS)- The office of addiction services and support oversees one of the nation's largest addiction and services systems with nearly 1,650 prevention treatment & recovery programs.

The Justice Center has authority over all facilities operated licensed or certified by OASAS. Examples include:

- Addiction treatment centers
- Intensive residential rehabilitation
- Outpatient services
- Supportive living services

- Chemical dependency treatment centers operated in collaboration with the Department of Correctional and Community Services and community residential services

Some examples of programs ***not within the Justice Center's jurisdiction*** include:

- prevention services
- recovery initiatives
- drug courts and drug treatment alternatives to prison programs

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) - Dedicated to improving the integration of services for New York's children youths' families and vulnerable populations to promoting their development and to protecting them from violence/neglect/abuse and abandonment.

Relative to the Justice Center, the Office of Children and Family Services operates residential programs for youth that have been placed in the custody of the Commissioner of OCFS as a juvenile offender or juvenile delinquent. These youth live in secure or non-secure residential settings, OCFS also certifies, or licenses residential programs operated by voluntary agencies and local social services districts. Youths housed in these facilities may or may not be offenders or have a delinquent status. They may be there for foster care placement, respite care, homeless, runaway youth placement, undocumented youth placement, etc.....

The Justice Center has jurisdiction over state operated facilities which include:

- The Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth or DJ Joy
- Youth Detention
- Residential Treatment Facilities or RTFS
- Homeless Youth and Runaway Programs

Programs not included within the Justice Center's Jurisdiction include:

- In-State Foster Family Homes
- Residential Programs for Victims of Domestic Violence

Department of Health (DOH)– Protects and proves and promotes the health productivity of all New Yorkers.

The Justice Center's Jurisdiction of DOH programs include:

- Adult Homes or Enriched Housing Facilities
- Summer Day Camps
- Overnight Camps
- Traveling Summer Day Camps

The list of covered camps may vary each year depending on permitting. The number of covered adult care facilities may also vary depending on the census of individual served with serious mental illness.

The list of DOH programs not covered under the Justice Center's Jurisdiction includes:

- Nursing Homes
- Hospitals

State Education Department (SED) - Part of the University of New York, one of the most complete interconnected systems of educational services in the United States. Relative to the Justice Center's Jurisdiction, the State Education Department operates supports and regulates residential schools that provide education to students with disabilities. Both day and residential

students who attend such schools are protected under the people with special needs act.

Justice Center's Jurisdictions Examples (Residential Programs Only):

- NYS School for the Blind
- NYS School for the Deaf
- State Supported Schools
- Approved Residential Schools (In-State and Out-of-State)

Immunity from Liability - The laws grant immunity to Mandated Reporters from a legal claim which may arise from a good faith act of providing information to the VPCR.

Failure to Report – Any Mandated Reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report a case of suspected abuse or neglect to the VPCR may be subject to disciplinary action including termination and may be sued in civil court for monetary damages for any harm caused by the failure to make a report.

In addition, any Human Services Professional, who meets the definition of a Mandated Reporter, who knowingly and willfully fails to report an allegation of abuse and neglect, may be prosecuted for Class A misdemeanor.

When a Report is Made



1. A trained call center representative collects information from the reporter and an incident number is assigned.
2. The call is recorded.

After the Call is Taken



Reportable:

Abuse
Neglect
Significant Incident

Non-Reportable

General Inquiry
Outside Justice Center Jurisdiction

Once Classification is Made



Once the report is classified, a case is created and assigned. The report is assigned to the appropriate entity for investigation. Once assigned, the

investigation begins. Regardless of who is conducting the investigation, the Justice Center reviews all abuse and neglect investigations and makes the final determination about whether or not the allegation is substantiated or unsubstantiated.

Once the determination is made, the Justice Center notifies the victim and they / them personal representative, the subject in the case, and the provider agency director or CEO of the outcome. For purposes of confidentiality, Mandated Reporters and witnesses are not notified of the outcome of the investigation. The Justice Center does not interrogate, arrest, or prosecute individuals who receive services. The Justice Center also does not investigate allegations of significant incidents. Significant incidents are delegated to the appropriate State Oversight Agency for review.

In summary, the Protection of People With Special Needs Act established the Justice Center to provide protection and safeguards for vulnerable persons and identifies Human Service Professionals as mandated reporters. The Justice Center has jurisdiction over incidents of abuse and neglect committed by custodians employed by certain facilities, programs, and agencies operated/licensed/ or certified by six state oversight agencies.

Internal Engagement:

One component of effective communication is respect, and it lets individuals know their efforts are valued. Respect means accepting others for who they are, even if they are different or think differently. A respectful attitude is the most important trait in the workplace because a positive environment helps achieves better results. We agree to:

- Value the time and workload of others
- Listen to what everyone has to say
- Pay attention to nonverbal communication
- Practice common courtesy and politeness
- Consider other's views and opinions

The nature of our work can lead to interruptions, especially in a crisis environment. We agree with the following:

Each meeting will have one member from Life at RCIL or Catholic Charities in attendance to share ideas and thoughts. We both provide person centered services; however, we provide different roles and services and discussing our experiences is critical in working towards the same goal of improving services.

The Project Coordinator will share all weekly messages by email. All members will have access to prior discussions and developments made within the collaboration. In addition, we will use a topic specific survey to ensure feedback is obtained from all members of the collaboration outside of the weekly meeting.

When meeting virtually, we will ensure each member is removed from their workstations so they can focus on working on the needs of this project without intrusion. This will allow for a more meaningful conversation.

We will use professional judgment when answering calls and emails during scheduled meetings. Our time together is limited, so it is important to make the most of our meetings.

We agree to respond to requests for information in a timely manner to reach our deliverables.

We will agree to provide feedback. People want feedback and recognition to show that their contributions matter. Providing positive and constructive criticism helps improve communication within the collaboration as it gives an insight into your strengths and weaknesses.

As humans, we can be enthusiastic about our role, and we may have an overwhelming desire to take things personally or to heart as we work towards making change. We agree to step away from our individual feelings and put the needs of our victims/survivors from our community as a priority. We will focus on what is best for the collaboration and we will not jump to conclusions or make assumptions without talking it through.

MC3 Communication Meeting Guidelines

The Project Coordinator sets agendas, facilitating the meetings, ensuring all members receive meeting minutes, and keeping everyone informed of progress. To make the agenda successful, we need to ensure everyone's input so we will require the contribution of all members, as this is key to the success of our group. Everyone will be welcome to speak freely and share creative thoughts or ideas. We will eliminate confusion by actively listening to each other and asking questions for clarification.

We will try to meet face-to-face each month for weekly collaboration meetings. If we can't meet in person, we will meet virtually. Email is the best way to communicate updates and changes. It allows the recipient time

to review the information and respond thoughtfully. Email is easily searchable, making it safe and easy to store and retrieve messages.

Members will notify collaborators if they are out for PTO for over one week, as planned. In the event of an emergency, it is acceptable that another member of the collaboration informs the group of the absence.

At least one member from each agency is expected to attend the weekly joint meeting, held every Wednesday from 11:00 to 12:00. The Project Coordinator attends each meeting and manages the meeting agenda and minutes. For last-minute cancellations, an email, phone call, or text message must be sent to the Project Coordinator.

We will keep the leadership staff of both agencies informed of progress and updates regarding this grant. We agree to discuss updates at staff meetings and educate staff about the work being done in the community.

If there is an extended absence or planned vacation, the Project Coordinator will assign a point person to step in.

If the Project Coordinator is out for an extended period, the lead agency will name a replacement. The team will be notified either by email or during the weekly meeting.

External Communication (Activating Change/OVW):

Our collaboration may require communication with individuals or organizations outside of MC3. We will also be expected to communicate with Activating Change or OVW as we progress through this project.

The Project Coordinator handles correspondence between Activating Change and OVW. A bi-weekly meeting is scheduled between the Project Coordinator and the TA overseeing this project and it is expected that the Project Coordinator will submit all deliverables.

Although the Project Coordinator is the primary source of communication for MC3, any MC3 member can contact Activating Change directly. In the rare occurrence that there is a concern regarding the integrity of the collaboration, any member can reach out to the OVW.

Communications with Victims/Survivors

You can expect to encounter various barriers of communication, including cultural differences, disabilities, and social barriers. Rather than using a generic approach based on assumptions and prejudices, each victim/survivor will be approached individually. We need to make sure our internal and external communications are open to all cultures so that everyone feels welcome. Communication styles will be tailored to the needs of each victim/survivor, and materials will be accessible to anyone seeking domestic violence support. To be successful in providing services to the people in need, we must consider the following:

We will remain aware of the cultural needs of the communities we serve, not assume what is needed, but listen and understand what the barriers are to providing needed services. Ensure specific training is available for both agencies regarding the different communication styles used for those with disabilities. Work towards a consistent dialog that does not upset or offend the people we serve.

Employ bilingual staff at both agencies to ensure a clear understanding of customs and practices. If our communication fails, the victim/survivor may withdraw from the service or revert to their abuser.

With Spanish accounting for 14% of conversations in Montgomery County, there is a need to provide materials in both English and Spanish. This is to ensure that people with disabilities that are at risk for domestic violence can be reached. Both agencies have a contract with the Language Line Service, so we can communicate in all languages.

Victim/survivor communication needs are critical. So, when we interact with them for the first time, we should ask if they need translation or another accommodation. We must adapt to the style of communication that best suits them.

MC3 will continue to address the remaining barriers to culture-specific programming in our community and discuss how we can continue to address their needs through communication. Examples of these barriers include cultural terminology, forms of speech, rituals, and social drama. Inadequate cultural communication treats customers in a very one-size-fits-all manner. We need to ensure that our communications are inclusive. It is about making it available and accessible to all cultures.

Communication Plan with Executive Leadership

Upper Management will be made aware of what the collaboration is working on, especially if that work leads to changes in policies or procedures. Executive Leadership is involved with finance, marketing, and other aspects of this project, so understanding what transpires makes it much easier to get their approval. Correspondence can include face to face, email or virtual. All communication methods are acceptable.

The directors from each agency taking part in the collaboration will update leadership periodically so that they are aware of what is being worked on and the direction of the work. All requested documents from leadership will be sent upon request. Regular meetings will be held to allow the Project

Coordinator and directors the opportunity to provide management with updates on the project.

Communication Plan for Media

The nature and extent of the information conveyed to the media will depend on the specific circumstances. Each agency will follow their own process in determining how media requests are handled. All requests will be reviewed by Executive Leadership, who will ensure consistency in our approach and determine who will deliver the message.

There may come a time when the collaboration releases information to the public. This information may include local television, radio, social media, or newspapers. We will carefully consider the content and work within the collaboration to determine the appropriate media outlet.

Responses to Media Requests

If the media contacts MC3 regarding this project and our work, they will be directed to the Project Coordinator, who will obtain all the information and coordinate with the media point person (s) and key leadership from each agency for a statement. If the Project Coordinator is absent, another collaboration member can take on the request. One point of contact for the initial request eliminates confusion and will provide a consistent message to anyone else involved in the decision-making process. We will not provide any statement without guidance and approval.

Should the media request involve safety and well-being of a victim/survivor that we serve, the following steps will be taken:

- We will maintain privacy and confidentiality by not verifying any personal information in the event of an inquiry regarding a victim/survivor.
- Members of the collaboration, as well as Executive Leadership, will review the request. Staff members will not be permitted to speak to the media without approval.
- Staff and reception will be notified of the request if the media contacts them. They will refer any requests to the Project Coordinator, who will contact collaboration members and all necessary parties.
- We will treat the media with respect and professionalism and respond in a courteous, positive, helpful manner while we are processing the request.

Media Speaking Points

- 1) People with disabilities have a higher lifetime prevalence of experiencing abuse than people without disabilities, and they experience violent crime at twice the rate of people without disabilities.
- 2) The Adult Maltreatment Report 2021 found that 39.5% of perpetrators are women and 37.5% of perpetrators are men and most perpetrators were in the age range of 50-59. Below are the most common forms of abuse:

Abandonment	47.8%
Emotional Abuse	43.1%
Exploration	55.7%
Neglect	52.9%

Physical Abuse	47.4%
Self-Neglect	32.1%
Sexual Abuse	45.1%

- 3) Catholic Charities and LIFE at RCIL has been awarded a grant for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence to improve processes, accessibility, and safety for people we serve. Together, we will identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations, so we can provide better accessibility to those who request our services.

- 4) The US Department of Justice has awarded a Violence Against Women grant to Catholic Charities and LIFE at RCIL for Montgomery County. This is not a direct service program. Its purpose is to identify barriers and improve services for people with disabilities who experience domestic violence.

- 5) This collaboration is funded by a three-year grant from the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The collaboration comprises of members from Catholic Charities and LIFE at RCIL. They designed this program to look at ways we can improve domestic violence services in Montgomery County.

- 6) Our collaboration has a strong commitment to working together to create safe, accessible quality services for victims/survivors with disabilities. We believe our experience and our joint efforts will make a meaningful impact on the delivery of service for the people we serve.

Chapter #8

TIMELINE

Proposed Timeline

<i>Product/Phase</i>	<i>Approximate Timeframe</i>
Collaboration Charter	October - December 2022
Approval by OVW	Jan-22
Develop Needs Assessment Plan	February - Mar 2023
Approval by OVW	April-23
Conduct Needs Assessment	May - June 2023
Develop Findings Report	July - Aug 2023
Approval by OVW	September-23
Develop Strategic Plan	Oct - Dec 2023
Approval by OVW	Jan-23
Implementation Phase	Feb 2023 - June 2025

Chapter #9



Abuse: Abuse is improper treatment toward another person, often to gain benefit unfairly or improperly. Abuse can come in many forms, such as physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, coercion and threats, economic, using intimidation or privilege, isolation, criminal activity, as well as minimization, denial of wrongdoing, and shifting blame to the victim. Abuse occurs when someone causes another person harm or distress. It can occur in someone's home, a care home, hospital, or a public place. Often the people who commit abuse are taking advantage of a special relationship and may utilize power and control tactics on the victim of abuse.

Accessibility: The quality of being usable, reachable, and obtainable and referring to the basic human right to an environment that supports an individual's ability to move or communicate. Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, services, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for all people regardless of individual barriers.

Activating Change: An independent, non-profit organization to increase the visibility of the justice issues people with disabilities and Deaf people face and to have a greater impact on ending those injustices. They provide technical assistance to grantees.

Barrier(s): Any obstacle that prevents a person from fully participating in all aspects of society, keeping them apart and making progress difficult. This is true for language, physical and mental health, architectural, informational, communicational, technological, organizational, and attitudinal barriers. Barriers to entry can affect an industry (and the companies within that industry) in unexpected ways including regulatory hurdles, or other obstacles that prevent changes from being made.

Commitment: An agreement or pledge to do something in the future. Having a dedicated work ethic shows a commitment to the tasks one undertakes, whether they are personal or professional. A commitment is a promise to assume a position or carry out a specific course of action. Making a commitment to doing or supporting something, whether personal or professional, is one of the most fundamental aspects of success.

Compassion: Compassion is the feeling that arises when we are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. Empathy can motivate us to be good to others as we can imagine being in their position and think about how we would wish to be treated. Empathy and compassion are not the same and show activity in different areas of the brain. With empathy, we join the suffering of others who suffer, but may stop short of actually helping. With compassion, we take a step away from the emotion of empathy and ask ourselves, "How can we help?"

Compromise: An agreement or settlement of a dispute reached by each side making concessions and seeking a mutually beneficial solution. Compromise does not indicate complete agreement between all parties. Seeking a compromise is a healthy way to maintain personal values, beliefs, opinions, and preferences while still meeting halfway.

Consensus Style: A consensus based decision-making process is an effort in which affected parties (stakeholders) seek to agree on a course of action to address an issue or set of related issues. In a consensus process, the stakeholders work together to find a mutually acceptable solution. Consensus decisions can lead to better quality outcomes that empower the group or community to move forward to create their future together.

Empower: A means of providing power, authority, and/or autonomy to an individual. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals to identify their own strengths and needs to make informed decisions to improve their quality of life. Empowerment enables leaders and team members to live to their fullest potential and to do their own work. Leaders who build a culture of empowerment set others up for success by enabling others to experience continual growth and align their vision and values with organizational goals. Empowering those we provide services for enables them to experience growth and success on their own terms.

Ethical: Pertaining to or dealing with morals or the principles of morality and being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession. Ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

Equal: Treating people equally means treating everyone the same regardless of their race, sex, social status, disability, religion, or anything else. In a community, equal treatment allows us to work together, solve problems, and feel safe and cared for. Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

Flexibility: To be flexible is to respond to altered circumstances or conditions and to be willing to accommodate others' needs and not be preoccupied with one's own objectives. It is to be adaptable to the prevailing circumstances and to have the ability to adapt to the way other people work and cope with differences in conditions or environment. Giving people flexibility is a vote of confidence. It shows faith in their ability to make decisions about where and how they work, as well as their competence in managing their own time.

Improvement: Make and become better by altering, changing, or rephrasing. This grant improves services for victims/survivors who are disabled and experiencing domestic violence. The systemic process of identifying the root causes of a performance issue in an organization and implementing solutions to resolve that issue helps ensure solutions are suited to the problem at hand.

Inclusive: Our collaboration will be open to everyone, not limited to certain people, and will not leave any person or part of a group out. When people are included, their worth is recognized and respected. Employees are at

their best when they are their own authentic selves. A diverse and inclusive workplace is one that makes everyone, regardless of who they are or what they do for the business, feel equally involved in and supported in all areas of the workplace.

Integrity: The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. Integrity means being honest, behaving ethically, and doing the right thing. Integrity in the workplace comes in many forms, but above all refers to having upstanding character traits and work ethics including sound judgement, honesty, dependability, and loyalty.

Latinx: Latinx is coined from Latino and Latina in an effort to be more inclusive to gender non-conforming individuals.

Listening: Listening is receiving language through the ears and involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences. Active listening is the foundation of successful communication and involves going beyond simply hearing the words that another person speaks but also seeking to understand the meaning and intent behind them. It is a valuable workplace skill, which requires being an active participant in the communication process. This can promote a feeling of being valued and heard, create a feeling of trust, and strengthen working relationships.

Participation: The act of taking part or sharing in something; the act of sharing in the activities of a group. When employees take part more actively in company matters, input their ideas, perspectives, and opinions, they feel recognized, appreciated, and valued. They receive higher job satisfaction. They can see that their contribution matters and is being appreciated by many.

Respect: To respect someone is to deeply admire their abilities, qualities, or achievements. Respect indicates an acceptance of another person for who they are, even when they are different from you, or you don't agree with them. Respect reduces stress, maximizes productivity and

collaboration, increases employee satisfaction, and creates a fair work environment.

Social Drama: A drama about people and the place where they live; a drama that deals with the way people interact with others. Social drama may prohibit initiating interaction with others, establishing and maintaining relationships, providing others with encouragement, and counting on others for help. Social dramas are potential turning points in social situations where the social order gets deconstructed, debated, and reformed.

Victim/Survivor: Although a victim is a legal definition necessary within the criminal justice system, survivor can be used as a term of empowerment to convey that a person has started the healing process and may have gained a sense of peace in their life. For the purpose of this document, we will refer to victim/survivor as a person with a disability experiencing domestic violence. Often, they live in fear, worrying about their safety and impending danger. Sometimes they need to leave their homes to protect themselves and their loved ones. They look to others for support, to help manage and improve the situation, and to seek a better quality of life. Although they may be victims of abuse, we can empower them to see themselves as survivors.

Chapter #10

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