

Volunteer Safety & Mandatory Reporting Policy

Guide for Course Leaders

Applies to: All REBOOT Recovery Volunteers and Group Leaders

Effective Date: February 18, 2026

1. Purpose of This Policy

REBOOT Recovery is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for every participant.

Because sensitive and personal experiences may be shared in group settings, this policy explains:

- The role of REBOOT volunteers
- The limits of confidentiality
- When safety concerns require action
- How to respond to difficult disclosures
- How to escalate concerns appropriately

2. Your Role as a Volunteer Leader

REBOOT Recovery leaders serve as peer facilitators, supportive guides, and group hosts. To maintain the integrity of our peer-led model, leaders do not act as:

- Therapists or Counselors
- Clinicians
- Legal Investigators or Mandated Reporters in a clinical sense.

While REBOOT groups are peer-led, state laws regarding "Mandatory Reporting" vary. In many jurisdictions, any individual—regardless of their professional status—is required by law to report suspected abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult (typically defined as those 65+ or with a physical/mental disability).

Because our participants generally do not fall into these categories, these laws rarely apply to REBOOT sessions. However, to ensure the safety of our community and the protection of our leaders:

- **Escalate Immediately:** If you become aware of a situation involving the potential abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult, or if a participant expresses a desire to harm themselves or others, contact REBOOT Recovery staff immediately for guidance.
- **Know Your Local Requirements:** As a leader in your community, it is important to be aware that your state may have universal reporting laws. You can find your specific state's reporting hotlines and requirements at Childwelfare.gov or by searching your state's Department of Human Services.
- **Follow Mandatory Reporting Obligations:** First responders and others who may be mandatory reporters by nature of their licensure or profession should in addition follow the legal requirements of their agency, state and license.

3. Confidentiality and Its Limits

REBOOT Recovery groups respect participant privacy. Personal stories shared within the group should be treated with care and discretion.

IMPORTANT: Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when safety or legal obligations require action. Confidentiality may be limited if a participant discloses:

- Current abuse or neglect of a minor
- Abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult as defined by “at risk” population laws
- Imminent risk of serious harm to self
- Imminent risk of serious harm to others
- Situations where reporting is legally required (may vary for each state)

4. Understanding Past Versus Current Abuse

Past Abuse With No Current Danger

If a participant shares abuse that occurred in the past and there is no indication of current danger, you may:

- Listen with empathy
- Do not investigate
- Do not seek detailed proof
- Offer support and resources if appropriate
- Escalation may not be required

Current Abuse or Ongoing Risk

REBOOT Leaders must take action if there is reasonable concern that:

- A minor is currently being harmed
- A vulnerable adult is being abused
- Someone is in immediate danger
- Someone intends to harm themselves or others

Definitions of Vulnerable Populations

All individuals under the age of 18 are considered to be a “minor” and qualify as a vulnerable individual. If anyone shares regarding current or ongoing harm to a minor, alert your REBOOT coach and contact local law enforcement. If any form of abuse or accusation of abuse occurs within the group itself or on location, including childcare, call your REBOOT coach and alert your location supervisor immediately. If present danger exists, call 911.

A vulnerable adult is defined as any person 18 years or older who meets one or more of the following:

- **Residential Status:** Lives in a facility like a nursing home, assisted living, or psychiatric unit.
- **Disability:** Has a physical, mental, or developmental disability that substantially limits their ability to perform daily tasks (feeding, dressing, hygiene).
- **Incapacity:** Is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation due to a condition like dementia, brain damage, or advanced age.

5. How to Respond to a Disclosure

Step 1. Stay Calm and Present

Helpful responses include:

- “Thank you for sharing that.”
- “I am really glad you told us.”
- “That sounds incredibly difficult.”

Avoid:

- Shocked reactions
- Panic
- Judgment
- Promising absolute confidentiality

Step 2. Gently Clarify Immediate Safety

Ask only simple, safety-focused questions:

- “Are you safe right now?”
- “Is anyone currently being hurt?”
- “Is a minor involved or at risk?”

Do not:

- Ask for graphic details
- Conduct an investigation
- Press for extensive explanations
- Confront the individual causing the abuse

Step 3. Affirm and Offer support

- “You are not alone.”
- “Thank you for trusting us.”
- “There is help available, and I’ll help you find it.”
- “If you need a safe place to stay, I’ll help you find somewhere appropriate.”
- “If you are ok with it, I would like to reach out to some outside resources for advice.”

6. Escalation Process

Leaders should never manage serious safety concerns alone.

Contact the following when possible:

- Your REBOOT Coach and your Local Host Supervisor
- Emergency services if immediate danger exists. In emergency situations, call 911.

7. What Volunteers Should NOT Do

- Do not investigate (contacting the accused abuser, discussing with others etc)
- Do not attempt to provide professional therapy or counseling
- Do not confront alleged abusers
- Do not promise secrecy
- Do not ignore safety concerns
- Do not assume someone else will handle it

8. Documentation Guidelines

If a safety concern or escalation occurs, briefly document:

- Date and time
General nature of concern
- Actions taken

Documentation should be:

- Brief
- Factual
- Objective

Avoid:

- Detailed narratives
- Opinions
- Diagnoses
- Speculation or triangulation

Share those notes with your REBOOT coach and local host supervisor.

Crisis Response Roles, Responsibilities, and Tactical Communication Immediate Actions for Local Leaders

IF A CRISIS OCCURS:

1. Ensure immediate safety. Call 911 if needed.
2. Contact your Coach immediately.
3. Do not communicate publicly or on social media.
4. Document only known facts.
5. Wait for direction from REBOOT leadership within 2 hours or less.