

Child Maltreatment Reporting and The Ethical Use of Professional Discretion

Program Description

In North Carolina, “Any person or institution who has cause to suspect” is considered a mandated reporter of child abuse, neglect and dependency. Professionals working with families have a unique role in this regard, in that the family may already be seeking our help, many times for the very issues we are required to report about them. Issues of trust and maintaining the therapeutic relationship must be factored into decisions to access the ethically and legally approved breaks with confidentiality. The child welfare and law enforcement systems that respond to these reports can be confusing to navigate, at best, especially when the professional is not familiar with the frames of reference and sometimes competing priorities of these systems. In order to support children and families and address immediate safety issues, it is important that the professional understand aspects of the child welfare system and the legal system with regard to reporting and the costs and benefits of involving each of those systems. This session will examine the NC Juvenile Code and the sections of the North Carolina Criminal Law that apply to juveniles, demonstrate the flow of response once a report is made to the Department of Social Services, and will examine the often overlooked gaps in mandated reporting.

Program Objectives:

Upon completion of this program participants will:

1. Describe the nuances of NC General Statutes which apply to mandated and non-mandated reporting of child maltreatment;
2. Explain the convergence of laws and various ethical codes for reporting;
3. Outline the gaps in legal mandates and identify options for reporting within those gaps;
4. Apply the material learned to case vignettes.

Agenda

Available upon request

Target Audience

Mental health, substance use and health and human service professionals.

Credit

2.0 hours

Faculty

Amy Levine, MSW, LCSW, is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work, where she teaches courses in child welfare and mental health and serves as a faculty member in the field education program. Amy has a practice background in both public and private child welfare services as well as mental health and has worked for a number of years as a child, adolescent, and family therapist. Amy is also a Certified Clinical Supervisor,

providing supervision and consultation to Provisionally Licensed Social Workers in North Carolina. Amy's practice and research interests include trauma-informed care, child and adolescent mental health, and the intersection of child welfare and behavioral health services.