

# Critical Incident Protocol

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Arizona Child and Family Advocacy Network (ACFAN) Critical Incident Protocol is to protect the integrity and reputation of ACFAN and its members during a natural or manmade crisis and to ensure that advocacy center clientele are provided all necessary services.

It is not the intention of this protocol, or of ACFAN, to disseminate information regarding every difficult situation a center is facing to our larger membership. However, this protocol does recognize that the public exposure one center faces can effect the perception of ACFAN and its members, and therefore ACFAN and non-affected centers may be approached for comment on the issue.

## **Definitions; A critical incident may involve:**

- **Serious Violations of Law or Regulations:** Credible preliminary findings involving significant issues that may place the member organization at risk or may result in civil or criminal penalties or other serious violations of local, state or federal law.
- **Significant Changes in Operation Resulting in Diminished Service to Clients:** Circumstances that impact the agency's ability to serve clients.
- **External Impact:** Any significant incident which could possibly generate negative media coverage, negative legislative or regulatory attention, or other such circumstance that could affect the credibility and reputation of ACFAN and its members.

## **Critical Incident Response:**

Initial Response: Once a center has determined that a critical incident exists, the center director shall contact the ACFAN Board President or Coordinator, who will immediately notify the Board President. Early planning creates a strong potential for minimizing negative outcomes. If there is doubt that a critical incident exists, ACFAN shall be notified to discuss the facts. The Board President will determine if the protocol should be activated.

## **Activating the Protocol:**

The Board President will determine if a critical incident exists. The President shall immediately notify the Board of Directors and Coordinator and brief them of the incident. The Board of Directors and Coordinator shall assess the situation, develop a plan and message, and determine whether and how information will be disseminated to other ACFAN members. Member centers can expect that ACFAN will provide support and resources to the center in crisis while also protecting the general interests for the ACFAN membership. The Board of Directors and Coordinator shall operate under the premise that it is to the benefit of the ACFAN membership to handle the media outreach quickly, truthfully and with the goal of establishing creditability and confidence. The Board of Directors may utilize member or non-member resources as deemed necessary to the incident.

The following items will be addressed:

1. Identify a spokesperson
2. Assess the facts and develop key media messages. Determine the need to disseminate key messages to local centers.
3. Determine if preliminary contact should be made with the media
4. If needed, facilitate the arrangement of alternative services for clients of the affected local center. Identify other agencies involved in the crisis and locate their spokesperson to discuss their strategy and assess viability of coordination of messages.
5. Create a list of parties which may receive contact from the media regarding the incident (local elected officials, legislators). Determine whether contacting these parties with key messages is appropriate.
6. Determine a schedule for further meetings/communication.

In determining a key message and response, the team will make every effort to ensure that the names of clients are kept confidential unless and until such information has been made public record and if doing so will not impede the criminal justice process nor jeopardize the well being of a victim and his/her family.

### **ACFAN Member Centers**

Member centers that are not directly affected by the crisis are requested to do the following:

1. If a local media request arises regarding the situation or what is perceived to be a potential crisis with wider implications, centers shall make every effort to first contact ACFAN and the affected center with information regarding the nature of the media request before responding. If and when possible, the press shall be directed to the center affected by the situation.
2. If a media request regarding the crisis is accepted, centers shall utilize any prepared materials and messages which are provided by ACFAN.
3. When responding to media requests, at no time shall a center disclose the identity of a client, nor confirm an individual as a client, unless such information has already become a matter of public record and if doing so will not impede the criminal justice process or jeopardize the well being of a victim and his/her family.
4. All centers are strongly encouraged to develop a communications plan which designates a spokesperson for their center and proscribes that all media requests be directed to that individual.
5. NCA member centers are reminded that they have a requirement to notify NCA of certain critical incidents occurring at or involving local Children's Advocacy Centers. Refer to [www.nationalchildrensalliance.org](http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org) for further information on this requirement.

**Chapter Member Emergency Contact Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have text messaging capability? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Home Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you able to access your home email remotely? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In Case of Emergency, where can you be reached? \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Emergency Contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you provide shelter for another employee and/or their families? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

How many people can you accommodate? \_\_\_\_\_

Names and relationships of other people in your household:

Name	Relationship	Cell Phone Number

Please list any special needs:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_