



## Policy and Procedure # 272

### Internal Investigations

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date: 5/8/24

#### POLICY:

EFI is committed to providing services that enhance the quality of care provided to clients and to protect them (to the extent possible) from harm and to ensure that clients are free from abuse and neglect.

This policy outlines the internal investigation process to ensure that investigations are conducted in a fair, impartial, thorough thoughtful manner and complies with all applicable laws.

#### PROCEDURE:

Any report abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment will be investigated by the Corporate Compliance Officer (CCO) or an investigator designated by the Executive Director. Investigations will be initiated immediately, with further investigation undertaken appropriate to the seriousness and circumstances of the situation.

1. Internal investigations conducted incorporate the following:
  - a. Witnesses to the incident or occurrence will be identified and will be interviewed in as private an environment as possible.
  - b. Interviews should be conducted separately by qualified, objective parties. Interviews of clients should be conducted by parties with an understanding of the client's unique needs and/or capabilities.
  - c. Pertinent information will be reviewed (e.g. records, photos, observations of incident scene, expert assessments).
  - d. Physical evidence, if any, will be identified and appropriate steps will be taken to safeguard and preserve physical evidence.
2. The investigation will be documented. Documentation must include an investigative report.
  - a. For all reportable incidents, investigative reports will contain the following information:
    - i. Identifying data, such as the name(s) of person(s) receiving services involved in the incident or occurrence; the date the incident/occurrence was reported and/or discovered; the classification of the incident.
      1. Client initials can be used to maintain client confidentiality.
    - ii. A description of the incident or notable occurrence
    - iii. Immediate protections provided to person(s) receiving services
    - iv. A summary of the evidence obtained in the investigation
    - v. Conclusions, including the findings in the case of a report of abuse or neglect
    - vi. Recommendations, including recommendations for remedial actions.
  - b. Notes taken by the investigator will be destroyed after the investigative report has been completed.



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3. The investigation will continue through completion regardless of whether an employee or volunteer who is directly involved leaves employment (or contact with clients) before the investigation is complete.
4. EFI will maintain the confidentiality of information regarding the identities of reporters, witnesses, and subjects of reportable incidents, and limit access to such information to parties who need to know, including, but not limited to, administrators and assigned investigators.
  - a. Employees involved with an investigation are required to maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the investigation.
  - b. Employees accused of misconduct, may be suspended from working with clients pending the investigation. This action is to protect both the employee and EFI during the investigation process.
    - i. If the investigation shows no misconduct, none of the information about the investigation will be included in the employee's personnel file.
5. Restrictions on situations that may compromise the independence of investigators.
  - a. Any party who has been assigned to investigate a reportable incident, in which he or she recognizes a potential conflict of interest in the assignment, will report this information to the agency. The agency will relieve the assigned investigator of the duty to investigate if it is determined that there is a conflict of interest in the assignment.
  - b. No one may conduct an investigation of any reportable incident or serious notable occurrence in which he or she was directly involved, in which his or her testimony is incorporated, or in which a spouse, domestic partner, or immediate family member was directly involved.
  - c. No one may conduct an investigation in which his or her spouse, domestic partner, or immediate family member provides supervision to the program where the incident took place or provides supervision to directly involved parties.
6. When an investigation is completed:
  - a. Incident Report follow-up will be faxed to DDA and APS/RCS as required.
  - b. If the investigation reveals a serious breach of agency policy, disciplinary action will proceed according to policy.
  - c. If the investigation reveals that illegal activity has occurred, a report will be made to law enforcement.
  - d. If the investigation indicates that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a client may have occurred, APS/RCS will be notified. In addition, a report should be made to the licensing unit at the Washington State Department of Health.