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One Executive Place  
600, 1816 Crowchild Trail NW  
Calgary, Alberta T2M 3Y7  
Phone: (403) 802-1680  
Fax: (403) 270-7446  
www.familytherapy.org  
e-mail: cftc@familytherapy.org

## CFTC Violence and Abuse Prevention Policy

The Calgary Family Therapy Centre is committed to relational wellbeing both for the community we serve and the community we are as a place to work. This commitment includes developing and adopting a specific policy with procedures considered reasonable to protect both our staff and the community we serve from the potential hazards associated with workplace violence.

CFTC, represented by its Executive Director, is committed to eliminating or, if that is not reasonably practicable, controlling the hazard of violence. Everyone must uphold this policy and work together to prevent workplace violence. Accordingly, this policy applies to both CFTC staff, clients, and to all people, either internal or external to CFTC who may exert, be subjected to, or witness violence at this workplace.

### Definitions for this policy:

“*Violence*”, whether at a work site or work-related, means **the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence or abuse as defined in this policy.**

“*Abuse*” is a form of violence, happening between two or more people participating in hierarchical relationships (e.g. between a minor or an elder and their caregivers; or between a professional therapist and a client; or between a supervisor and a supervisee). Following the HPA ([Health Professions Act, available in The Centre Sharepoint](#)) abuse includes, but is not limited to, physical harm, emotional manipulation, sexual misconduct, financial exploitation, and neglect.

“*Therapists*” are people who relate with a client adopting a professional role and, as such, they are considered to be in a position of trust and authority, and the client is not believed to ever be in a position that would allow them to provide full and true consent to any form of sexual activity. It includes in-training and staff therapists, and clinical supervisors.

“*Clients*” are people who receive professional services, which normally includes a person under the age of 19 and their family or people they live with.

“*Worker*” or “CFTC staff” is any person who works at CFTC including employees, contractors, students, and volunteers.

“*Therapeutic setting*” is the context in which professional family therapy services are delivered. It includes all interactions between clients and therapists at the workplace. It includes the documentation that therapists are obliged to do in delivering professional services (e.g., keeping clinical records in Brief Interview Reports).

### Responsibilities

Responsibilities supporting this policy include procedures and measures adopted by specific roles at the CFTC to protect workers from workplace violence. Procedures include a means of summoning immediate assistance, and a process for workers to report incidents or raise concerns.

### Workers

Every worker must work in compliance with this policy and the supporting procedures. All workers are required to raise any concerns about workplace violence and to report any violent incidents or threats they may be subjected to, or witness, as specified below in this policy.

Any worker who witnesses or suspects abuse to a member of the public or staff in the workplace context should immediately report it to the Executive Director using the [violence incident report template](#). The Director will



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determine actions to be taken regarding the reported incident, which may include the need to further investigate the incident, assist the victim(s), and report the incident to the appropriate authorities as required by law.

## Clients

All individuals who have been subjected to or become aware of violence and who wish to make a complaint are encouraged to raise their concerns by contacting any of the following:

1. CFTC administration using the email address [cftc@familytherapy.org](mailto:cftc@familytherapy.org)
2. Any CFTC staff member, including administrative or clinical staff. The contact and complaint may be issued verbally (in-person or by phone); or in written form, addressing the CFTC staff member by a known institutional email.
3. The CFTC Executive Director, either by email or requesting an appointment. The Executive Director's email will always be made available upon request in the front office.

## Therapists (Students, Staff Therapists, Clinical Supervisors)

Therapists are responsible to discuss with clients the exceptions or limits of confidentiality, which should include situations where people are, or it is suspected they may be exposed to serious harm or situations where minors or elders are under abuse. Therapists should take immediate and reasonable action to prevent or stop the abuse or risk of harm. If the therapist is a **student**, they should immediately report the situation to their primary clinical supervisors. The therapist will ensure that the violence has been reported to the appropriate authorities, normally the police and/or Child and Family Services. If the therapist is unsure whether the suspected abuse has been reported, or whether a proper investigation has been initiated by the appropriate authorities, the therapists will immediately report it directly to the appropriate authorities. In addition to calling 911 for requesting immediate police or medical assistance, reporters of violent incidents will have access to a list of emergency contacts available at CFTC's front desk (e.g., Child and Family Services). If the therapist is a **student**, they should immediately report the situation to their primary clinical supervisors, before reporting it to the local authorities. It is the responsibility of the clinical supervisors to follow professional and legal procedures for an opportune report to the authorities. Should a primary supervisor not be available, another supervisor working on site at the CFTC may also be advised of the violence.

Therapists will professionally address instances of violence within the therapeutic setting and professionally document such instances in a Brief Interview Report (**BIR**), following professional standards prescribed by their regulatory bodies. If the therapist considers confidentiality must be breached to report an incident, they will complete a [violence incident report](#), and the report will be kept in the client's records.

**Clinical supervisors** are responsible for ensuring that workers they supervise follow measures and procedures and have the information they need to protect themselves. All licensed therapists and clinical supervisors should be prepared to provide reasonable and compassionate immediate support to any person who witnessed or was subjected to violence at the workplace (e.g., be available for debrief, emotional support, and guiding a person about this policy).

## Executive Director (ED)

ED will ensure this policy and the supporting procedures are implemented and maintained.

ED will ensure all workers will receive **training and support** to understand and promote this policy and its procedures. ED will ensure that training about this policy is offered to any staff during the onboarding process.

The Executive Director will **investigate** incidents and complaints of workplace violence in a fair and timely manner, which includes **and taking and documenting appropriate corrective actions** to address violence incidents taking place beyond the therapeutic setting. The Executive Director may create an ad-hoc advisory committee with members of the organization that may be able to provide advise on how to proceed investigating



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or adopting corrective action in a particular reported incident, typically members of the Executive Team and/or the Board of Directors.

The ED pledges to respect the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. The employer will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of violence, or the names of the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the violence, and any witnesses, except where necessary to:

- investigate the incident or to take corrective action,
- inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and any corrective actions taken,
- inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence, or
- comply with other legal requirements.

The ED will disclose only the minimum amount of personal information required that is necessary to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence.

No workers can be penalized, reprimanded or in any way criticized when acting in good faith while following this policy and the supporting procedures for addressing situations involving workplace violence. This violence prevention policy does not discourage a worker from exercising the worker's right under any other law.

*Joaquin Gaete-Silva*  
JOAQUIN GAETE-SILVA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 15, 2024