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Multidisciplinary Team Invitation Letter – New Hanover County

Description:

This document is the invitation letter used by New Hanover County's Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), which is focused on combatting adult abuse. The letter outlines the benefits, expectations, and structure of MDT participation and emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts to enhance services for older adults.



ADULT PROTECTION NETWORK



UNC

SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT

October 11, 2023

Dear Good Shepherd,

Background

Elder abuse is gaining recognition. National prevalence studies indicate that over 10% of Americans aged 60 and older experience some form of elder abuse in a given year. Elder abuse typically is a term used to refer to five types of elder abuse: financial exploitation, caregiver neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. The consequences for those who experience elder abuse include diminished health, finances, social connections, independence, and even hastened death.

With this increased recognition and understanding comes even more sophisticated responses. One best practice being promoted is the use of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) so prolific in the field of child abuse. In our community, the New Hanover County MDT is being developed. As an important member of our community, we are inviting someone from your organization to represent your organization on the MDT.

Join Us!

Our objective is to set up our new MDT venture for success. Your organization has been identified as a potential strong partner and crucial MDT member. We cordially request your participation as we move forward with MDT planning and development. Your input into our team is highly valuable, and we believe that together, we can have a positive impact in the lives of our mutual client, our community, and in our respective organizations/agencies. Below, you can learn more about what MDTs are, why they are considered a best practice, and what expectations can be anticipated if you choose to participate in our MDT.

Every county in North Carolina is being asked by the State to have a MDT to address elder abuse. In New Hanover County, we do not currently have an MDT, but we are creating one and want your participation. This is an opportunity to become a part of this important resource in our community from the beginning.

Those who are being invited to join this MDT include but are not limited to:

New Hanover County Sheriff's Office
Wilmington Police Department
New Hanover County District Attorney's Office
New Hanover County Department of Social Services
Legal Aid of North Carolina
Berth Behavior Consultation
Novant/New Hanover Hospital
Carolina Beach Police Department
Wrightsville Beach Police Department
Kure Beach Police Department
U.S. Secret Service
New Hanover County Senior Resource Center

Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear
New Hanover County Health Department
UNCW Department of Gerontology

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for your organization's representative on the MDT include:

- A memorandum of understanding that outlines procedures and legal and ethical issues will be signed by your organization's authorized representative.
- Your organization's representative on the MDT will:
 - Attend and actively participate in case review meetings;

Be available to consult with other team members (by phone or email) outside of case review meetings;

Make regular case referrals to the MDT.

What you can expect from us:

A recurring and predictable meeting schedule in which the team meets monthly at the New Hanover County Department of Social Services for approximately 1-2 hours; [The first meeting will be on June 29, 2023, and the meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of each month thereafter]

The case review meeting agenda will be faxed or emailed to members in advance of the scheduled meeting to ensure members come prepared to discuss the cases on the agenda;

A semi-formal case review meeting led by [name].

In closing, we would like to thank you for taking the time to learn about our elder abuse case review MDT. We hope we have provided you with adequate background material to evaluate the pros and cons of becoming a member of our team. Please feel free to reach out with additional thoughts or questions, as we intend for this process to be as collaborative as possible.

Sincerely,

[Name Redacted]

Program Manager

New Hanover County Department of Health and Human Services

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ELDER ABUSE CASE REVIEW MDT

An elder abuse case review MDT is a group composed of members who know each other, each with varied but complementary experience, qualifications, and skills, bound by a common purpose, working collaboratively to achieve a shared goal. Case review MDTs are characterized by five elements:

1. **Shared Decision Making.**

The entire team participates in the decision making process, sharing information, and sharing successes through case review.

2. **Partnership.**

A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or an Interagency Agreement (IAA) is signed by all participating organizations/agencies.

3. **Interdependency.**

Group and individual outcomes are influenced by the group, that is, the actions of one member impact important outcomes of other members and the team.

4. **Balanced Power.**

All members of the MDT have equal input and discourage a single member from dominating the group.

5. **Process.**

The development and use of protocols to introduce predictability and accountability into the case review process.

BENEFITS OF ELDER ABUSE CASE REVIEW MDTs

Reasons why Elder Abuse Case Review MDTs are considered “best practice” when responding to elder abuse cases:

Successful partnerships can benefit *professionals/organizations in the following ways:*

- MDTs result in a greater number of cases being referred for prosecution.
- MDTs can increase confidence and enhance job satisfaction by promoting collegiality.
- MDTs extend and leverage interagency resources in part by reducing the financial and staff burden on individual agencies.
- MDTs can instill confidence that the case is being handled the best way possible by obtaining validation from other team members.

Successful partnerships can benefit vulnerable adults in the following ways:

- Coordination of multiple services may reduce the number of systems with which vulnerable adults have to navigate.
- Coordination creates an integrated array of services tailored to the vulnerable adult’s multifaceted needs that can build upon the adult and family’s strengths.
- Collaboration produces creative solutions that no one agency could produce on its own.
- Collaboration results in more desirable case outcomes for vulnerable adults by enhancing the probability that no matter where a vulnerable adult enters the system, they have access to coordinated services.

Successful partnerships can benefit communities in the following ways:

- By creating community responsibility for the safety of vulnerable adults.

- By enhancing relationships among public and private service providers.
- By strengthening families, which strengthens communities.
- By extending the reach of limited resources within a community.

As more communities recognize the relevance and value of case review MDTs, the number of elder abuse victims benefiting from services will increase, and communities will become safer for older Americans. To learn more, visit <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/mdt-toolkit>.