

CareCertify LLC

Behavioral & Mental Health Training Series

BH-10

Maltreatment Reporting & Safety

Participant Guide

Behavioral & Mental Health Training Series · Audience: ARMHS · CTSS · Behavioral Aides · MH Practitioners · Case Managers · CE Hours: 1.0

You May Be a Mandated Reporter Twice Over

Behavioral health staff often serve both adults and children, which means you may be a mandated reporter under two laws: the Vulnerable Adults Act (Minn. Stat. 626.557) for vulnerable adults, and Chapter 260E for the maltreatment of minors. The reporting standard for both is the same — reason to believe — and the duty is personal.

This guide covers who's protected, what counts as maltreatment, the warning signs, how and where to report, your protections, and broader client safety. When in doubt, report — that's how the people you serve stay safe.

Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Identify who is protected as a vulnerable adult or a child
- Explain your mandated-reporter duties under 626.557 and Chapter 260E
- Recognize categories and warning signs of maltreatment
- Report correctly to MAARC and to county/law enforcement
- Describe reporter protections and broader client safety

Section 1: Who Is Protected

Two groups are protected by mandated-reporting laws you may be subject to. Vulnerable adults are adults who receive services from a licensed provider or who, due to age or disability, can't protect themselves (Minn. Stat. 626.5572). Children are minors protected under Chapter 260E. Because behavioral health staff serve adults and children, your reporting duty may apply to both.

Section 2: Your Mandated-Reporter Duty

Behavioral health staff are mandated reporters under both the Vulnerable Adults Act (626.557) for adults and Chapter 260E for children. The standard for both is 'reason to believe' — you don't need proof or certainty. The duty is personal: if you have reason to believe maltreatment occurred, you must report, even if you assume someone else will.

Section 3: Categories of Maltreatment

Maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and verbal abuse, neglect (failure to provide needed care, food, supervision, or safety), and — for vulnerable adults — financial exploitation. For children, neglect and abuse are defined under Chapter 260E. Self-neglect by a vulnerable adult is also addressed under 626.557. When unsure which applies, report anyway.

Section 4: Recognizing Warning Signs

Warning signs include physical signs (unexplained bruises or injuries, poor hygiene, weight loss), behavioral signs (fear, withdrawal, regression, sudden changes), and direct disclosures from a client. Take disclosures seriously and respond supportively. You don't need proof — a sign, a pattern, or a disclosure is reason to report.

The standard is 'reason to believe'

You are not the investigator. If you have reason to believe a vulnerable adult or child is being maltreated, report. Certainty is not required.

Section 5: How and Where to Report

For a vulnerable adult, report to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) at 1-844-880-1574, available 24/7. For a child, report to the county child protection agency or local law enforcement under Chapter 260E. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911 first. Report immediately, give the facts you have, notify your supervisor, and follow agency policy. Internal reporting does not replace your legal duty to report to the proper agency.

Section 6: Reporter Protections and Retaliation

Both reporting laws protect good-faith reporters from civil and criminal liability and prohibit retaliation. A mandated reporter who fails to report when required can face personal consequences. These protections exist so you never have to choose between your job and a client's safety — when in doubt, report.

Section 7: Broader Client Safety and Emergency Procedures

Maltreatment reporting is part of a bigger picture: client safety. Know and follow your agency's emergency procedures, which are a required 2451 training topic. Respond appropriately to medical emergencies (911), behavioral health crises (988 and crisis teams), and safety risks, and maintain safe environments by reporting hazards. Keeping clients safe is part of every role.

Section 8: After the Report

After reporting, keep the client safe and continue providing services, and cooperate with any investigation. Document the facts objectively without speculation, and protect confidentiality consistent with reporting requirements. These situations are emotionally hard — use your supervisor and support. Your report starts a protective process; staying steady and supportive helps the client through it.

When in doubt, report

Across both laws, the message is the same: if you have reason to believe a vulnerable adult or child is being harmed,

report immediately. You are protected, and the client is depending on you.

Key Terms

Term	What it means
Vulnerable adult	An adult who receives services or can't protect themselves (626.5572).
Chapter 260E	Minnesota's law on reporting the maltreatment of minors.
Mandated reporter	A person legally required to report suspected maltreatment.
MAARC	Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (1-844-880-1574).
Reason to believe	The reporting standard — suspicion, not proof.
Reporter protection	Legal shield for those who report in good faith.

Check Your Understanding

1. Who is protected as a vulnerable adult and as a child?
2. What is the reporting standard, and do you need proof?
3. Where do you report maltreatment of a vulnerable adult vs. a child?
4. What protections exist for good-faith reporters?
5. Name two parts of broader client safety beyond reporting.

What's Next

Looking ahead

This completes the Behavioral & Mental Health course. Keep each lesson's completion record on file per Chapter 245I, and pair these with your program's required supervision and emergency procedures.