

# CareCertify LLC

## Substance Use Disorder Training Series

SUD-10

# Maltreatment Reporting & Safety

## Participant Guide

Substance Use Disorder Training Series · Audience: Counselors · Technicians · Support Staff · Recovery Peers · CE Hours: 1.0

## Recognize Harm and Report It

SUD program staff have a duty to recognize and report maltreatment of vulnerable adults under the Vulnerable Adults Act (Minn. Stat. 626.557), and to report child maltreatment under Chapter 260E when it comes to their attention. 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 program 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 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 program safety

## Section 1: Who Is Protected

Two groups are protected by mandated-reporting laws. 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. In SUD programs, clients may be vulnerable adults, and clients often have children — so your reporting duty can apply to both.

## Section 2: Your Mandated-Reporter Duty

SUD program staff are mandated reporters under both the Vulnerable Adults Act (626.557) and Chapter 260E. The standard for both is 'reason to believe' — proof or certainty isn't required. The duty is personal. And while SUD confidentiality is strict (42 CFR Part 2), mandated reporting of abuse is one of the situations where the law requires action — follow your program's procedures for reporting consistent with Part 2.

## 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. Child neglect and abuse are defined under Chapter 260E. Self-neglect by a vulnerable adult is also addressed under 626.557. When unsure which category 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. 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, 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 program 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 or child's safety — when in doubt, report.

## Section 7: Broader Client and Program Safety

Maltreatment reporting is part of a bigger picture: safety. Know and follow your program's emergency procedures, respond appropriately to medical emergencies (911), overdose (naloxone), and behavioral health crises (988 and crisis teams), and maintain safe environments by reporting hazards. Keeping clients and the program 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 objectively without speculation. Reporting isn't a betrayal of the client — it protects vulnerable people and can connect families to help and resources. These situations are emotionally hard, so use your supervisor and support. 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're protected, and someone 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. How does mandated reporting interact with 42 CFR Part 2?
5. Name two parts of broader program safety beyond reporting.

## What's Next

### Looking ahead

This completes the 245G / SUD Programs course. Keep each lesson's completion record in the personnel file per Chapter 245G, and pair these with your program's supervision and emergency procedures.