VICTIM RIGHTS LAW CENTER

Model Script: Mandatory Reporter Speaking at School

This is a model script for advocates who work in jurisdictions where they are mandatory reporters. In this script, the advocates are speaking to a group of young teens at school. We expect you will revise this script to fit your needs, including your style of speech, the needs of the minors you serve, the law in your jurisdiction, and the needs of your organization.

Hello, my name is _____ , and I work at _____. Our organization provides free services to _____.

I'm here today to share some information about [domestic violence/sexual assault/stalking/child abuse]. This violence impacts many people in our community, including many of us in this room. Some of what I say may sound familiar to you personally, and you may have questions or concerns that you want to talk about.

I will give you a time to ask questions, but first I want to share some important, privacy-related information. Our organization believes strongly in a survivor's right to decide what's best for them and to control what happens to their information. Because of that, we want you to understand what happens with any information that you share with me today or with others at [Name of Organization] at a later time.

I am a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Generally, this means that if I know or suspect that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, I am required to report it [to the police or to child protective services]. Even though I am a mandatory reporter of child abuse, you can call our hotline confidentially, without giving any names or ages, if you have questions about something that happened to you or someone you know,. If you do provide your name or your telephone number, this information might have to be shared if a report is required.

I want to be upfront about my mandatory reporting responsibilities because although sometimes reporting is exactly what a survivor wants, sometimes it's not. If you want to talk to someone about abuse that you, a friend, or family member is experiencing, I am happy to listen. But please know that depending on what you tell me, I may not be able to keep that information private; I may have to report it.

However, while I am a mandatory reporter, not everyone is. There are people who you can talk to privately and confidentially who do not have to make a report. You can find a list of some of these people, both at our organization and at organizations our staff have worked with and trust, on the handout I passed out.

We want you to choose the services that would be most helpful for you. We hope this presentation provides the information you need so you can get support if you need it.

Also, I have brought a "Question Box" with me. At the end of my presentation, I will ask each one of you to write something on a the pieces of paper I handed out: A question, a comment, some feedback on my presentation today - you decide. Then fold the paper and put it into the Question Box. Even if you don't have a question for us, writing something down will help protect the privacy of those who do.

Finally, please take care of yourself both during and after this presentation. We try to create a safe space here; is there something else we could do that would help you feel more comfortable?

Any questions before I begin?

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