



Glorious United For
Rural Development

GLORIOUS UNITED FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (GURD-RWANDA)

CHILD & OTHER PARTICIPANTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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GLORIUS UNITED FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Westen province, Nyamasheke district

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Introduction

GURD-Rwanda is dedicated to fostering a safe and empowering environment for children and vulnerable participants engaged in its diverse programs and activities. Recognizing that safeguarding is a critical aspect of its mission, this Comprehensive Safeguarding Policy outlines the organization's commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of those it serves. The policy reflects GURD-Rwanda's ethical obligation to uphold the highest standards of care and respect, ensuring that all participants are shielded from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

Safeguarding is not merely a set of procedures; it is an organizational culture that prioritizes the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations. This policy establishes a framework for identifying risks, responding to safeguarding concerns, and promoting awareness among staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. It also ensures compliance with Rwandan laws and international standards on child protection and safeguarding.

Vision

Our vision is to attaining sustainable and transformative change for young people in rural communities.

Mission

We aim to support Girls and women by empowering them with knowledge and skills in sexual reproductive health, equipping them to navigate life's challenges, and providing counseling and socio-economic opportunities. We also focus on gender based violence prevention and response, (SGBV) as well as improving girls' educational outcomes.

Through these initiatives, we hope to help young people achieve their full potential and create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Key Definitions of Terms

1. **Safeguarding:** A proactive approach that seeks to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of individuals, particularly children and vulnerable adults, ensuring they live free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
2. **Child:** According to Rwandan law, a child is defined as any person below the age of eighteen years. This includes both boys and girls who may be vulnerable due to age, social status, or other factors.
3. **Vulnerable Participant:** Individuals who may be at increased risk of harm due to their circumstances, including but not limited to those with disabilities, mental health issues, or those who are socially or economically disadvantaged.
4. **Abuse:** The intentional mistreatment of an individual, which can take various forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, or financial abuse. Rwandan laws classify abuse as a criminal act, necessitating immediate intervention and reporting.
5. **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a person's basic physical, emotional, or educational needs, which can result in serious harm or risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
6. **Radicalization:** The process by which individuals come to adopt extremist political, social, or religious ideologies. This policy specifically addresses the recognition and prevention of vulnerability to radicalization (VTR).
7. **Reporting Safeguarding Concerns:** The procedures established for all staff and volunteers to report any safeguarding issues or suspicions regarding abuse or neglect, ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.
8. **Allegations of Abuse or Malpractice:** Any claims or suspicions that an individual has acted in a manner that causes harm or poses a risk to a child or vulnerable person, particularly by staff or volunteers within GURD-Rwanda.

Rwandan Laws on Safeguarding

GURD-Rwanda's safeguarding policy is informed by and complies with several key legal frameworks within Rwanda, including:

- **The Rwandan Constitution:** Article 27 ensures the right to life, integrity, and freedom from torture or inhuman treatment for all individuals, particularly vulnerable groups.
- **Law No. 27/2001 of 28/04/2001 on the Protection of Children:** This law outlines specific protections for children, including the prohibition of all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect.
- **Law No. 65/2008 of 30/09/2008 on the Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence:** This law establishes mechanisms for addressing gender-based violence, including protections for women and children.
- **National Policy on Child Protection:** This policy articulates Rwanda's commitment to safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation, setting forth guidelines for organizations working with children.

1. Safeguarding Procedures (All Staff)

All staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to follow strict safeguarding procedures. These procedures ensure the safety and well-being of children and participants and include awareness, training, and adherence to reporting guidelines.

1. Understanding and Commitment to Safeguarding

- **Read and Acknowledge the Policy:** All staff must read the safeguarding policy thoroughly, sign an acknowledgment of their understanding, and commit to upholding its principles.
- **Embody Organizational Values:** Staff should align their behavior and work ethics with GURD-Rwanda's core values such as commitment, diversity, and collective care.

2. Training and Professional Development

- **Mandatory Initial Training:** Complete a comprehensive training session on safeguarding procedures upon joining the organization. This training should cover recognizing abuse signs, reporting procedures, and maintaining professional conduct.
- **Ongoing Refresher Courses:** Participate in periodic training sessions to stay updated on new safeguarding strategies, laws, and best practices.
- **Practical Workshops:** Engage in workshops that simulate real-life scenarios, helping staff practice how to respond to disclosures or emergencies effectively.

3. Proactive Engagement and Vigilance

- **Maintain Constant Awareness:** Stay vigilant for signs of abuse or any changes in participants' behavior that may indicate distress or harm.
- **Professional Curiosity:** Exercise proactive observation, questioning situations that seem suspicious without making assumptions or judgments prematurely.

- **Build Trust with Participants:** Foster an environment where children and vulnerable individuals feel safe to express concerns without fear.

4. Immediate Reporting and Documentation

- **Report Concerns Promptly:** Notify the designated Safeguarding Officer immediately if there is any suspicion or evidence of abuse, ensuring that the report is factual and devoid of opinions.
- **Accurate Record-Keeping:** Document observations, incidents, and any disclosures made by participants. Notes should be clear, dated, and kept confidential.
- **Follow the Reporting Pathway:** Use the appropriate flowchart or outlined steps in the policy to report concerns to external authorities if needed.

5. Maintaining Boundaries and Conduct

- **Respect Boundaries:** Avoid one-on-one unsupervised contact with participants unless necessary and in a public, visible setting.
- **Uphold Professionalism:** Use appropriate language and maintain physical boundaries to protect participants and avoid any perception of misconduct.
- **Respond Appropriately to Disclosures:** When a participant discloses abuse, stay calm, listen without interruption, and reassure them that they did the right thing by speaking up. Avoid making promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept.

6. Creating a Safe Environment

- **Implement Protective Measures:** Ensure that activities and programs are conducted in a safe, supportive environment. Conduct risk assessments for all events involving participants.
- **Engage the Community:** Work collaboratively with parents, caregivers, and community members to strengthen the protective environment for children and vulnerable individuals.

- **Model Positive Behavior:** Lead by example and inspire others to adopt safeguarding measures seriously.

7. Accountability and Feedback

- **Peer Accountability:** Hold colleagues accountable for their safeguarding responsibilities by reporting any deviations from policy or lapses in judgment.
- **Seek Feedback:** Regularly request feedback from peers and participants to identify areas for improvement in safeguarding practices.
- **Reflect and Improve:** Take part in debriefing sessions post-incident or during annual reviews to discuss safeguarding outcomes and adjust practices for better protection.

8. Protecting Confidentiality

- **Confidential Handling of Information:** Treat all participant information sensitively and only share it on a need-to-know basis with authorized personnel.
- **Secure Records:** Ensure that any documentation related to safeguarding is stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

2. Reporting of Safeguarding Concerns

Any concerns about potential abuse or safety risks must be reported immediately.

Procedures include notifying the Safeguarding Lead or designated officer and maintaining confidentiality while ensuring the appropriate actions are taken.

Reporting safeguarding concerns promptly and effectively is essential to protect children and vulnerable participants. All staff at *GURD-Rwanda* must follow a structured approach when handling potential abuse or safety risks. Here is a detailed outline of how staff should manage and report safeguarding concerns:

1. Recognize and Respond

- **Be Alert to Signs:** Staff must be trained to recognize signs of abuse, neglect, or potential harm. This includes being attentive to physical indicators, changes in behavior, or disclosure by the participant.
- **Initial Response:** When a concern arises, respond calmly and assure the individual that their safety is your priority. Avoid expressing shock or disbelief, which could discourage further disclosure.

2. Immediate Reporting Obligations

- **Notify the Safeguarding Lead:** The first step is to report the concern to the designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer. This must be done as soon as possible, ideally within the same day.
- **Emergency Situations:** If there is an immediate danger to the participant or staff, contact local authorities or emergency services (e.g., calling 999) before notifying the Safeguarding Lead.
- **Direct Reporting When Necessary:** If the concern involves a safeguarding officer, escalate directly to the organization's leadership or designated external body.

3. Documentation Requirements

- **Detailed Records:** Document all concerns accurately, noting observations, facts, and any statements made by the participant. Ensure these records are clear, dated, and signed.
- **Confidentiality in Records:** Maintain the confidentiality of the written report by limiting access to relevant personnel only. Store the information securely in accordance with GURD-Rwanda's data protection policies.

4. Maintaining Confidentiality

- **Respecting Privacy:** Share information on a need-to-know basis while ensuring that the concern is appropriately addressed.
- **Informing the Participant:** If safe and appropriate, inform the participant that you are obligated to report the concern to ensure their protection. Clarify that their disclosure will not remain confidential but will be handled sensitively.
- **Consent Considerations:** While gaining consent from the individual (or their guardian) is ideal, it is not mandatory if it could compromise safety or the ability to protect others.

5. Steps for Reporting

- **Verbal Report:** Start with a verbal report to the Safeguarding Lead to ensure prompt awareness and response.
- **Written Report:** Follow up with a detailed written report within 24 hours. Include all relevant details, such as the nature of the concern, dates, times, and any individuals involved.
- **Use of Reporting Templates:** Utilize standard reporting templates provided by GURD-Rwanda to ensure all necessary information is included.

6. Escalation Protocols

- **Internal Review:** Once the report is received, the Safeguarding Lead will conduct an initial assessment to determine the next steps, including whether external referral is needed.
- **Referral to Authorities:** If the situation warrants it, refer the case to local child protection services or police for further investigation.
- **Feedback and Updates:** The Safeguarding Lead should update the reporter on any significant developments and ensure continuous communication within legal and procedural boundaries.

7. Support for the Reporter

- **Emotional Support:** GURD-Rwanda ensures that staff who report concerns receive emotional support, as witnessing or handling such situations can be distressing.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** The organization enforces policies that protect whistleblowers from retaliation or negative repercussions for raising safeguarding concerns in good faith.

8. Training on Reporting Procedures

- **Mandatory Training:** All staff must attend training sessions focused on how to report safeguarding concerns effectively and handle them with professionalism and empathy.
- **Scenario Practice:** Engage in practice scenarios during training to build confidence in recognizing and reporting concerns under various circumstances.

9. Ensuring a Culture of Reporting

- **Promote Openness:** Encourage an open culture where staff feel confident to report concerns without fear of judgment or reprisal.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and refine reporting processes to align with best practices and feedback from staff experiences.

3. Allegations of Abuse or Malpractice Towards a Child by Staff or Volunteers

All allegations against staff or volunteers are taken seriously and must be reported promptly. Fair investigation processes will be followed to protect all parties involved, with reports made to appropriate external authorities if necessary.

GURD-Rwanda is committed to maintaining a safe and transparent environment where all allegations of abuse or malpractice involving staff or volunteers are taken seriously and addressed promptly. This section outlines the procedure for managing such

allegations, ensuring the protection of all parties involved and adherence to ethical and legal standards.

1. Initial Response to Allegations

- **Immediate Reporting:** Report any allegation against a staff member or volunteer to the designated Safeguarding Lead or senior leader as soon as it is raised, without delay.
- **Confidential Treatment:** Protect the identities of both the accuser and the accused by ensuring all information is shared only with relevant personnel on a need-to-know basis.
- **Temporary Measures:** Consider temporary suspension or reassignment of the accused staff member to prevent any potential interference with the investigation or compromise of participant safety.
- **Inform Relevant Parties:** Notify senior management and legal advisors where appropriate to ensure that organizational policies and legal standards are upheld.

2. Ensuring a Fair Investigation

- **Appointment of Neutral Investigator:** Assign a trained and unbiased individual to manage the investigation to maintain the integrity of the process.
- **Collecting Evidence:** Gather all available evidence promptly, including documents, witness testimonies, and electronic records.
- **Comprehensive Interviews:** Conduct interviews with the person making the allegation, the accused, and any potential witnesses to gather a comprehensive understanding of the events.
- **Adherence to Timelines:** Establish and follow a clear timeline for the investigation to ensure a swift and fair resolution.

3. Supporting the Involved Parties

- **Prioritizing Safety:** Implement immediate protective measures to ensure the ongoing safety of the child or participant involved, such as safety planning or supervision adjustments.
- **Access to Support Services:** Provide access to counseling or support services for both the accuser and the accused to address emotional and psychological needs.
- **Transparency with the Accused:** Inform the accused about the nature of the allegation, their rights, and the investigation process.
- **Maintain Dignity:** Handle the investigation in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of all individuals involved.

4. Reporting to External Authorities

- **Legal Compliance:** Ensure that reporting to child protection services or police is done in accordance with national and organizational legal requirements.
- **Immediate Action for Serious Cases:** In cases involving serious allegations, notify the authorities immediately without waiting for the internal investigation to conclude.
- **Provide Full Cooperation:** Work closely with external agencies by providing necessary documentation and supporting their investigation.
- **Follow Up with Authorities:** Maintain contact with external bodies to stay informed of any developments and to coordinate further action if needed.

5. Documentation and Record-Keeping

- **Detailed and Accurate Records:** Document all aspects of the investigation, including initial reports, statements, and evidence collected. Ensure records are clear, dated, and signed by the person responsible.

- **Secure Storage:** Keep investigation records separate from general participant files and ensure they are stored securely to maintain confidentiality.
- **Confidential Sharing:** Limit access to investigation records to authorized individuals only, such as the Safeguarding Lead or legal counsel.
- **Periodic Record Review:** Review records regularly to ensure all documentation is complete and adheres to data protection regulations.

6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- **Controlled Information Flow:** Share information only with those directly involved in the investigation to minimize exposure and uphold confidentiality.
- **Privacy Compliance:** Ensure all information-sharing practices comply with data protection laws and organizational privacy policies.
- **Clear Communication:** Communicate clearly with involved parties regarding what information will be shared, with whom, and why, maintaining transparency without breaching confidentiality.
- **Feedback to Participants:** When appropriate, provide updates to the participant or their guardians about the investigation's progress and outcomes.

7. Decision-Making and Outcomes

- **Objective Assessment:** Make decisions based on the evidence collected and without bias, considering the well-being of the participant and the fairness to the accused.
- **Disciplinary Actions:** Implement necessary actions if the investigation confirms misconduct, including disciplinary measures, termination of employment, or reporting for legal action.
- **Restorative Measures:** In cases where misconduct is confirmed, consider restorative measures to address any harm caused and prevent recurrence.

- **Appeals Process:** Provide the accused the right to appeal the decision, ensuring transparency and fairness in handling disputes.

8. Post-Investigation Procedures

- **Review and Reflect:** Hold a debriefing session to evaluate the handling of the case and gather lessons learned for policy and practice improvements.
- **Support for Reintegration:** If the accused is cleared, support their reintegration into the organization, such as team briefings to address concerns and rebuild trust.
- **Policy Updates:** Use insights from the investigation to update and refine safeguarding policies and training materials.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Implement a system for collecting feedback from staff involved in the investigation to identify areas for continuous improvement.

9. Training and Awareness

- **Annual Training Programs:** Implement annual refresher courses to reinforce staff understanding of procedures for reporting and handling allegations.
- **Scenario-Based Workshops:** Conduct workshops with case studies and role-playing exercises to help staff practice responding to and reporting allegations.
- **Documentation Guidance:** Provide training on proper documentation practices for safeguarding reports to ensure clarity and accuracy.
- **Promoting a Culture of Awareness:** Foster an environment where staff feel empowered and prepared to report allegations confidently and without fear of repercussion.

GURD-Rwanda reinforces its dedication to handling allegations effectively, ensuring fairness, safety, and the continuous improvement of safeguarding practices.

4. Recognising Child and Adult Abuse

The ability of staff to recognize signs of abuse is a crucial component of safeguarding. By being aware of and understanding the indicators of abuse, staff at *GURD-Rwanda* can act promptly to protect children and vulnerable individuals. Here's a detailed approach to recognizing various forms of abuse:

1. Training and Awareness Programs

- **Mandatory Training:** All staff must participate in mandatory training sessions focused on recognizing signs of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect. The training should include both common and subtle indicators.
- **Continuous Learning:** Provide periodic refresher courses and updates on evolving patterns of abuse, emerging issues, and changes in laws or best practices.
- **Case Studies and Scenarios:** Use real-life examples and case studies during training to illustrate how different forms of abuse can manifest in various settings.
- **Specialized Workshops:** Offer workshops led by experts in child psychology and social work to deepen staff understanding of behavioral and emotional signs of abuse.

2. Physical Abuse Recognition

- **Visible Indicators:** Look for unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or injuries that do not align with normal activities or developmental stages.
- **Inconsistent Explanations:** Be cautious of explanations for injuries that are inconsistent with the nature of the injuries or seem rehearsed.
- **Frequent Absences:** Take note if a participant frequently misses activities or events, as this could be a sign of physical abuse that their caregiver may be trying to conceal.

- **Behavioral Changes:** Watch for sudden changes in behavior, such as aggression, withdrawal, or fear of certain individuals or settings.

3. Emotional Abuse Recognition

- **Verbal Indicators:** Listen for participants expressing feelings of worthlessness, excessive criticism, or other harmful speech patterns that could indicate emotional abuse.
- **Behavioral Shifts:** Recognize excessive shyness, social withdrawal, clinginess, or a decrease in self-confidence as potential signs of emotional harm.
- **Developmental Delays:** Be aware of cognitive and emotional development that seems inconsistent with a participant's age, as this can signal ongoing emotional abuse.
- **Avoidance Behavior:** Note if a participant is excessively wary or avoids eye contact and interaction with peers or adults, suggesting emotional mistreatment.

4. Sexual Abuse Recognition

- **Physical Signs:** Be alert to any signs of discomfort, injury, or symptoms related to the genital area, or reports of pain or bleeding that have no medical explanation.
- **Age-Inappropriate Knowledge:** Pay attention to a participant demonstrating knowledge of sexual behavior that is beyond their age or developmental stage.
- **Fear of Being Alone with Certain People:** Watch for sudden reluctance or fear of being alone with specific individuals, which could indicate trauma.
- **Sudden Changes in Behavior:** Sudden shifts to aggression, withdrawal, or sexually explicit behavior can be warning signs of sexual abuse.

5. Recognising Neglect

- **Physical Appearance:** Look for signs of poor hygiene, ill-fitting or inappropriate clothing for the weather, and consistent lack of medical care when needed.
- **Nutritional Concerns:** Be alert to signs of malnutrition or hunger, including participants consistently seeking extra food or showing significant weight changes.
- **Developmental Issues:** Be aware of developmental lags, such as delays in speech or motor skills, that may be attributed to neglect.
- **Frequent Fatigue:** Consistently tired or sleeping during activities can be an indicator of neglect or lack of adequate care at home.

6. Psychological Abuse Recognition

- **Fearful Behavior:** Be observant of participants who exhibit signs of fearfulness, hyper-vigilance, or anxiety that seems out of proportion to their environment.
- **Extreme Behavior:** Note participants displaying extreme behaviors such as constant aggression, anger outbursts, or an unusually passive demeanor.
- **Emotional Disregard:** Recognize signs that a participant is being ignored, threatened, or emotionally manipulated.
- **Isolation:** Be aware if a participant is being deliberately isolated from peers and normal social interactions, as this can be a sign of psychological abuse.

7. Responding to Recognized Signs of Abuse Immediate Action: Report any signs or suspicions of abuse to the designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Early reporting is vital for intervention and protection.

- **Document Observations:** Maintain accurate records of any signs observed, including dates, times, and the specific behaviors or statements that raised concern.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Handle all observations and reports confidentially, sharing details only with relevant personnel as outlined in safeguarding protocols.

8. Community and Staff Engagement

- **Education for All:** Encourage community awareness programs to educate parents and community members about the signs of abuse and their role in protecting children.
- **Staff Collaboration:** Foster a culture where staff members communicate and share observations regularly, creating a network of vigilance and support.
- **Feedback and Improvements:** Regularly gather feedback from staff and participants to improve recognition strategies and training modules.

5. PREVENT: Vulnerable to Radicalisation (VTR) or Influenced by Extremism

GURD-Rwanda follows a preventive approach to protect participants from radicalization.

Indicators of vulnerability and response procedures are outlined for effective intervention.

We are committed to a proactive and preventive approach to safeguard participants from radicalization and extremist influences. Understanding the complex factors that contribute to vulnerability, GUARD Rwanda aims to identify early indicators and implement effective response procedures to mitigate risks.

Indicators of Vulnerability: To effectively recognize individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalization, GUARD Rwanda monitors the following indicators:

1. **Social Isolation:** Withdrawal from family, friends, and community activities. A marked decrease in social interactions or support networks.

2. **Changes in Behavior:** Sudden shifts in mood or behavior, including increased anger, agitation, or aggression, and Engagement in secretive or unusual activities that deviate from established patterns.
3. **Exposure to Extremist Ideologies:** Increased consumption of extremist content online or in-person. Participation in groups or forums that promote radical views.
4. **Identity Crisis:** Feelings of alienation or disenfranchisement, particularly among youth. Expressions of frustration or confusion regarding personal identity, culture, or beliefs.
5. **Disruption in Routine:** Decline in academic or work performance. Withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities, hobbies, or interests.

Response Procedures

GUARD Rwanda has established a comprehensive set of response procedures to address identified vulnerabilities and prevent radicalization:

1. **Early Identification and Assessment:** it is essential to regular assessments and observations of participants to identify potential indicators of vulnerability. Collaboration with community leaders, educators, and family members to gather insights and concerns.
2. **Engagement and Support:** Providing a safe space for open dialogue, where participants can express their thoughts and feelings also Offering mentorship programs that promote positive role models and resilience against extremist narratives.
3. **Education and Awareness:** Implementing educational workshops on the dangers of radicalization and the importance of critical thinking. The team must Raise awareness about the impact of extremism on communities and individuals.
4. **Referral to Professional Support:** Establishing partnerships with mental health professionals and social services to provide specialized support when needed

ensuring access to counselling and rehabilitation programs for individuals displaying signs of distress or vulnerability.

5. **Community Involvement:** Promoting community engagement initiatives that foster social cohesion and inclusivity, encouraging participants to actively contribute to community projects, and reinforcing their sense of belonging and purpose.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** continuously evaluating the effectiveness of intervention strategies and adjusting them based on feedback and outcomes. Regular conducting regular training sessions for staff and volunteers on recognizing and addressing radicalization.

6. Guidance Notes for Recognising VTR

Guidance on identifying potential vulnerabilities to radicalisation includes assessing behavioral changes and association with extremist groups.

Identifying potential vulnerabilities to radicalization requires a nuanced understanding of behavioral changes, associations, and contextual factors. The following guidance outlines key areas for staff to assess when evaluating individuals who may be at risk:

1. Behavioral Changes Sudden Changes in Attitude or Beliefs: Be vigilant for drastic shifts in an individual's beliefs or ideologies that may align with extremist viewpoints. This may manifest as increased anger, hostility, or a strong desire for societal change.

Withdrawal from Social Circles: Notice if an individual becomes increasingly isolated or withdraws from family, friends, and community activities. Such isolation can signify a retreat into extremist ideologies.

Changes in Routine or Interests: Look for signs of a drastic change in daily activities, interests, or social interactions, particularly if they begin to revolve around extremist content or communities.

Decline in Academic or Work Performance: Observe any noticeable drop in academic performance or work productivity, which may indicate a shift in priorities or engagement with extremist influences.

Increased Irritability or Mood Swings: Watch for heightened emotional responses, such as irritability, anxiety, or unexplained mood swings that may suggest underlying distress or exposure to radical ideologies.

2. Associations with Extremist Groups

Identifying New Associations: Monitor for new friendships or associations with individuals known to have extremist affiliations or views. This includes engagement with online communities that promote radical ideologies.

Participation in Extremist Activities: Be aware of any involvement in activities that support or propagate extremist beliefs, such as attending rallies, engaging in discussions, or sharing materials that endorse violence or hate.

Online Behavior and Social Media Activity: Assess changes in online behavior, including increased use of extremist websites or social media groups. Look for patterns of sharing or endorsing extremist content.

Subtle Shifts in Language and Humor: Note any changes in how individuals use language, including adopting slang or humor that may belittle or dehumanize specific groups or ideologies.

3. Language and Communication

Use of Extremist Language: Pay attention to changes in language, including the adoption of jargon or phrases commonly used in extremist circles. This can be an indicator of deeper ideological alignment.

Expressions of Discontent: Watch for frequent expressions of discontent with societal norms, institutions, or specific groups that may reflect a susceptibility to extremist narratives.

Encouragement of Violence or Hate Speech: Be alert to any expressions or justifications of violence, including comments that glorify acts of terrorism or encourage harm against others.

Rhetorical Shifts in Conversations: Listen for shifts in conversations from casual topics to discussions that focus on conspiracy theories, perceived injustices, or radical solutions to societal problems.

4. Vulnerability Indicators

Personal Circumstances: Assess the individual's personal circumstances, such as experiences of trauma, loss, or significant life changes that may make them more vulnerable to radicalization.

Seeking Identity or Purpose: Identify individuals who are searching for identity or purpose, as this can make them susceptible to groups offering a sense of belonging or mission.

Victimization or Discrimination: Recognize if an individual has experienced bullying, discrimination, or victimization, as these factors can increase susceptibility to extremist narratives promising empowerment or belonging.

Disillusionment with Authority: Be mindful of signs that an individual exhibits a general distrust of authority figures or institutions, which can create openings for extremist groups to exploit their grievances.

5. Building Trust and Open Communication

Encouraging Dialogue: Foster an environment where individuals feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. Open dialogue can help uncover underlying issues that may indicate vulnerability.

Establishing Support Systems: Provide access to support systems, such as counseling or mentorship, to help individuals navigate their experiences and reduce the likelihood of radicalization.



Promoting Critical Thinking: Encourage critical thinking and discussions around media consumption, helping individuals discern credible information from extremist propaganda.

Creating Peer Support Networks: Develop peer support networks where individuals can share their experiences and concerns, promoting resilience against extremist ideologies.

6. Reporting Concerns

Documenting Observations: Staff should maintain detailed records of any concerning behaviors, associations, or communications related to potential radicalization. Include dates, times, and specific instances.

Referral Protocol: Establish a clear referral protocol for reporting concerns to designated safeguarding leads or authorities equipped to handle such issues.

Feedback Mechanisms: Implement mechanisms for feedback on reporting processes, ensuring staff feel supported and confident in taking action.

7. Community and Staff Engagement

Training and Awareness: Conduct training sessions for staff on recognizing signs of radicalization and appropriate responses. This includes case studies and role-playing scenarios to enhance understanding.

Community Awareness Programs: Engage with community members to raise awareness about the signs of radicalization and the importance of collective vigilance in safeguarding against extremism.

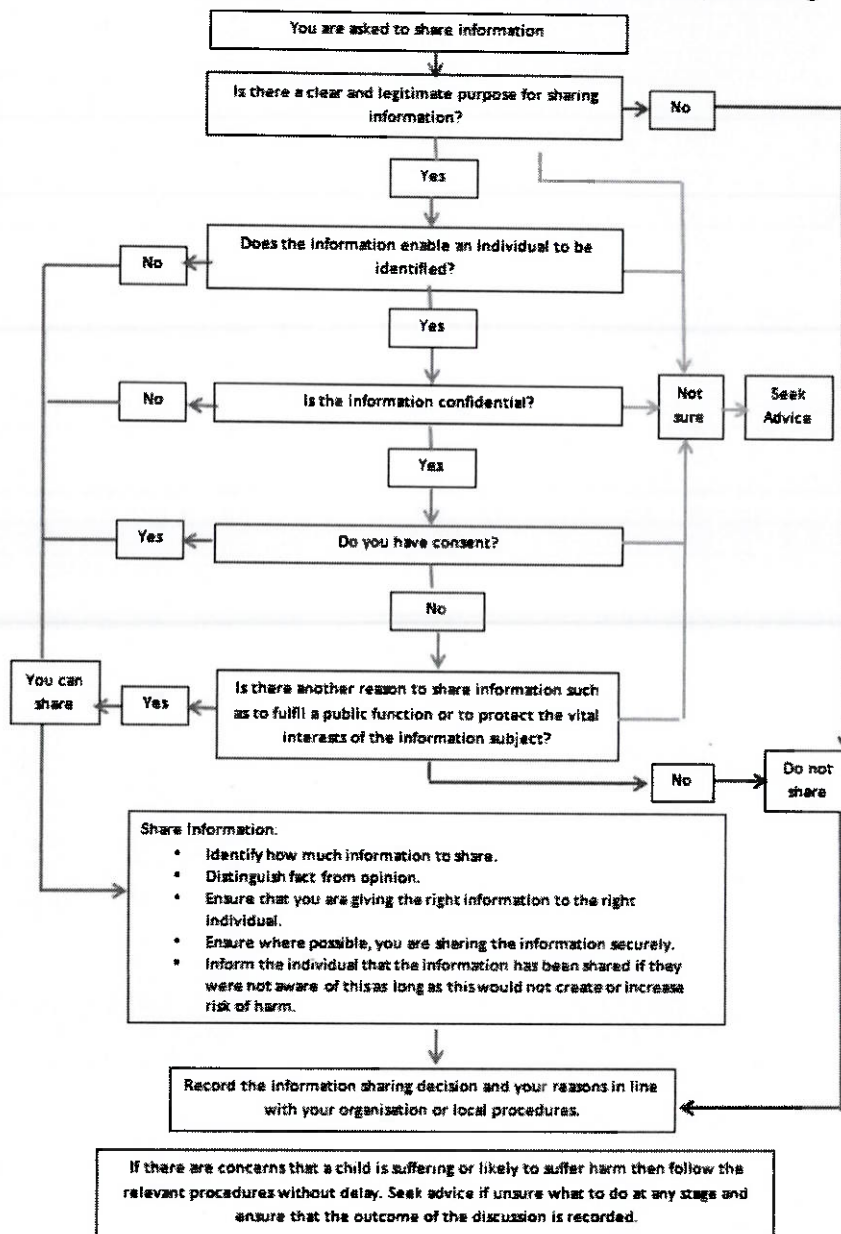
Building Partnerships: Collaborate with local law enforcement and community organizations to share resources and strategies for recognizing and addressing radicalization.

7. Information Sharing Procedures Relating to Safeguarding

Effective information sharing is crucial for safeguarding. This policy covers the procedures for lawful sharing, ensuring confidentiality while prioritizing safety.

- **Information Sharing:** The process of exchanging relevant information between organizations and individuals to enhance the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals, ensuring timely interventions and coordinated support.
- **Confidentiality:** The principle of protecting sensitive information from unauthorized access or disclosure, ensuring that personal and private information remains secure.
- **Informed Consent:** The process of obtaining explicit permission from individuals before sharing their personal information, ensuring they understand how their data will be used and shared.
- **Safeguarding:** The measures and policies implemented to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable, ensuring their safety from harm or abuse.

Information Sharing Procedures Relating to Safeguarding



Effective information sharing is crucial for safeguarding individuals at risk, ensuring their safety and well-being. This policy outlines the procedures for lawful sharing of information, emphasizing confidentiality while prioritizing the protection of vulnerable individuals.

a. Legal Framework for Information Sharing

Compliance with Laws and Regulations: All staff must adhere to relevant laws and regulations governing data protection and safeguarding, including the local laws of Rwanda, and any applicable international guidelines.

Understanding Consent: Ensure that staff are trained to recognize when informed consent is required for sharing information and when it may be appropriate to share without consent in cases of safeguarding concerns.

Information Sharing Protocols: Familiarize staff with established protocols for information sharing, including the circumstances under which information can be disclosed without consent, such as when there is a risk of harm to the individual or others.

b. Types of Information to Share

- I. **Identifying Information:** Share identifying information about individuals at risk, such as names, contact details, and relevant background information that may assist in safeguarding efforts.
- II. **Observations and Concerns:** Report and document observations related to concerning behaviors or incidents that may indicate a safeguarding issue, including signs of abuse or vulnerabilities to radicalization.
- III. **Interventions and Support Needs:** Communicate information regarding any interventions that have been implemented or support needs identified, ensuring continuity of care and effective safeguarding measures.

c. Methods of Information Sharing

- I. **Secure Communication Channels:** Utilize secure methods of communication for sharing sensitive information, including encrypted emails, secure file sharing platforms, or other approved communication systems.

- II. **Face-to-Face Meetings:** Where appropriate, hold face-to-face meetings with relevant personnel to discuss safeguarding concerns, ensuring a clear understanding of the situation and required actions.
- III. **Documentation and Record Keeping:** Maintain clear and accurate records of information shared, including the date, purpose of sharing, individuals involved, and the nature of the information exchanged.

d. Ensuring Confidentiality

Limit Access to Information: Share information only with those who need to know to protect individuals at risk. Establish a need-to-know basis for access to sensitive information.

Training on Confidentiality: Provide training for staff on the importance of confidentiality in safeguarding, including the potential consequences of unauthorized information sharing.

Secure Storage of Records: Ensure that all records containing sensitive information are stored securely, either physically in locked cabinets or digitally with appropriate security measures in place.

e. Responding to Information Requests

- **Clarifying Requests:** When approached for information by external parties (e.g., law enforcement, social services), clarify the purpose of the request and assess whether it aligns with safeguarding protocols.
- **Documenting Requests and Responses:** Keep a record of any requests for information received and the responses provided, including the rationale for sharing or withholding information.
- **Consultation with Designated Safeguarding Lead:** In cases of uncertainty, consult with the designated Safeguarding Lead before responding to information requests to ensure compliance with safeguarding policies.

f. Review and Feedback

Regular Policy Review: Conduct regular reviews of information-sharing policies and procedures to ensure they remain relevant and effective in safeguarding practices.

Gathering Feedback: Collect feedback from staff on the effectiveness of information-sharing procedures and areas for improvement, fostering a culture of continuous enhancement in safeguarding efforts.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Safeguarding Code of Conduct for All Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers

Introduction

The Safeguarding Code of Conduct is an essential framework that guides the behavior and actions of all staff, contractors, and volunteers at GURD-Rwanda in their roles to protect the welfare of children and vulnerable individuals. This document not only outlines the responsibilities inherent to safeguarding but also reinforces the organization's commitment to fostering a culture of safety, respect, and accountability. By adhering to this Code, every individual contributes to a secure environment where the rights and dignity of every person are upheld, ensuring that our organization remains a trusted and safe space for those we serve.

1. General Principles

Commitment to Safeguarding:

All personnel must demonstrate unwavering dedication to safeguarding practices, actively promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable individuals. This commitment involves understanding and respecting their rights and dignity in all interactions.

Zero Tolerance for Abuse:

GURD-Rwanda enforces a strict zero-tolerance policy toward any form of abuse, exploitation, or harassment. Any suspected misconduct must be reported immediately to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals.

Integrity and Respect:

All staff, contractors, and volunteers are expected to treat everyone with integrity and respect. This includes fostering an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.

Cultural Sensitivity:

Recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of individuals within our organization, promoting inclusivity and understanding in all interactions.

Empowerment and Advocacy:

Encourage the empowerment of children and vulnerable individuals by advocating for

their voices to be heard and ensuring they are active participants in decisions that affect their lives.

2. Professional Behavior

➤ **Maintain Professional Boundaries:**

Establish and uphold clear professional boundaries with children and vulnerable individuals, fostering a safe and supportive atmosphere. Avoid any relationships or emotional entanglements that could compromise professionalism.

➤ **Respect Privacy and Confidentiality:**

Protect the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals by refraining from disclosing personal information without consent, except where mandated by safeguarding protocols.

➤ **Use Appropriate Language and Conduct:**

Communicate with individuals in a manner that is both respectful and age-appropriate. Be mindful of language and behaviors that could be perceived as offensive or harmful.

➤ **Dress Code:**

Maintain a professional appearance by adhering to appropriate dress codes that reflect the values of GURD-Rwanda.

➤ **Self-Care and Professional Development:**

Engage in self-care practices to manage stress and prevent burnout, enabling you to perform your duties effectively while also participating in professional development opportunities to enhance your skills.

3. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

Prompt Reporting:

Staff, contractors, and volunteers are required to report any suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct to the designated Safeguarding Lead without delay, following established reporting procedures.

Cooperate with Investigations:

Fully cooperate with any investigations related to safeguarding concerns, providing truthful and accurate information as required to support the investigation process.

Protection for Whistleblowers:

Ensure that those who report concerns in good faith are protected from retaliation, encouraging an environment where safeguarding issues can be raised without fear.

4. Engagement with Children and Vulnerable Individuals

Supervision and Oversight:

Ensure adequate supervision of children and vulnerable individuals during activities, particularly in circumstances that may pose a risk of harm.

Encourage Open Communication:

Create an environment where individuals feel safe to express concerns or report issues, and actively listen to their needs and perspectives.

Avoid Isolation:

Avoid meeting with children or vulnerable individuals in isolated settings. Ensure interactions take place in public or shared spaces whenever feasible.

Positive Reinforcement:

Use positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behaviors and foster a supportive atmosphere where individuals feel valued and respected.

Crisis Management:

Be prepared to manage crises effectively, employing de-escalation techniques when necessary to maintain safety.

5. Use of Technology and Social Media

Responsible Use of Technology:

Utilize technology and social media responsibly, steering clear of any forms of communication that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate or unprofessional.

Monitoring Online Interactions:

Remain vigilant regarding online interactions with children and vulnerable individuals, ensuring that all communications adhere to safeguarding policies.

Guidelines for Social Media:

Establish clear guidelines for the use of social media, including what is acceptable to share and how to maintain professionalism online.

6. Training and Awareness**a. Mandatory Safeguarding Training:**

Attend mandatory safeguarding training sessions to remain informed about best practices, legal obligations, and the latest developments in safeguarding.

b. Continuous Learning:

Pursue ongoing professional development in areas related to safeguarding and child protection, enhancing both knowledge and practical skills.

c. Sharing Knowledge:

Encourage sharing knowledge and experiences among staff, fostering a collaborative learning environment that strengthens safeguarding practices.

7. Consequences of Breaching the Code**a. Disciplinary Action:**

Breaches of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, which can range from reprimands to termination of employment or contracts, depending on the severity of the violation.

b. Legal Implications:

Any acts of abuse, exploitation, or negligence may result in legal consequences and the possibility of referral to law enforcement agencies for further action.

c. Rehabilitation Opportunities:

Consider offering rehabilitation opportunities for minor infractions, focusing on education and improvement rather than solely punitive measures, when appropriate.

Conclusion

By adhering to the Safeguarding Code of Conduct, all staff, contractors, and volunteers at GURD-Rwanda play a vital role in creating a safe and supportive environment for children and vulnerable individuals. A steadfast commitment to these guidelines fosters trust and accountability, ultimately promoting the well-being of those we serve.

Approved by:

TUYISHIME Fidèle

Legal Representative

NTAKIYIMANA Elie

Secretary

UMUHIRE Maria Glorioso

Deputy Legal Representative



Handwritten signatures in blue ink corresponding to the three roles listed: Legal Representative, Secretary, and Deputy Legal Representative.

Appendix B. Safeguarding Code of Conduct Acknowledgment Form

Purpose:

This document serves to confirm that I have received, read, and understood the Safeguarding Code of Conduct for all staff, contractors, and volunteers at GURD-Rwanda.

I acknowledge that:

- I am committed to upholding the principles of safeguarding and ensuring the welfare of children and vulnerable individuals.
- I will adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
- I am aware of my responsibility to report any concerns regarding abuse or misconduct following established procedures.

Acknowledgment:

Name	Position/Role	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Appendix C: Questions to Ask Before Making an Adult Safeguarding Referral Introduction

This appendix serves as a guideline for GURD-Rwanda staff to assess situations involving adults who may be at risk of harm or exploitation. Making a safeguarding referral is a serious decision that requires careful consideration. By asking the right questions, staff can gather essential information that will help determine the need for intervention while ensuring that the dignity and rights of the individual are upheld.

Key Questions to Consider

1. **Understanding the Individual's Situation a. Who is the individual at risk?**
 - What is the individual's name,
 - Individual age,
 - Contact information?
 - What are their known vulnerabilities or disabilities?

2. **What are the specific concerns?**
 - What has led to the suspicion of harm, abuse, or neglect?
 - Are there specific incidents or patterns of behavior that raise concern?

3. **Is the individual aware of the concerns Has the individual expressed any concerns about their safety or well-being and How does the individual perceive their situation?**

4. **Assessing Immediate Risk**
 - a. **Is there an immediate danger?** (Is the individual currently in a situation where they are at risk of significant harm or Are there any immediate actions that need to be taken to ensure their safety?)

5. **What has been done so far?** (Have any interventions been attempted, such as speaking to the individual or contacting their support network which outcomes associated)
7. **Gathering Relevant Information, Who else is involved?**
 - Are there other individuals or agencies involved in the individual's care or support?
 - What roles do these individuals play, and what information do they have?
8. **What evidence is available?**
 - Is there any documentation, such as medical records, incident reports, or witness statements, that can support the referral?
 - Are there physical signs of abuse or neglect that can be observed?
9. **Considering the Individual's Wishes and Views**
 - a. **What does the individual want?**
10. **Legal and Ethical Considerations**
 - a. **Are there legal obligations?** (Is there a legal duty to refer this situation to safeguarding authorities based on the specific circumstances?)

Conclusion

Before making an adult safeguarding referral, GURD-Rwanda staff needs to consider these questions thoughtfully. This process not only aids in ensuring the safety and well-being of the individual but also reinforces the principles of respect, dignity, and empowerment. Proper assessment and documentation can lead to appropriate actions and interventions that genuinely meet the needs of vulnerable adults.