


TASKEEN HEALTH INITIATIVE
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Prepared By	Department: Human Resource	Date: 15th April, 2020
Approved By COO/CEO	Signature: 	Date: 17th April, 2020

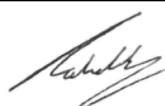
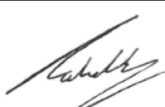
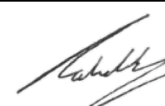
Revision History Table			
Revision	Date	Description of Change	Approved by COO/CEO
1.0	1st July, 2023	First Annual Revision	
2.0	1st July, 2024	Second Annual Revision	
3.0	1st January, 2025	Third Annual Revision	

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Taskeen Health Initiative

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Taskeen Health Initiative is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for all individuals associated with the organization, both those who seek mental health services (patients) and employees. This policy establishes the responsibilities, procedures, and rights related to safeguarding vulnerable individuals from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of harm. It applies to all Taskeen staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, board members, and affiliated personnel.

SECTION I: PATIENT SAFEGUARDING

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This section aims to protect patients, particularly vulnerable individuals, who interact with Taskeen's mental health services, including through teletherapy platforms. All Taskeen staff must act to prevent harm and respond promptly to any safeguarding concerns.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **Patient:** Anyone receiving mental health services from Taskeen.
- **Vulnerable Individual:** A person (adult or child) in need of care and support, unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
- **Child:** A person under the age of 18.
- **Abuse:** Any act (or failure to act) that causes harm, endangers life, or violates the dignity and rights of a person.

3. TYPES OF ABUSE

- **Physical Abuse:** Observable signs of violence, often disclosed by the patient.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Inappropriate comments, coercion, exposure, or sexual acts without informed consent, including those occurring online.
- **Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** Verbal threats, intimidation, humiliation, gaslighting, cyberbullying, or other controlling behaviors.
- **Financial Abuse:** Coercive control over finances, digital scams, or manipulation for monetary gain.

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- **Discriminatory Abuse:** Biased or unequal treatment based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.
- **Organizational Abuse:** Systemic failure to provide appropriate care or breaches in confidentiality.
- **Neglect/Self-Neglect:** Ignoring medical needs, or a patient failing to care for themselves due to a lack of support.
- **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking:** Coercive, exploitative situations potentially disclosed during sessions.

4. PATIENTS' RIGHTS

Patients have the right to:

- Receive culturally respectful, inclusive care.
- Be involved in decisions about their treatment.
- Know their care providers.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy.
- Refuse or withdraw consent from treatment.
- Report abuse or concerns and receive prompt follow-up.
- Be treated with dignity, regardless of identity or background.
- Be informed of policies affecting their care.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURE (FOR PATIENTS)

Any individual who becomes aware of, suspects, or is informed of abuse, neglect, or exploitation involving a patient is required to report the concern. This includes Taskeen staff, volunteers, interns, board members, contractors, patients themselves, family members, or external stakeholders.

Reports must be submitted through one of the following channels:

- In-person communication or written communication via email to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO – CEO/COO) or the Deputy DSO (Head of HR).
- Written communication via email to the official safeguarding address (safeguarding@taskeen.org).
- Anonymous submission through sealed letters or in the complaint box, if anonymity is preferred.

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- Immediate verbal alerts or phone communication in cases where urgent action is required to protect someone from harm.

Each report must include essential information such as:

- The names and roles (if applicable) of the individuals involved.
- The date, time, and location of the incident(s).
- A clear and concise description of the concern or abuse observed or disclosed.
- The type of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory, or neglect).
- The identities of any witnesses.
- Relevant supporting evidence such as emails, screenshots, messages, voice notes, photos, or written statements.
- Any previous related complaints or actions taken.

The DSO (COO/CEO) or Deputy DSO (Head of HR) must acknowledge receipt of the report within 24 hours. Patient safety must be prioritized through immediate protective measures, such as modifying service arrangements, alerting internal stakeholders, or providing confidential psychological support.

All records must be documented using the official Safeguarding Incident Report Form. These records must be signed, dated, and stored securely in a restricted-access repository.

Taskeen guarantees strict confidentiality for all safeguarding reports. Only authorized personnel directly involved in the investigation or response will have access to this information. Retaliation against those who report in good faith is strictly prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. INVESTIGATION AND ESCALATION (FOR PATIENTS)

All complaints raised by patients will be assessed with care and urgency by the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) - Chief Operating Officer (COO) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or by the Deputy DSO - Head of Human Resources.

The DSO or Deputy DSO will assess the complaint based on:

- The level of urgency,
- The potential risk to the patient or others, and

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- Whether external reporting or escalation is required.

In cases where the complaint involves serious allegations, multiple incidents, or possible criminal conduct, the matter must be escalated to the CEO and, if necessary, the Board of Directors.

The responsibilities of the DSO or Deputy DSO include:

- Ensuring the immediate safety and well-being of the patient and any other affected individuals.
- Gathering additional details, if needed, in a manner that does not influence or compromise evidence.
- Notifying appropriate external bodies (e.g., law enforcement or protection authorities) after conducting a risk assessment that prioritizes the patient's best interests.

No Premature Action: No one at Taskeen will take internal action (such as disciplinary steps or interviews) until the safeguarding team has fully assessed the situation. If needed, they will work with outside experts to ensure the matter is handled fairly and thoroughly.

SECTION II: EMPLOYEE SAFEGUARDING

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This section outlines Taskeen's commitment to providing a safe and respectful workplace. It safeguards employees, volunteers, interns, and consultants from abuse, harassment, exploitation, and unsafe working conditions.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **Employee:** Any person working at or affiliated with Taskeen.
- **Workplace Abuse:** Acts of harassment, discrimination, bullying, or retaliation in a professional setting.
- **Whistleblowing:** Disclosure of misconduct without fear of retaliation.

3. TYPES OF WORKPLACE ABUSE

- **Harassment:** Verbal, physical, or written misconduct.
- **Discrimination:** Based on identity, background, or beliefs.

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- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted sexual behavior or exploitation.
- **Bullying:** Verbal abuse, threats, or power-based intimidation.
- **Retaliation:** Negative treatment of individuals who report concerns.
- **Confidentiality Breach:** Unauthorized sharing of employee data.

4. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Employees have the right to:

- A safe, non-hostile work environment.
- Report concerns confidentially and without retaliation.
- Access grievance mechanisms.
- Receive psychological support when needed.
- Participate in safeguarding training.

5. REPORTING AND RESPONSE (FOR EMPLOYEES)

Reports related specifically to harassment, discrimination, or sexual harassment must be filed and handled in accordance with Taskeen's **Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy**. That policy outlines detailed procedures, designated reporting authorities, confidentiality safeguards and investigation processes. All personnel are required to familiarize themselves with the provisions of that policy.

For all other safeguarding concerns involving employees (excluding those explicitly covered under the Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy), the reporting process is as follows:

Reports must be made via the following approved channels:

- Direct report (in person or in writing) to the DSO (COO) or Deputy DSO (Head of HR)
- Email submission to the designated safeguarding email address (safeguarding@taskeen.org).
- Confidential or anonymous submissions through sealed letters or through the complaint box.
- Immediate phone or direct contact when employee safety is at risk.

Each report must contain detailed and factual information, including:

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- Full identification of both the complainant (unless anonymous) and the accused.
- The professional roles and relationship between the parties.
- The nature of the concern, including specifics about the abuse or misconduct.
- The timeline and context in which the abuse occurred.
- The names of witnesses, if applicable.
- Any evidence available to support the claim (emails, photos, messages, reports).
- A brief history of any related previous incidents or complaints.

Within 24 hours of receiving the report, the DSO (COO/CEO) or Deputy DSO Head of HR) must confirm its receipt and begin reviewing the matter. Immediate safeguarding actions such as paid leave for the accused, alternate working arrangements for the complainant, or psychological support services must be implemented as appropriate.

All incidents must be recorded on a standard Employee Safeguarding Incident Form and stored securely. Complaints must be handled discreetly and respectfully, ensuring that personal dignity and privacy are protected throughout the process.

Taskeen enforces a strict non-retaliation policy. Any form of reprisal against individuals who raise concerns in good faith will result in disciplinary consequences.

6. INVESTIGATION AND ESCALATION (FOR EMPLOYEES)

Each complaint must be assessed by the DSO (COO/CEO) or Deputy DSO (Head of HR) to determine the level of urgency, potential risk to the victim, and the need for external escalation. All complaints involving serious allegations, multiple incidents, or potential criminal activity must be reported to the CEO and, if necessary, the Board of Directors.

The DSO (COO/CEO) OR Deputy DSO (Head of HR) must:

- Ensure the safety of all involved individuals.
- Gather missing details if required, without influencing the evidence.
- Notify external parties (e.g., law enforcement, protection authorities) where appropriate, after a risk analysis that considers the employee's best interest.

No internal disciplinary actions, interviews, or resolutions must occur before the safeguarding team assesses the situation and, where necessary, coordinates with external authorities.

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7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

All safeguarding disclosures are handled confidentially. Reports and investigation records are stored securely and only accessed by authorized personnel. Information will be shared externally only when legally mandated or ethically necessary.

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