



CASA Lake County

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Goal of Crisis Management for CASA Lake County:

The Crisis Management Plan exists to successfully manage serious crises that have the **potential to disrupt**

- CASA Lake County's ability to provide superior advocacy to court- involved children and/or
- CASA Lake County's existence and/or reputation

Inherent Program Principles and Practices limiting crisis potential:

It is the hope of CASA Lake County that potential crises can be prevented or minimized through strong program management which encourages ethical and prudent practices. Inherent in CASA Lake County's program management are many policies and procedures that are designed to reduce the Program's risk.

- Adherence to Illinois Juvenile Court Act, 405/2-17.1
- Adherence to NCASAA standards and practices
- Adherence to IL CASA standards
- Screening procedures, background checks, and adherence to EOE for potential volunteers, Board members, and paid staff
- Extensive CASA training program of 40+ hours of classroom instruction
- Annual confidentiality review and commitment by staff and volunteers
- Strong Advocate supervision by paid staff members for volunteer advocates
- Procedural and personnel policies that ensure staff adheres to policies
- File Retention and Security procedures
- Office security procedures
- Computer records protection through ongoing backup and password policies
- *Media training for ED, PD, and/or board president*

Crisis Management Team:

A Crisis Management Team is established to:

- **Prepare and maintain** CASA Lake County's Crisis Management Plan. Plan preparation includes identifying potential crises and maintaining a document that describes pre-determined protocol for the identified situations.
- **Execute** the plan in the event of a crisis, including making proper notifications, directing strategy and public relations/ media contact, and quelling rumor, if necessary
- **Evaluate** the plan's effectiveness and make plan revisions once the crisis is ended

The Crisis Management Team must include at least one, but is not limited to:

- Executive Director
- Program Director

The Crisis Management Team may also include:

- Board President or other Board designee
- CASA Lake County's Attorney
- Public Relations expert
- Advocate Manager if the crisis involves case management or a specific Volunteer Advocate
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Juvenile Judge
- GAL

Crisis Management Document:

In addition to including pre-determined protocol for managing specific crisis situations, the completed Crisis Management Plan must include, but is not limited to:

- Fact sheet about CASA Lake County, NCASAA, IL CASA
- Current staff list with phone numbers and other contact information
- Current board list with phone numbers and other contact information
- Current active volunteer list with phone numbers and other contact information
- Protocol for designating one spokesperson, with contact information
- An ongoing media contact log to be maintained by designated spokesperson (see attached form, Appendix A)

The completed Crisis Management Plan will be maintained by one staff member, designated by the Program Director. This document will be made available for review upon request.

Crisis Communications:

At the onset of a crisis, news is likely to spread quickly. The Crisis Management Team needs to determine **who** will be most affected by the situation, including but not limited to:

- CASA child, Advocate, Advocate Manager, Program Director, Executive Director, Board member
- Attorneys: State, PD, GAL, private
- DCFS/POS agency personnel
- Court personnel: Judges, etc.
- Regulatory associations: IL CASA, NCASAA

Immediate decision needs to be made determining if the affected person(s) should be part of the decision-making or notification process in handling the situation.

Determination needs to be made on whom of the above are most important to CASA Lake County's current work, future existence or growth, and how that person(s) should be involved, if at all.

Policy statements released to the public should at all times incorporate the following principles:

- Honesty (you don't have to tell everything you know, but don't ever lie.)
- Timeliness
- Cooperative (A vacuum of information breeds media hostility and loss of confidence *ie.*, avoid the temptation to say "no comment")
- Directness without compromising confidentiality

Identification of Potential Crisis Situations and Specific Protocols:

See Attached Table B

General Emergency Activation Checklist:

Some of these actions may be necessary for emergency situations, to be determined by the Crisis Management Team:

- Call 911
- Notify building security/maintenance
- Notify key staff members
- Determine who will be the key CASA staff incident handler
- Determine if an emergency declaration needs to be made
- Start an incident log and determine who is responsible for keeping it current
- Determine if an initial press release is needed, and if so, who should write and deliver it.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Crisis Management Plan:

Only after a Crisis Management Plan has been put to the test can the Crisis Team evaluate its effectiveness. To that end, the Crisis Management Plan will be monitored, evaluated, and revised by the Crisis Management Team.

Ensure the position statements are still relevant and no new issues have arisen

- Assess any media coverage, the resulting enhancement or damage to CASA Lake County's image and reputation
- If necessary, determine long and short-term programs to rebuild

It will be the responsibility of the designated staff member who maintains the plan to update it and make revisions available to the Team or upon request.

**CASA Lake County Crisis Management Plan
Recommended Guidelines for Potential Crisis Situations
Table B**

Nature of Crisis	Crisis Team	External Spokesperson	Who needs local notification	Internal Program Response	Media Response	Post Crisis Review
Breach of Confidentiality by a volunteer	Prog Dir Adv Mgr	Exec Dir or designee ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Exec Dir Volunteer Vol Coord	Determine if child's best interests were compromised Address w/victim Address w/volunteer Take action in BI of children and CASA Retrain and retain, or retire	In the event of a crisis situation requiring general media response, a Designated Spokesperson will be named after consultation with and advisal by the non-profit specialist attorney for CASA Lake County. The designee will be the Executive Director or the Program Director, or a person of their choice.	Document in personnel file Staff Notice as needed
Inappropriate behavior of a volunteer	Exec Dir Prog Dir Adv Mgr		Board, child's guardian, GAL	Assess and determine if volunteer's credibility is compromised Address w/ victim Address w/ volunteer		Document in personnel file
Inappropriate behavior of a staff member	Exec Dir Prog Dir Adv Mgr		Board, child's guardian, GAL	Assess and determine if volunteer's credibility is compromised Address w/ victim Address w/ volunteer		Document in personnel file
Mental Health crisis of staff member	Exec Dir Prog Dir Mental Health staff member		EMS	Assess Determine if there has been aggression or violence vs. others Address w/ staff member Determine if		Document in personnel file
Death of staff member	Exec Dir Prog Dir		Board Court staff CASA staff CASAs	Notification of family if necessary Determine who will cover deceased's duties temporarily, initiate hiring process Talk to Insurance agent		Staff notification Staff meeting
Drug or alcohol abuse by staff member	Exec Dir Prog Dir Mental Health staff member					Staff Notification
Alleged criminal activity by staff or board member	Exec Dir Prog Dir Board rep			Board, Juv Judge, child's GAL		Assess Place employee on Leave of Absence until further notice

