



# Appropriately Handling Disclosure Training Vignettes

In Cooperation with the Firecracker Foundation

December 2, 2020

Districts are encouraged to use these vignettes for training around student disclosure and mandated reporting. They supplement a presentation found on the [MDE Code of Educational Ethics webpage](#).

### **Recommended group training instructions:**

Divide the participants into small groups.

For each scenario,

- Have participants read the scenarios
- Discuss what they read. Consider the following questions:
  - How do you respond to the student sharing the information with you?
  - What is your next step?
  - Do you need to report? If so, what information will you provide?

The focus of these vignettes is the act of hearing a disclosure from a student and responding appropriately to that disclosure. These vignettes include explicit advice from actors to report when appropriate. Unless otherwise indicated, each of the vignettes are set in a private environment or feature a move into one. Those that are hearing disclosures are actively listening and their body language is showing it. They are remaining calm and neutral while providing comfort, guidance, and reassurance.

## Scenario 1: Mr. Salamini

**Mr. Salamini teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the school where you work. The students love his laid-back style. He is known to let the girls rub his shiny, bald head.**

Location: In an afterschool study session.

Atmosphere: A group of students arriving and getting settled to start a study group. The 5th graders are making light conversation with the teacher.

5TH GRADER 1-2: *gather around a table. They unpack backpacks, check phones, greet one another, and get settled.*

MRS. RAMOS: *Enters. Greets students and sits down at the table.*

MRS. RAMOS: Where's Marta?

5TH GRADER 1: I'm not sure. She said she'd be here earlier.

MARTA: *Walks in hurriedly.*

5TH GRADER 1-2: Hey Marta! Where you been?

MRS. RAMOS: Hey Marta! How are you?

MARTA: *Laughs awkwardly and hurries to sit down and take out her things.* Mr. Salamini took too long picking up our quizzes. I was trying to get outta there, but I swear, he loves taking his time.

5TH GRADER 2: *Looking skeptical.* How long does it take to pass forward quizzes?

MARTA: It wouldn't take so long if he'd stop flirting with all of the girls!!!

5TH GRADERS: *Laugh knowingly*

MRS. RAMOS: *Gently.* Can you share a little more about what you mean, Marta?

5TH GRADER 1: *Interjects.* I heard he asks them all to rub his bald head before they leave for the day.

5TH GRADER 2: Eeew, whatever happened to a high five?

ALL 5TH GRADERS: *laugh uncomfortably*

MRS. RAMOS: *Gesturing to an adjoining classroom.* Why don't you two pair up and get started on your studies in there? Marta, why don't you and I pair up at my desk?

MRS. RAMOS: *Waits for the other students to get started*

MRS. RAMOS: Marta, I am concerned about what you shared with me about Mr. Salamini. How does the way he acts make you feel?

MARTA: I mean, it's not that big of a deal, I guess. I just don't want to, and I don't think I should be pressured to when I'm just tryin' to leave.

Mrs. Ramos: Thank you for being courageous enough to share this with me. It's important for you to know that it's my job as your teacher to keep you safe and a part of that means reporting incidents like this one...

MARTA: *Interrupting.* NO. I am not even mad! You don't need to tell anyone. If Mr. Salamini finds out I said something, he's going to be mad at me. A lot of students really like him, and they'll be so upset with me. I like him too! Please don't say anything, Mrs. Ramos!

Mrs. Ramos: *Gently.* Marta, you sound really worried about people being mad at you about this. Would you be comfortable with me talking to Principal Anderson on my own? You don't need to do anything. I mean, it is clear that this is common knowledge to students. *Gestures at the other 5th graders studying in the adjoining classroom.* I just want to make sure that Mr. Salamini respects your boundaries.

MARTA: So, it would come from you? I wouldn't have to do anything?

MRS RAMOS: It would come from me and if Principal Anderson needed to ask you any questions, it would be private and confidential. How do you feel about that?

MARTA: I'm still scared.

MRS RAMOS: I would be too. I want you to know that I am here and that I will do everything I can to make sure that you are safe and treated fairly. If anything happens, whether it's Mr. Salamini or one of your classmates, will you let me

know? Can you do that?

MARTA: Yes, I can do that.

MRS RAMOS: If you feel like you're being targeted, we can contact the Title IX Coordinator for help. Do you know Mrs. Martin? She teaches social studies.

MARTA: I think so.

MRS. RAMOS: Mrs. Martin often helps students when issues like this arise and they need help. *Pause.*

Thank you for trusting me, Marta. I'm sorry that this is happening but it's not your fault. You are not responsible for Mr. Salamini's behavior or whatever consequences may come from them. Do you understand?

MARTA: *Unconvinced.* I guess.

MRS. RAMOS: I mean it. This is not your fault and I will be here to remind you of that no matter what happens. Why don't we go ahead and get back to studying and I'll circle back and give you an update in a few days? How does that sound?

MARTA: Thank you, Mrs. Ramos. I really don't want anyone to get in trouble, but I also don't like the way Mr. Salamini treats us girls, you know.

MRS. RAMOS: I know. And that's why I'm here to help. You won't have to deal with this alone.

## Scenario 2: Mary

**In a discussion with your students, one of the girls states that she was touched inappropriately by a family member. She says it in passing, not really giving much detail. The other kids don't really know how to react, so they just go on talking about something else.**

Location: Cafeteria

Atmosphere: A group of students eating lunch when a Student Support Specialist, Mary (or other school staff) comes over to check in on an intense conversation.

### Scene 1:

ALL TEENS: *Sitting around a lunch table talking quietly.*

STUDENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST MARY (SPS): *Slows to speak to a few kids she knows at the table.* Hey, everyone. How are we today?

ALL TEENS: *Quietly uncomfortable*

MARY SPS: *Attempts to break the tension.* Uh Uh. Did I interrupt something intense?

TEENS 1-3: *All teens attempt to look away but keep peering at a friend named Sarah.*

MARY SPS: *Still attempting to break the tension.* Okay, Sarah. What's going on?

SARAH: *Quietly angry and glaring at friends.* I told them that my uncle touches me under the table sometimes and now they're making a big deal about it.

MARY SPS: *Gently and seriously.* Oh, Sarah. I'm sorry. Why don't we go take some space in my office to talk? You can catch your breath before classes this afternoon.

SARAH: *Stand up abruptly. Directed at other teens.* Thanks a lot. Seriously. Thank you.

MARY SPS: I'll come check on ya'll later, okay.

[The implication here is that other student's hearing this information could be traumatic as well as impact Sarah's confidentiality. Staff will need to circle back to

check on them and ask them to be discreet.}

ALL TEENS: *Nod and smile awkwardly.*

## **Scene 2:**

Location: MARY SPS's office.

MARY SPS: Sarah, can I get you any water or anything?

SARAH: No. I'm just so mad that they made such a big deal out of this. I don't even know why I said anything.

MARY SPS: Can you tell me a little about what you shared?

SARAH: My uncle has been living with us for 4 months. He lost his job. He's an alcoholic and he lost his home. When he's not drunk, he's super fun. We watch movies together and he helps me with my homework and stuff. But sometimes, when he's been drinking, he tries to touch me. He touches my leg under the table at dinner. If we're on the couch watching a movie, he puts his arm around me, and his hands get really close to my chest. He's just always there and I don't know what to do. He's my uncle and I love him.

MARY SPS: Sarah, you are so brave for telling me and for telling your friends. The first thing I want you to know is that none of this is your fault...

SARAH: Then why does it keep happening? My mom says it's because I don't cover myself when he's around, but I am just wearing my pajamas or my comfy clothes at home.

MARY SPS: Nothing you're doing is making this happen. It's not your fault. No matter what you're wearing or what you're doing that doesn't give him the right to touch you.

SARAH: *Starts crying*

MARY SPS: Sarah, I am glad that I got to talk to you today because I am here to help you. Am I to understand that your mom already knows?

SARAH: Yes! I told her and she doesn't care! She thinks it's all my fault and she won't help me.

MARY SPS: Sarah, as your Student Support Specialist, it is my job to report when

someone is abusing or harming one of my students. I will make the call. All I need from you is a little information.

SARAH: *Cries.* I don't want to have to leave my home!

MARY SPS: I know. I know. I am so sorry this is happening. I cannot guarantee what will happen after I make this call. I wish I could. I can tell you that I am going to be here with you as much as I can. Is it okay with you that I check on you every day? I won't make a big deal about it, but I can swing by your locker or you can pop in my office whenever you need to.

SARAH: Okay. I'm really scared of going home.

MARY SPS: Then let's make that call right now. We can also make some calls to help make sure you're safe in the meantime. This may be hard, but you won't be alone, okay?

SARAH: Okay.



## Scenario 3: Colton

**A mom arrives at the day care center where you work to pick up 2-year-old Colton who is having a melt-down. The more the mom tries to put his winter clothing on, the more he fights and screams, and the angrier she gets. She jerks him around, forcing his arms through the sleeves and jamming his feet into his boots. Colton starts to cry hysterically and mom yells at him that she'll give him something to cry about. He is unable to calm down. She drags him across parking lot and throws him against the car. You can hear his head thud and hear her scream, "See what you made me do?" She throws him into his car seat and drives off, tires squealing.**

Location: Day care office

Atmosphere: The bystander comes in upset to share what she saw with the director of the center and determine whether she should report the incident.

Vignette starts with the visual of this experience.

*STAFF: Rushes into the director's office clearly very worried. Can I talk to you for a second? I just saw a parent hurting a child and I think I need to make a report.*

DIRECTOR: Please. Yes, come in. Shut the door. Tell me what happened?

STAFF: Recounts incident.

DIRECTOR: I'm really sorry that you experienced that. I agree that we need to make a report.

STAFF: What about tomorrow morning when they get here? What should I do?

DIRECTOR: Just welcome the family like you would on any other day. We don't want the parents to remove the child from our care. I'd like to be able to support this family as much as we can.

In the future, I want you to feel comfortable intervening when a parent is abusing their child.

STAFF: I know. I wanted to but I didn't know what to do.

DIRECTOR: Sometimes just walking over and offering to help can deescalate the situation. This doesn't mean that we couldn't report or offer other support, but it may help prevent some of the harm from happening in the meantime.

STAFF: I could really use some ideas on how to do that.

DIRECTOR: I think it's something we should discuss at the all staff meeting and maybe offer more training about it too.

STAFF: *Visibly calmer.* I think that would be really important. I just felt stuck. Thank you for validating me and helping me figure this out.

DIRECTOR: The important thing is that you knew abuse when you saw it and that we're reporting it. Thank you. *Grabs some paperwork out of her desk.* Let's gather some information and make the call.

STAFF: Okay.

## Scenario 4: Camron

**Camron (age 6) is very loved by his mother. She holds him for several minutes before leaving him at the before-school program. She tells him, "I don't know what I would do without you. You are my best friend. It is you and me against the world, kid."**

Location: A quiet classroom

Atmosphere: A teacher, Mrs. Stanford, checking in about overhearing this conversation.

Mrs. Stanford: How do you feel when your mom says that too you?

Camron: I feel really good. I love her and we are a superhero team!

Mrs. Stanford: Wow! What are your superpowers?

Camron: Well...we're good at hugs....and, sometimes we make food together...oh! And we both dance real good! *Does a little dance move.*

Mrs. Stanford: Oh, my goodness! Those are great dance moves! Camron, is there anything about your mom that makes you feel yucky or bad? Does she ever touch your private parts?

Camron: Well, she cleans them sometimes...

Mrs. Stanford: Other than that?

Camron: No! My body is mine!

Mrs. Stanford: That's right! I am so proud of you for knowing that! I want you to know that if anyone ever makes you feel yucky, bad, scared, or unsafe, you can tell me. My superpower is making sure my students are feeling good and safe.

Camron: Wow. That's a good superpower.

Mrs. Stanford: Thanks! We're all pretty powerful, huh?

Camron: Yep.

## Scenario 5: Cecilia

**Cecelia's mom drops her off and says, "You better stop being evil today. I swear you are no good, and I wish I did not even have to pick you back up."**

Location: In the drop-off line and school office

Atmosphere: Kate hears an exchange and then reports to administration in the office. They then brainstorm to invite a staff member trusted by the child to speak to the child about the experience.

### Scene 1:

Vignette starts with the visual of this experience.

MOM: *Shouting from the car.* You better stop being evil today. I swear you are no good, and I wish I did not even have to pick you back up.

KID: *Shuts the door the car and walks towards KATE as MOM drives off.*

KATE: Hey CECILIA, I'm so happy to see you. You are such a bright spot in my day. I'm so glad you're here.

KID: *Smiles a little, gives KATE a side hug and then heads into the school.*

KATE: *Walks into the school office clearly very worried. She is taking off her safety vest and putting things away when she addresses the school secretary.* I just saw something upsetting.

SCHOOL SECRETARY: What's going on?

KATE: *Recounts incident.* Have you ever seen Cecilia's mom speak to her like that?

SCHOOL SECRETARY: No but that doesn't matter because you did. I think we need to find out more. Do you know Cecilia well?

KATE: I say hello to her when I volunteer but other than that, not really.

SCHOOL SECRETARY: Well, how would you feel about talking to Cecilia with the help of her teacher, Mrs. Miller. I think it will help if she trusts her enough to talk through whether this has happened before and then you and Mrs. Miller can decide what to do next.

KATE: That sounds like a great idea. Can we do it now?

SCHOOL SECRETARY: We definitely should. Let me see what I can do about getting someone to cover her class.

## **Scene 2:**

Location: Private office

KATE: CECILIA, I was so happy to see you this morning but when you were getting dropped off, I heard your mom say some things to you. Do you remember what she said?

CECILIA: *Her countenance changing to sadness and discomfort.* Yes.

MRS. MILLER: Cecilia, would you share with me what she said?

CECILIA: *Quietly.* I don't remember.

MRS. MILLER and KATE: *Quietly waiting.*

CECILIA: She called me evil.

KATE: That's what I thought I heard. The first thing I wanted to make sure you know is that you are not evil, Cecilia. You are kind and fun and smart.

CECILIA: But I burnt the toast this morning. Everything bad happens because of me. I'm so stupid.

MRS. MILLER: Oh Cecilia. We all make mistakes, but you are not bad or evil because of it. Do you remember yesterday when I spilled all of the blue paint? It was such a huge mess. Do you think that made me bad or evil?

CECILIA: No. That was just an accident.

MRS. MILLER: Yes, just like accidentally burning the toast. It happens.

KATE: Cecilia, does your mom talk to you like that often.

CECILIA: Not all of the time. Just when I do something bad.

MRS. MILLER: CECILIA, when you do something bad, what does she say?

CECILIA: She yells at me and calls me stupid. She says I am evil and she wishes she didn't even have to have me around. But sometimes she's nice and says she loves me. I love my mom.

MRS. MILLER: We know you do. I'm so sorry that your mommy is using such sad words towards you. Thank you for telling me. I want you to know that you can come to me anytime this happens. I'll be here to remind you that you are good and kind and smart and amazing.

CECILIA: Okay. *Smiles sheepishly.*

### **Scene 3:**

Cecilia is back in class and Mrs. Miller and Kate are debriefing.

MRS. MILLER: Thank for bringing this to my attention. I had no idea this was happening.

KATE: It was so sad. She's such a great kid.

MRS. MILLER: She really is. Now that we've got a little more information. We need to make the report. This is definitely mental injury. And until we know that things are different, you and I can pay attention.

KATE: I'll also remind our volunteers to be attentive to the way that our kids are being talked to and to bring it to my attention if it's anything like this.

## Scenario 6: Bryce

**Bryce has been out of the program for a few days. His parents had called in to report him sick. On his first day back, though, you notice fading bruises on various parts of his body.**

Location: Quiet time

Atmosphere: Teacher pulls student aside for a quiet conversation

### Scene 1:

Location: Mrs. Jones' classroom during quiet time.

Mrs. Jones: Bryce, since you were gone yesterday because you were sick, would you be willing to meet with me privately for a couple minutes to discuss what you missed?

Bryce: Sure, I guess. *Bryce appears a bit checked out.*

Mrs. Jones: Ok great, follow me into the hallway.

### Scene 2:

Location: Hallway outside of the classroom

Mrs. Jones: Bryce, how are you doing today?

Bryce: I'm ok. *Bryce seems quiet and distant.*

Mrs. Jones: Alright, do you have any questions about what we went over yesterday when you were home sick?

Bryce: No... *Bryce still seems quiet and distant.*

Mrs. Jones: Ok, well if you think of anything, I am happy to help get you up to speed. I also wanted to ask you a couple more questions if that's ok with you.

Bryce: I guess...

Mrs. Jones: I noticed some bruises on you, which makes me worried that something may have happened to you. Did someone hurt you?

Bryce: *Bryce gives Mrs. Jones a nervous look and starts fidgeting, but then says "No" flatly.*

Mrs. Jones: Ok, well I want you to know that part of my job is to make sure my students are safe both at school and at home. When I notice a lot of bruises on one of my students, I always pull him/her aside to make sure they are safe at home.

Bryce: I'll be alright. *Bryce says this quietly and with low energy.*

Mrs. Jones: What do you mean, could you help me understand?

Bryce: Well it only happens when I don't do my chores at home.

Mrs. Jones: What happens?

Bryce: I'm afraid to say. *Bryce appears slightly shaky and looks up nervously at Mrs. Jones.*

Mrs. Jones: Bryce, I am worried about you. I want to make sure you are safe. Could you tell me more about what happened?

Bryce: I guess... *Bryce pauses for a moment sighs.* When I don't do my chores my dad gets really mad and yells at me really loud. Then he gets a belt and starts whipping me with it. *Bryce says all of this very quietly and is looking down.*

Mrs. Jones: I'm so sorry that has happened to you. That was really brave for sharing that with me.

Bryce: I don't feel brave... what is going to happen now?

Mrs. Jones: I can see that you are worried about what this means now that you told me about your dad hurting you. Remember how I said that part of my job is to make sure my students are safe?

Bryce: Yeah.

Mrs. Jones: Well, to do that, I need some help from some other people, as I can only do so much to keep you safe by myself. There are other professionals that help kids in your situation all the time that I will need to inform about what you just told me.



Bryce: Really? You have to tell more people?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, and I know that must feel scary, but my job is to make sure you are safe, and these people will help ensure you are safe.

Bryce: Ok...

Mrs. Jones: What I will do next is make a report to the people who will be helping.

Bryce: Alright. *Bryce seems a little relieved, but still nervous.*

Mrs. Jones: Ok, do you feel comfortable enough to go back in the classroom?

Bryce: Sure, I'm just scared about what's going to happen.

Mrs. Jones: I completely understand why you might feel that way. If you want to talk again after class, I have a free period next hour, and we could sit down and talk for a few more minutes if that would be helpful for you. Anytime you need to talk, I will do my best to make time for you, although I can't always promise this. I could also walk you to the counselor's office and introduce you to Mrs. Hendley if you'd like.

Bryce: Alright, thanks. I think I just want to try to forget about this for the rest of the day.

## Scenario 7: Violet

**Violet, age 11, is having a hard time walking. When she sits down, she acts like it hurts. You ask her what is wrong. She just looks down and says, “Nothing.” A few days later, she is playing soccer with the other children. She rolls up her pant legs stretches on the ground when she gets warm. You notice dark purple bruises on her inner thighs. She seems to remember the bruises are there and rolls the pant legs back down below her knees.**

Location: Locker room

Atmosphere: The players and Coach of the soccer team just finished a game and are packing up their belongings. The Coach overhears a teammate say to Violet “Wow what happened to your legs?” Violet nervously and quickly says “nothing” and redirects their conversation. After Violet has her things packed up, Coach pulls her aside to talk to her privately.

### Scene 1:

Coach pulls Violet aside: Hey Violet, how are you?

Violet: *nervously mumbles.* I’m fine

Coach: I’ve noticed you’ve been feeling sore and having a hard time walking lately. Can you tell me more about where your body is hurting?

Violet: My legs have just been bothering me lately, but my mom and John said I’m fine.

Coach: Who’s John?

Violet: My mom’s new boyfriend who moved into our house a couple months ago.

Coach: Ok, how do you like John? Do you two get along?

Violet: Puts head down. He’s ok. But sometimes he likes to sleep in my bed. I told him it’s just my bed, but he said he likes to share.

Coach: When he wants to share your bed, does he just go to sleep?

Violet: *tears up and begins crying.* Sometimes he puts his hands under my pajamas and touches me down there. I told my mom, but she said I’m lying and

John wouldn't hurt me like that.

Coach: You are so brave for sharing this with me Violet. My biggest concern is your safety and I want you to know I'm here for you and I'm going to do whatever I can to help you.

Violet: I don't want anyone else to know, please don't tell.

Coach: My job as your coach is to make sure you're safe, which means making a call to report what you've told me. It's important you know that none of this is your fault, and I will be here to support you no matter what happens.

Violet: *crying*. Ok, I'm just scared. Mom and John will be so mad at me for telling. I don't want anyone to get in trouble.

Coach: It's understandable that you're scared, but you won't have to deal with this alone. It sounds like you're very worried about your mom and John's reactions to you telling me. I will be here for you every step of the way through this process. You are not alone.

# Answers

<b>Vignette</b>	<b>Key Words</b>	<b>Mandated Reporting</b>
Scenario 1: Mr. Salamini	grooming, boundaries, harm reduction, safety planning	Does not trigger a mandated report to DHHS but the administration should be made aware of this situation as a potential incident of grooming and a clear breach of appropriate boundaries.
Scenario 2: Mary	sexual abuse, harm reduction, safety planning, vicarious trauma	Triggers a mandated report to DHHS. May require additional resources for safe housing.
Scenario 3: Colton	sexual abuse, harm reduction, safety planning, bystander intervention	Triggers a mandated report to DHHS.
Scenario 4: Camron	Bystander intervention	Does not trigger a mandated report to DHHS.
Scenario 5: Cecilia	Mental injury, verbal abuse, bystander intervention, safety planning, harm reduction	Triggers a mandated report to DHHS.
Scenario 6: Bryce	Physical injury, physical abuse, harm reduction, safety planning	Triggers a mandated report to DHHS.
Scenario 7: Violet	Sexual abuse	Triggers a mandated report to DHHS.