



# CLIENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

**Please read the following policies about STAR's services. You will be asked to sign that you have read and understand these policies.**

## **OUR SERVICES**

STAR® offers many services to survivors of sexual trauma. Our services are free of charge.

### **Advocacy Services**

Advocates provide support, information, and referrals to survivors and their loved ones. Advocates can help you understand your options for reporting, receive medical attention, provide information about the legal system, and accompany you to interviews with police, attorneys, and at court proceedings. Advocates are available by phone or to meet in person at our office.

### **Counseling Services**

You can receive individual and group counseling at STAR®. Our licensed counselors and social workers and graduate-level interns provide one on one sessions available by appointment. Individual sessions are 50 minutes each. STAR® offers group counseling throughout the year. Ask your counselor about group counseling availability.

A parent or caregiver must consent to allow STAR® to provide counseling

to youth under the age of 18. A parent or legal guardian must also be present in the waiting room at STAR® during the counseling session for the youth.

### **Legal Services**

Our attorneys can assist you if you experience legal needs as a result of your sexual trauma. Please speak to your advocate if you would like more information about STAR® legal services.

At this time, legal services are not available to those under the age of 11. Please note that STAR® does not provide legal representation in civil cases to sue someone for money.

## **ACCESS TO SERVICES**

We want to make sure our services are available to everyone in the community. If you need special assistance, such as help with reading, information provided in a different language, or help with getting to our office, please let us know.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

STAR® staff will:

- Treat you with fairness and respect
- Talk to you about any changes that may affect your access to our services
- Keep your information confidential
- Call you if there are any changes to your appointment

You will:

- Treat STAR® staff and volunteers with fairness and respect
- Tell us when your address, phone number, or email changes
- Keep information about other clients private

- Recognize that the services at STAR® have limits
- Show up to your appointment on time

## **RESCHEDULING AND CANCELLATION**

You must contact STAR® at least a day in advance if you need to reschedule or cancel your appointment. If you do not contact us within 24 hours of your appointment, or if you do not show up for your appointment, you may be unable to receive additional services at STAR®.

You are responsible for showing up on time for your appointment. If you show up more than 15 minutes late, you will have to reschedule for a different time.

If there is a power outage or bad weather, we may close the STAR® office. We will contact you to let you know if this happens. If you call our 24-hour hotline (1-855-435-STAR), you can ask about office closure before you come to STAR.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

STAR maintains the highest level confidentiality to protect our clients. Information is not provided to individuals outside of STAR® unless:

1. We have your written permission.
2. We believe it is necessary to prevent danger to yourself or others.
3. You tell a mandated reporter that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child, dependent adult, or a vulnerable elderly person has been abused and/or neglected.
4. An advocate or counselor is working under supervision.
5. We are ordered to by a court.

## **CLIENT RECORDS**

STAR® has a password-protected database that stores client information and records. STAR® has strict requirements for releasing client records. You

may examine and/or receive a copy of your client record if you request it.

You must complete a records release form to request your information. Once you request your records, your advocate or counselor will meet with you to review the file to answer any questions you might have.

You must also complete a records release form if you would like STAR® to release your records to another person or service provider. We do not accept release forms from other providers. You have to sign a STAR® release. This is to protect your privacy.

STAR® will not provide any documentation that confirms or denies whether or not a sexual assault occurred.

## **ANIMAL POLICY**

You are not allowed to bring a pet to our offices. Service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) do not apply to this policy. Other support or therapy animals that are not service animals are not allowed at the building.

## **ILLNESS**

To protect the health of our staff members and clients, if you experience any of the symptoms listed below, we ask that you not come to STAR:

- Any infectious disease that is considered contagious (Flu, Meningitis, strep throat, etc.)
- Fever greater than 100
- Contagious skin rashes
- Uncontrollable coughing
- Chicken pox, measles, or shingles
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Infestations (lice, bed bugs, etc.)
- Ringworm

If you experience these symptoms, please contact STAR® to reschedule

your appointment.

## **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS**

Clients are not allowed to bring any weapon or firearm to STAR, even if you have a valid federal or state license to possess or carry a firearm.

The only exceptions to this policy are if 1) the firearm is carried by an on-duty law enforcement officer or 2) you keep your concealed firearm stored within a personally owned vehicle. If an individual does not have a vehicle or another means to secure their weapon; they should inform STAR staff of the weapon or firearm in their possession, so it can be securely stored, while on STAR property.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

STAR can provide clients with transportation through a ride-share program, such as Uber and Lyft. Transportation is provided to meetings and appointments in relation to your experience of sexual trauma. You can request a ride to or from:

- Appointments at STAR®
- Follow-up medical care after a forensic exam
- An interview or meeting with the police
- Meetings with the District Attorney
- Court hearings

To receive transportation through STAR®, you must follow these policies:

- The ride must be to/from an address in your file, or to a shelter or a community center.
- We cannot provide trips with multiple stops.
- You are only allowed 8 one-way or 4 roundtrip rides per month.
- Youth under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a guardian and/or a person 18 years or older.

- You cannot be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the rides.

Please contact your advocate or counselor to schedule transportation.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Please call our office number (found on the next page) to schedule, reschedule, or cancel your appointment. You can also call us to ask questions or express concerns in between your appointments. Our office phone is a land line and is not capable of sending or receiving text messages.

STAR® staff do not provide their personal cell phone numbers to clients. You may receive a call or a text from a STAR cell phone that is shared by several different staff members to use when communicating with clients.

To protect your privacy, STAR® staff will limit email communications with you.

You can always call our 24/7 hotline for support. This line is answered by a STAR staff member during business hours, and a volunteer advocate during evenings, weekends, and holidays. The hotline number is 1-855-435-STAR.

STAR® staff do not communicate with clients through social media. We welcome you to “like” and “share” information on our public social media pages. Please be aware that all information posted online is public information. Our social media profiles are monitored by staff and any inappropriate content will be removed.

## **SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA**

If a member of the media contacts you to discuss your case, please know that you are not required to talk to them. Your advocate or counselor can talk with you if you would like to discuss your case with the media.

STAR® often receives requests for survivors to speak to the media. If you would like to speak about your case or your experience to the media, please let us know.

We will not give your information to any media outlet or speak of any case publicly that identifies you as a client of STAR® without your written permission.

## **CLIENT FEEDBACK SURVEYS**

We welcome your feedback. Client satisfaction surveys are available in the reception area. We ask that you complete a survey at any time to help us learn how we can better serve you and our community.

## **GRIEVANCES**

In an instance where you feel that your experience with STAR® has been unsatisfactory, you are encouraged to discuss the matter with your advocate or counselor first, then with the Director listed below.

### ***Alexandria Branch***

1412 Peterman Drive, Suite A  
Alexandria, LA 71301  
Office number: (318) 625-7592  
Director: Hannah Morace

### ***New Orleans Branch***

123 N. Genois Street  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
Office number: (504) 407-0711  
Director: Amy Jackson, LCSW, MPH

### ***Baton Rouge Branch***

5615 Corporate Blvd., Ste 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Office number: (225) 615-7093  
Director: Kirsten Raby

### ***Legal Division***

5615 Corporate Blvd., Ste 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Office number: (225) 615-7093  
Director: Morgan Lamandre, Esq.

STAR® is a recipient of Federal VAWA funds; therefore, any person who believes that they have experienced discrimination by STAR may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). OCR has authority to investigate complaints alleging a violation of the VAWA nondiscrimination grant condition. To file a discrimination complaint, please download and complete the Complaint Verification Form (CVF) and the Identity Release Statement (IRS) and return both forms to OCR at the following address: Office for Civil Rights, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 810 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531

**Note:** All licensed clinicians are required to follow professional standards. A copy of the Declaration of Practices and Procedures of the Counselor and the Professional Disclosure Statement of the Social Worker is available upon request.



# EMERGENCY CONTACT CONSENT

We have a duty to protect you from harm, including harm towards yourself. Your consent is required to allow STAR® to contact someone on your behalf in emergency situations. Please select the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes, I agree** to allow a STAR® staff member to contact my designated  
(Initial) emergency contact (listed below) on my behalf if it is determined that I am  
in need of emergency care.

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to You: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes, I agree** to allow a licensed mental health professional to contact local  
(Initial) emergency services on my behalf if it is determined that I am in need of  
emergency care.

**-OR-**

\_\_\_\_\_ **No, I do not agree** to allow STAR® to contact my emergency contact and/or  
(Initial) local emergency services my emergency contact and/or local emergency  
services on my behalf if it is determined that I am in need of emergency  
care.

# AGREEMENT TO POLICIES

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the client policies and procedures, and I am giving my consent to receive services.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date