

## SECTION 1: VOLUNTEER INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 *Welcome to No One Alone*

We are happy to welcome you to No One Alone (NOA). We are a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to help women suffering from domestic violence by providing emergency shelter and comprehensive support services. We value each of our volunteers, and hope that you will find your work here rewarding and satisfying.

### 1.2 *Our Mission*

NOA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing emergency shelter and comprehensive support services to victims of domestic violence and their children in Dawson and Lumpkin Counties, Georgia. NOA was incorporated in 1990 and the original shelter, serving Dawson and Lumpkin Counties, opened in 1992. NOA is established as a leading voice against domestic violence and a strong advocate for victims. The program offers emergency shelter, individual counseling and support groups, children's services, legal advocacy, financial assistance, and educational scholarships to help victims and their children rise above harmful situations.

### **Mission Statement**

*NOA provides safe haven and support services for victims of family violence. Through educational programs, NOA works to foster attitudes in the community that violence is not acceptable.*

As a domestic violence shelter program, NOA gives hope to families touched by domestic violence -- families who are battered, injured, hurt, with broken hearts and broken spirits. The emergency shelter houses victims of domestic violence who have nowhere else to turn for help. Not only are victims sheltered from physical and emotional violence, they are provided with food, clothing, transportation, medicine, and personal necessities. The domestic violence program also offers:

- A 24-hour crisis line
- Individual and group counseling
- Children's program
- Parenting support
- Legal advocacy and court support
- Case management
- Financial assistance
- School prevention program
- Educational scholarships

### **1.3 *Purpose of this Volunteer Handbook***

Policies are established to serve the best interests of the volunteer and NOA. This Handbook is designed to answer many of your questions regarding volunteering for NOA. This Handbook applies to NOA volunteers. It provides information outlining the NOA program, policies, and volunteer requirements in effect at the time of publication. NOA will try to keep the manual current, but there may be times when a policy may change before the manual can be revised.

You should keep this Handbook as a reference throughout your volunteer assignment with NOA. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to discuss them with the Volunteer Coordinator at 706-864-0030, ext. 4 or [brendab@noonealone.org](mailto:brendab@noonealone.org).

## **SECTION 2: GENERAL VOLUNTEER POLICIES**

### **2.1 *Volunteer Assignments At-Will***

All volunteer assignments with NOA are at-will, which means that you have the right to terminate your volunteer assignment at any time, for any or no reason. At the same time, NOA reserves the right to discharge any volunteer at any time, for any reason not prohibited by law. Nothing in this Handbook creates, or should be construed to create, a contract or promise of assignment for any particular period or a contract for benefits. NOA reserves the right to add, change and/or delete policies, practices, and/or benefits at any time with or without notice.

### **2.2 *Policy Against Harassment***

NOA recognizes that harassment, including sexual harassment, on any level, involving any party of any gender, within the organization is unlawful conduct and a violation of individual civil rights. NOA does not tolerate threats or insinuation to an individual, either explicitly or implicitly, that the individual's refusal to submit to sexual or romantic advances will adversely affect the volunteer's assignment, evaluation, assigned duties or volunteer hours. NOA also does not tolerate intimidation, ridicule, or insult of a volunteer or employee because of his or her race, sex, color, national origin, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other protected characteristic where such intimidation, ridicule, or insult is sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to alter the conditions of the volunteer's assignment by creating an abusive or hostile work environment.

Examples of the type of unwelcome conduct that are prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, sex, color, national origin, age, disability or any other characteristic protected under applicable laws;
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, national origin, disability or other protected characteristic;
- Touching, such as rubbing or massaging someone's neck or shoulders, stroking someone's hair, or brushing against another's body;

- Sexually suggestive touching;
- Grabbing, groping, kissing, fondling;
- Invading someone's "personal space";
- Suggestive whistling;
- Lewd, off-color, sexually oriented comments or jokes;
- Foul or obscene language;
- Leering, staring, stalking;
- Suggestive or sexually explicit posters, calendars, photographs, graffiti, cartoons, or other written materials;
- Unwanted or offensive letters or poems;
- Sitting or gesturing in a sexually suggestive manner;
- Offensive e-mail or voice-mail messages;
- Sexually-oriented or explicit remarks, including written or oral references to sexual conduct or gossip regarding one's sex life, body, or sexual activities, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Questions about another's sex life or experience;
- Sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, or repeated requests for dates; and
- Sexual favors in return for rewards, or threats if sexual favors are not provided.

Harassment is misconduct that will not be tolerated.

If you believe that you are being harassed by another volunteer, employee, vendor, or by anyone else, or if you believe that someone else is being harassed, you should, without fear of reprisal, promptly report it to your immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. If the complaint is being made against the Executive Director, or if you are uncomfortable discussing the problem with your immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator, or if you previously have discussed the problem with the Volunteer Coordinator and believe that further action is necessary to resolve the problem, then you may submit a written complaint to the Administrative Chairperson of the Board of Directors. An investigation of each incident will be made and corrective action will be taken when appropriate. NOA will not penalize you in any way for reporting conduct that you believe in good faith may be a violation of this policy.

**Violations of this policy will subject a volunteer to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of volunteer assignment.** Therefore, if you have any questions about what constitutes harassing behavior or what conduct is prohibited by this policy, please discuss them with the Volunteer Coordinator.

NOA cannot resolve a harassment problem unless we know about it. Therefore, it is your responsibility to bring any such problems to our attention so that we can take whatever steps are appropriate to correct the problem.

### **2.3 *Anti-Retaliation Policy***

NOA will not engage in or allow retaliation of any kind against any volunteer for reporting (internally or externally) or expressing opposition to any incident of discrimination, harassment, violation of federal, state, or local employment laws, or for cooperating, assisting, or otherwise participating in the investigation of any allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or other policy violation. Retaliatory action, or threatened retaliatory action, against a volunteer under such circumstances is subject to the identical policy and procedures concerning discrimination and harassment, including discipline up to and including termination of volunteer assignment.

If you believe you have been subjected to any kind of retaliation, you should immediately report the conduct to the Volunteer Coordinator. All reports of retaliation will be investigated as promptly, completely, and confidentially as possible. When the investigation is complete, NOA will take corrective action where appropriate.

### **2.4 *Open Door Policy***

We want to maintain a positive and pleasant environment for all of our volunteers. To help us meet this goal, NOA has an open door policy, by which volunteers are encouraged to report volunteer assignment-related concerns.

If something about your assignment is bothering you, or if you have a question, concern, idea, or problem related to your volunteer tasks, please discuss it with your immediate supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. We encourage you to come forward and make your concerns known to the NOA management team. *We cannot solve the problem if we do not know about it.*

### **2.5 *References and Criminal Background Checks***

NOA will conduct a criminal background check on each new volunteer that is assigned to work with clients or their children. NOA reserves the right to terminate the volunteer assignment based on the outcome of the criminal background check.

References are contacted to verify the volunteer's education records, employment history and level of appropriateness for the volunteer assignment.

### **2.6 *Training and Orientation***

All new volunteers of NOA and or volunteers transferring from another non-profit position will participate in NOA training and orientation. Volunteers who have not or will not satisfy the requirements of the orientation period will not be retained. The duration of training and orientation will vary depending on the volunteer assignment.

## SECTION 3: VOLUNTEER STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

### 3.1 *Volunteer Behavior*

Certain rules and regulations regarding volunteer behavior are necessary for efficient business operations and for the benefit and safety of all volunteers, employees and victims. Conduct that interferes with operations, discredits NOA, or is offensive to clients, visitors, coworkers, or others will not be tolerated.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to safeguard the reputation of NOA through professional conduct. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects positively on NOA. Each volunteer of NOA shall, among other things, perform all duties assigned to him or her in a manner that will:

- Give ready response to and comply with the directions and instructions of the immediate supervisor.
- Show courtesy, cooperation, diligence, and tact in dealing with other volunteers, employees, clients, Board members, and the general public.
- Give full, efficient and industrious service in order to promote the economical and effective accomplishment of agency programs.
- Safeguard all information of a confidential nature and refrain from disclosing any portion thereof, except in a manner and to the extent authorized. ***The confidentiality of the shelter location and NOA's clients must be maintained at all times.***

### 3.2 *Personal Safety and Professional Relations with Clients*

Volunteers must maintain appropriate safety behaviors by observing the following:

- Volunteers must not take a client to their home nor reveal their home address or telephone number to a client.
- Volunteers must never transport a client to or from the client's home or the home of a client's friend or relative.
- Volunteers must not lend their personal vehicle to a client nor borrow a client's vehicle.
- Volunteers must not report for duty under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are allowed on shelter premises. *Please see the Policy against Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use set forth in Section 3.8 below.*
- NOA is a smoke-free workplace. Smoking is not permitted inside NOA facilities or in NOA vehicles. Smoking is allowed in designated areas outside of the shelter building only.

### **3.3 *Volunteer Punctuality and Attendance***

You are important to the effective operation of NOA. When you are not here at expected times or on expected days, it negatively impacts the operation of NOA. Being late (tardy), or not showing up for your volunteer assignment affects the clients we service as well as other staff members. As a result, we expect you to keep regular attendance and be on time and ready to work at the beginning of each scheduled volunteer assignment.

If you anticipate that you will be late or absent, it is your responsibility to directly notify your immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. We ask that you give notice as far in advance as possible so that we can arrange coverage in your absence.

Excessive absences, as well as failure to properly notify the Volunteer Coordinator of such occurrences, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of your volunteer assignment.

### **3.4 *Use of NOA Property***

We have invested a great deal of money in the property and equipment that you use to perform your job. As such, employees are expected to exercise care in the use of property owned or leased by NOA. Negligence in the care and use of NOA property and/or unauthorized removal or personal use of such property is prohibited.

We ask all volunteers to take care of NOA property and to report any problems to their immediate supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordinator. If a piece of equipment or property is unsafe for use, please report it immediately. Please use property only in the manner intended as instructed.

We do not allow personal use of NOA property unless specifically authorized.

### **3.5 *Confidentiality Policy***

NOA is committed to protecting the confidentiality of client records, personnel information, and other non-public information regarding our clients, employees and operations. Volunteers must ensure that information about our clients, employees, operations and other volunteers is held in confidence to protect the welfare and interests of clients, volunteers and employees. Any and all inquiries by individuals, the media, or public concerning NOA, its clients, volunteers or employees should be referred to the Executive Director.

### **3.6 *Threatening, Abusive or Vulgar Language***

We expect our volunteers to treat everyone they meet through their jobs with courtesy and respect. Threatening, abusive, and vulgar language has no place in our workplace. It destroys morale and relationships, and it impedes the effective and efficient operation of our business.

As a result, we will not tolerate threatening, abusive, or vulgar language from volunteers while they are on the worksite, conducting NOA business, or attending NOA-related business or social functions.

### **3.7 Policy Against Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use**

NOA is a drug-free workplace and complies with the Drug Free Workplace Act as required by Federal regulations.

All volunteers are absolutely prohibited from:

- Use, possession, sale, distribution, or manufacture of illegal drugs on NOA property or while on NOA business.
- Use, possession, sale, distribution, or manufacture of alcohol on NOA property or while on NOA business (other than the moderate consumption of alcohol at NOA social functions held after normal business hours).
- Being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs on NOA property.
- Use of alcohol in a manner which deteriorates work performance or could place volunteers, employees or clients in jeopardy.
- Possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs off NOA property that deteriorates volunteer work performance or could place other volunteers or employees in jeopardy.

Any volunteer violating this policy will be severely disciplined, up to and including termination of volunteer assignment for the first offense.

## **SECTION 4: DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND DISCIPLINE**

### **4.1 Complaint Procedure**

NOA has a grievance procedure intended to promote a constructive, work-producing environment for the benefit of all volunteers and the organization.

If you have any question about the interpretation or application of NOA policies, are in disagreement with a fellow volunteer, employee or supervisor, feel that you have been treated unfairly, or have a problem that has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you should follow the steps below:

**Step 1:** If you have a grievance you should normally discuss the issue first with your immediate supervisor.

**Step 2:** If your immediate supervisor does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction, or if you do not feel comfortable about discussing it with your immediate supervisor, you should discuss the issue with the Volunteer Coordinator.

**Step 3:** If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may file a written grievance to the Administrative Chairperson of the Board of Directors, specifying the previous efforts at resolution and the specific relief sought. At its sole discretion, the Board may choose to meet in person with you or

may consider your grievance without meeting with you. The decision of the Board or any other final decision in this procedure shall be final.

## **4.2    *Discipline***

NOA wishes to promote the fair, equitable and reasonable handling of volunteer misconduct and the application of discipline. NOA expects all volunteers to accept certain responsibilities, adhere to acceptable business principles in matters of personal conduct, and exhibit personal integrity at all times. Volunteers must comply with NOA policies and procedures, and observe the highest standards of professionalism. When a volunteer violates NOA's rules, it is cause for concern and action.

Certain acts are considered so serious that they normally will result in termination of volunteer assignment for a single offense. Such actions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Being intoxicated or under the influence of drugs while on duty
- Violation of any NOA policy
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Revealing company information to anyone other than authorized employees, without written approval
- Sexual advances/harassment, or any other harassment, of a client or co-worker
- Endangering a client or another employee
- Sexual relations with a client
- Use of physical or sexual violence against a client or NOA personnel
- Theft of, or willful damage to, NOA property
- Falsification of a volunteer application or timesheet
- Disruptive, unprofessional, rude, or discourteous conduct toward clients, other volunteers or employees
- Client abuse/neglect
- Sleeping on the job without permission
- Criminal behavior during work hours or unlawful behavior otherwise related to NOA
- Violation of applicable ethical rules governing appropriate client relationships

If you have any questions about whether a particular situation would violate this policy, you should immediately discuss it with your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.



This list is illustrative only and is not intended to cover every possible situation that may arise. Any conduct that is detrimental to NOA's interests or security, or the safety or welfare of NOA employees, volunteers or clients, may result in corrective action or termination of your volunteer assignment.