

# PURPOSE OF CAPACITY BUILDING ON MANDATORY REPORTING OF CASES OF CHILD ABUSE

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

20 OCTOBER 2023

# CAPACITY BUILDING ON MANDATORY REPORTING OF CASES OF CHILD ABUSE

- Department of Social Development as guardian of children is tasked with a responsibility to care and protect children whilst ensuring their well-being is concerned about the shocking statistics from the Gauteng Department of Health that recorded more than 23 000 teen pregnancies in one year and that some mothers are as young as ten years.
- Teenage pregnancy particularly the tender age of 10 years is a serious concern to the country as it is a manifestation of the high levels of vulnerability of children; unmitigated risk factors and harm children are exposed to in communities including home environment.
- In response to the alarming figures released by Health in Gauteng, DSD made a call to sensitize Health Care Workers about the mandatory reporting as required by the Children's Act because Department of Social Development does not have such reported cases owing to its responsibility and mandate to care and protect children, ensuring their well-being.
- The Children's Act, 38 of 2005 makes provision for reporting of suspected cases of abuse for purposes of triggering an immediate response and measures to assist a child whose life is at risk.

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- In the case of these pregnant children; teachers, nurses and neighbours have an obligation to care and protect these children by raising alarm through reporting of their suspicion of neglect or abuse to the police or social workers if parents and caregivers have taken no action.
- The Children's Act also makes provision for access to information on health promotion and the prevention and treatment of ill-health and disease, sexuality reproduction; access to contraceptives for children over 12 years of age as there is an acknowledgement that during this adolescent stage children experiment by engaging in sexual abuse however; they need to be guided and empowered with information to make right decision and choices.
- The Children's Act further advocates for promotion and provision of prevention and early intervention programmes intended to prevent problems before they occur and also address risk factors when children are exposed to harm.

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- Given that the DSD does not have such reports, it clearly indicates that Health Care Workers might not be familiar with the reporting obligations as required by the Children's Act No 38 of 2005.
- Therefore, the purpose of the training is to sensitise HCW about the mandatory reporting by taking them through **Form 22** which should be completed when reporting such cases and be submitted the Designated Child Protection Organisation or local Department of Social Development for further investigation; assessment; intervention and monitoring of services rendered to the child and the family were required.

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