

**RIVER VALLEY COUNSELING CENTER, INC.**

**POLICY/PROCEDURE # C30.05**

**SUBJECT: DUTY TO PROTECT**

**DATE REVIEWED/REVISED: 10/15, 11/18**

**POLICY STATEMENT:** When a client presents a danger to self or others or when there is danger to an identified or reasonably identifiable other, the clinician must take steps to protect the client from self harm, or the intended victim from harm by the client, or both if need be.

**PURPOSE:** To protect clients and/or intended victims from harm.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** All Clinical Staff.

**PROCEDURE:**

- A. If the client presents a clear and present danger to self, this includes active suicidality, as well as impaired judgment and high risk behaviors, the clinician should contact the crisis team to arrange assessment for commitment to a psychiatric unit. Consultation with a clinical supervisor is advised if such a supervisor is available, and it would not unduly delay assessment. The client's self-endangering behavior must be reported to the hospital.
- B. If the client communicates an explicit threat to kill or inflict serious bodily injury on a reasonably identifiable individual and the client appears to both intend and to be able to carry out the threat, or if the client has a known history of physical violence and the clinician has a reasonable basis to believe that the client will attempt to kill or inflict serious bodily injury on a reasonably identifiable person, the clinician must take reasonable precautions, which shall include one or more of the following:
  - 1. Communicate the threat to the intended victim;
  - 2. Notify an appropriate law enforcement agency where the client or the potential victim live;
  - 3. Arrange a voluntary hospitalization
  - 4. Initiate involuntary hospitalization (commitment)
- C. Consultation with a supervisor is advised if this would not unduly delay action. In all cases of hospitalization for dangerousness, the hospital must be notified of the nature of the threat, including intended victim, if any.

*All paper copies are uncontrolled. Always refer to the electronic version*

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Document the reasons for considering the danger to exist, as well as the actions taken to protect the client or intended victim, when and to whom you spoke; the content of the contact.