

### 1 Observable Walk Away (**for persons *without* established independent time**)

1.1 Staff will attempt to deter a person from walking away from the premises without approval by using the following procedures:

1.1.1 Remind the person served of their behavior program and ISP goals. If applicable, staff will implement any pro-active strategies identified in the behavior plan to address the presenting issue. Staff will use positive behavioral techniques to diffuse and de-escalate the situation.

1.1.2 Attempt to determine the reason the person would like to leave the site, such as to go to a desired destination, obtain something or avoid a situation.

1.1.3 If possible, attempt to negotiate with the person to de-escalate the situation and develop a plan on how the need or request can be resolved.

1.1.4 If the person begins to walk away from the site, staff will alert another staff member, if applicable, that they will be following the person. Keep the person in line of sight at all times if possible. Contact the on-call supervisor to apprise them of the situation. **Do not attempt to physically impede the person's path.**

1.1.5 If there is another staff member present to remain with the other persons served, continue to follow the person until the situation is resolved. Keep the on-call supervisor apprised of the situation until the person returns to the site.

1.1.6 If the person continues to walk away, staff will follow them quietly. If they become agitated or display unsafe behavior staff will consult the on-call supervisor and determine if assistance from the police or crisis support services is warranted. If the person becomes an immediate danger to themselves or others, staff will contact the police immediately.

### 2 Out-of-Sight Elopement (**for persons *without* established independent time**)

2.1 If an elopement occurs and the staff members are unable to visibly observe the person, the following protocol will be followed:

- 2.1.1 Complete a perimeter check to verify the person served has left the site. Check known places the person likes to frequent and surrounding property.
- 2.1.2 If there is another staff member present to remain with the other persons served, continue to search for the person. Contact the on-call supervisor to apprise them of the situation until the person returns to the site or other direction is provided.
- 2.1.3 If the person has an identified behavioral objective to specifically address elopement, implement the procedures outlined in the individual behavioral plan.
- 2.1.4 If the elopement is a new behavior not addressed in a person's individual service plan follow the walk away protocol.
- 2.1.5 If the police are contacted, the elopement should be reported as a "walk-away" unless the person presents a threat to himself/herself or others. If the person does represent such a risk, those risks should be conveyed to the police when making the report.
- 2.1.6 Any time law enforcement officers are summoned, OPTIONS staff members will be prepared with the following information:
- Emergency information on the person served
  - Photo identification of the person(s) served involved in the incident
  - List of current medications, if any
  - A verbal action plan of what staff members expect the law enforcement officer(s) to do (e.g., take a report, press charges, notify Crisis Services, Mental Health, etc.). Staff will consult with the on-call supervisor or manager for assistance as needed.
- 2.1.7 Continue to look for the person until the person is found or until the police arrive.
- 2.1.8 If the person is found after the police are called but before they arrive on the scene, notify them immediately and cancel the request for assistance.

- 2.1.9 When the person served has returned to the site, immediately notify the on-call supervisor and provide a visual check for injury or any signs of distress.

### 3 Observable Walk Away (**for persons *with* established independent time**)

- 3.1 Staff will attempt to deter a person from walking away by using the following procedures:
  - 3.1.1 Remind the person served of their behavior program and ISP goals. If applicable, staff will implement any pro-active strategies identified in the behavior plan to address the presenting issue.
  - 3.1.2 Attempt to determine the reason the person would like to leave the site such as to go to a desired destination, obtain something or avoid a situation.
  - 3.1.3 If possible, attempt to negotiate with the person to de-escalate the situation and develop a plan on how the need or request can be resolved. If the person is not a safety risk, create an agreement on where the person is going and when they will return.
  - 3.1.4 If the person begins to walk away from the site without an agreement, the staff member will communicate with other staff, if applicable, that they will be following the person. Keep the person in line of sight at all times. Contact the on-call supervisor to apprise them of the situation. **Do not attempt to physically impede the person's path.**
  - 3.1.5 If there is another staff member present to remain with the other persons served, continue to follow the person until the situation is resolved. Keep the on-call supervisor apprised of the situation until the person returns to the site.
  - 3.1.6 If the person served continues to walk away, follow them quietly at a distance. If they become agitated or displaying unsafe behavior, consult the on-call supervisor and determine if assistance from the police or crisis services is warranted. If they become an immediate danger to themselves or others contact the police immediately. Do not leave the person served unsupervised until the person is calm and an agreement is reached.

- 4 Out-of-Sight Elopement (**for persons *with* established independent time**)
  - 4.1 If an elopement occurs and the staff members are unable to visibly observe the person, the following protocol will be followed:
    - 4.1.1 Complete a perimeter check to verify the person served has left the site. Check known places the person likes to frequent and surrounding property.
    - 4.1.2 If there is another staff member present to remain with the other persons served, continue to search for the person. Contact the on-call supervisor to apprise them of the situation.
    - 4.1.3 If the person has an identified behavioral objective to specifically address elopement, implement the procedures outlined in the individual behavioral plan.
    - 4.1.4 If the elopement is a new behavior not addressed in a person's individual service plan and the person served has not been located within the time agreed upon by the on-call supervisor, follow the individual ISP walk away policy.
    - 4.1.5 If the police are contacted, the elopement should be reported as a "walk-away" unless the person presents a threat to themselves or others. If the person does represent such a risk, those risks should be conveyed to the police when making the report.
    - 4.1.6 Any time law enforcement officers are summoned, OPTIONS staff members will be prepared with the information listed in 2.1.6 above.
    - 4.1.7 Continue to look for the person until the person is found or until the police arrive.
    - 4.1.8 If the person is found after the police are called but before they arrive on the scene, notify them immediately and cancel the request for assistance.
    - 4.1.9 When the person served has returned to the site, immediately notify the on-call supervisor.

5 The following documentation must be completed for all incidents of elopement:

5.1 Special Incident Report

5.2 Elopement Checklist

POLICY DATE: February 1996

Revised: July 2001, March 2004, August 2007, January 2011, May 2012  
September, 2014

Reviewed: September, 2015, September 2016, October 2017, October 2018

Revised: November 2019, November 2020

Reviewed: March 2022