

[KKPP DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 18, S. 1994, May 12, 1994]

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPECIAL PROJECT ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF SEXUALLY ABUSED AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

I.

Rationale

Child abuse, particularly, sexual abuse and exploitation is a growing phenomenon in our country. An analysis of the records of the Bantay Bata Hotline project of the Bureau on the number of incidence of sexual abuse and exploitation cases for a 3 year period indicated an average increase of 10% yearly. It is to be noted, however, that the figures involved in the analysis represent only those cases that are reported to DSWD. It is believed that a lot more is unreported considering that cases of this type are culturally viewed as "private in nature" and families would rather not report least they will be subjected to social censure and public scrutiny. In addition, children victims may not report said incidences because of ignorance; fear of reprisals by the perpetrators and fear that parents will blame them. Notwithstanding, with the continuing advocacy and mass persuasion efforts, an increase in the number of cases is projected as more people will be encouraged to report.

Consequences of child sexual abuse and exploitation are both serious and long lasting. Studies show that children victims fail in achieving healthy relationships with their immediate family, lessens the chance in attaining a sense of personal worth, a feeling of acceptance and self respect which may lead to difficult deviant behavior. Finally, these effects will create not only physical but emotional and psychological scars that may last a lifetime.

Child sexual abuse and exploitation is everyone's problem. It does not only affect the child but also the family and the society as a whole. The public must deal with the financial costs of legal process, placement in the institution for the abused child, or conviction of the perpetrator.

It is in the light of the adverse effects to the personality of the child and the general implications to society at large that prompted the BCYW to conceive of this project.

Moreover, the following are the legal basis for such a project:

1. RA 7610 also known as the Special Protection Act of Children Against Abuse and Exploitation which mandates the DSWD to formulate a comprehensive program against child abuse and exploitation within one year after its approval (June, 1993);

2. Executive Order 56 mandates the DSWD to take into its protective custody children who are sexually abused and exploited or the child prostitutes and to provide a comprehensive program for the child victims and their families.

3. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of which the Philippines is a State Party is to undertake appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse (Article 34).

4. The Philippine Plan of Action for Filipino Children towards the Year 2000 and Beyond contains as one of its goals, the protection and rehabilitation of 70% reported abused and exploited children

II. Description

The project seeks to address the needs of children and youths below 18 years old who are sexually abused and exploited (victims of prostitution, incest, pedophilia and rape), through the provision of special social services to help the client and his/her family cope with the trauma of the experience leading to his/her psycho-social recovery.

A. General Objective:

To provide protection and rehabilitation services to children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation for their early recovery.

B. Specific Objectives:

1. To assist the child and family to resolve their emotional responses to sexual abuse and exploitation
2. To secure medical, psychological/psychiatric and legal assistance, relative to child's social, emotional and physical needs arising from the experience.
3. To provide temporary shelter to children who can not remain in their own homes due to risk of further abuse
4. To provide livelihood opportunities that will eventually lead them to find gainful employment
5. To provide a venue where reports or referrals of child abuse cases are received and acted upon immediately at any time
6. To encourage and mobilize community groups to assume responsibility and be responsive to the needs of these children
7. To initiate conduct of action research program related to sexual abuse and exploitation

III. Target Beneficiaries:

The project is nationwide in scope with a physical target of 2000 children and youth below 18 years old who are sexually abused and exploited

IV Components:

A. *Early Detection and Prevention* - involves the conduct of activities aimed at forestalling the occurrence of sexual abuse and exploitation among children.

1. *Advocacy, Networking and Social Mobilization*

a. *Advocacy Activities* such as submission of legislative agenda and position papers to Congress on issues related to sexual abuse and exploitation, working with the elite and policy/program managers for allocation of resources.

b. *Organization of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children* - composed of barangay officials and representatives of the different sectors in the barangay to identify conditions that may lead to sexual abuse and exploitation and adopt measures to protect the rights and promote the welfare of children.

c. *Organization of Community Volunteers* - development of a pool of community volunteers to assist in identifying and reporting of a suspected victim of sexual abuse and exploitation

2. *Information Dissemination Services* - refer to activities which are aimed at raising the awareness of the public in protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of children.

a. Conduct of dialogues, meetings, seminars, assemblies or other fora focused on topics related to sexual abuse and exploitation

b. Installation of the Bantay Bata Hotline Project - broad scale public awareness campaign making use of radio, TV print media or tri-media and the community to promote the rights and welfare of children and encourage and facilitate the immediate reporting of a sexual abuse and exploitation case.

c. Production of communication aids such as posters, brochures, flyers, primers, video documentation to name a few.

B. *Treatment and Rehabilitation Services* - entail the provision of special social services designed to facilitate the psychological recovery and social reintegration of children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. These are provided in either community or center based settings.

1. *Protective Custody* - refers to the immediate removal of the child from the home and the assumption of temporary parental authority over the child by the state.

a. If upon assessment, the child appears to be a risk of further abuse perpetrator is still around or has access to the child and parents have no capacity to protect the child from further abuse his/her immediate transfer from the home to a licensed foster family or duly accredited child caring institution shall be effected. Group

Homes for Girls is an example of a center based facility established primarily to provide protective custody to children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation where they are provided rehabilitative services while working with their family in preparation for their eventual return to them or for other alternative parental care such as adoption or foster care.

b. Likewise, preparation of initial case study report and coordination with a legal officer for the filing of involuntary commitment of the child shall be done.

c. The Department shall ask the Court to suspend the parental authority of the parent or lawful guardian.

d. The child who is placed under protective custody should be referred to a government medical or health officer for a physical examination or medical treatment.

2. *Psycho-social Interventions* - refers to the specialized therapeutic approaches and techniques provided to children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation to help them cope with the trauma of the abuse and facilitate their early recovery and rehabilitation.

a. Child and Family Counselling – refers to the provision of information, options, emotional support and opportunities to strengthen child-family relationships and coping capabilities and enable the family and child to reach a decision.

a.1. Counselling which may be individual or in groups, shall focus but not limited to the following:

a. 1.1. Enabling the family to identify causes of sexual abuse and exploitation

a.1.2. Enabling the family and child to deal/ cope with the stress brought about by the child's experience

a.1.3. Providing information as to specific action/service that can be done/extended to meet the various needs at various stages

a. 1.4. Preparing the child and family to undergo the different procedures entailed such as medical examination, court hearings, preparing for temporary separation, etc.

b. Therapeutic techniques refers to the conduct of appropriate treatment modalities which include but are not limited to the following:

b.1. art work

b.2. play therapy

b.3. psycho drama

b.4. music and movement therapy

b.5. puppetry