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Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research

Spring 5-3-2018

Graduate Students as Future Mandated Reporters

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Recommended Citation

Mellin, Emily E., "Graduate Students as Future Mandated Reporters" (2018). *Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE)*. 677.

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Abstract

Graduate students in the medical, mental health, and educational fields have in common that they all will become future mandated reporters. As part of their graduate training, these professionals receive minimal training at best as to how to proceed when faced with reasonable suspicion that maltreatment has occurred. Unfortunately, specific training is not common, leaving graduates exposed and putting the children they serve at further risk. The purpose of this study was to obtain direct feedback from graduate students at Valparaiso University as to the way the topics of child maltreatment and mandated reporting are incorporated into specific training programs. Using a survey questionnaire tailored to the level of training for the different respondents, researchers seek to delineate and document the critical need for direct training in these areas. The long-term goals are to provide an exploratory and evaluative study of the strengths and weaknesses of current training practices, all serving to provide a basis to develop and disseminate necessary recommendations to improve preservice training, protect graduates from liability, and reduce placing children and families at further risk of harm.

*Written by Dr. Sara Golomb and edited by Emily Mellin.