

The STAR Newsletter

Adult Foster Care (AFC) Issue

Attention: Public Email Changes

Effective Jan. 1, 2025, AFC license holders' email addresses will become public data.

Create a separate email address solely for AFC information if you don't want the current email address on file shared publicly. This email address will be used for Department of Human Services (DHS) communications, so you need to check your inbox regularly. Inform your licenser of any contact information changes.

Adult Foster Care Licensing Team's Mission

To enrich the lives of adults by promoting safe and quality licensed care.



Community Services
Adult Foster Care
Licensing
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
[Adult Foster Care
Licensing Website](#)

Provider Spotlight Grace Lelei



Grace pictured in Kenya.

How long have you been licensed?

I have been licensed since October 2019.

What made you want to begin adult foster care?

I had worked in big facilities such as hospitals, assisted living, and nursing homes for many years. When I graduated nursing school, my best friend Laraba asked me to apply at her job. It was a group home, and I was required to take care of one critically ill resident. I was astonished by the level of personalized care that my resident received. The fast paced setting I was used to in the past seemed stressful and often times I went home dissatisfied with the quality of care I had given. We always seemed to be short-staffed. After experiencing a more fulfilling one-to-one setting, I knew that I would make a bigger difference in others' lives if I started caring for my own residents in my home while raising my children.

What are your favorite aspects of adult foster care?

The staff-to-resident ratio is small, and therefore my new family members/the residents get the best quality of care. With my new job, my children learn to be selfless and caring by observing how I interact with the residents. The residents enjoy the presence of a home and family setting where we share activities, go on outings, or even bask in the sun when the weather is good. We all wake up without a rigid schedule, in a calm, friendly, and homey environment.

What are some challenges you've faced while providing adult foster care?

The residents we serve at times depart from us. They become members of my family and when this happens, as a provider, I have to pull myself together quickly, for the sake of my other residents, staff, and children. We mourn together, pray for, and support one another during challenging times.

How do you practice self-care as a foster care provider?

With the help of my staff, I pick at least two days a week where I get to sleep in and laze around my bedroom. On this day, I will walk around with my appropriate pajamas (which none of them notice) all day. At least once a year, I will go on a vacation with my children.

Continued on page 2

Continued from Provider Spotlight - Grace Lelei on page 1

At least once a year, I will take my kids on a 'staycation' (closest hotel) just to sleep, read, use the hotel's swimming pool, or whatever.

Do you have any words of encouragement for other adult foster care providers?

Thanks to my fellow providers! This is my dream job; I don't know about y'all. I don't have to worry about

the four seasons. If the snow is too much, reschedule the residents' doctor appointments if medically approved. If it's raining too much, pull your car all the way to the front door, sideways, lol. To my fellow providers, the service we provide our folks is a clear mirror of how we will be treated when we age, so let's do it right.

A Guide to Training Logs

We get it, training logs can be difficult to maintain, especially if you have multiple caregivers. We have some tips and tricks to help you manage training hours and documentation. *As always, consult with your licensor if you are having specific challenges regarding this licensing requirement.*

Training Record

The Washington County AFC training record lays out trainings that must be done annually (every 12 months). You will also find space to include additional required training like site policies, recommended Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) trainings, and open space to write in any other trainings you've attended. On the back of this form, you will see training requirements such as the number of hours to complete and which trainings must be done by all program staff.

Required Annual Training

Vulnerable adult training, internal maltreatment reporting procedures, Individual Abuse Prevention Plans (IAPPs), and Program Abuse Prevention Plans (PAPPs), are all required to be reviewed each year. Typically, the day you review these plans should also match the date you sign the plans. For example, if your training log states you spent 30 minutes reviewing your PAPP on Sept. 1, 2024, we would expect to see that you signed the PAPP on Sept. 1, 2024. It would be acceptable to write "self" as the training source when reviewing your own policies.

Recommended Trainings

As AFC providers, you are serving diverse populations like disabled or chronically ill individuals. Our training record includes a space for recommended Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) trainings. Purposefully seeking out trainings to understand how to best serve your residents' unique

needs is always advised and aligns with a person-centered approach.

Certificates

You have probably heard this a hundred times, but *always remember that if you didn't document it – it didn't happen!* Most agencies you complete training with (Washington County, Veterans Affairs, 245D organizations) will offer a certificate upon completion of the training. This confirms that you attended and will also list the number of hours you received. When you write in training hours without providing an accompanying certificate or documentation from the training source, there is no way to prove you actually attended. This could be a disservice to you if you run into issues with training compliance down the line.

Timeliness

Are you someone who waits to add your training hours until the night before a licensing visit? Procrastination is something many struggle with. The truth is, you will save yourself a lot of grief by adding each training you complete to your log throughout the year rather than waiting to do it all at once. Accurately document the training as soon as you have finished to avoid errors and unneeded stress before your licensing visit.

Common Discrepancies

There are common discrepancies we see in training logs. These are things like adding in that you attended a full 2-hour training with Washington County, when you may have arrived late to the training and your certificate does not match the time you entered on the training record. We sometimes see Washington County listed as the training presenter when it was not a training we provided.

Continued on page 3

Continued from A Guide to Training Logs on page 2

Please make sure the title of the training, number of hours attended, and training source are listed correctly.

Approved Trainings

There are several approved training topics under [Minnesota Rule 9555.6185, Subp. 4](#). Appropriate topics may include basic first aid, the aging process, mental health, and stress management. *The Washington County AFC team hosts six provider meetings a year that can be used toward your training hours.* If you have another job,

some of your required training there could be used towards your AFC training hours as well. For example, if you are a nurse that completes Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training annually, you can add this to your training record. If you work with the Veterans Affairs (VA) or a 245D agency, they likely offer trainings that can be used toward your AFC hours. If you are struggling to find training resources, your licenser can give you suggestions on how to get these hours completed.

Burnout in Helping Professions

Those in helping professions, especially caregivers, are prone to experiencing high rates of burnout and compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue might look like exhaustion from intense client interactions where you begin to dread day-to-day caregiving tasks. It is hard to recognize the signs of these things when you are providing care to vulnerable individuals 24/7. Adult foster care puts you in a unique position where you are caring for someone in your home with seemingly no breaks. It may feel like symptoms of burnout are just a part of the job that you have to learn to live with.

In reality, there are ways to combat burnout and continue to enjoy the work you do. Unaddressed burnout can lead to mental and physical health symptoms which can impair your ability to continue providing the best care possible to your residents. Some symptoms include insomnia, anxiety, apathy, feelings of guilt, physical exhaustion, and chronic pain (therapyaid.org).

So how can caregivers avoid burnout and compassion fatigue? First, start by identifying what's causing your symptoms. One bad day does not necessarily mean you are burnt out. Burnout is something that happens over time and with continuous exposure to difficult work. There are many reasons people may feel depressed or fatigued that are not related to work. Talk to your

healthcare provider if you are having unpleasant, ongoing symptoms.

Self-Care

Ideally, self-care is not something you do once you're at the brink of exhaustion. Intentionally practice self-care on a regular basis starting now. Explore what forms of self-care are most helpful to you. For some people, that is a day of sleeping in and taking a bath. For others, being around friends and family, going to church, or physical exercise is what reenergizes them. You may need different forms of self-care depending on your stressors. Good sleep hygiene is one of the most important aspects of self-care – there is no substitute for a good night of sleep. While it may seem counterintuitive, taking care of yourself is what will allow you to continue caregiving effectively.

Talk About It

You may experience relief simply by expressing your feelings of stress. Talking to people in similar roles may bring you a sense of belonging when others can relate to what you are going through. There are support groups for caregivers available both virtually and in-person.



Continued on page 4

Continued from Burnout in Helping Professions on page 3

Some support groups may address a specific population, such as adult children taking care of their parents or groups about caring for individuals with dementia. *Other AFC providers may be able to provide a great deal of knowledge when it comes to feelings of burnout.* Our provider group meetings are an opportunity for you to bring questions and concerns for feedback from both licensors and other providers.

Ask for Help

Don't hesitate to ask for help from your family, caregivers, licensor, and health care professionals. If you need to take a break, rely on your substitute caregivers to cover for

a weekend while you decompress. *Talk to your licensor about respite options if needed.* Finally, you may need to ask for help from health care providers if you are at the point of burnout and mental distress. Therapy is a great tool for you to talk through your emotions with the guidance of a skilled professional. Asking for help is not a moral failing, it means you can identify signs of burnout and need support.

Sources: [Helping the Helpers to Overcome Compassion Fatigue and Burnout | Therapy Aid Coalition](#)

Understanding Licensing Actions

In our summer 2024 newsletter, we discussed correction orders and repeated violations. Repeated violations can lead to **licensing action recommendations** to the Department of Human Services (DHS), but what exactly are these licensing actions? Actions may include fines, conditional licenses, or revocation. As county licensors we can make a licensing recommendation, but ultimately DHS has the final decision of choosing to issue a penalty. *You have the right to appeal actions made by DHS.*

Your licensor is here to support you in avoiding licensing actions. *Use your licensor as a resource to understand requirements you may be struggling with and always reach out with questions or concerns.* Please understand that we always try to correct an issue using the least severe action when possible. This will usually start with a **correction order**, however if there is an egregious violation that needs to be addressed immediately, further action must be taken.

Fines can be up to \$200 for each instance of certain violations. For example, if you have received a correction order for three years in a row for not running fire drills, we might recommend a fine.

Conditional licenses can be issued when the provider has a history of non-compliance with the adult foster care rules, but the provider has the ability to come into compliance. The conditional license will last a set length of time and will list the requirements which the provider must follow to maintain compliance. For example, if a

provider failed to complete their training requirements for a couple of years, a conditional license might require the provider to submit a training plan, require additional training hours, attend training on specific topics, and require training documentation to be submitted to the licensor every month.

Lastly, a **recommendation for a revocation** may be made when the provider has a history of repeated violations of different licensing requirements or when they are not in compliance with a conditional license. It could also be issued when the provider engages in behaviors which are significantly out of compliance with the rules and are a health and safety risk, such as leaving residents unsupervised and not having reliable caregivers to cover when they are not present.

If we make a licensing action recommendation, you will receive a mailed notification informing you that DHS will review the recommendation and determine if an action will be issued. Your residents and their legal representatives will also be issued a notice of this recommendation under [Minnesota Rule 9555.6145, Subp. 7](#). If DHS decides to issue a licensing action, you will receive another notification with this information as well as reconsideration and appeal rights. *The recommendation is confidential and legally cannot be shared with you or anyone else, except as authorized by law.* It may take DHS several months to come to a determination.

Assisting Individuals to Vote!

There are many ways to get help when you vote. You can bring someone to help, ask an election judge, use a machine to help you mark your ballot, or even vote from your car.

Help from family, friends, or neighbors

You can bring a family member, friend, neighbor, or anyone you choose to help you vote. *The only exception is that you can't get help from someone from your employer or from your union.* Your assistant can help you in all parts of the voting process, including in the voting booth. You can show your ballot privately to an election judge to check that it is correctly marked.

Helpers are not allowed to influence your vote or share how you vote with others.

Curbside voting

If you cannot easily leave your vehicle to enter the polling place, you can ask to have a ballot brought out to you. This is known as 'curbside voting.'

Two election judges from different major political parties will bring out a ballot to your vehicle. If you need to register or update your registration, they will bring you an application as well. When you are finished voting, election judges will bring your ballot inside for you and put it in the ballot box.

Help from ballot marking machine

Most polling places have a ballot marking machine that can mark a ballot for you. It gives you privacy if you cannot (or choose not) to vote using a pen. The machine has a screen that displays the ballot in large print or with a high-contrast background. It can also read the ballot to you through headphones.

You can fill out your ballot using a Braille keypad, touchscreen, or sip-and-puff device. After you make your choices, it prints your completed ballot. For more details on curbside voting, contact your municipal clerk or [county elections office](#) before going to the polling place.

Help from election judges

Election judges are there to help you through the entire process of voting.

If you need help marking your ballot, two election judges from different political parties can assist. *They are not allowed to influence your choices or tell others how you voted.*

Voters with print disabilities may request an accessible absentee ballot.

Print disabilities are disabilities that interfere with the effective reading, writing, or use of printed materials. This definition includes:

- Persons who are blind or visually impaired;
- Those with learning disabilities;
- Those with a physical disability that interferes with holding and manipulating paper or a pen/pencil.

[View a Minnesota Voter Assistance Factsheet.](#)

Source: [Minnesota Secretary Of State - Get help voting](#)

County Adult Foster Care Licensing Staff

Robbin Ann Rosén

Licensor

651-430-4169

[Email Robbin](#)

Tanika Gockowski

Licensor

651-430-6550

[Email Tanika](#)

Hannah Thompson

Licensor

651-275-7718

[Email Hannah](#)

Hannah Price

Case Aide

651-430-8307

[Email Hannah](#)

Sarah Tripple

Supervisor

651-430-6480

[Email Sarah](#)

Adult Foster Care Licensing Email:

[Email Adult Foster Care Licensing](#)

Visit our website:

[Adult Foster Care Licensing website](#)