



Abuse Prevention, Identification and Reporting Training & Education For Support Professionals

Includes staff, workers, volunteers, students who are working in
a direct support capacity



Prevention

In order to prevent abuse from occurring, it is important to understand the reasons individuals with disabilities are at higher risk of abuse/neglect.

- Society's negative attitudes and stereotypes about disability
- Social isolation
- Reliance on others for life necessities, including for some, intimate personal care
- Reliance on relationships where another person controls decision-making



If an individual with a disability is being abused, they may:

- Not be believed
- Not know their rights
- Be unable to disclose or communicate clearly
- Be afraid to complain



Support professionals like you may not report because of:

- Fear of doing wrong or making a false accusation
- Fear of criticism from co-workers
- Fear of punishment
- Fear of lack of credibility
- Fear of publicity
- Might be unsure what constitutes abuse



Prevention

How Can Abuse Be Prevented?

The best way to prevent abuse is to make sure that anyone who has a disability:

- Is involved in the community
- Can do as much on their own as possible
- Has information about their rights
- Has / feels some (age appropriate) control over their life and can make choices
- Engages in periodic (age appropriate) discussions about appropriate behaviour and abuse



Extend-A-Family Policy

Extend-A-Family Waterloo region (EAFWR) has zero tolerance for abuse of vulnerable individuals, adult or child

- All EAFWR support professionals, staff, volunteers and students are required to report if they suspect, witness, or receive a disclosure about any form of abuse of an adult or child with a developmental disability, or any vulnerable person receiving support
- If an EAFWR support professional is found guilty of abuse, either by the police or through an internal agency investigation, he/she may be terminated from employment with EAFWR as per the Standards of Conduct Policy



Definitions & Identification

How do you know if abuse/neglect might be happening?

- Knowing when abuse or neglect might be happening is one of the most important ways to protect the person you are in contact with



Abuse is any action or inaction that jeopardizes a person's health or well-being, or results in significant loss or destruction of his/her property.

It includes: physical abuse, neglect, psychological/emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or financial abuse/exploitation



Identification - Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse** – any rough treatment that causes physical injury or fear of injury such as pushing, hitting or rough handling; an inappropriate use of restraint
- **Sexual Abuse** – any act of unwanted touching/activity of a sexual nature including inappropriate touching, forcing sexual acts, making someone look at sexual pictures or making offensive sexual comments



Types of Abuse

- **Emotional / Psychological Abuse** – any act which may lessen the sense of identity, dignity or self-worth of a person including isolation, intimidation/threats, denial of information, privacy or religious worship
- **Neglect** – any situation where the basic needs of the person are not being met by themselves or others, such as: food, water, shelter, heat, clothing, hygiene or safety, proper medical, dental or psychiatric treatment



Types of Abuse

- **Financial Abuse** – any act that involves the misuse/abuse of funds and/or assets belonging to a vulnerable person, such as:
 - Obtaining/taking property and funds without person's consent or knowledge
 - Staff/volunteer borrowing money from someone under their care and/or making it difficult for the person to say no to this



Types of Abuse

- **Exploitation** – any act that takes advantage of a person's disability to trick or manipulate for personal gain, such as:
 - Persuading an individual to do things that are illegal
 - Persuading an individual to do something not in his/her best interest

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Reporting

What should you do if you suspect a person is being abused?

Depending on the person's age refer to:

1. EAFWR Abuse policy in regards to children
2. EAFWR Abuse prevention and reporting, training and education policy (adults)

As an EAFWR employee or volunteer you are required to review the EAFWR Abuse policies and complete this learning presentation annually



Reporting

What should you do if you suspect a person is being abused?

1. Intervene to ensure individual's health and well-being is taken care of
2. Provide necessary first aid
3. Report to your EAF supervisor at 519-741-0190 who will guide you on next steps (should the alleged abuser be your supervisor, contact any other EAF supervisor/manager)
4. Maintain confidentiality – do not discuss allegations with supervisor until you have been interviewed by police
5. Support the person to talk with their parents or guardians if that is the person's wish or, with the consent of the person



Reporting

Important information if you hear about or witness abuse/neglect

- Do not self investigate as this contaminates evidence
- Do not ask direct questions such as, “Did someone hurt you?”
- If a report is unclear, ask open-ended questions such as, “When you say ‘hurt’, what do you mean?” or “Can you tell me more?”
- Stop all questioning as soon as there is a clear allegation made
- Give the person time. Reassure them that you are there to support them
- Listen, be available



Reporting

How to write up an incident:

- Your report is considered evidence that can be used in a court of law
- Be specific, accurate, clear – be objective
- Do not use language the person did not use
- Record any question or action that you took
- Use only blue or black ink
- Do not use white out or rewrite the report. Stroke out and initial any changes. This shows you did not change your statement
- Do not include other information; the report is about the allegation, nothing more



Important Numbers

In an emergency call 9-1-1

To report suspected abuse/neglect:

- Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge: 519-653-7700
- All other areas of Waterloo Region: 519-570-3000

- To report abuse/neglect after hours, call EAF at 519-741-0190
- The answering machine will direct you to the appropriate number to call to reach someone
- To report abuse/neglect of a child, contact the authorities as directed by Family and Children's Services Act

