

Purpose:

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region has a zero tolerance for abuse of vulnerable individuals.

All policies related to abuse will be reviewed by the organization's Leadership Team and by the Board of Directors, at least annually, to determine if changes are necessary. Any changes will be promptly initiated and the dates of these reviews and changes will be recorded.

This policy also fulfills the Quality Assurance Measurements requirements of the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008* (the "Act").

Scope:

This policy applies to all Staff (Staff includes all employees, direct support people, providers and volunteers). The policy includes: definitions of types of abuse, required training for staff, education and awareness training for those persons served and their families, as well as, reporting requirements.

Policy:

Abuse is defined in the "Act" as any action or behaviour that causes or is likely to cause physical injury or psychological harm or both to a person with a developmental disability, or any vulnerable person and results, or is likely to result, in significant loss or destruction of their property and includes neglect.

Definitions of Types of Abuse:

Sexual Abuse: is the unwanted touching of a person's sexual body parts. The lack of consent is the defining feature. It is important to note that, because of the power hierarchy, it is impossible for there to be consent between a person with a disability and their care provider.

Physical Abuse: acts of assault or threats of assault, such as hitting, slapping and burning that cause or could cause physical injury or fear of physical injury. An intellectual or physical disability often results in a need for people to be physically close to provide personal assistance. Physical abuse is more terrifying for those who cannot, physically, flee or escape.

Verbal Abuse: demeaning language, name calling or negative verbal depictions of disability or attractiveness are all forms of verbal abuse.

Emotional Abuse: the repeated criticism, insulting, threatening, degrading, humiliating, bullying, infantilizing, intimidation or terrorizing of a person. Emotional abuse is the most difficult to define. Emotional abuse is the misuse of power, in any way, to cause a person to lose respect for self.

Financial Abuse: the misuse or misappropriation of someone's financial assets for personal gain. Staff/volunteers are not to "borrow" money from someone who is under his/her care as the power imbalance makes it difficult for the person to say "no"

Exploitation: taking advantage of a person's disability to trick or manipulate for personal gain. The persuasion to do things that are illegal or not in the individual's best interest.

Neglect: the failure to provide the necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, care or supervision. A person receiving care from EAFWR has the right to expect that his/her basic needs will be met and that he/she will be provided with the supervision which is appropriate to their age and developmental and intellectual needs.

Training:

EAFWR will provide training on abuse prevention, identification and reporting to all Staff who have direct contact with persons with developmental disabilities who are receiving service and supports. This training will occur during orientation and annually thereafter.

All front line Staff, Supervisors, Program Managers and Executive Director will receive procedural training on abuse that is appropriate to their authority and responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent abuse and to report abuse when they know, or ought reasonably to know, that a person with a developmental disability or a vulnerable person has experienced or is experiencing abuse.

As well, EAFWR will provide orientation to all the agency's policies and procedures dealing with abuse prevention and reporting to all new Board members and annually thereafter.

Education and Awareness Building for Persons Served and Their Families:

As part of the intake process or upon entering service, and annually thereafter, EAFWR will provide education and awareness building about abuse prevention and reporting to persons with developmental disabilities who are receiving services and supports, and their families, in a language and manner that is appropriate to the capacity of the person.

EAFWR will also provide information about EAFWR's policies on abuse prevention and reporting to all persons being served and their families.

Reporting Requirements:

All EAFWR Staff are required to report if they suspect, receive an allegation about, or witness any form of abuse of an adult with a developmental disability, or any vulnerable person receiving

EAFWR supports. If any Staff receives an allegation, suspects or witnesses any form of abuse of a person with a developmental disability, or any vulnerable person, the following will occur:

- a) They are to intervene to ensure that the individual's health and well-being is taken care of whenever possible.
- b) They are to provide the necessary first aid.
- c) If any Staff suspects, alleges or witnesses any form of abuse regarding a person with a developmental disability or any vulnerable person, the staff will immediately report the incident to his/her Supervisor.
- d) The Supervisor upon receiving the information will take the appropriate steps **if the suspected, alleged or witnessed abuse may constitute a criminal offence.**
- e) When receiving the report from the individual, Staff will not ask any leading questions or attempt to do an investigation.
- f) Staff receiving the report or witnessing the abuse will not discuss the allegation with the

Supervisor (beyond the basics of the report), or with any other Staff until he/she has been interviewed by the police, **in those cases where they are called.**

- g) Should the alleged abuser be the Supervisor, Staff will contact any other Supervisor/Manager of EAFWR.
- h) Staff will provide written documentation of the allegation once the notification had been made.
- i) Staff will document the allegations being made, or their observations, and the questions the staff person asked in taking the report.
- j) Staff will support the person to talk with their parents or guardians if that is the person's wish or, with the consent of the person, the Program Manager or Executive Director will contact the parents or guardians as soon as it is practical.
- k) In the event that the individual, is considered not competent to give consent to contact parents or guardians, a Program Manager or Executive Director will contact the parents or guardians as soon as practical.

In the event that the alleged abuser is a member of Staff he/she will be immediately removed from having contact with the person allegedly abused, and no further contact with the person being served will be permitted until the police investigation and/or the internal investigation (if required) is completed.

No EAFWR Staff shall conduct an internal investigation before the police have completed their investigation and make a determination whether or not a criminal offence has occurred. If the police determine that a criminal offence may have occurred, the investigation is turned over to the justice system.

If the police determine that no criminal offence has occurred and the alleged abuser is a member of EAFWR, the agency will initiate an internal investigation to determine if the actions of the Staff, while deemed not criminal are still considered abusive. The staff in question will have no contact with the alleged victim and no unsupervised contact with any person served until the internal investigation has determined whether it is appropriate for the Staff to return to their previous duties, or other duties as assigned.

If a staff member is found guilty of abuse, either by the police or an internal investigation, he/she may be terminated from employment with EAFWR as per The Standards of Conduct Policy.

All Staff that suspect, receive an allegation or witness the abuse of a child have a duty to report to the authorities as directed by the Child and Family Services Act.

Particular to Individuals Served in the FamilyHome Program:

When there is doubt as to the capacity of an individual to give informed consent EAFWR will request a capacity assessment. EAFWR affirms that people with developmental disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens in the area of sexual expression. Competent sex education and counseling services shall be provided according to the individual person's need.

Reviewed April 2017