

3.4 ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF ADULTS/YOUTH

OVERVIEW

Care Providers, contractors, and others who are involved in the lives of the individuals we serve are often in positions of trust and authority over those people. Some of the people we serve have physical limitations that make them unable to protect themselves or look after all of their own needs. These circumstances make them vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

This policy section is intended to guide Care Providers and contractors in (1) dealing with suspicions of abuse or (2) reports of abuse or neglect and (3) handling situations where abuse or neglect has occurred or might occur. Where programs are funded by the Community Living BC or the Ministry for Children and Families, the intent is to provide direction.

Definitions and Categories of Abuse

1. Definitions

Abuse is an action, inaction or behavior that may result in physical, emotional, or mental harm to an individual.

2. Categories of Abuse

Physical

- > Assault (for example: slapping, hitting, kicking, punching, stuffing a cloth into an individual's mouth).
- > Rough handling without regard for the individual's comfort (for example: unnecessary force applied during lifts, transfers, and activities of daily living).
- > Gross physical neglect (for example: withholding food or personal or medical care)

Psychosocial

- > Verbal or emotional abuse (for example: yelling, making demeaning or derogatory remarks, teasing, swearing, and/or name-calling).
- > Psychosocial neglect (for example: lack of attention, isolation, confinement).
- > Setting individuals up for ridicule or scorn by peers or others.
- > Interactions, which are disrespectful or could reasonably be interpreted as disrespectful.

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Financial

- > Misuse of an individual's finances for inappropriate purposes
Theft: money or personal property.
- > Fraud: deceitful manipulation of finances.
- > Solicitation for compensation.

Sexual Abuse/Assault

- > Any form of sexual conduct by force or threat of force.
- > Any form of sexual contact.
- > Any attempt to engage in sexual activities.
- > Unnecessary disregard for privacy.
- > Unnecessary touching of a person's private parts.

Medication Abuse

- > Medicating or sedating unnecessarily.
- > Over sedation or non-compliance with medication refills.
- > Misuse of a person's medications and prescriptions.
- > Misuse of non-prescription medications.

Violation of rights

- > Denial of basic civil/human rights.

Neglect

- > Active neglect: willful withholding of basic necessities and care.
- > Passive neglect: withholding of basic necessities and care, usually due to a lack of experience or information.
- > Failure to respond to an individual's need for discussion, inclusion, or routine interaction on a daily basis.

POLICY

BACI's Responsibilities

- > BACI will provide services in an environment that is safe and free from any abuse or neglect.
- > BACI will report allegations of abuse to family members and appropriate authorities.
- > BACI will ensure investigation of any allegations of abuse. To ensure that individuals are supported without fear of abuse, every effort will be made to ensure that all reported incidents are investigated and dealt with quickly. We will try to maintain confidentiality, but it cannot be guaranteed.

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- > BACI will take any necessary action to ensure that individuals feel safe and secure and that the abuse does not re-occur. Any Care Provider who, upon investigation, has abused or neglected a person in care will face measures up to and including immediate termination of their contract.

Care Providers' Responsibilities

Care Providers or volunteers who suspect that abuse or neglect has occurred have the responsibility to report their suspicions immediately to the Manger or Assistant Manager of Life Sharing Network. If the accused is the Manager or Assistant Manager, the suspicions should be reported immediately to the Executive Director's. Care Providers who know or could reasonably be expected to know about an incident of abuse or neglect and who do not report it will be treated as having aided the abuse or neglect and will face measures up to and including termination of their contract.

PROCEDURES

- > All concerns about possible abuse raised by individuals served by the Association, families, members, Care Providers, BACI employees or other persons must be reported immediately to the Life Sharing Manger or Assistant Manager.
- > Any Care Provider who witness abuse shall first intervene to protect the person from further abuse and then report immediately to the Life Sharing Manger or Assistant Manager.
- > All reports of abuse or suspected abuse must be immediately documented and appropriate measures taken to respect confidentiality. A Care Provider who knows or could reasonably be expected to know about an incident of abuse and does no report it will be disciplined.
- > Care Providers who suspect that abuse has occurred are not responsible for assessing the situation but should immediately report their suspicions to the Life Sharing Manager or Assistant Manager. All reports of suspected abuse must be immediately documented and the confidentiality of those involved must be maintained.
- > Care Providers who have been aggressed by an individual will not retaliate or inappropriately "punish" the aggressor.
- > The Manager or Assistant Manager of the Life Sharing Network will immediately report an allegation of abuse to the Executive Director.
- > wherever the abuse is criminal (sexual abuse/assault, physical abuse/assault, or financial abuse) the Manager or Assistant Manager will also notify the local Police Department.

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- > Once the Life Sharing Network Manager or Assistant Manager is notified, they will assume the leadership role in the investigation. They will coordinate the roles of the Care Provider and representatives of the funding body.
- > The investigator(s) will: review all information relevant to the incident, resolve any inconsistent evidence or information, report their findings, and recommend appropriate action.
- > A Care Provider suspected of abuse may have their contract suspended until an investigation is completed.
- > If a suspended Care Provider is exonerated he or she will be reinstated. If it is found that a Care Provider has abused a person supported by the Association, he or she will have their contract immediately terminated.
- > Any Care Provider who has abused a person supported by the Association or whose behavior has put a person at risk shall be relieved of his or her responsibilities immediately.