

Abuse is the treatment of a person or animal with cruelty or violence. Abuse, neglect, and exploitation are common themes in the home health care field. The five types of abuse are:

1. Abuse – Purposely causing physical, mental, or verbal harm.
2. Sexual Abuse or Assault – Sexual contact with any person not able to give consent. This could be by force or through threatening behavior.
3. Neglect – Failing to provide a person with food, water, clothing, shelter, or medical attention.
4. Financial Exploitation – Using a person’s money or belongings when it has not been approved. Forgery (signing someone else’s name) and stealing are two examples of this. Forcing someone to sign something over to you is another example.
5. Emotional Abuse – Mental abuse such as name-calling, insults, threats, giving someone the silent treatment, and bullying.

As the Direct Care Worker, you are the one who regularly has contact with the at risk adults whom we serve. Many victims are related to their abuser. They are afraid to speak up out of fear that the abuse will get worse. They may also feel embarrassed about their situation. Many victims are also dependent on their abuser for money. They don’t want to risk being left with nothing.

You will want to learn to recognize and understand the signs of abuse. Some common signs of physical abuse are bruises, broken bones, cuts, or other injuries in different stages of healing. Physical signs are easy to observe. You will want to pay close attention to your member’s behavior as well. This is done in order to spot emotional abuse or neglect. The most common form of abuse is self-neglect. This is when the member is at risk because they cannot care for themselves. One warning sign to look for is loss of interest in an activity that used to be enjoyed and now is not. Another would be if your member becomes angry and wants to be alone and this is not normal behavior for them. If you ever have any concerns, you should report them to your supervisor right away. You should also contact the authorities.

It is important to know that there are community resources available to you. Adult Protective Services has a toll free, confidential hotline. This hotline is where you can report abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The phone number is 1-877-SOS-ADULT (877-767-2385). All reports are private. Each report will be looked into by an Adult Protective Services Specialist. This person will work with law enforcement to make sure that the member is safe. It is okay to report possible abuse, even if you do not have proof. It is not your job to investigate the abuse. It is your job to report it. We will all work together to make sure that each member we serve is safe in their home.





PREVENTING ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

TEST YOURSELF

True or False

Score _____

- 1. Calling someone names is an example of emotional abuse. T F
2. If you notice a bruise on your client's back, it is probably nothing to worry about. T F
3. Self-Neglect is the most common form of abuse. T F
4. You will rarely encounter abuse, neglect, or exploitation in the home health care industry. T F
5. Withholding food until your member takes a bath is not abuse. T F
6. APS has a toll free number where you can report your concerns anonymously. T F
7. If you suspect that your client is being abused, you should conduct your own investigation before reporting it to the authorities. T F
8. Forcing your client to make you a co-signer on their bank account is an example of financial exploitation. T F
9. Most victims are related to their abuser. T F
10. It is not necessary to report your concerns to your supervisor. T F

DCW Name (please print)

DCW Signature

Date

Coordinator Name (please print)

Coordinator Signature

Date

