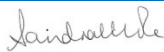


Guidance name	Types and Indicators of Abuse	CEO Approved	
Category	People We Support	Approval date	February 2018
Version	2	Review date	February 2020

Types of Abuse

Abuse is not limited to the types defined below and Workers are required to consider that any inappropriate behaviour towards a person we support may be abuse.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is violence, abuse and intimidation perpetrated by one person against another in a personal, intimate relationship. It is a partnership violence that includes violence perpetrated when couples are separated or divorced. Domestic abuse occurs between two people where one has power over the other causing fear, physical and/or psychological harm.

This type of abuse can occur where people are living in the same house, between a person we support and a family member or friend, or between two Individuals.

Neglect

Neglect is a failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities of life. It can be willful denial of medication, dental or medical care, therapeutic devices or other physical disability. It can also be a failure to provide adequate shelter, clothing, food, protection and supervision, or to place persons at undue risk through unsafe environments or practices and thereby exposing that person to risk of physical, mental or emotional harm. Neglect includes the failure to provide the nurturance or stimulation needed for the social, intellectual and emotional growth or well-being of an adult or child.

Neglect may occur when the primary Carer of an individual does not provide the essential elements for life described above or when any person or organisation responsible for providing care or services fails to meet this obligation.

Examples

- Refusing to provide Individuals with food because they have not done what they were asked to do.
- Hurrying or rushing assistance with eating or drinking to fit with Worker timetables rather than Individuals' needs.
- Withdrawal or denial of privileges, planned outings or personal items that are not designated and planned behaviour management strategies.
- Depriving Individuals of their right to express their cultural identity, their sexuality or other desires.

- Failure to ensure adequate food, health care support, clothing, medical aid or culturally relevant contexts and supports.
- Not using a communication device to enable expression of needs or other communication.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is assault, non-accidental injury or physical harm to a person by any other person. It includes but is not limited to inflicting pain or any unpleasant sensation, causing harm or injuries by excessive discipline, beating or shaking, bruising, electric shock, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation, female genital mutilation and attempted suffocation or strangulation.

This type of abuse may be perpetrated by people known to Individuals or by strangers, and can occur at any time or place.

Examples

- Hitting, smacking, biting, kicking, pulling limbs, poking, hair or ears.
- Bending back fingers, bending an arm up behind the back.
- Dragging, carrying or pushing people who do not want to be moved unless involuntary relocation is part of a behaviour management plan.
- Physical restraint.
- Threat of violence.

Restraints and restricted practices

Restraining or isolating an adult for reasons other than medical necessity or in the absence of a less restrictive alternative to prevent self-harm (Restricted Practices). This may include the use of chemical or physical means or the denial of basic human rights or choices such as religious freedom, freedom of association, access to property or resources or freedom of movement. These practices are not considered to be abuse if they are applied under a Restricted Practice authorisation.

Identitywa's policy and guidance on positive behaviour support describes the use of Restricted Practices.

Examples

- The use of social isolation (ignoring an Individual) when it is not a designated behaviour management strategy.
- Putting an Individual into a room with the door locked.
- Locking an Individual in a room all night.
- Using other Individuals to provide physical control over an Individual.
- Expulsion for masturbation.
- Excessive chemical restraint – use of medication without proper authorisation or consent.
- Forcing Individuals to eat food they do not want to eat.

Sexual assault

Sexual assault is any sexual contact between an adult and child 16 years of age and younger, or any sexual activity with an adult who lacks capacity to give or withhold consent or is threatened, coerced or forced to engage in sexual behaviour. It includes non-consensual sexual contact,

language or exploitative behaviour and can take the form of rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment or sexual interference in any form.

This type of abuse may be instigated by any person against any other person of any age and of either gender.

Examples

- Anal or vaginal intercourse without consent.
- Fingers or object inserted into vagina or anus without consent.
- Cunnilingus or fellatio without consent.
- Masturbation of another person without consent.
- Non-consensual touching of breasts or genitals.
- Indecent exposure.
- Masturbation by a person in the presence of the victim.
- Voyeurism.
- Displaying pornographic photography or literature.
- Sexual harassment, including lewd or suggestive comments, teasing or insults with sexual connotations.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes verbal assaults, threats of maltreatment, harassment, humiliation or intimidation or failure to interact with a person or to acknowledge that person's existence. This may also include denying cultural or religious needs and preferences.

Although any person may initiate emotional abuse towards an Individual it is likely to come from persons who associate with Individuals regularly. The sources of emotional abuse could be primary carers, family, friends, other Individuals or other service providers.

Examples

- Humiliating an Individual for losing control of their bladder or bowel or about other private matters.
- Treating Individuals in ways that deny them their dignity.
- Preventing Individuals from expressing themselves out of fear or retaliation.
- Discouraging personalisation of rooms or clothing.
- Limiting social freedom available to Individuals.
- Denying cultural needs, such as serving port to Jewish or Muslim individuals.
- Shouting orders to Individuals.
- Stand over tactics and intimidation.
- Using humiliating names when speaking to an Individual.

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is the improper use of another person's assets or the use or withholding of another person's resources.

Possible sources of financial abuse are carers, families or guardians who act formally or informally as financial managers and have access to or responsibility for Individuals' finances and property.

Examples

- Denying Individual access to or control over their money when they have a demonstrated capacity to manage their own finances.

- Denying an Individual access to information about their personal finances.
- Taking an Individual's money or other property without their consent (which is likely to also constitute a criminal offence).
- Forced changes to wills or other legal documents.
- Using an Individual's belongings for personal use.

Systemic abuse

Systematic abuse is the failure to recognise, provide or attempt to provide adequate or appropriate services, including services that are appropriate to that person's age, gender, culture, needs or preferences.

Service providers and Carers are the likely sources of systemic abuse.

Examples

- Relevant policies and procedures are not implemented.
- Individuals are denied the option to make decisions affecting their lives.
- Health care and lifestyle plans are not implemented.

Recognising signs that may be indicators of abuse

Workers and management play an important role in protecting Individuals from further harm by recognising the indicators of abuse and responding to them. The presence of one or more indicators does not mean that abuse has occurred but does require Workers to be vigilant on the Individual's behalf.

Indicators of abuse are not always obvious and while Individuals or others may suspect that abuse has occurred there might not be any evidence to confirm the suspicion. Indicators are variable and people who are familiar with Individuals and have a strong positive relationship with them are best placed to recognise behavioural changes that may suggest an Individual is being abused.

References and further reading

How do I recognize when a child is at risk of abuse or neglect?

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Documents/HowDoIRecogniseWhenAChildIsAtRiskOfAbuseOrNeglect.pdf>

The Signs of Safety: Child Protection Practice Framework

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Resources/Documents/Policies%20and%20Frameworks/SignsOfSafetyFramework2011.pdf>

Children and Community Services Act 2004

Australian National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline
1800 880 052

Do you need to know more?

Please contact the Policy Officer if you have any questions regarding policies, procedures and/or review details. If you would like to be involved in our policy development programme please also use the contact details below:

- Telephone: (08) 9474 3303

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Signs
Physical abuse • Facial, head and neck bruising or injuries • Drowsiness, vomiting, fits (associated with head injuries) • Unexplained or poorly explained injury • Other bruising and marks that suggest the shape of the object that caused it • Bite marks or scratches • Unexplained burns or scalds • Unexplained fractures, dislocations, sprains Neglect • Hunger and weight loss • Poor hygiene • Poor hair texture • Inappropriate or inadequate clothing for climatic conditions • Inappropriate or inadequate shelter or accommodation • Unattended physical problems or medical needs • Health or dietary practices that endanger health or development • Social isolation Sexual abuse • Direct or indirect disclosure • Sexual act described by individual • Trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Injuries (e.g. tears or bruising), pain or itching to genitalia, anus or perineal region • Torn, stained or blood-stained underwear or bedclothes • Sexually transmitted diseases • Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts • Pregnancy Psychological or emotional abuse • Speech disorders • Weight loss or gain Financial abuse • Restricted access to or no control over personal funds or bank accounts • No records or incomplete records kept of expenditure and purchases • Missing money, valuables or property • Forced changes to wills or other legal documents	• Explanation inconsistent with the injury; explanation varies • Avoidance or fearfulness of a particular person or Worker • Sleep disturbance (e.g. nightmares, bed wetting) • Changes in behaviour – out of character aggression, withdrawal, excessive compliance. • Requesting, begging, scavenging or stealing food. • Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep. • Direct or indirect disclosure. • Extreme longing for company. • Anxiety about being alone or abandoned. • Displaying inappropriate or excessive self-comforting behaviours. • Repeat use of words e.g. ‘bad’, ‘dirty’ • Self-destructive behaviour, self-mutilation. • Sudden changes in behaviour or temperament e.g. depression, anxiety attacks (crying, sweating, trembling), withdrawal, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security. • Inappropriate advances to others. • Sleep disturbances, refusing to go to bed, going to bed fully clothed. • Eating disorders. • Refusing to shower or constant showering. • Changes in social patterns, refusing to attend usual places (work, respite). • Excessive compliance. • Feelings of worthlessness about life and self, extreme low self-esteem, self-abuse, or self-destructive behaviour. • Extreme attention seeking behaviour and other behavioural disorders (e.g. disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying). • Excessive compliance. • Depression, withdrawal, crying. • Stealing from others. • Borrowing money. • Begging.