Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Recognizing, Preventing and Reporting

Source:  www.dda.dhmh.maryland.gov
201 W. Preston St 4th Floor Baltimore, MD 21201
**Who Are We Talking About?**

*Anyone* who can be victimized.

Victimizers look for **vulnerable people**, so in this field, we are magnets for abusers.

Remember it only takes one person to damage a person’s life **FOREVER**!
Prevalence of Violence

- More than 90% of people (male & female) with developmental disabilities (DD) will experience sexual abuse in their lives.

- 62% of women with physical disabilities reported experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

- Adults with DD are at risk of being physically or sexually assaulted at rates four to ten times greater than other adults.
  - The violence women with disabilities experience includes: verbal abuse; forced segregation; intimidation; abandonment & neglect; withholding: meds, transportation, equipment & personal assistance services; physical & sexual violence.

- Neglect & physical abuse are most common. Mostly reported by newly in-serviced team members.
Who Are the Perpetrators?

Approximately 50-67% of offenders . . .

contacted their victims through the service system
How do abusers function?

The "Grooming" Process

Respect/Praise

Favors

Secrets

Fear & Intimidation

Power and Control

Through "training"

Gifts and Presents
Most team members have the values and work ethics we are looking for.

It’s those **20%** that aren’t where we need them to be.

How do we handle that group?

What plans are in place to effect change?
Types of Abuse

1. Physical
2. Sexual
3. Psychological
4. Neglect
5. Verbal
6. Exploitation
Definition of Physical Abuse

Physical contact that is not necessary for safety of individual & causes discomfort to individual:

Hitting
Slapping
Pinching
Biting

Strangling
Pushing
Kicking
Shoving or

Otherwise mishandling individual
Definition of Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity between individual receiving services & employee, intern, volunteer, consultant, or contractor of agency who provides care or supports or has responsibility for supervision of vulnerable individual, whether consensual or not, is considered to be sexual abuse AND IS PROHIBITED.

Any sexual activity between individuals receiving services & others; or between individuals receiving services is considered sexual abuse unless involved individuals are consenting adults.

Any touching or fondling of individual directly or through clothing for arousing or gratifying of sexual desires and/or causing individual to touch another person for purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desires.
Definition of Psychological Abuse

Psychological abuse, also referred to as emotional or mental abuse, is sustained, repetitive form of mistreatment to cause mental or emotional anguish by threat, intimidation, humiliation, isolation or other verbal or nonverbal conduct in order to systematically diminish another.

Can include bullying, rejecting, degrading, terrorizing, isolating, corrupting/exploiting & "denying emotional responsiveness."

Psychological abuse includes verbal abuse such as yelling, name-calling, blaming, & shaming.

Abusive statements are intended to humiliate or infantilize, & include insults, threats of abandonment or institutionalization & other controlling, dominant or jealous behavior.
Definition of Neglect

Failure to obtain or provide needed services & supports as defined by individual’s plan & as required by law or regulation.

Failure to provide goods & services necessary to avoid physical harm, mental anguish, or mental illness.

Neglect can be intentional (commission) or unintentional (omission)
Signs/Examples of Neglect

Can include failing to provide needed care such as:

- Disregard for individual’s needs such as food, shelter, medication, clothing
- Failure to provide personal &/or medical care
- Protection from health & safety hazards
- Attention
- Lack of supervision
- Allowing individuals to be in unsafe environments
- Unsanitary environments
- Leaving individual unattended
Evidence of Neglect

Failure to revise ineffective behavior plan

Placement in unsafe environment

Absent or inadequate monitoring systems

Individuals found with serious injuries of unknown origin that are suspicious based on nature or circumstances of injury, & on functional or medical status of individual

Program structure not meeting individual’s needs

Failure to intervene when indicated
Definition of Exploitation

Exploitation is practices or behavior that result in any type of exploitation such as:

- Financial
- Sexual or
- Criminal
Financial Abuse

Intentional acts that result in loss or misuse of individual’s money or personal property

Requiring individual to pay for service that should be paid by agency

Using individual’s funds to pay for items that will be used by others
Preventing Financial Abuse

Always count & document individual’s money as it is used

Keep all receipts

Keep running tally of all deposits & expenses

Report discrepancies

Same person should not be purchaser & overseer

Avoid mixing funds of one individual with another individual or team member

Seek guidance of supervisor when there is a discrepancy - don’t try to hide it or make it up next month
Indicators of Abuse

Physical

Individual Behaviors

Staff Behaviors

Environmental
Physical Indicators

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, cuts, welts, discolorations, grip marks, scratches, swelling, fractures, lacerations, wounds
- Any unexplained injury that doesn't fit with given explanation of injury
- Any injury incompatible with person's history of unexplained injuries
- Lack of care for injury (remember these injuries can, and often are, hidden/covered by clothing)
- Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene
- Malnutrition & dehydration without illness-related cause
- Unexplained loss of weight
- Burns, that are possibly caused by cigarettes, or friction from ropes, rug burns from being dragged on ground
- Pain or itching in genital area
- STDs
- Not being given the proper medications
Individual Behavioral Indicators

Unusual crying out, whining, complaining, screaming

Curling up in corner, cowering

Avoidance of team member or self-isolation

Uncharacteristic increase in aggressive &/or self-abusive behavior

New habit disorders such as jerking motions, thumb sucking or ear pulling
Staff Behavioral Indicators

Tone, frequency of interactions with individuals

Body language & demeanor with individuals

Physical interactions with individuals

Avoidance, lack of interactions with individuals

Staffing shortages

Lack of supervision/training

Failure to implement behavior plans &/or individual plans appropriately
Environmental Indicators

Overcrowding in common areas

Lack of cleanliness

Noise levels (too quiet or too noisy)

High usage of restraints
Sticks and Stones
May Break
My Bones But Words Hurt
FOREVER!
Indicators of Verbal Abuse

When team members speak to individual they are supporting in language that is humiliating, insulting or threatening

It often results in individuals showing:

- Signs of helplessness
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Fear
- Depression
- Non-compliance or overly compliant
- Sleep disorders
- Denial
- Agitation
- Withdrawal
- Anger
- Elopement
“What’ll it be, Tyler—your lunch money or heaps of verbal abuse?”
Examples of Rights Violations

Unauthorized removal of personal property

Refusal of access to telephone

Opening individual’s mail

Violating individual’s privacy or confidentiality
Create the culture at our agency...

...Where all abuse allegations will be reported and investigated every time.

The abusers will leave!
Failure to Report Abuse or Suspicion of Abuse Is Abuse!
Alert Your Supervisor Immediately
Reassure Individual
The Abuse Is Not Their Fault
Could This Happen in Our Agency?

JONESBORO, Ga. (AP) - A 74-year-old caregiver accused in the death of a developmentally disabled man who was left outside in subfreezing temperatures has been found guilty of murder.

A Clayton County jury on Thursday found Dale El Smith guilty of felony murder and cruelty to an elderly person in the death of her 66-year-old patient Arthur Pelham. WSB-TV reports Smith has been sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Police have said Pelham spent about 10 hours outside in subfreezing temperatures in January 2014 and died at a local hospital.

Authorities have said Pelham was outside waiting for an adult day care service to pick him up while he was in Smith's care. His transportation didn't arrive because of bad weather.
WORK ENVIRONMENT ABUSERS HATE

Speak Up
Don’t Turn Away
Not Here
Report

Break The Silence
Prevent Re-Abuse
Say Something
Help

You can make a difference

Say Something Don’t Turn Away Not Here

Prevent Re-Abuse Break The Silence

Don’t Turn Away Say Something

You can make a difference Say Something

You can make a difference Say Something

Break The Silence Prevent Re-Abuse
Hear what’s being said and what isn’t being said

Watch how individuals interact with team members (especially body language)

Teach and empower individuals to speak up

Don’t cover it up
What About the Person that Claims Abuse Repeatedly?

- Why are they doing it?
- Is it just documented so we don’t look into it or are we providing a support to see what is triggering it?
- Could it be Post Traumatic Stress?
The Signs that Tell an Abuser Not to Risk It:

If individual is:

Self Confident

Not easily intimidated/good assertiveness skills

Good at problem solving

Good social skills

Knows how to self protect

Is valued/respected by others

Has high self-esteem/respect

Not overly-compliant/will question authority

Well informed about sex
Are You Supporting the Abuse by Not Saying Anything?

☑ By having policies and not following through

☑ By always alerting team members that you are coming to do a visit