



Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

How to recognize it and how to report it

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Abuse: What is it?

Abuse is an intentional, knowing, or reckless action that harms a client or puts them at risk of harm.

Abuse may be:

- **Physical:** Hitting, pushing, grabbing, inappropriate restraint, excessive force, or other actions that cause or could cause injury.
 - **Sexual:** Unwanted or inappropriate sexual contact, activity, or exploitation.
 - **Verbal/Emotional:** Threatening, intimidating, humiliating, harassing, degrading, or otherwise causing emotional distress.
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Recognizing Possible Abuse

Possible warning signs include:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, scars, or broken bones
- Injuries shaped like fingers, hands, belts, or other objects
- Signs that restraints may have been used
- Unexplained genital injury, pain, bleeding, or difficulty walking/sitting
- Sudden fear, distress, or unusual behavior
- A client reporting that someone hurt, threatened, or touched them inappropriately

Remember: A warning sign does not prove abuse occurred. It means something may need to be reported and investigated.

Neglect

Neglect is a failure to provide necessary care or protection that causes—or puts a client at risk of—physical or emotional harm.

Examples may include:

- Inadequate food, fluids, hygiene, or appropriate clothing
 - Unsafe or unsanitary living conditions
 - Failure to provide needed supervision
 - Failure to provide necessary medical or dental care
 - Improper medication management
 - Failure to provide needed equipment or adaptive aids
 - Untreated wounds, skin breakdown, or other care needs
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Exploitation

Exploitation is improperly or illegally using a client—or their money, property, resources, or personal situation—for someone else's benefit or gain.

Examples may include:

- Taking or using a client's money or belongings
- Using a client's bank card or account without proper authorization
- Pressuring a client to give money, gifts, or property
- Misusing a client's financial information
- Taking advantage of the client's trust or dependence for personal benefit

Warning signs: Missing money or valuables, unexplained banking changes, unpaid bills despite available funds, or suddenly being unable to afford necessities.

Grooming Behaviors:

Grooming is a process used to build trust with a client in order to take advantage of them.

Warning signs may include:

- Giving special attention or favoritism to one client
- Attempting to isolate a client from others
- Encouraging secrecy ("this is just between us")
- Crossing professional boundaries
- Giving gifts or doing favors outside job duties
- Building emotional dependence ("you're the only one who understands me")

Grooming can happen gradually and may not seem harmful at first.

IMPORTANT: Grooming behaviors must be reported immediately, even if no abuse has occurred.

When Should You Report?

You must report:

- Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Signs or symptoms of abuse
- **Grooming behaviors or boundary violations**
- Any situation that feels unsafe or inappropriate

You do NOT need proof to report.

If something feels wrong, report it!

What Do You Think?

A caregiver gives one client special attention and small gifts. They tell the client, "Don't tell anyone, this is just between us."

Is this:

- A. Appropriate behavior
 - B. Grooming behavior
 - C. Harmless kindness
 - D. Not sure
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What Do You Think continued?

Correct Answer: B - Grooming Behavior

This behavior creates secrecy, favoritism, and boundary issues.

These are early warning signs and must be reported.

Reporting Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation:

If you see, hear about, or suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation:

- **If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911.**
- **Notify your manager immediately.**
- **Do not investigate the allegation yourself or confront the suspected person.**
- **Document what you observed or were told accurately and objectively.**
- **Follow instructions for any required external report.**

Reporting the concern to your manager does not prevent you from making a report directly when required by law.

In Conclusion

We have an obligation to protect our clients from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

If you see, hear about, or suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation, report it immediately. Notify your manager right away and follow the company's reporting procedures.

You do not need proof. When in doubt, report the concern.

Please see your manager with questions or concerns.

Videos:

Please watch the video below:

<https://youtu.be/x2RvPMMSJmA?si=-yeV6ODY81Wtjvlf>
