

Types of Abuse

Physical abuse

Description

It is any non-accidental physical injury or injuries to a child or adult by any other person. This includes but is not limited to, inflicting pain of any sort, causing harm or injuries or causing bruises, fractures, burns, electric shock or any unpleasant sensation.

Example

Inconsistent and vague or unlikely explanation for injury.

Unexplained injuries:

- broken bones, fractures, sprains, bruises, burns, bite marks, scratches or welts in various stages of healing.

Other bruising and marks may suggest the shape of the object that caused it.

Behaviour

Avoidance or fearful of a particular person or staff member or over compliance to staff. Frequent and overall drowsiness. Out of character aggression.

Unauthorised restraints and restrictive practices

Description

Restraining or isolating an adult for reasons other than medical necessity or the absence of a less restrictive alternative to prevent self-harm.

This may include the use of chemical, physical, mechanical, psycho-social and seclusion as a 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 abuse if they are applied under a Restricted Practice Authorisation and a Behaviour Support Plan**

Examples

Physical restraint – prolonged use on any part of a person's body to restrict their free movement.

Chemical restraint – inappropriate use of medication to control a person's behaviour.

Mechanical restraint – the inappropriate use of a device to restrict the free movement of a person.

Psycho-social restraint – the use of verbal communications and/or threats of social or material punishment which elicit fear and restrain a person's behaviour.

Seclusion – involves confinement in a room or area, in which an exit is prevented: or where a person believes they cannot or should not leave a room without permission.

Behaviour

Broken or unmaintained aids or equipment that restricts a person's movement e.g. uncharged battery on a wheel chair. Overdose of medication.

Locks on outside of bedroom doors. Locks on food pantry and refrigerators without Restrictive Practice Authorisation.



Sexual assault/ abuse

Description

Any sexual contact between an adult and child under 16 years of age or any sexual activity with an adult who is unable to understand, has not given consent, is threatened, coerced or forced to engage in sexual behaviour. Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act or behaviour which is threatening, violent, forced or coercive and to which a person has not given consent or was not able to give consent, including sex with a person in a position of care or authority.

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. Indecent exposure. Masturbation by a person in the presence of the victim. Voyeurism. Displaying pornographic photography or literature. Sexually explicit comments, inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature.

Behaviour

Direct or indirect disclosure. Bruises, pain, bleeding including redness and swelling around breasts and genitalia. Torn, stained or bloody underclothing, or bedding. Repeating the word or sign e.g. 'bad', 'dirty'. Presence of sexually transmitted disease. Pregnancy. Sudden changes in behaviour or temperament, e.g. depression, anxiety attacks (crying, sweating, trembling, withdrawal, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security). Sleep disturbances and refusing to go to bed, going to bed fully clothed. Refusing to shower or constant showering.



Psychological or emotional abuse and verbal abuse

Description

Verbal assaults, threats of maltreatment, harassment, humiliation or intimidation or failure to interact with a person or failure to acknowledge that person's presence. 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.

Examples

Treating people in ways that deny them of their dignity. Humiliating a person for losing control of their bladder or bowel or about other private matters. Denying cultural or religious needs such as serving pork to Jewish or Muslim persons. Not allowing a person to express themselves out of fear of retaliation. Discouraging personalisation of rooms or clothing. Limiting social freedom available to people. Criticising, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring and isolating a person. Making a person beg for help. Shouting orders to people. Verbal taunts, humiliation, intimidation and insults (bullying). Removing aids or equipment (such as wheelchair or communication device).

Behaviour

Depression, withdrawal, crying. Secretive and trying to hide information and personal belongings. Speech disorders. Weight gain or loss. 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.



Financial abuse

Description

The improper use of another person's assets or the use or withholding of another person's resources.

Examples

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

Denying a person access to information about their personal finances.

Taking a person's money or other property without their consent (which is likely to be a criminal offence).

Forcing changes to wills or other legal documents. Having cheques or credit card payments forged, or using a person's personal banking cards without their authorisation.

Using a person's belongings for personal use.

The improper use of another person's assets or the use or withholding of another person's resources.

Behaviour

Sudden decrease in bank balances. No financial records or incomplete records kept of expenditure and purchases.

Person controlling finances does not have legal authority.

Sudden changes in banking practices.

Sudden changes in wills or other financial documents.

Unexplained disappearance of money or valuable possessions.

Person has insufficient money to meet budgetary needs.

Person is persistently denied outings and activities due to lack of funds.

Borrowing, begging, stealing money or food.



Systems abuse (also includes wilful deprivation)

Description

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

Examples

Service providers arriving late or leaving early (without agreement).

Relevant policies and procedures are not implemented. People are denied the option to make decisions affecting their lives. Unacceptable staff attitudes have become normalised.

Lack of policy awareness and inadequate staff training and education.

Service or social isolation. Not identifying and reporting abuse and neglect.

A person with disability is dependent on one person or service for all support. Not providing people with disability access to a telephone, internet or significant others or a way to independently leave the house.

Failure to provide adequate or appropriate services.

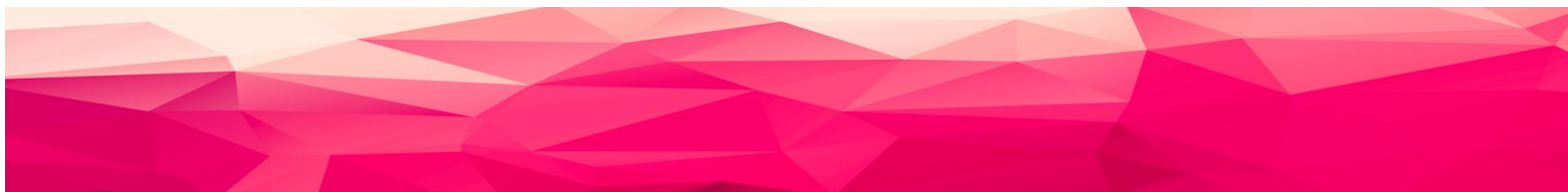
Behaviour

Over or under use of medication. Over or under use of restrictive practices.

Lack of staff to provide necessary support. Provision of care by a staff person with whom the person feels uncomfortable or unsafe. Ignoring a person when they ask for help. Intentionally making a person wait for help.

Neglecting to recharge the battery of a person's wheelchair. Providing physical care in a way that is unnecessarily rough or careless. Refusing to provide help unless the person agrees to lend money.

Purposely unplugging or turning off or not maintaining adaptive equipment.



Legal or civil abuse

Description

Denial of access to justice or legal systems that is available to other citizens.

Examples

Denial of access to justice or legal systems that is available to other citizens. Denial of access to protection. No legal support or representation with known reports of abuse.

Domestic violence

Description

Domestic violence is a range of abusive behaviours perpetrated in the victim's home by someone who is well-known to them.

Examples

Any form of abuse that occurs in a person's home including: Physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual assault, restricted practice and restraints, psychological or emotional abuse and verbal abuse, financial abuse, systems abuse, legal or civil abuse, neglect, wilful deprivation, passive neglect or emotional neglect.

Behaviour

Depression, withdrawal, crying. 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.



Neglect

Description

Neglect is a failure to provide the necessities of care, aid or guidance to dependent adults or children by those responsible for their care.

Examples

Failure to provide the following:

1. Supervision for long periods of time, when the risk of foreseeable harm or injury to the person requiring care is high
2. Adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene
3. Clean clothing
4. Appropriate health care or medical treatment
5. Safe environment
6. Social interaction and engagement.

Denying or withhold food or drink for example, because a person has not completed a task. Hurrying or rushing assistance with eating or drinking to fit in with staff timetables rather than the person's need. Withdrawal or denial of privileges, planned outing or personal items that are not designated and planned behaviour management strategies.

Behaviour

Inappropriate or inadequate shelter or accommodation. Hunger and/or weight loss. Requesting, begging, scavenging or stealing food. Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep. Direct or indirect disclosure.

Extreme longing for company. Poor hygiene. Inappropriate or inadequate clothing for climatic conditions. Unattended physical problems or medical needs. Social isolation. Loss of social and communication skills. Displaying inappropriate or excessive self-comforting behaviours.



Physical neglect

Description

Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, protection, supervision, medical and/or dental care, or to place persons at undue risk through unsafe environments or practices.

Examples

Not supporting the person to maintain hygiene. Not providing adequate medical or dental care. Unmaintained house. Failing to report hazards. Not completing annual comprehensive health, risk and swallowing assessments.

Behaviour

Improper sleeping, cooking, bathing arrangements. Unclean and unsanitary living conditions. Poor grooming – overgrown finger and toe nails, unclean hair, unshaven, unbathed, wearing dirty or damaged clothing. Smelling of urine or faeces.

Emotional neglect

Description

The failure to support and encourage, protect and provide stimulation needed for the social, intellectual and emotional growth or well-being of an adult or child.

Examples

Ignoring a person. Forced isolation. Depriving a person of their right to express their cultural identity, their sexuality or other desires.

Not using a communication device to enable expression of needs or other communication.



Behaviour

No social or recreation activities. No daytime or work activities. No family contacts. No means of communication.

Passive neglect

Description

A caregiver's failure to provide or withholding of the necessities of life, including food, clothing and shelter or medical care

Examples

Denial of dental or medical care, therapeutic devices or other physical assistance. Failure to provide proper food – lack of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Behaviour

Not using equipment and therapeutic devices as prescribed by a health professional. For example, for a person with disability: no lap strap fixed when transporting a person in a wheelchair; inadequate pressure care; not positioning a person properly etc.

