

Abuse Prevention Review

(Please document the date of review on the person's ISP)

There are six different types of abuse. One of the easiest ways to identify if something is abuse is by what your gut is telling you. It is important that you listen to your feelings. If something feels good, that usually means it is a yes feeling and gets a green light. This is easiest thought of in terms of handshakes and hi-fives. If something does not feel good, this is when you would say, "NO, stop, red light!" This would be if someone hits you, calls you names, touches you inappropriately, or hurts you in some way.

Abuse can be:

- 1) **Physical** - Hurting or threatening to hurt someone's body with physical injury. Examples: Punching, kicking, pinching.
- 2) **Verbal** - Name calling or saying bad things about someone. Examples: Saying, "You're ugly."
- 3) **Emotional** - Hurting someone's feelings. Example: Saying, "You're not good enough to have a boyfriend/girlfriend." "You don't deserve to have lunch."
- 4) **Sexual** - Unwanted touching of the private parts of your body.
- 5) **Financial** - Someone misuses your money or does not let you have it and uses it for their own purposes.
- 6) **Neglect** - When someone fails to provide the things a person needs to live, such as food, shelter, clothing, and care.

It is important that everyone recognizes that they need to set **boundaries**. There are public and private places, possessions, and body parts. Each person decides for themselves what this looks like and there is no right or wrong answer. Once boundaries have been set, a person needs to be assertive by being clear about how they feel, what they need, and how that can be done. For example, one would say, "When you do this....it makes me feel like this....and I want you to stop."

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Everyone has rights and responsibilities and the easiest way to understand what this means in a general sense is to treat others how you would like to be treated. For example, it is your **right** to have privacy and it is your **responsibility** to respect other people's privacy.

If abuse occurs, a person has three different ways that they might deal with the situation:

- 1) Call 911 yourself and get help (this keeps you safe and puts a stop to the abuse).
- 2) Tell someone you know and trust about the abuse. Depending on who this person is, they may have to call the police or may choose to call. For example, if you tell your support worker about abuse, they must call the police. Your parents or friends do not have to call but they might in order to keep you safe.
- 3) Do nothing. If you do not tell anyone then the abuse may continue, and no one can help because they do not know.

It is essential that you know what happens after you choose one of the above in terms of aftercare and support. Example: Talk with a counsellor.

Safety planning is important. It is helpful to have a plan in place so that during a stressful time there is an action plan at the ready. The first thing would be for you to know what you can say to a person who might be trying to hurt you. This is when you show your assertiveness skills. Next you should identify a safe place that you can go to and a person who can help you. Also, it is good to know an activity that you can do for yourself that makes you feel safe.

In summary, not all no feelings and unpleasant situations match the definitions of abuse. Sometimes people feel disappointment or even let down. For example, if your support worker cannot take you to Tim Hortons one day this is not abuse.

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Life is full of compromises and relationships require give and take. You do not always get what you want. Therefore, not getting your way is not abuse and does not require a report or call to the police.

Calling 911 is only for **emergency situations** and not for minor problems, or as part of a joke or prank. Calling the police to report abuse should be taken seriously, it should not happen because an argument is lost, or plans interrupted.

Sometimes making a decision is difficult. If you do not know whether a situation is abusive, talk with someone first. But if you feel you are in real danger then do not hesitate to contact police or emergency services right away.

Not Abuse

- You were at a market that was very busy with lots of people around and someone brushed against your bum in the crowd.
- Someone opened the door and hit you with the door. You were standing on the other side, and they did not see you.
- Someone tells you that they do not want to hang around with you because they would rather hang out with someone else.

Abuse

- Asking a trusted person to take you to the doctor or clinic because you are really sick, and they say no.
- A boyfriend or girlfriend tells you that you are no good and that you cannot get anybody else.
- A family member hits you but only when they have been drinking. They always say sorry afterwards.

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