**Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Reporting**

Keeping our clients safe from harm is one of the most important things we do for them. We make sure that they eat health food and drink plenty of water, they take their medications as prescribed, they have their hygiene needs met, and their home is safe. As the person in the home with them the most, we notice changes sooner than others may, and we need to know how to protect them if those changes indicate the person may be being abused or neglected, or they are neglecting themselves. The following is from the Principles of Caregiving for Direct Care Workers with an attached video about how to recognize potential abuse or neglect. Remember, you are not required to prove that the person is being abused or neglected to need to report it; we report any suspicions and let the professionals with Adult Protective Services or the police department investigate. As a caregiver you are legally mandated to report and have the support from Cypress to do so. If you ever suspect that a client is being abused or neglected contact 911 if the person is in immediate danger and call the office to help you with the process if the danger is not immediate. If you ever approach a home and fear entering the home because you hear noises inside that indicate abuse, call the office and the police immediately, do not ring the doorbell and put yourself at risk, too. If you need clarification on the signs of abuse or neglect or on your responsibilities please call the office at 602-264-8009.

**Principles of Caregiving: Fundamentals**

Chapter 2- Legal and Ethical Issues

<http://azdirectcare.org/uploads/2011fixed_Fund_ch_2_Legal-ethical.pdf>

1. **Definition**

Adult abuse refers to any form of maltreatment of a person by a caregiver, family member, spouse, or friend. Categories of abuse include:

* 1. **Abuse**

Intentional infliction of physical harm or unreasonable confinement.

* 1. **Sexual abuse or sexual assault**

Sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent or through force or coercion, which means by force or threatening.

* 1. **Neglect**

Failing to provide a person food, water, clothing, medicine, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health. Shelter refers to housing but also the environment. Leaving a person in unsafe or hazardous environments can be neglect. When a person does not care for his/her own well-being or safety, this is called self-neglect.

* 1. **Financial exploitation**

The improper or unauthorized use of a person’s funds, property, or assets. This includes forgery, stealing money or possessions, or tricking a person into signing documents that transfer funds, property or assets.

* 1. **Emotional abuse**

Psychological abuse such as name-calling, insults, threats, and intimidation.

1. **Risk Factors**
   1. **Adult abuse**

* Previous incidents of domestic violence by spouse.
* Financial dependency on the adult by the abuser.
* Mental illness of the abuser.
* Adult children living with older parent.
* Abuser isolates adult to prevent the abuse from being discovered.

1. **Signs**
   1. **Adult abuse**

* ***Physical:*** bruises, broken bones, cuts or other untreated injuries in various stages of healing.
* ***Sexual:*** bruises around breast or genital area; signs of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
* ***Emotional:*** adult is upset or agitated, withdrawn, non-communicative, or paranoid.
* ***Neglect (including self-neglect):*** dehydration, malnutrition, pressure ulcers, poor personal hygiene, and unsafe or unsanitary living conditions.
* ***Financial:*** unusual banking activity, missing financial statements or other personal items such as jewelry; signatures on checks that do not match adult’s signature.

1. **Prevention**

* Community awareness.
* Public and professional education.
* Caregiver support groups.
* Stress management training.
* Respite care or in-home services.

1. **Reporting Requirements**

* All persons responsible for the care of an incapacitated or vulnerable adult have a duty to report suspected abuse and neglect. This is called mandatory reporting.
* Reports must be made immediately (by phone or in person) to Adult Protective Services or to the police. Failure to report is a misdemeanor.
  + If the individual is in danger, call 911.
  + If the abuse is not life-threatening, report it to your Supervisor who will assist you in making the report to the 24-hour statewide reporting line:
    - Adult Protective Services: 1-887-SOS-ADULT (1-877-767-2385)
* Immunity

All persons reporting are immune from any civil or criminal liability of the report does not involve any malicious misrepresentation, according to Arizona statues (ARS § 46-453).

1. **Legal penalties**

Any person who has been employed to provide care to an incapacitated or vulnerable adult and who causes or permits the person’s life to be endangered or his/her health to be injured or endangered by neglect can be found guilty of a felony.

An individual how is found guilty of a felony will not only face jail time. A felony conviction also limits the type of jobs the individual can hold in the future. For example, convicted felons are unable to work in most healthcare or educational systems.

Recognizing and Reporting Elder Abuse (19:45)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBJdfDzOSPw>

30 minute total time