

Abuse, Neglect, & Exploitation



Introduction

Lesson Objectives

All patients receiving care, treatment and/or services are screened or observed for signs of abuse during the assessment process.

After you complete this lesson, you should be able to:

- Recognize the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Describe the process for reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Identify appropriate information to document in the medical records
- Identify where to locate the Accounting for Disclosures documentation

Abuse

Definition of Abuse

Abuse is defined as:

- The non-accidental infliction of physical or psychological injury to a child or vulnerable adult
- The failure of the caregiver to take reasonable measures to prevent the occurrence of physical or psychological injury

A relative, caregiver or adult household member is usually the one to inflict abuse.

Vulnerable Adult - A vulnerable adult is a person 18 years or older whose ability to perform normal activities of daily living or provide for his or her own care or protection is impaired due to any one or a combination of the following:

- Mental, emotional and physical disability
- Developmental disability
- Brain damage
- Infirmities of aging

Examples of Abuse

Abuse can present itself in a variety of forms. Please review the following examples of abuse:

Examples of abuse:

- Excessive exposure to heat or cold
- Poisoning
- Leaving an individual who requires supervision alone in a hostile or dangerous situation
- Abandonment
- Threatening to cause death, disfigurement or harm
- Excessive use of physical and/or chemical restraints
- Forcing an individual to take excessive medication and/or medication that is not prescribed
- Locking an individual in a room, closet or shed
- Sexual assault and exploitation
- Sterilization of a vulnerable adult without prior informed consent and due process of the law
- Denial of civil rights entitled by law
- Forcing an individual to consume excessive amounts of food or liquid as punishment

Signs of Abuse

Abuse is usually seen as:

- Welts
- Bruises
- Untreated sores or other skin injuries
- Evidence of overall poor care

Abuse involving children is most frequently seen as:

- Bruises
- Head injuries (shaken baby)
- Burns
- Spiral fractures - a key indicator of child abuse!

Neglect

Definition of Neglect

Neglect is when a caregiver fails or omits to provide care and services to minors and vulnerable adults that:

- A reasonable person would determine to be essential for their well-being
- Are necessary to maintain physical and mental health

Neglect includes repeated conduct or a single incident of carelessness that produces or could be expected to result in serious physical or mental harm or risk of death. Neglect can be shown in several areas including:

- Medical treatment
- Nutrition and hydration
- Care and services
- Clothing and shelter

Examples of Neglect: Medical Treatment, Nutrition and Hydration

Neglect can also present itself in different forms. Please review the following examples of neglect.

Medical Treatment - caregiver does not provide:

- Required medical services
- Medical services or prescribed medications
- Medication administration as prescribed
- Recommended/required treatment programs
- Explanation regarding care and services

Nutrition and Hydration - caregiver does not provide:

- Adequate amount of food and/or liquid
- Proper type of food and/or liquid
- Nourishing meals regularly

Examples of Neglect: Care and Services, Clothing, Shelter

Neglect occurs when the caregiver does not provide does not provide:

- Assistance with basic hygiene
- Adequate care, concern, privacy and supervision
- Adequate and/or clean clothing appropriate for the weather conditions

Neglect also occurs when the caregiver does not:

- Repair unsafe housing conditions
- Maintain sanitary living conditions
- Provide adequate heating and cooling of the environment

Exploitation

Definition of Exploitation

Exploitation is the improper or illegal use or management of a child or vulnerable adult's funds, assets, property or person.

Exploitation is also the use of a vulnerable adult's power of attorney or guardianship for another's or one's own profit or advantage.

Examples of Exploitation

Exploitation can present itself in different forms. Please review the following examples of exploitation:

Exploitation can include, but is not limited to:

- Cashing vulnerable adults' checks without their permission
- Forging their signature
- Stealing or misusing their money or possessions
- Abusing the power of attorney

Examples of Exploitation (Vulnerable Adult)

Exploitation can include, but is not limited to:

- Money taken through deceit
- Property taken and/or sold through deceit
- Attempts to bribe someone to do something he or she ordinarily would not do
- Underpayment or no payment for work-related services provided
- Sexual exploitation
- Prostitution

Signs of Exploitation

Exploitation is usually seen as:

- Sudden changes in banking activity, including large withdrawals from the bank or ATM
- Additional names added to a vulnerable adult's bank signature card
- Abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents
- Disappearance of funds or valuable possessions without explanation
- Substandard care or unpaid bills despite adequate financial resources

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

- Signatures on checks, financial transactions (or other property documents) that do not resemble the vulnerable adult's
- Previously uninvolved relatives claiming rights to a vulnerable adult's affairs and possessions
- Transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family without explanation or permission

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Reporting

Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

You are mandated to report cases of abuse or suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation involving minors and vulnerable adults.

When you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of a minor or vulnerable adult, contact your immediate supervisor, file a report, notify the risk manager, consult social services and any other appropriate health care professionals.

Report Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation: Hotline

Team members will immediately report all alleged incidences of abuse, neglect or exploitation to: **1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**.

If a report is required, the report should contain:

- Name, age, race, sex and physical description of alleged victim
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of alleged victim's family, caregiver and alleged perpetrator (if available)
- Name of the person reporting the alleged abuse, facility address and facility phone number

Reporting Domestic Violence

Team members will report domestic violence when it involves minors or vulnerable adults.

If the domestic violence does not involve minors or vulnerable adults, encourage the individual to self-report.

Domestic Violence – means any assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

Reporting Domestic Violence (BMG & BH Only)

If you need to report domestic violence, please refer to the posted signs in your facility for all state and local numbers relating to domestic violence.

Domestic Violence – means any assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

Documentation of Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

Documentation of abuse, suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation in the medical record should tell a factual, accurate story of what was observed by the team member and stated by the customer and caregivers. Documentation should not include assumptions, opinions or assign blame.

Accounting for Disclosures

The designated person at your facility must complete an Accounting for Disclosures form for each report of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation. The reporting form is available on the BayCare Intranet.

To locate this form, simply go to the BayCare Intranet Home page and search for "disclosures database"; complete and submit the form.