

Community Connections Support Services - Policies and Procedures

Section	Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
Subject	Abuse and/or Neglect – definition, reporting, allegations and prevention (ip027)
Applies To	Employees and Subcontractors
Effective Date	November 1995
Date Revised	April 2018

Policy: All support workers and subcontractors are responsible in varying degrees for the well-being of the individual they are supporting. Abuse of any person is forbidden by policy and by law.

Definition:

All of the following are forbidden and must be reported immediately to your service coordinator or home share coordinator. Abuse and neglect are difficult to define in precise detail. They include, but are not limited to:

- Striking, slapping or administering any physical punishment including using unnecessary force to control a person. This includes use of seclusion or restraint where such seclusion or restraint is not identified as necessary in the person's Behaviour Support and Safety Plan.
- Shouting, swearing, making derogatory remarks, teasing or otherwise verbally provoking a person or condoning and encouraging others who are being abusive.
- Depriving a person of food, privileges they have earned, access to their community and family, monetary and other rewards, without the necessary permission and sanction to do so.
- Exploiting a person by making him/her do work which is your responsibility, but which you find distasteful.
- Taking a person's personal property for your own use, including finances.
- Having sexual intercourse or indulging in any inappropriate sexual activity/touching/communication with an individual.
- Threatening a person with physical, emotional or financial abuse as a means to control their behaviour. Threatening to withhold basic necessities and/or essential services from a person as a means to control their behaviour.
- Neglecting to care for a person including leaving them too long without supporting them to clean themselves and change their clothes if they have been incontinent with urine or feces, leaving them naked and exposed in public and semi-public areas, feeding helpless people in a manner that causes them discomfort or pain.
- Withholding or neglecting to provide for a person's basic needs and/or essential services such as food, water, shelter, human contact/interaction, emotional support, medication needs,

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financial stability, mobility needs and support.

- Leaving people alone and isolated without a means to leave their environment and access their community or home.
- Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is, in itself, abuse. A support worker or subcontractor can be held accountable for unreported abuse and/or neglect.

Procedures:

Reporting Allegations of Abuse:

1. Any employee or subcontractor who has witnessed mistreatment of a person or suspects that there has been abuse of a person, must report the incident immediately to their service coordinator or home share coordinator and also complete a Critical Incident Report form according to procedures found in hs040 Incident Reporting policy. If it is the service coordinator or home share coordinator who is alleged to have abused or neglected a person supported or who does not follow up an allegation of abuse, the employee or subcontractor will report the alleged abuse to the CCSS Directors.
2. Failure to report an incident or suspicion of mistreatment shall be cause for disciplinary action. If unsure as to whether or not the incident constitutes abuse, discuss the matter with your service coordinator or home share coordinator.
3. The employee or subcontractor reporting the incident may be asked to submit a written statement outlining the following:
 - a) Name of person reporting abuse and name(s) of the persons involved in the alleged abuse.
 - b) Details of the nature of the alleged abuse.
 - c) Date, time and place where alleged incidents occurred.
 - d) Names of other individuals who may have witnessed the alleged incidents.
 - e) Other details, such as physical evidence of abuse, that could help in the investigation.
4. The employee or subcontractor may be contacted further by Community Connections Support Services, CLBC, PGT or the RCMP to gather more information to establish facts.

Allegations against employees or subcontractors:

1. After receiving an allegation of abuse, Community Connections Support Services must take steps necessary to ensure the safety of the person(s) supported. If the alleged abuser is:
 - a) an employee; that employee may be immediately suspended with or without pay,

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- pending the results of an investigation.
- b) A subcontractor; the person(s) supported in that contractor's home may be temporarily moved to a respite placement, the family home of the person supported, or the home of an alternate contractor, pending the results of an investigation.
2. Once an investigation has been conducted and findings and recommendations have been established the person reporting the incident and the person whom the allegation was made against will receive notification from CCSS as to the results of the investigation.
 3. If the investigation concludes that allegations of abuse are substantiated, the following disciplinary actions will be taken if the abuse was committed by:
 - a) an employee; further action up to and including dismissal will be taken as deemed appropriate by the employer. Charges may be laid.
 - b) A subcontractor; further action up to and including termination of contract will be taken as deemed appropriate by the agency. Charges may be laid. Community Connections Support Services may determine to permanently sever its contractual relationship with the subcontractor.
 4. If the investigation concludes that allegations of abuse are not substantiated, the following action will be taken if the alleged abuse was committed by:
 - a) an employee; that employee will be reinstated with full back pay. Additional recommendations from other agencies (ie. CLBC, RCMP, PGT) will be implemented by Community Connections Support Services.
 - b) A subcontractor; the person(s) supported in that subcontractor's home will be returned and supports will continue per contract with Community Connections Support Services with no lapse in payment. Additional recommendations from other agencies (ie. CLBC, RCMP, PGT) will be implemented by Community Connections Support Services.
 5. **Note: Should an employee or subcontractor being investigated for allegations of abuse be required by CLBC, PGT or RCMP to travel, attend court proceedings, produce documentation, or retain legal counsel; all associated costs will be borne solely by the employee or subcontractor.**

Prevention of Abuse:

1. Some employees or subcontractors may not be aware that what they are doing constitutes abuse and/or neglect and a word of advice is often all that is required to prevent a recurrence.
2. Some employees or subcontractors can be described as being “at risk” in that they may be under pressure due to domestic and other problems and may take out their frustrations on the people they support. At the first sign of this behavior, you should have a discussion with your service coordinator or home share coordinator who can intervene before the

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behavior deteriorates and puts your job in jeopardy. People “at risk” include those with problems with alcohol or drugs, those with financial problems or with marital problems, but of course they are not limited to any one group.

3. An employee or subcontractor may become momentarily angry when dealing with a person with challenging behaviors and lose control. You can assist an employee or subcontractor to disengage themselves from the situation and prevent it from becoming abusive. MANDT training will be provided by CCSS to all employees or subcontractors who support a person who presents with challenging behaviours.
4. A need to feel that they are in control of the people they work for and must remain in control, often leads employees or subcontractors to resort to abusive tactics. Supervisory and other professional staff are available for help and guidance in this regard.
5. The person who has been unjustly accused of abuse and the individual who reported the incident must be supported through a very difficult time by the service coordinator and fellow team members or home share coordinator.
6. In the case that an abusive action has taken place, all employees or subcontractors will be required to ensure that the person who was abused has received all the support and professional counseling, if necessary, that he/she needs.
7. Under no circumstances is the person who makes the allegation of abuse, nor the person alleged to have been subjected to the abuse, nor the alleged abuser to be subjected to retaliation by any other party. Our foremost responsibility is the provision of responsive and respectful supports to all parties involved in any allegation.

For further information on this policy or permission to reprint, please contact:

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