

Disability Self-Advocate Handbook on Abuse and Neglect

For Adults with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities



Introduction

This guide will help you learn about abuse and neglect.

You will learn:

- The different types of abuse and neglect
- Signs that abuse or neglect might be happening to you or someone else
- How to report abuse or neglect that happens to you or someone else
- Who you can talk to when you or someone else needs help
- What happens after you report abuse or neglect



What Abuse and Neglect Are

Abuse can look different depending on the situation. Here are the types:



Physical Abuse

This is when someone hurts you or says they will hurt or kill you. [1]



Verbal Abuse

This is when someone yells at you, calls you names, or makes fun of you. [3]



Sexual Abuse

This is when someone does sexual things to you without your permission, like:

- Touching or kissing your private parts
- Making you touch their private parts
- Having sex with you when you do not want to
- Taking pictures of your private parts
- Making you look at sexual pictures or videos
- Making you touch or have sex with someone else
- Making sexual jokes or comments even when you say stop [3]



Disability-Related Abuse

This is when someone harms you because of your disability by:

- Taking or breaking equipment you need
- Giving you too much or too little medication [2,4]



Financial Abuse

This is when someone takes or uses your money in a way that does not help you by:

- Keeping your money from you
- Stopping you from working or earning money
- Making money decisions without asking you [1,3]



Neglect

This is when someone does not take care of you when you need help.

- Not giving you food or a safe place to live
- Not helping with daily tasks like eating or bathing
- Not giving you healthcare or protection [1]

How to Report Abuse

You can report abuse that happens to you or someone else in different ways:

- 1. Tell a trusted adult.**
- 2. Call 911 if there is danger.**
- 3. Call the government agency that handles abuse.**



Government Agencies You Can Call

Adult Protective Services numbers are available for each New Jersey county. The toll-free number is 855-835-5277.

Call the Division of Developmental Disabilities Abuse Hotline at 1-800-832-9173, then press 1.

You can also contact the Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families at 609-984-7764 or disability.ombudsman@treas.nj.gov.



What Happens After You Report Abuse



1 The person who did the abuse may be removed from your or the person who was abused's care.

2 You will be asked questions about what happened.

You can have a support person with you for this.

3 You or your support person can ask for updates, if you were the one who was abused.

4 The person who was abused will get a new caregiver, if needed.

5 The investigation may take weeks, months, or more than a year.



About The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities is committed to advancing public policy and systems change that helps people with intellectual or developmental disabilities gain more control over their lives.

The council identifies the most pressing needs of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, such as housing, employment, transportation, services, and supports systems.

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