Preventing Abuse and Neglect

How we protect a vulnerable population
Giving people a voice

- Many of the residents of the DPD are completely dependent on others for their care.
- Some have various levels of independence.
- In all cases staff and volunteers work to be sure they are safe and cared for.
One responsibility is to be sure they are not abused or neglected in any way.

It is important to keep in mind that the residents may be unable to verbalize for themselves.

Even a person who appears very capable of reporting abuse may not be able to do so. He or she may be reluctant emotionally or may not want to ‘cause trouble.’
To this end, staff and volunteers are always advocates on the behalf of the residents.

We must be observant to recognize the signs of abuse. Signs may be physical. They may also be behavioral.

Keep in mind that you do not conduct an investigation of abuse. You only have to see signs that don't have another reasonable explanation to report suspected abuse.
Physical Abuse

- Any act of a person that physically injures a resident and results in harmful effects on the resident’s physical or emotional well being.

- This includes encouraging or allowing someone else to inflict the injury.

- Any person standing by and watching a resident being abused **must** step in and stop it immediately or they will also be held accountable for the abuse.
Examples of physical abuse

- Hitting a resident with hand, fist, foot or object.
- Shoving, tripping, pushing, pulling, scratching or biting a resident.
- Raping a resident or forcing them into other sexual acts.
- Using unnecessary or excessive physical or chemical restraints.
- Giving medication that is not prescribed.
- Allowing one resident to be abused by another resident.
- Using Corporal Punishment to discipline someone.
Possible signs of Physical Abuse

- Matching bruises on both upper arms from shaking.
- Clustered bruises on the trunk from repeated striking.
- Bruises resembling an object.
- Old and new bruises.
- Burns, especially those that are unusually located.
- Suspicious scars.
- Injuries that are unusual or appear repeatedly even if the individual offers an explanation; it may be a cause for concern.
We are responsible for creating an environment where our people feel secure, safe, wanted and loved. When this fails to happen, emotional abuse has the possibility of occurring.
Examples of Emotional Abuse

- Consistent negative atmosphere.
- Teasing in a cruel fashion, humiliating, or degrading.
- Using derogatory nicknames or ethnic slurs.
- Treatment not physically harmful in itself, but, is cruel and emotionally harmful.
- Forcing clients to engage in acts against their will. This DOES NOT refer to behaviors that are necessary for safety.
Possible signs of Abuse

- Extreme changes in behavior
- Recurrent nightmares, or disturbed sleeping patterns.
- Regression to more infantile behavior.
- Unusual interest in or knowledge of abusive behavior.
- Fear or intense dislike at being left somewhere or with someone in particular.
Sexual abuse is unwanted sexual activity, with perpetrators using force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent.
Possible signs of Sexual Abuse

- Sudden behavioral changes.
- Changes in hygiene (excessive bathing, or the opposite).
- Withdrawal and isolation from others.
- Use of sexually explicit language.
- Acting out sexual behaviors.
- Changes in enthusiasm for activities usually found to be enjoyable.
- Self-inflicted abuse.
Protecting God’s Children® – a required one time training for all Employees and Volunteers in the diocese who are in contact with children or vulnerable adults.

This training is aimed at our role in creating and maintaining a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.

Protecting God’s Children® program educates and trains adults (clergy, religious, teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents) about the dangers of sexual abuse, behaviors to look for in potential abusers, the warning signs of abuse, the ways to prevent abuse, and the methods of properly reporting suspicions of abuse.
If you have not yet completed your Protecting God’s Children Training...

- Please do so as soon as possible. You may be asked to refrain from volunteering until the training is completed as per Diocesan mandate. (It’s that important!!)

- To register for a training: [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org)

- New training locations are added regularly so check back often for a site convenient to you.

- Once you have completed the training the DPD – Director of Volunteers will be notified by the diocese that you have done so.
Financial Exploitation

- Financial exploitation occurs when someone improperly uses the money, assets or resources of a person to the abuser's advantage or to the disadvantage of the person with disabilities.
- This frequently occurs without the explicit knowledge or consent of the person.
- May involve selling things to the resident, ‘borrowing’ money from them, asking the resident to buy you a gift, etc.
Neglect

- Neglect is failure to provide the care and services needed for physical and mental well being.
- This means being inattentive, lax, slack, failure to see needs and not giving things that are known to be needed.
Examples of Neglect

- Someone not given medication on time.
- Not providing adequate clothing for weather conditions.
- Allowing someone to sit in feces or urine for an excessive amount of time.
- Not seeking medical help promptly when needed.
- Not providing adequate supervision.
- Allowing someone to self mutilate.
If you see any behaviors that cause you concern, please let someone know.

As a volunteer you are the eyes and ears of one who has the best interest of our residents and clients at heart and we value your input.

Express any concerns to the supervisor of the program or contact the Director of Volunteers: 973–401–1103 or

patriciabarrett@dpd.org
The fundamental reason for our work of service to people with developmental disabilities is the belief in the sanctity of human life.

This is the root of Catholic Social Teaching.

The DPD works tirelessly to protect the people we serve and to assure for them a life with dignity, love and purpose.

We thank you our volunteers for the role you play in keeping them safe and bringing joy to their lives.
God Bless you for all you do!

- For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1 John 3:11