

PROCEDURE

If abuse is suspected:

- Inform the Support Team who will guide you in next steps, as well as report the concern in the Communications Log.
- The office will follow up accordingly.

Please respect the sensitivity, gravity and confidentiality of these concerns.

- Report to Support Team *immediately*
 - DO NOT share your concerns with other program staff, volunteers, etc.
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IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL ABUSE

Types of abuse: physical, neglect, sexual, psychological/emotional, financial, discriminatory

**Below, we will address the first three.*

An individual who is *physically abused* may:

- have burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- not want to go home
- be afraid of adults

An individual who is *neglected* may:

- not wear clothing that's suitable for the weather
- be dirty or unbathed
- be very hungry
- not be properly supervised

An individual who is *sexually abused* may:

- Be very compliant or extremely aggressive
- Be afraid of a certain person or a family member
- Have difficulty walking or sitting
- Inappropriate knowledge of sexual acts for their age

Additional notes regarding sexual abuse:

- Sexual abuse is 4 x more likely to occur for individuals with disabilities (1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls with autism).
 - Perpetrators may seek out staff/volunteer roles in community recreation programs as opportunities to access vulnerable individuals.
 - Remember the *Rule of 2* from the December staff newsletter: Staff and volunteers should **never** be alone with a participant.
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PROGRAM BOUNDARIES: PHYSICAL CONTACT

CAN recognizes that in some contexts, physical touch is appropriate and helpful. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

Importance of Independent Engagement

- Remember that fostering independent engagement in group activities with peers is an important goal for all participants.
- For example, holding hands with a 4 year old participant who requires redirection to engage in an activity or is at risk of elopement and is in an open area, holding hands may be appropriate.
- Initiating hand holding with a 4 year old who was otherwise independently participating in the activity is NOT constructive.

Skill Development

- Physical guidance may also be necessary to support skill development.
- For example, a staff or volunteer may provide a physical prompt to show participants where to put their hands on a baseball bat, basketball, etc.
- Staff and volunteers should 'narrate' their actions in cases where physical guidance is necessary, moving slowly and approaching the participant from the front *e.g., "I'm going to show you where to put your hands. One hand on the side of the basketball. And one hand on top of the basketball."*

As a guiding principle:

- A bystander should be able to easily recognize that the physical touch provided is to meet the needs of the participant, not to meet the needs of the staff or volunteer.
- For example, a young child may choose to sit right next to you at a team meeting when seeking comfort or reassurance.
- In contrast, staff and volunteers should not be pulling children into their laps who are otherwise engaged appropriately.

Using Safety-Care™

- *This is only used by a Support Team member as an absolute last resort.*
- Safety-Care™ Behavioral Safety Training is a program that provides the skills and competencies to effectively prevent, minimize, and manage behavioural challenges.
- Our Support Team has received training in this program to know when a hands-on restraint is necessary for participant safety.
- All use of Safety-Care™ procedures must be documented.

We appreciate the commitment that our staff and volunteers have in ensuring the utmost safety of participants in our programs.