

Abuse and Neglect

Recognizing and Responding to Neglect, Mistreatment, or Abuse

What You Will Learn

- Define abuse, neglect, exploitation, extortion, and isolation
- Understand the vulnerabilities of relevant populations including children, individuals with disabilities, and seniors
- Discuss the ethical responsibilities of staff
- Identify signs of abuse, mistreatment, and neglect
- Be able to file an effective and timely report

PLEASE NOTE!

When you have completed this training, you will be directed to access the test via a link in the final slide.

Definitions

- **Abandonment** - the desertion or willful forsaking of an individual by anyone having care or custody of that person
- **Abuse** - the infliction of physical or mental injury such as sexual abuse, isolation, exploitation, extortion of money or things of value, or humiliation



Definitions



- **Exploitation** - improper or illegal use of an individual's funds, assets, or property for one's own advantage
- **Extortion** - using physical force, intimidation, or abuse to acquire things of value from an unwilling or reluctant individual

Definitions



- **Isolation** - intentional acts that prevent or serve to prevent one from having contact with family, friends, or concerned persons; prevent from receiving mail or calls; physical or chemical restraint; confining; social deprivation (Does not include medical isolation as prescribed by a doctor)
- **Neglect** - failure to provide necessary care

Ethical Responsibility (Mandated Reporting)

- The law requires that **ALL** Louisiana citizens report suspected cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and extortion of disabled adults, seniors, and children.
- Any staff or social service practitioner having **cause to believe** someone has been affected by abuse, neglect, or exploitation must report it to **Child Protection Services, Adult Protective Services, or Elderly Protective Services AND to the local or state law enforcement agency.**

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises (bilateral or patterned) or welts, especially on the face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, wrists, or ankles, or the presence of old and new bruises
- Fractures, sprains, or dislocations, especially to skull, nose, or facial structure
- Burns to palms, legs, arms, soles of feet; immersion burns resulting in donut-shaped burns on buttocks; rope burns
- Other signs - abrasions, lacerations, wounds, or punctures; hair thinning from pulling; frequent trips to the emergency room; injuries to head, scalp, or face

Other Signs of Abuse

- Vague explanations or denial of obvious injury
- Conflicting or illogical explanation of injury (age-appropriate)
- Being locked up or left alone for extended periods of time
- Denied visitors or freedom to leave house
- Threats, insults, or harsh orders overheard



Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Sudden change in hygiene or self-esteem
- Change in personal “bubble” or response to physical contact
- Inappropriate references of sexual material
- Sexual behavior or knowledge that’s inappropriate for a child’s age
- Abuse of other children sexually
- Trouble walking or sitting or complaints of genital/anal pain
- Blood in a child’s underwear

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Pregnancy or a sexually-transmitted infection
- Statements that he/she was sexually abused
- Incontinence in someone previously toilet-trained
- Frequent urinary tract infections or yeast infections

Neglect is defined as...

- The refusal or unreasonable failure to supply necessary food, clothing, shelter, care, treatment, or counseling for any injury, illness or condition resulting in physical, mental, or emotional distress.

Signs of Neglect

- Dirty skin, uncombed hair
- Soiled clothing
- Insufficient clothing in winter
- Body odor
- Underweight, sudden weight loss
- Inadequate heating or cooling
- Unsanitary living conditions
- Extremely neat, doesn't look lived in

Signs of Neglect

- Lack of food or water
- Lack of needed medical attention
- Untreated physical or mental health problems
- Lack of eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other needed devices
- Medication not taken properly
- Bedsores
- Discoloration of skin
- Excessive number of old medicine bottles from different doctors

“Red Flag” Behaviors in Victims

- Unwillingness to discuss problems in perpetrator’s presence
- Fearful of perpetrator
- Fearful of outside contacts
- Frustration, anger directed at perpetrator
- Overly passive or quiet
- Agitated
- Tearful
- Looks to others to provide the “right” answers
- Unrealistic or implausible statements

“Red Flag” Behaviors in Perpetrators

- Exaggerated defensiveness or concern
- Attitude of indifference towards client
- Overt hostility toward client
- Demanding, critical, accusing
- Blames others for problems
- Lacks knowledge of consumer’s condition
- Unwillingness to comply with plans
- Attempts to isolate client from friends and family
- Lack of eye contact
- Claims that client just wants attention
- Flirtatious, coy as indicators of inappropriate relationship



Risk Factors

- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Mental illness
- Alienation, social isolation
- Caregiver has poor self-image, is too young or immature for responsibility
- Client is demanding, overly critical, never satisfied
- Caregiver is unemployed, has insufficient funds, or is dependent on client for money
- Caregiver and/or client have chronic illness or poor health

Caretakers are defined as...

- Parent/legal guardian/legal custodian
- Adult household member
- Relative who is in the home on a regular basis
- Person with a dating or engagement relationship with the parent/legal guardian
- Foster parent
- Owner or employee of a day care or residential facility

Exploitation/Extortion

- Theft or misuse of pension, disability benefits
- Reliance on client's income by caregiver
- Failure to meet basic needs
- Household and personal items not consistent with size of estate
- Taking of money or property by caregiver
- Abuse of joint checking account privileges

Exploitation/Extortion

- Unusual activity in bank account
- Unpaid bills
- Bank account inappropriate to client
- Personal belongings missing
- Using the individual for one's personal gain



Identification of Victim as Abused

- Very rare and difficult
- Genuine concern for abuser
- Fear of retaliation

In order to identify as a victim, one must...

- Recognize the behavior as abusive
- Consider it significant enough to report
- Be able to communicate to someone about the abuse
- Be believed

How to Make a Report

- Notify supervisor and division director of the situation and your concerns
- Work with them to properly contact authorities
- Call 1-800 number to make oral report
- Complete the written report for mandated reporters
- Complete an internal incident report
- Develop a plan with your supervisor for how to proceed in caring for the client regardless of income
- Prepare yourself for your report to seemingly go “unheard”

A Quality Report

- The report should be timely. The sooner the report is made, the fresher the evidence.
- The report should be made by or should identify the source. If you saw it, heard it, were told it, you should report it.
- The report should be detailed. What happened? When? Where? Who?
- Don't exaggerate! Don't try to make it sound worse than it is.
- Include all relevant information. The law requires “any pertinent information.”

Hotline Numbers

Adult/Elderly Protective Services

- 1-800-898-4910

Child Protective Services

- 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437)

What is a mandated reporter?

- Mandated reporters are individuals who have regular contact with vulnerable people and are therefore legally required to ensure that a report is made when abuse or neglect is observed or suspected.
- Their professions or positions make these individuals uniquely qualified to identify those who may be abused or neglected. In general, people who provide care, training, supervision, or protection of these vulnerable people by nature of their profession are mandated reporters.

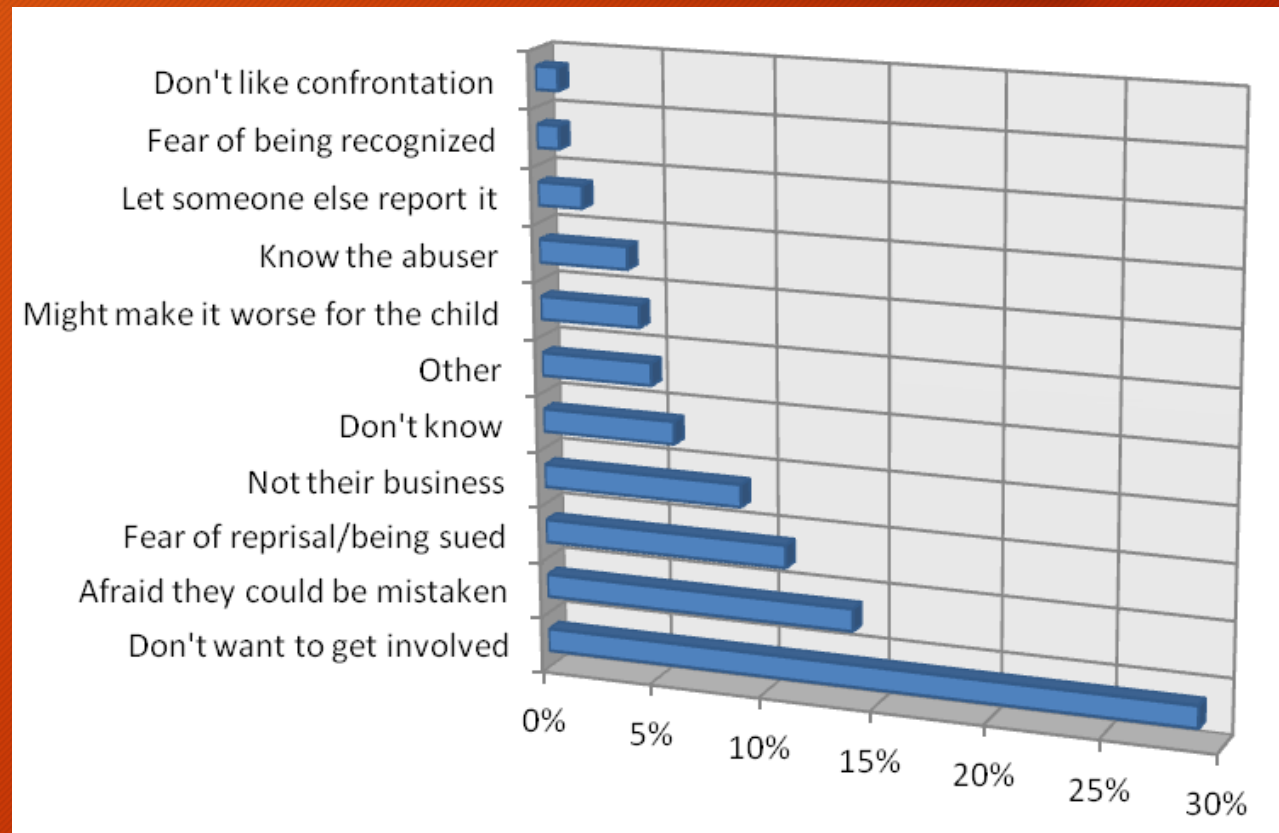
Mandated Reporters

- Teacher or Child Care Providers
- School Coaches
- Organizational and Youth Activity Providers
- Higher Education
- Health Practitioners
- Mental Health/Social Service Providers
- Police Officers or Law Enforcement
- Film/Photographic Print Processors
- Clergy
- Mediators (juvenile court cases)
- Parenting Coordinators (child custody cases)
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

Overcoming hesitancy of reporting

In 2008 a survey was conducted that asked mandated reporters in 4 major cities—New York, Los Angeles, Houston, and New Orleans--about concerns of child abuse and mandated reporting.

If you are hesitant or fearful of making a report, you are certainly not alone!



Immunity from Legal Liability

Any person who in good faith makes a report will have **immunity** from a civil or criminal liability that otherwise might be incurred or imposed.

Privacy Laws Impacting Survivors

Legal Liability

Louisiana law protects adults aged 60 or older from act of omission resulting in physical or emotional abuse and neglect inflicted by caregivers and from self-neglect by an individual. Louisiana law also protects seniors from acts of financial exploitation and extortion.

Legal Liability

Anyone 18 or over who fails to report child sexual abuse that is witnessed may be...

- Fined up to \$10,000
- Imprisoned for up to five years
- Or both

Legal Liability

Anyone 18 or over who fails to report **knowledge** of a child homicide, rape, or sexual abuse may be...

- Fined up to \$500
- Imprisoned up to 1 year
- Or both

Dual Reporting

- Dual reporting is when you must report to DCFS and law enforcement.
- There may be instances in which dual reporting is required, especially when the perpetrator is not in the home.

How quickly does the investigation occur?

Severity

Response Time

Priority 1

Within 24 hours

Priority 2

Within 48 hours

Priority 3

Three (3) calendar days

Priority 4

Five (5) calendar days

Hotline and Portal

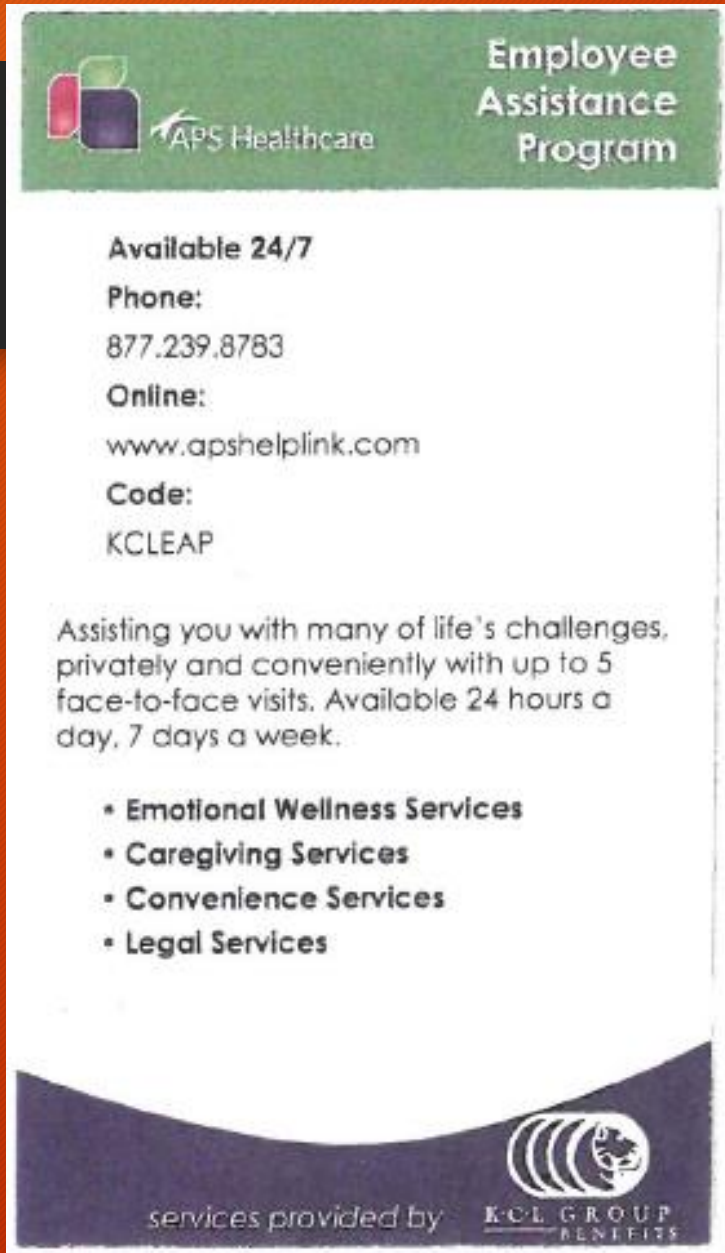
- HOTLINE: 1-855-4LA-KIDS
- Due to a change in the system that accepts reports of abuse and/or neglect, callers to the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline may encounter a longer than usual wait time. If you are a Mandatory Reporter making a non-emergent report, we encourage you to use the [Mandatory Reporter Portal](#). We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. If you have an emergency, please dial 911.

Summary

- Abuse is any harmful treatment of a person.
- Neglect is failure to provide proper care to an individual.
- Louisiana law requires that abuse/neglect be reported by anyone who is aware of the situation.
- Abuse/neglect can be reported to Child Protective Services or Adult/Elderly Protective Services.
- Be prepared to recognize “red flags.”
- Report concerns in a timely, accurate, and detailed manner.

Self-Care

Don't neglect yourself!
Did you know that as part of your benefits package with VOA, full-time employees can have access to up to 5 free therapy sessions?



The card features a green header with the APS Healthcare logo (a stylized 'A' with a heart) and the text 'Employee Assistance Program'. Below the header, contact information is listed: 'Available 24/7', 'Phone: 877.239.8783', 'Online: www.apshelplink.com', and 'Code: KCLEAP'. A paragraph describes the service: 'Assisting you with many of life's challenges, privately and conveniently with up to 5 face-to-face visits. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.' A bulleted list of services includes Emotional Wellness Services, Caregiving Services, Convenience Services, and Legal Services. The bottom of the card has a dark blue background with the KOL Group Benefits logo and the text 'services provided by KOL GROUP BENEFITS'.

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- Legal Services

services provided by **KOL GROUP BENEFITS**

Sources

“Adult Protective Services,” Aging and Adult Services, Louisiana Department of Health, 2019 April 4.

Elder Abuse, City of Shreveport Police Department, 2019 April 4.

“Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect,” Department of Children and Family Services, 2019 April 4.