



AVENUE II COMMUNITY PROGRAM SERVICES
(THUNDER BAY) INCORPORATED

MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATION

TOPIC:	SUBJECT:	Code: AD000
Administration	Abuse	Date of Issue: November 1994
		Revised: November 2024
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PURPOSE:

To clarify what is considered abuse (of a client) supported by Avenue II and what process to follow when becoming aware of possible abuse.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Avenue II has zero tolerance for any kind of abuse to clients by Avenue II staff, other people, volunteers, or students on placement. Staff will adhere to the procedures below regarding abuse or suspected abuse. It is the responsibility of all in the agency to report suspected abuse of someone we support. Failing to document and report suspected abuse is subject to discipline under policy HR022.

Where there is suspected abuse, each party will be advised of his/her rights and available options.

Where allegations of abuse have been reported and where an employee has been shown to have abused a client, automatic termination of employment will result. During an investigation, an employee will be relieved of duty until the investigation is complete.

DEFINITION:

Depending on the nature of the incident, abuse may be an offense under the Criminal Code, Human Rights Code, and/or a violation of Avenue II policy.

Abuse can take many forms. It can take place once or it can happen on an on-going basis. Types of abuse that may occur are defined below. It does not include all types of abuse.

The *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*, defines abuse as "action or behavior that causes or is likely to cause physical injury or psychological harm or both to a person with a developmental disability, or results or is likely to result in significant loss or destruction of their property, and includes neglect".



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Client-to-Client Abuse: Is an action that is intentional and may be criminal in nature that is perpetrated by one client against another client. Unintentional behavior is not abuse.

Sexual Abuse: Is the unwanted or non-consensual sexual contact of any part of a person's body. Sexual abuse is also the denial of a person's right by staff to engage in consenting sexual behaviour.

Physical Abuse: Is an act of assault that causes or could cause physical injury. I.e. hitting, burning and pushing.

Verbal Abuse: Is the use of demeaning language and/or name calling. It includes the threat of assault, negative verbal depictions of disability, skill or attractiveness.

Psychological Abuse: It is generally sustained and repetitive. It includes criticism, insults, threats of harm or destruction, degradation, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or terrorizing a person.

Emotional Abuse: Is the misuse of power, in any way, to cause a person to lose respect for him or herself.

Financial Abuse: Constitutes the misuse, misappropriation or restriction of someone's financial assets for financial gain.

Neglect: Is the failure to provide the necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, care or supervision. It includes ignoring a person or not providing required support and the failure to provide a person with the support and assistance that is required for their health, safety or well-being and includes inaction or a pattern of inaction that jeopardizes the health or safety of the person.

Exploitation: Is taking advantage of a person's disability to trick or manipulate for personal benefit. This includes persuasion to do things that are illegal or not in the individual's best interest.

Harassment: Is the use of any comment, conduct, or gesture that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading, offensive, or discriminatory, and directed toward an individual or group of individuals.

Sexual Harassment:

Is the use of any comment or conduct of a sexual nature, undertaken that causes offence or humiliation.



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PROCEDURE:

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. STAFF:

When you witness abuse of a client:

1. Stop the abuse.
2. Ensure the safety of the client.
3. Do not ask questions of the victim.
4. Do not allow the person to:
 - a. Remove or re-arrange clothing,
 - b. Bathe or wash,
 - c. Urinate or have a bowel movement if it is suspected to be sexual in nature.
5. If needed, seek medical care or first aid for the victim. Ensure the medical professional is aware that the person may have been abused.
6. Call your Manager or On-Call Supervisor who may require you to call the police.
7. Document your findings on an Incident Report.

When a client reports abuse to you, or you suspect abuse:

1. Ensure the safety of the client.
2. If needed, seek medical care and first aid for the victim.
3. Do not ask further questions if the client has reported abuse to you and call your Manager (if it is about the Manager, call his/her supervisor).
4. If you suspect abuse, ask the client what happened and if they indicate possible abuse, stop and call your Manager.
5. Document your findings on an Incident Report.
6. Criminal Acts of abuse will be reported to the police by Management.

If a client arrives for support with unexplained injuries or bruising:

1. Ask the client what happened. If they are unable to tell you, call the home or family and ask for an explanation.
2. Document the conversation.
3. Ensure your Manager is aware.
4. If not immediately satisfied with the explanation, contact your Manager directly to ensure he/she is aware of the situation. The Manager may continue to follow up with the Supervisor or the home or the family.



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B. MANAGER/ON-CALL SUPERVISOR:

1. Ensure client and staff are safe and that any medical issues have been dealt with immediately.
2. If the abuse was witnessed by staff, ensure the police were called and Director of Support Services is called.
3. Ensure staffing requirements are adequate. If the abuser or suspected abuser is also an Avenue II client, separate support staff will be required to assist them through the process.
4. If the alleged abuse has been reported to a staff member or abuse is suspected, call the Director of Support Services who may form an Investigation Team.

C. INVESTIGATION TEAM:

1. If the victim is able to make decisions and gives permission/consent, contact parents, guardians, or advocates to share essential information. People who do not wish to inform parents, guardian, or advocates will be advised of the benefits of these people knowing and encouraged to change their mind. Note the discussion on the Incident Report or log.
2. The Director of Support Services may arrange for an investigation team of two management personnel who will jointly follow the steps below. Note: The person managing the team or individual may not be the best candidate for handling the investigation.
 - a. Meet as soon as possible with the staff reporting the incident.
 - b. Meet with the victim and:
 - i. Explain the process that will be followed.
 - ii. Confirm abuse, ensure allegation, and look for direct evidence.
 - iii. At the first indication that the abuse is criminal in nature, **STOP THE INVESTIGATION** and call Police.
 - iv. If not criminal in nature, continue the investigation.
 - c. Meet with the suspected abuser.
 - d. If a criminal investigation was required, continue to gather information from the victim, staff and suspected abuser **only after** the criminal investigation has been completed.
 - e. Record all findings during each step and ensure proper documentation is completed.
 - f. Arrange for counseling to be available for staff and client if needed.



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3. If the person has been legally determined to not have decision making capacity, then inform the substitute decision maker.
4. Prepare report on findings for review by the Executive Director.
5. Ensure that staff supporting are equipped to deal with situations surrounding the abuse or alleged abuse (i.e., support strategies to deal with victim). Arrange for debriefing or EAP for staff as available.
6. Follow up with person's team regarding outcome, as much as confidentiality will allow.

D. DIRECTOR OF SUPPORT SERVICES:

1. Inform the Executive Director of situation.
2. Participate in the investigation as needed (may be the second management personnel involved in talking to the victim and suspected abuser).
3. Review information from the Investigation Team and make recommendations to the Executive Director on future action required.
4. If required, pass the required documentation on to the Executive Director to prepare Serious Occurrence.
5. Ensure follow up where required.
6. Ensure debriefing is available for the client(s).

E. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

1. Review reports and recommendations.
2. File Serious Occurrence report with Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services within appropriate time frame.
3. Notify the President of the Board of Directors as appropriate.
4. Ensure follow up as per Ministry or Board direction as required.