Understanding Abuse
e-learning and resources
Downloadable worksheets
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• NDS acknowledges the following sources which have been utilised in the development of resources as per the permissions granted:
  • National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline: http://www.disabilityhotline.net.au/
  • Queensland Government: Preventing and responding to abuse, neglect and exploitation
  • Social Care Institute for Excellence: Protecting Adults at Risk: Good Practice Guide

Disclaimer

The information provided in this guide is intended for general use only. It is not a definitive guide to the law and best practice, does not constitute formal advice, and does not take into consideration the particular circumstances and needs of your organisation.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this document at the date of publication. NDS cannot be held responsible and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information in this document for any particular purpose and for actions taken by third parties.

All stories used throughout this tool are fictional and are for educational purposes only.

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Module 1: Understanding Abuse

Things to remember…

- All people have human rights
- Abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence are all violations of people’s rights
- People with disability experience abuse for many reasons
- The impact of abuse on a person is more important than what causes it
- Zero Tolerance means that abuse and neglect are never OK

Abuse
when someone’s human rights are violated by the actions of another person

Exploitation
taking advantage of a person or situation in a way to get benefit for yourself

“We shouldn’t have to earn this. We are the same.” ‘Speaking up about Safety’ participant

Neglect
failure to provide necessary care, aid or guidance to someone who needs it

Violence
threatening or using physical force that results in injury, death, psychological harm

Impact
the physical and emotional effect of an action on a person

Everybody has human rights

Freedom

Respect

Equality

Dignity

Personal reflection
Can you think of a time when your human rights were denied or violated?

How did you feel?

What did you do about it?
If everyone has human rights why do people with disability experience abuse?

- Social connections: segregation and isolation
- Choice and control: how much say people have in decisions
- Attitudes of others: low expectations; ‘othering’; care vs support
- Bad people: predators, opportunists and hate crimes
- Environment: where people live and how they are supported
- Reliance: help for things that are private and personal
- Life experience: people not supported to learn and take risks
- Personal factors: gender, age, disability, communication style

Abuse and neglect can happen:

1. *Deliberately*, someone wants to harm or take advantage of a person
2. *Accidentally*, people did not realise that their actions were abuse or the impact their actions had on people they were supporting
3. *Systemically*, staff not trained or supervised properly or adequately supported to do their job, or not enough funding to meet needs

It doesn’t matter what causes it. The impact is still felt. Take a zero tolerance approach

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Group discussion

Make a list of things you might do that:
- Limits human rights for people you support
- Might make people feel unsafe or be unsafe
- You could be doing better in your job

Make a commitment to call each other out when you see these or other instances of poor practice happening in your workplace.

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Talk about it

Talk to the people you support about the commitment you made.

Find out if there is anything else they would like you to add to the list

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Resources and links


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My commitment

*I make a commitment to work with my team to call each other out on anything that doesn’t support human rights, that makes people feel unsafe or that we could be doing better.*

Signature: _______________________________  Supervisor signature: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Module 2: Power and control

Things to remember

- People with disability are often disempowered
- The effects of disempowerment may increase with added factors such as gender, communication style, cultural background or type of disability
- You have power in your role as a support worker
- You need to be aware of how you use this power and the impact it has on people you support
- WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Personal reflection

When have you experienced powerlessness in your own life?

What impact did it have on you? How did you feel?

“It (staff) shouldn’t do it, but they make threats to withdraw service all the time”
‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

“They (staff) are higher up so they have more rights”
‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

“I want to change (programs) but I don’t want to get the staff into trouble”
‘Understanding Abuse’ workshop participant

It is important to recognise when you might be exerting control over people you support. Be mindful of these factors:

VALUES: Imposing your own values on someone, intentionally or without realising

CHOICE: Denying a person the opportunity to make choices for themselves

EXPECTATIONS: Limiting opportunity by having low expectations of what a person can do

COMMUNICATION: Influencing perceptions about people with disability through the way you talk to or about a person
Activities

Group activity
Make a list of the ways that you might exert control over people in your workplace.

Why does this happen?

What can you do to support people to have greater control over their lives?

“If I go to someone for help I don’t want them to take the problem out of my hands. I want them to support me to solve the problem”
‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

Think of a time when you supported someone to be more empowered and in control. How did you do this?

What support did you have from others?

What were the results for the person?

Personal reflection
The way you feel when you come into work has an impact on the way you provide support. Which of the following affects you most often?

What strategies can you put in place?

Hungry

Angry

Late

Tired

Sensitive

My commitment
Talk with someone you support and commit to one action you will take to support them to have greater control.

Signature: Supervisor signature: Date:
Module 3: The Empowerment Circle

Things to remember

• Abuse and neglect can occur in any area of a person’s life
• Focus on rights (green area), Target abuse (orange and red)
• Recognise and take action on ALL instances of poor practice or abuse

Personal reflection

What is important to you to have a good life in each life area? Write something in each slice of the circle.

Group discussion

Talk about the ways you could use this circle with people you support.
Think of a person you support. What does it look like when life is good for them in each of these areas? What colour best represents each area for them at this time? Fill in the slices. Are there any areas that you don’t know about? Why is this? How will you find out?

Clear processes to address these actions
Recognise and take action on anything in this section
Aim for this and continue to improve

My commitment
Talk to a person you support about your responses to the activity above. Fill in any gaps together, and make changes as needed. Commit to one action that you will take to supporting them to move toward the green in one life area.

Signature:  Supervisor signature:  Date:
Identity: Who I am and what I believe

This is about who you are and the things that are important to being you. It’s about living your life in a way that feels good and true to you. It’s about what you believe in and having the freedom to express that in the way you live life. It’s about your culture and your politics. It’s about your religion. It’s about your sexuality and your gender. It’s about what makes you who you are. Supporting someone in this area means helping them to express themselves and to live life the way they want to. Put simply, it’s about supporting people to be themselves.

Personal reflection

Think of three things that are important to you and who you are.

How do you express these things in your daily life?

How do you feel when you are not able to express them?

Think of a person you support. What people or things are important to them?

What are two things you could do to support them to express their identity?

Group discussion

Choose an aspect of identity (eg: politics, religion, culture, gender). Do you support people well in this area? What can you do better? What would assist you?

“Especially with gay and lesbian clients, workers need to learn that they don’t have a right to judge”

‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

My commitment

Talk to a person you support about what is important to them in expressing their identity. Commit to one action you will take. Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature:  Supervisor signature:  Date:
Identity

Use these checklists to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

When life is good, people…

- are able to explore and express their identity
- are supported to try different things
- are supported in a way that is age and gender appropriate
- are supported through life stages and changes
- have their privacy respected
- know that they can talk to staff about beliefs
- can explore and express their sexuality and gender identity
- can express religious, political and cultural beliefs

- are supported to attend groups or meetings
- are supported in a way that respects their cultural identity and values
- have their customs respected
- have access to education and support to vote

Poor and neglectful practice includes…

- not recognising and supporting individual abilities and skills
- ignoring requests for support for individual needs
- not considering a person’s individual needs relating to race, age, sex, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religious or spiritual belief, marital status when providing support
- unequal treatment of person based on their personal attributes
- public discussion of personal matters
- sharing information with people who don’t need to know

- not providing ways for people to communicate in their preferred language or communication style
- reliance on family to provide interpreting
- deferring to values of family by default instead of listening to the person
- forgetting or ignoring events significant for a person
- not recognising cultural significance or knowing details of a person’s culture
- not supporting cultural celebrations

Abusive or criminal practice includes…

- discrimination based on personal characteristics including disability, age, sexuality, gender identity, marital status, race, religious or political beliefs
- being deliberately excluded based on personal characteristics
- refusing to work with a person based on personal characteristics
- using a person’s religious or spiritual beliefs to control or manipulate them

- preventing a person from following their preferred religious, spiritual or cultural traditions
- forcing a person to engage in a religious, spiritual or cultural practice
- belittling or making fun of a person’s religious, spiritual or cultural tradition, beliefs or practices
- harassment or bullying using identity as leverage
- derogatory remarks or violent actions that are racist, ageist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, bigoted

Signs and signals include…

- expressing an interest in culture/identity/gender
- Being excluded from basic rights
- withdrawal and isolation
- boredom

- agitation or aggression
- anxiety
- frustration
- sadness
Emotional: How I feel

This is about how you feel and your emotions. It’s about being happy, excited, or feeling relaxed and peaceful. It can be about feeling respected, valued or loved. It can also be about being supported when we’re feeling sad, anxious or worried, scared and upset. Sometimes people can make us feel ignored, or insulted or lonely.

This is about understanding your emotions, and that other people can affect how we feel about ourselves and the world. It’s about having the right to our emotions and having our emotions being acknowledged. Supporting someone in this area means noticing and providing the right support when they feel bad, and when they feel good.

Personal reflection

What do you look like when you feel good?
What do you do? Can other people tell?

How do other people know when you feel sad?

How do other people know if you are worried or scared?

“Don’t yell at me. Support workers yell at me when I have an accident”
‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

Group discussion

Think of a time someone you were supporting was upset. How did you know?

What did you do?

What could you have done better?

My commitment

Talk to someone you support and commit to one action you will take to support them to express their emotions. Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature: Supervisor signature: Date:
Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

### Emotional

#### When life is good, people...
- are asked how they feel and encouraged to express their feelings
- are listened to (what they say AND what they show through behaviour or mood)
- have their feelings understood and respected
- are celebrated with when they are happy or excited
- are acknowledged and supported when they are not feeling OK
- are supported in a way that makes sense to them when they feel sad, angry or worried
- are supported by people who are interested in talking about things they want to talk about
- are supported by people who know their interests, skills and contributions
- are supported to communicate their feelings
- are supported consistently to use their preferred communication style
- are supported by people who know if they are introverted or extroverted and what support they need around this
- are supported to access counselling or specialist services
- are supported by staff who consistently follow their positive behaviour support plans

#### Poor and neglectful practice includes...
- talking about someone, not to them
- not considering a person’s emotional needs
- not acknowledging someone’s feelings when they are expressed
- discouraging people from showing emotion
- ignoring people or only talking to them when you want them to do something
- using guilt or pressure to make people do things they don’t want to do
- prioritising staff values and happiness
- making decisions about a person undertaking new opportunities based on staff comfort
- treating adults like children or babies
- making jokes a person doesn’t understand
- taking a joke too far
- not following positive behaviour support plans consistently
- not allowing the person to have contact with friends and family

#### Abusive or criminal practice includes...
- manipulation
- bullying and intimidation
- humiliation and teasing
- threats to hurt person, their possessions, pets or family
- threats to abandon someone
- yelling, screaming and verbal aggression
- calling a person names
- telling a person they are worthless
- frightening a person by sneaking up on them
- not supporting a person to use their preferred communication method

#### Signs and signals include...
- Person is uncharacteristically
  - agitated
  - anxious
  - quiet or withdrawn
  - manipulative
  - aggressive
  - scared
- confused
- crying
- poor sleep
- avoiding specific places or people
- not wanting to talk about specific places or people
- wanting to talk about specific place or people more than usual
- eating more or less than usual
This is about people’s physical health and safety. It is about understanding and respecting personal space. It is about providing the right support and information for each person to make choices about how to maintain their health in a way that works for them. It is about knowing what signs to look out for and take action on to make sure people feel safe and are safe from harm.

Personal reflection

What does being healthy mean to you?

What things do you do to look after yourself and stay healthy?

“They should take care not to make you feel at risk. For example, feel like you are drowning in the bath”
‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

Think about someone that you support. What makes them feel better about their body and their health?

What do you do to support them to do this?

How are people involved in the development of these plans and supports?

Group discussion

What are some of the challenges you face when supporting people to be empowered to be healthy and physically safe?

My commitment

Talk to someone you support and commit to one action you will take to support them to be more in control of their physical health and safety. Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature: ____________________________  Supervisor signature: ____________________________  Date: ____________________________
Physical

Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

When life is good, people...

- are listened to when they say they feel sick (through words, behaviour or appearance)
- are supported to go to the doctor, dentist, specialist when needed
- have regular health check-ups
- make choices about how and when to exercise
- exercise in a way that is enjoyable to them
- make choices about what to eat and when
- have access to information about food, exercise, smoking, drugs and alcohol

- have up-to-date, consistently followed manual handling profiles
- Have up-to-date, consistently followed meal assistance profiles
- have up-to-date, consistently followed medical plans
- are given enough time to prepare (eg: to go out)
- are informed about all physical contact before it occurs
- consent to physical contact before it is provided
- ..................................................................................
- ..................................................................................
- ..................................................................................
- ..................................................................................

Poor and neglectful practice includes...

- not providing accessible information about food, exercise, smoking, drugs and alcohol
- discouraging or not providing opportunities to exercise
- not checking room’s temperature or comfort
- promoting unhealthy lifestyles
- someone having to go out when they are sick
- providing physical support without explaining what you will be doing and gaining consent
- ignoring support plans

Abusive or criminal practice includes...

- physical force that causes pain, discomfort or injury
- hitting, pinching, hair pulling, arm twisting, strangling, burning, punching, pushing, pulling, dragging, slapping, shoving, kicking, choking, biting, torture
- force-feeding
- roughly handling a person during physical support
- threatening or assault with a weapon or object
- deliberately exposing someone to extreme temperatures (eg: removing clothing or blankets, opening windows)
- seclusion
- physical restraints that are not approved
- leaving someone alone when they need assistance
- restricting freedom of movement by denial of access to assistive technology
- denying access to glasses, hearing aids etc
- inappropriate use of medication, including over- or under-medication and withholding medication; ignoring instructions
- ignoring a person’s hygiene or teeth
- leaving person for excessive amounts of time in bed or on a commode or toilet
- ignoring dietary requirements or meal assistance plans
- not providing medication when required
- not calling a doctor; not reporting or taking action on a medical condition, injury or problem
- not being aware of the possible negative effects of medication
- not providing enough of the right kind of food and drink
- not providing personal care as often as needed
- not providing appropriate clothing and shelter
- not assisting a person to change position frequently to prevent stiffness and bedsores

Signs and signals include...

- bruises, cuts or burns
- unexplained marks on the body
- clusters of injuries
- inadequately explained injuries
- changes in continence patterns
- injuries at different stages of healing
- unexplained hair loss
- person hides parts of body
- frequent changes of GP, or reluctance to assist someone to go
- withdrawn around particular worker
- unexplained changes in weight
- difficulty walking or sitting
- frequent headaches
- frequent stomach aches
- medical symptoms that have not been addressed
- food left on face from previous meals
- changes in appetite/sleeping patterns
- being left in wet clothes or bedding
- bedsores or stiffness
- sunburn
- poor teeth or bad breath
- urinary tract infections
- rashes or body odour
- dehydration
This is about supporting people in their relationships with others. This could be family, friends, or partners. It could be someone the person has known for a long time or someone they would like to know better. It is also about their relationship with support staff. It’s about people having control over who is in their life, how often they spend time together. It’s about supporting people to figure out what sorts of relationships they want, and to have the right information and support to stay safe in those relationships.

**Personal reflection**

Who are the people that are most important to you? What role does each person play in your life? (eg someone to talk to, someone to go out dancing with, etc)

“They get so comfortable that they might overstep that worker relationship and it’s important they don’t do that”

‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

Think of a person you support. Who are the most important people in their life? What roles do they fulfil in each other’s lives?

How do you support them to maintain and grow these relationships?

**Group discussion**

What do you need to consider when supporting someone in a sexual relationship?

**My commitment**

Make a commitment to talk to a person you support about an important relationship they have and identify steps you will take to support them to maintain and grow this relationship. Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature: Supervisor signature: Date:
### Relationships

Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

#### When life is good, people...

- are treated as adults
- are supported to see and contact friends and family
- make choices about the sorts of relationships they want
- have the right to experiment and change their minds
- have the right to have casual or serious relationships
- have an understanding of respect for other people in relationships
- have an understanding of consent: what it is, how to give it, how to withhold it, that this is their right
- know what support they can ask for regarding support with relationships and sexuality
- know what to do/who they can talk to if things feel wrong
- have access to sexual health and family planning, education about relationships, advocacy
- are supported to build their confidence
- are supported to understand and explore sexuality and gender identity
- have privacy at home and in their own bedroom
- can access information and adult content if they choose
- have clear professional boundaries with staff
  
#### Poor and neglectful practice includes...

- people being lonely and isolated
- people only have paid supports in their lives
- people not being seen to have the same needs as other adults
- people not being allowed to express opinions
- people are denied privacy in relation to care, feelings and other aspects of life
- not having physical privacy respected at home
- not addressing inappropriate sexual behaviour or nudity
- people not being support to see people of their choosing
- personal values of staff and family influencing support or denial of support
- person’s sexuality is not respected
- disrespect and teasing regarding a person’s partner, friends or family
- not providing support to access information or education

#### Abusive or criminal practice includes...

- sexual acts between a staff member and person they support
- making unwanted sexual comments or jokes
- harassment
- humiliating, criticising or trying to control a person’s sexuality
- inappropriate looking or staring
- indecent exposure
- making someone watch sexual acts or sexual media
- grooming (befriending and manipulating a person for sexual acts)
- predatory or opportunistic behaviour
- touching in a sexual manner without consent (kissing, grabbing, fondling)
- masturbation of either or both people
- forced sexual intercourse
- forcing a person to perform sexual acts
- forcing participation in pornographic filming
- using a weapon to force compliance
- forced prostitution
- intentionally exposing someone to sexually transmitted infections

#### Signs and signals include...

- bruising or bleeding, pain or itching in the genital areas
- infections, discharges, or STIs
- objects in the genital or rectal openings
- pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- bruises to the thighs, breasts, buttocks, stomach or upper arms
- ripped, stained or bloody underwear
- uncharacteristic incontinence
- self-inflicted injuries
- significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language
- changes to appetite
- anxiety or depression
- poor sleep or concentration
- withdrawal from relationships
- fear of staff or other carers offering help with dressing, bathing etc
- going to bed fully dressed
- reluctance to be alone with a person that is known to them
This is about supporting people to feel ownership over their home and their things. It’s about people having a say about where they want to live and who they live with. It’s about respect for privacy and possessions. It’s about people being able to use their own things when they want to, and choose who to share things with.

**Personal reflection**

List your three most important possessions. Why are they important to you?

“Sometimes there’s a whole lot of strangers come into our house. They should tell us when visitors come into our house but they don’t”

‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

**Group discussion**

What are three things you can do better as a team to respect people’s privacy and possessions?

**My commitment**

Make a time to have a conversation with the people you support to talk to them about how you will respect their privacy and possessions, and get feedback about if there is anything else they would like you to do. Commit to making the changes they have asked for. Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature: Supervisor signature: Date:
Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

### When life is good, people…

- choose where they live and who they want to live with
- have access to their own things when they want
- choose where to shop and what to buy
- have their home respected as being their space
- feel good about their home
- have keys to their house
- choose when and where to eat
- have possessions which reflect who they are
- have their privacy respected
- do not touch a person’s things or go into their room without asking
- have their own room and a choice about how to decorate
- are included in decisions about household purchases
- have a choice about who comes into their home

### Poor and neglectful practice includes…

- people not knocking or asking permission to go into a person’s room
- treating things like part of your workplace instead of people’s home and possessions
- opening mail without permission
- physical environments that are not kept clean and maintained
- clothes that don’t fit well, are not clean, are in poor condition or shared
- Someone not having any personal possessions
- other people taking someone’s possessions
- shared intimate toiletries
- restriction of access to possessions (due to other people)
- staff borrowing things without asking
- staff breaking things and not replacing
- staff feeling more at home in a house than the people who live there
- not having a safe place to leave things at day service or work
- ignoring requests to explore other accommodation options

### Abusive or criminal practice includes…

- destroying or disposing of personal property
- using a person’s possessions or property in an illegal way
- theft
- locking people in or out of rooms
- false imprisonment
- borrowing something and not returning it
- denying someone access to their own things
- spending a person’s money on yourself
- helping yourself to someone’s food or household items
- moving in to the person’s house and living rent free

### Signs and signals include…

- standard of living is not consistent with financial situation
- possessions are missing
- people report that things are missing
- staff member has money or possessions which can’t be accounted for
- people eating quickly
- people hiding things
This is about providing support to people to understand, manage and spend their own money. This includes everyday budgeting and spending, involvement in decisions about major purchases, and saving. It is also about working and earning a wage, or getting money from other sources. Providing support in this area will look different for every person.

Personal reflection

Where does your money come from?

Who decides how you spend and save your money?

‘People with disability have the right to work… in an environment that is open, inclusive and accessible.’

Article 27: United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Group discussion

Think about three people you work with and how support with money looks different for each of them. What can you do to support each person to be more in control of their money?

What risks may this raise and how will you manage them?

How can you ensure a consistent approach from all staff?

What happens for the people you support?

Do people have individualised ways of managing their money?

My commitment

Talk to the people you support about one action you will take to support them to have more control of their money. Make it happen! Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature:  
Supervisor signature:  
Date:
Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

**When life is good, people…**
- understand money and what to use it for
- understand that they have choices about how to spend their money
- are in charge of their own money or have chosen someone who is
- feel a sense of ownership over their money
- know the value of money
- understand the things in their life that they need to pay for with their money
- are supported to make choices about how they spend their money
- are included in decisions about major purchases in their lives
- have a bank card with a signature or PIN
- feel their money is safe and secure
- are supported to use communication aids to understand and spend money
- are supported to order and pay for their own meals and purchases
- have short/medium/long-term saving goals
- have jobs where they earn a wage
- have high expectations regarding work and plans for the future
- are supported to try work options/volunteer etc
- …………………………………………………………….
- …………………………………………………………….
- ……………………………………………………………..
- ……………………………………………………………..

**Poor and neglectful practice includes…**
- people have to ask permission to use own money
- people never being told that it is their money and what that means
- not providing appropriate support to person to manage their money
- asking a person to pay for things for yourself
- people not making choices about how to spend their money
- borrowing money from people you support, even if you pay it back
- manipulating people to pay, using guilt, false ignorance or lies
- people are never told that work is an option
- there are low expectations and a lack of support to pursue work options

**Abusive or criminal practice includes…**
- stealing money
- withholding someone’s money from them
- using money without permission
- keeping the change from purchases
- keeping information from someone about their rights about money
- misusing power of attorney or legal guardianship
- fraud including signing for someone without permission
- living in a person’s home without paying
- selling someone’s possessions
- using a person’s money (such as housekeeping expenses) for self
- signing people up to contracts they don’t understand

**Signs and signals include…**
- not having enough money to meet normal expenses
- financial situation not matched by living conditions
- unexplained lack of money
- unaccounted for changes to pattern of spending
- unexplained withdrawals from account
- unexplained mail to their house
- failure of staff to provide receipts
- receipts indicating unusual purchases
- lack of clear financial accountability
- person managing finances is uncooperative
- person managing finances does not have legal authority
- no inventory of major purchases
This is about supporting people to be part of a community in a way that is meaningful to them. It’s about fostering connections with other people with shared interests. It’s about providing support for people to connect with new people and old friends where they feel like they belong. It’s about being a citizen. It’s about making a contribution and being valued. Shared interests may include work, sport, music, politics, work, spirituality.

Personal reflection

What does community mean to you?

Do you belong to any groups or clubs?

How did you come to be part of them?

“Knowing people in the community offers safety. Regular contact with people makes people with disability less invisible”

‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

“To belong, you have to be missed… people need to want you to be there. When you’re not there, they should go looking for you”

John Swinton, University of Aberdeen

Think of a person you support and an interest they have. How could you support them to connect with others with a shared interest?

Think of another person you support. What unpaid people do they have in their life?

Identify a connection they have made with someone else. How could you support this connection to develop?

My commitment

Talk to the person and take action to support them to pursue one of these ideas. Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature:  
Supervisor signature:  
Date:

Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

**When life is good, people...**

- do things that are interesting and important to them
- feel like they belong
- are known and cared about, and missed when they are not there
- are supported by staff that are interested in them and make them feel valued
- have lots of different relationships that they choose
- do a variety of things in the community that are meaningful to them
- go to everyday places
- are supported to order and pay for their own meals and purchases
- are supported to identify the communities they would like to be part of
- have support to communicate with others in the way that suits them best
- are supported by people that know their likes and dislikes, preferences, things they are good at
- are supported to travel as independently as possible

- have personalised communication aids to facilitate conversation and connection with others
- are continually supported to grow their networks
- are supported to be included in things that interest them
- are supported to follow up on natural connections that they make with others
- are supported to plan in the way that makes most sense to them
- are encouraged and supported to communicate directly with others in the community. Staff support people where required but get out of the way and allow natural connections to occur
- feel valued and have my contributions acknowledged
- are encouraged and supported to work
- speaking for someone instead of stepping back so they can communicate for themselves
- only doing things with housemates or within service environments
- frequent long trips in a car or van
- staff paying for things instead of providing support for the person to pay for themselves
- being apologetic, patronising, controlling or excluding people from conversation when out in the community

**Poor and neglectful practice includes...**

- leaving social events early to suit staff needs
- lack of appropriate communication aids
- making decisions based on ease, eg: getting hairdresser to come to house
- not providing support to travel independently
- people only having paid supports in their lives
- having low expectations of what person can do
- systems being prioritised over personal timeframes
- discouraging visitors to person’s home
- speaking for someone instead of stepping back so they can communicate for themselves
- only doing things with housemates or within service environments
- frequent long trips in a car or van
- staff paying for things instead of providing support for the person to pay for themselves
- being apologetic, patronising, controlling or excluding people from conversation when out in the community

**Abusive or criminal practice includes...**

- people being denied access to communication (eg telephone, internet, mobile phones)
- people being excluded from events due to disability/lack of access
- people being isolated or locked in
- people being denied contact with others
- discrimination on the basis of disability
- denial of access to services

**Signs and signals include...**

- only having contact with people from home and/or day service
- no variation in routine
- boredom or loneliness
- loss of skills, including communication skills
- frustration or agitation
- aggression toward others
- demonstrated desire to leave (trying to “escape”)
Education: Things I have learned and things I want to learn

This is about providing support and information for people to learn new skills or knowledge. It might be about doing a course or going to TAFE or university. It might be about learning a new skill to be more independent. It might be about learning for fun and to meet people. It’s about recognizing the importance of learning new things all through life.

Personal reflection

What is something you have learned over the past year?

What is something you would like to learn?

What steps will you take to make this happen?

“I think the services are frightened if we have our rights we might talk up more”

‘Speaking Up About Safety’ participant

Group discussion

Do you feel like you have the skills to support people to develop and learn?

What further training would be useful?

Think of a person you support and three areas they have expressed an interest in.

What support can you provide so that they can pursue these things?

My commitment

Speak to the person about your ideas and find out which one they are most interested in. Who needs to be involved? What support or resources do you need? Make it happen! Ask your supervisor to sign this worksheet after you have talked through the checklist.

Signature: ___________________________   Supervisor signature:_________________________   Date: ___________________________
**Education**

Use the checklist to help identify areas of good, poor and neglectful practice and abusive or criminal practice. Add examples related to your workplace and people you support. This worksheet should be signed by your supervisor and anything identified in the orange or red columns appropriately addressed.

**When life is good, people…**

- know their rights
- understand that they have choices about what to learn and how to learn it
- learn about things that are interesting and important to them
- are supported to explore interests and try new things
- are supported to think and talk about the things they would like to learn (not just when they are planning)
- are supported to develop skills and take control of their choices
- are encouraged to be as independent as possible with everyday tasks
- have access to information in a format that works for them
- know that it’s never too late to learn
- have education and skill development that is linked to goals and dreams
- are supported to identify steps to learning (through person-centred planning and ongoing support)
- look out together for information about learning opportunities and following up on leads
- have staff who are mindful of their own values and expectations
- are provided with the right level and type of support to facilitate effective learning
- have staff who have time and patience to support learning
- have a clearly documented approach developed with the team which is consistently followed by all staff and regularly reviewed

**Poor and neglectful practice includes…**

- having low expectation/no expectations about growth and learning
- doing things for people rather than supporting them to do it
- “It’s quicker/better/neater/cleaner if I do it”
- “Why bother, they’ll never be able to do it on their own”
- not advising people of their education options
- not exposing people to new opportunities
- discouraging learning or access to information
- people having the same life and the same goals in plans every year
- activities that don’t match plans or preferences
- being put into programs for convenience rather than because people are genuinely interested
- no clear or consistently implemented plan to support learning

**Abusive or criminal practice includes…**

- denying a person participation in educational programs
- denial of access to internet, newspapers, phones, magazines etc
- forcing people to do things they don’t want to do
- ‘keeping people in services
- not supporting people to move on to more appropriate services or employment
- deliberate misinformation

**Signs and signals include…**

- boredom
- lethargy
- agitation
- aggression toward others
- lack of skill development
- loss of skills including communication skills
- plans are developed but not followed
- no change in circumstances over time
Are you:

**H**ungry?

**A**ngry?

**L**ate?

**T**ired?

**S**ensitive?

Put some strategies in place to make sure this does not affect the way you support people today