

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT – CLIENT ABUSE

HR C2

INTENT

To provide employees with definitions, guidelines and procedures to recognize and report client abuse in compliance with Canadian and Provincial laws.

POLICY

Clients and residents of the organization have a right to expect an environment that is safe and free from any abuse or neglect. In order to maintain an atmosphere in which clients, residents and staff may live and work without fear of abuse, every possible effort will be made to ensure that all reported incidents are thoroughly investigated and dealt with expeditiously. Any staff member, student or volunteer who, upon investigation, has inflicted abuse or neglected a client or resident will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Physical

Assault (e.g. slapping, hitting, kicking)

Rough handling without regard for the client's comfort (e.g. unnecessary force applied during lifts/transfers)

Psychosocial

Verbal or emotional abuse (e.g. yelling, humiliation, making demeaning or derogatory remarks, swearing, name-calling)

Financial

Theft of money or personal property

Solicitation for compensation

Exploitation

Sexual Abuse/Assault

Any form of sexual conduct

Violation of Rights

Denial of basic civil/human rights

PROCEDURE - ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF AN ADULT CLIENT

1. Any staff member or volunteer who has knowledge of or has witnessed an incident of suspected abuse has the responsibility to report such an incident immediately to their supervisor. Failure on the part of any witness to report such an incident will result in severe disciplinary action and may result in termination of employment.

2. The person receiving the allegation of abuse against a Society employee must immediately notify the Program Director who must immediately notify the Executive Director of this allegation. The Executive Director shall notify the Board President.
3. The Program Director must immediately notify the staff member named in the allegation and set up a pre-investigation meeting with the Executive Director, Program Director, and staff member along with a support person (from staff) of their choice. The staff member will be immediately transferred to non-client duties pending investigation of allegations. Depending on the situation, a full investigation may be necessary.
4. Evidence must be protected in the event of criminal charges. Therefore a decision whether to call the police must be made prior to the beginning of the investigation in order to prevent the tainting of evidence which may prevent appropriate criminal charges being laid. The staff member must be informed of their right to legal counsel if needed.
5. If the police are not to be involved, the Executive Director and Program Director will conduct an investigation to determine the facts. If the allegations involve a Program Director, the Executive Director may request another Program Director to assist with this investigation. During the investigation the staff member will be suspended with pay, and a time line given for completion of the investigation. The investigation will begin immediately and be completed expeditiously. The staff member involved shall be offered counselling and support as needed.
6. The Program Director must offer support and counselling as needed to the client.
7. The outcome of the investigation shall determine any additional steps that must be taken such as disciplinary proceedings.
8. Any volunteer or student who has abused a client/resident or whose behaviour has put a client/resident at risk shall be relieved of his/her volunteer responsibilities immediately.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF A CHILD CLIENT

1. The person receiving the allegation of abuse against a Society employee must immediately notify the Program Director who must immediately notify the Executive Director of this allegation.
2. The Program Director must immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child involved in the allegation.
3. The Program Director must immediately notify the Ministry for Children and Family Development who may involve the RCMP depending on the nature of the allegation.
4. The Executive Director shall notify the Board President. If the allegations involve a Program

Director the Executive Director may request another Program Director to assist with the investigation.

5. The Program Director must immediately notify the staff member named in the allegation and suspend them with pay pending the investigation. The staff member must be informed of his or her right to legal counsel if needed and to have a support person (from staff) of their choice present at any meetings. The staff member involved shall be offered counselling and support as needed.
6. The Program Director and the Executive Director shall conduct an investigation related to Society policies and procedures. This will begin immediately and be completed expeditiously.
7. The Executive Director shall ensure support and counselling is offered as needed to the parent and the child.
8. The outcome of the investigation shall determine any additional steps that must be taken such as disciplinary proceedings.

DUTY TO REPORT

Everyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited, or needs protection due to the specific circumstances outlined in the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, is legally responsible under that Act to report the matter to a child protection social worker. In British Columbia, a child is anyone under the age of 19 years of age.

The duty to report applies to everyone, including service providers, family members and the general public – in short, anyone who is aware of circumstances that should be reported.

Reference Also refer to AP 9 Legal Duty to Report Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

EFFECTIVE: December 1, 2015	APPROVED BY: Executive Director	
REPLACES: April 1, 2014	MONITORING: Executive Director	FREQUENCY: Annually