

Abuse Information Package

(For guardians and families)

Abuse Prevention at L'Arche

Abuse can be defined as:

- A systematic pattern of behaviors used to gain and/or maintain power and control over another.
- Attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing harm to another person.
- Systematically behaving toward another without considering their needs or rights.

Some things L'Arche does to try to prevent abuse:

- Informal oversight/monitoring within our organization with a specified reporting structure
- Presence in Community – we strive to be visible to others and to encourage people with disabilities to develop and maintain strong relationships with people outside the L'Arche community
- HR screening – all personnel undergo police record checks, vulnerable sector checks and reference checks
- Goals – people who are happy, fulfilled and empowered, are less likely to be vulnerable, engender negative attitudes, behave in a compliant manner, or become isolated. Power imbalances are less likely to form.
- Behaviour Support Plans – positive procedures are provided to deal with difficult behaviour in an effort to encourage the use of consistent, least restrictive approaches
- “Assistant” vs. “Caregiver” Supports are aware that they are there to provide support based on individual needs and to take direction from the people with disabilities on what support is required; this reduces potential power imbalances

- Offer choices – another reminder about the above.
- Education for PWD – The people we support are provided with information about abuse and their rights and responsibilities in a manner that is understandable to them. Knowing their rights helps them stand up for themselves more readily.
- Learning about and using positive approaches – assistants are provided with extensive training on positive approaches to help them know how to readily respond in a positive manner to day-to-day situations

Things you can do when you have concerns about potential abuse

- Address concerns with House Leader as soon as they arise.
- If this does not result in a satisfactory resolution, then report your concern directly to the Community Leader/Executive Director (Garth Reesor)
- When there is suspicion of Moderate to Extreme abuse report it to:
 - Community Leader/Executive Director or designate 403-571-0155 x 260
 - The PDD Service Representative for your family member
 - Protection for Person's in Care reporting line 1-888-357-9339
 - Calgary Police Service 911 or 403-266-1234
- Protection for Persons in Care is an Alberta government agency that promotes prevention and responds to reports of abuse of adult Albertans receiving care or support services from publicly funded service providers. More information about the Protection for Person's In Care Act that governs the agency can be obtained through the Alberta Health website at:

www.health.alberta.ca/services/protection-persons-care

Education for People with Developmental Disabilities at L'Arche

The following pages contain plain language material that is used by house and program teams to begin regular discussions about abuse as well as about rights and responsibilities. The discussion about individual rights is meant to empower individuals as a means of making them less vulnerable to abuse.

Formation on Rights and Abuse

Plain Language Version

(Applies to everyone in the L'Arche Community)

What is Abuse?

Abuse happens when...

Someone means to bring you harm—to hurt you. There are many different ways that you can be hurt. We will talk about some of them.

Someone is not thinking about your rights when making decisions about how to be with you and they do things that go against your rights.

Abuse could happen when...

A person wants you to do what they want or does not think about what you need, only what they need.

Most people you know really care about you and want you to be safe and happy. Still, keep in mind that abuse *can* come from anyone that you see or do things with including...

- Friends
- Family (Parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.)
- People you know or see in the community (e.g., at work, programs, church, hockey games, public washrooms, etc.)
- Someone you live with (Assistant, House Leader, another housemate)
- Program Assistants
- Handi-bus Driver / Taxi Driver
- Your Guardian or Trustee
- Anyone!

Types of Abuse

Physical

- Someone does something on purpose that hurts your body.

Discuss examples

(i.e., punching hitting, pulling hair, pinching, shoving, biting, scratching, hitting or stabbing with a weapon, burning, etc.)

Emotional

- Someone continues to do something that hurt your feelings once you tell them that it is hurting you.
- Someone means to make you feel bad and they do or say something that makes you feel bad about yourself or embarrasses you in front of others.
- Someone says something that is not true to make you look bad or feel bad.

Discuss Examples

(i.e., calling you names, making you feel unwelcome, behaving as though there is something wrong with you, telling you that you would not be able to do something you know you can do, teasing you after you have said you do not want to be teased, etc.)

Sexual

- Someone touches or looks at your private parts in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Someone touches or looks at your private parts when you did not ask them to and you do not want them to.

[Sometimes doctors have to touch you in your private parts, or have to look at them if it has something to do with your health. That is not abuse.]

- Someone shows you their private parts without you wanting to see them or gets you to touch their private parts when you do not want to.
- Someone kisses you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable without asking you first.

Discuss Examples

(i.e., someone touches your breasts, someone slaps or taps your behind, someone hugs you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable when you did not want them to hug you, someone shows you pictures or movies of people with few or no clothes on that you do not want to see, someone leaves the bathroom door open when taking a shower because they want you to look in and see them, someone talks to you about doing things to you that you feel uncomfortable with, etc.)

Exploitation

- Someone takes advantage of something you have or of something you are good at without giving you credit for it.
- Someone finds a way to make money from you without giving you your share.

Discuss Examples

(i.e., selling your artwork for more money than it cost to buy the things you made it with and not giving you any of the money they got, asking you to buy something for them that costs a lot of money, making you do something you don't want to do so they can make money off it, using your disability to save money on something they wanted to do, etc.)

Neglect

- You are not being given the things you need to live, such as food and water, sleep, a warm, clean place to live, clothes that are good for the weather.

Discuss Examples

(i.e., Telling you that you do not need to have dinner every night, not taking you shopping for clothing when you do not have a warm jacket to wear, does not take you to see a doctor when you really need to see one, etc.)

What Can You Do About Abuse?

Tell the Person to Stop

Tell Someone You Trust About it

- Assistant
- House Leader
- Community Leader
- A friend
- Your Prayer Companion
- Your guardian or a family member

Keep Telling People

- If the first person you tell does not help you, then go to another person.
- Keep telling people until someone says they will help and does.

What Will Happen?

- You will not be in trouble.
- The person you tell will listen.
- They may ask you some questions to find out more about it.
- Someone will help you feel better and give you what you need to feel safe again.
- Someone will tell the community leader about it.

- The community leader will tell your guardian if you have one.
- Your complaint will be checked out.
- A plan will be made to help you and others like you stay safe.

Know Your Rights!

We all have the same rights as everyone else. With each right comes a responsibility

You have the right...

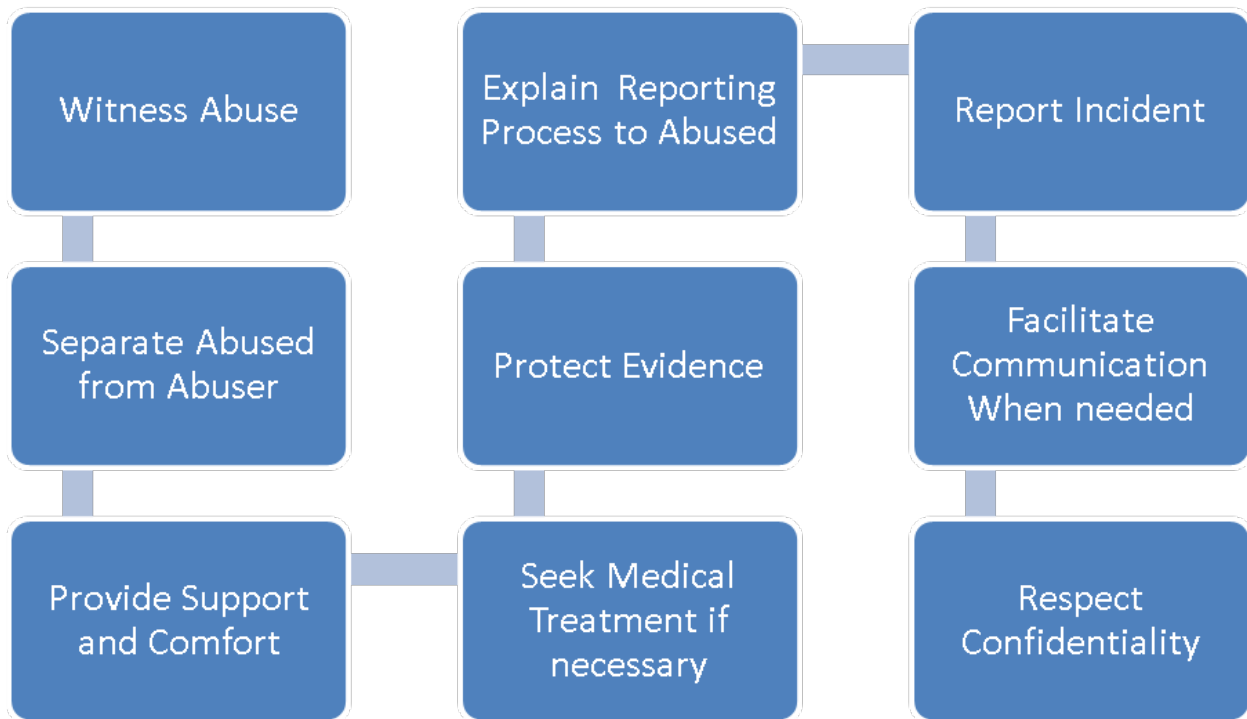
- To be treated in a fair way, like everyone else; to be respected.
 - You need to treat others in a fair way and with respect.
- To feel free to do what you want to, as long as it does not take away the rights of other people.
 - Make sure you are not taking away other people's rights.
- To feel safe where you live; not to be hurt by anyone.
 - You need to not hurt others so they can also feel safe.
- Not to be accused of something you did not do without being given the chance to show it is not true.
 - Give people the chance to explain themselves before you accuse them.
- To say "no" to things you do not like or do not want to be a part of.
 - Understand that others can also say "no" to you
- To be told about the support you will be given in a way that you can understand.
 - Ask questions if you do not understand until you do understand.
- To say "no" to kinds of support you do not agree with or do not want.
 - Respect the right of others' to say "no" to things they do not want.
- To have a say in your life regarding where you live, what you spend your money on, how you spend your time, what you choose to eat and drink, when you go to bed or use the bathroom, etc.
 - Consider what your supporters tell you, as it might be better for you.
- To have things that are only yours and not to have those things taken away from you.
 - Do not take other people's things from them.
- To get the help you need from people who treat you fairly and say good things about you, as well as explain to you about things they do not agree with.
 - Treat those who are helping you well. Tell them what you like about them not only what you do not like.
- To tell people what you think and feel and have people listen to you.
 - Listen to others when they want to tell you how they think and feel.
- To do as many things for yourself as you choose to do that you can do.
 - Allow other people the chance to do things for themselves too.
- To access the services in the community that are available to others.
- To privacy—you do not need to tell everything about yourself to anyone who wants to know. You can choose who to tell certain things to.
 - Do not talk to others about other people's things, allow them their privacy. Do not gossip.

- To become involved in the community (both L'Arche and beyond) and to have a say in how things are run.
 - Realize that all community members also have a say.
- To believe in whatever you like, to have a religion, and to change it if you wish.
 - Understand that others also have the right to believe in what they want to.
- Not to be treated differently for who you are or for what you are or are not able to do.
 - Do not treat others differently who may not be able to do all the things you can do.
- To make friends and have all kinds of relationships with others.
 - Do not do things that may stop other people from having their own friends.
- To get married and have a family.
 - Understand that others also have the right to a family and be understanding that they may need to share their time between you and their family.
- To work and get the same wages, benefits, and time off as everyone else who does the work you do.
 - Understand that others also have the right to work and get fair wages and benefits.

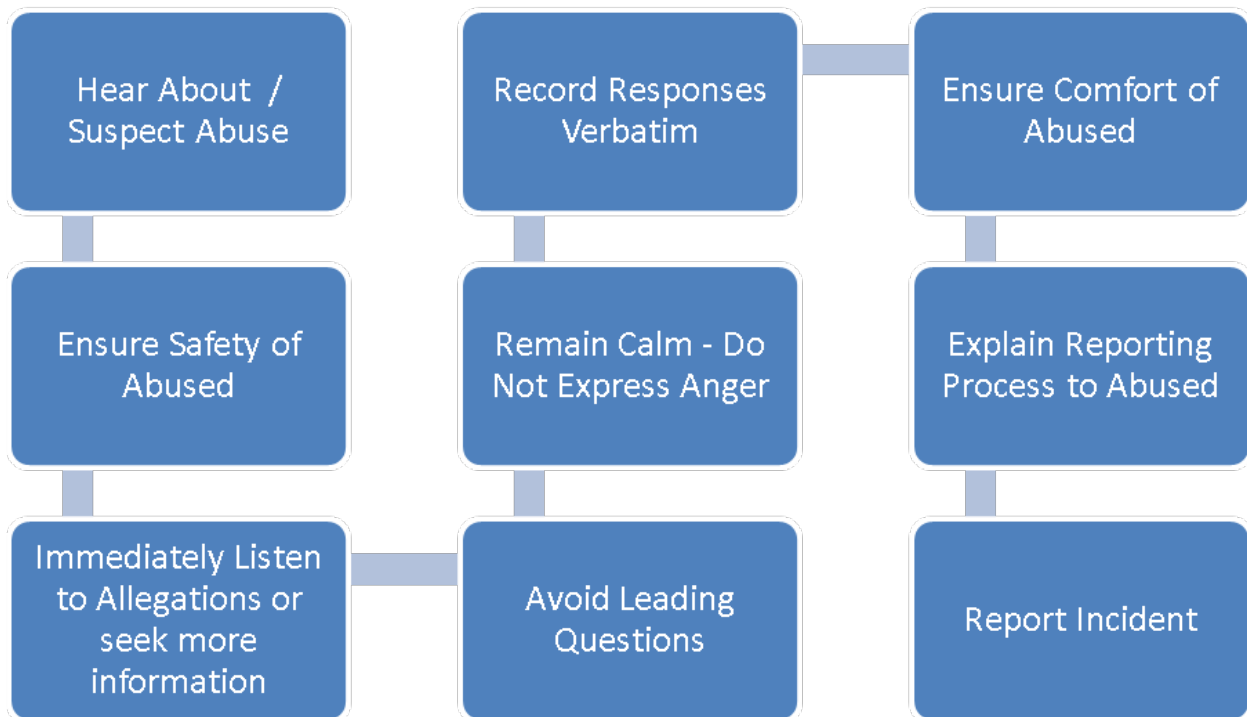
More Responsibilities:

- Behave in a way that maintains order in your house and in your community.
- Do your share of the things that need to be done around your house and in your community to the extent that you are able.

Responding to Abuse- when you see it



Responding to Abuse- when you hear about/suspect it



Abuse Reporting

