

Freedom From Abuse: Addressing Risk and Response in Respite

Presenter:

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The Freedom Trail to Respite
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Learning Objectives:

- * Better understand **why vulnerable population are at increased risk of abuse and the issues pertaining to respite situations.**
- * Learn **how to reduce the risk of abuse in respite care** by addressing key areas:
 - Core Values and the Culture of Care**
 - Policy and Procedures**
 - Reducing Risk through Human Resources**
 - Education and Empowerment**
 - Critical Community Partnerships**

Learning Objectives:

- * **Learn to recognize and respond to suspicions of abuse and the specific issues** related to vulnerable people and people with varying abilities.

Why be Concerned?


When more serious forms of abuse or multiple incidents of abuse are factored in, the risk for persons with disabilities is **probably twice and high and may be five or more times higher** that that of the general population. (Sobsey 1994)

Why are vulnerable population at increased risk of abuse?

Thoughts?

Contributors to Sustaining Abusive Environments

- * Systemic issues of power and control contribute to the risk of abuse
- * Personal factors such as financial poverty, physical, and emotional dependence on others increase the risk of abuse
- * Persons with disabilities may not be considered reliable witnesses
- * Myth of higher incidence of false reporting

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- * Nature of the persons disability may contribute to their increased risk - i.e., autism, lack of access to augmentative communication
 - * Lack of privacy
 - * Poor communication
 - * Lack of choice regarding where or with whom they can live and work

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- * Poor self worth
 - * Negative life experiences
 - * Segregation, institutionalization, group living all contribute to increased risk

(Violence Against Women With Disabilities, Guidelines for Service Providers, Kingston Independent Resource Centre, March 1998)

Perceptions that Increase Risk

- * Impaired cognitive function
- * Hearing – Vision - Mobility Impairments
- * Less able to understand dangerous situations
- * Communication impairment
- * Less able to communicate what happened
- * Less credibility as a witness or able to identify perpetrators

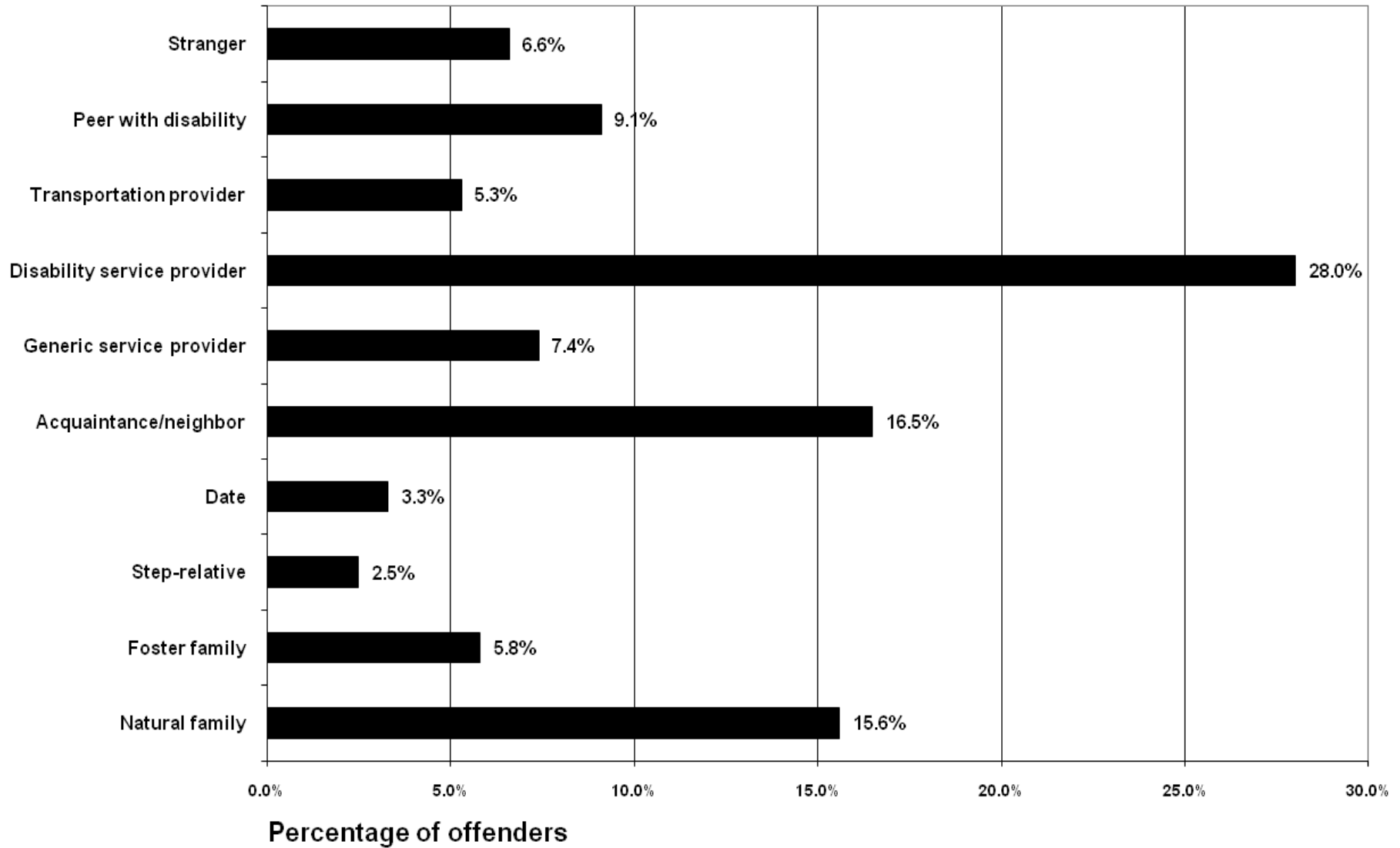
Who are the Offenders?

Who Abuses?

Natural family, foster family, step relative, date, acquaintance, neighbour, generic service provider, disability service provider, transportation provider, peer with disability, stranger.

(Sobsey, Violence and Abuse in the Lives of people with Disabilities, 1994)

Offender categories



Respite as abuse prevention

Natural Families as Offenders – 15.6% (Sobsey)

- * The role of respite in abuse prevention seldom mentioned in research.
- * Seldom mentioned as a reason for provision
- * Yet criterion in prioritizing and allocating resources

Potential for Abuse in Respite?

Disability Service Provider

28%

(Sobsey)



Thoughts?

What should we do?

Addressing Abuse

What do self advocates say?

Freedom From Harm Working Committee
A self-advocates group

“It’s a Matter of Equal Rights!”

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

*Parties to the convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the **full enjoyment of human rights** by persons with disabilities and ensure that they **enjoy full equality under the law**.*

Monitored by the [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

Google to see if your country signed on and ratified?

The Power of Equal Rights

To name a few...

- * The right be a full member of the community
- * The right to make decisions for oneself.
- * The right to expect access to all types of services and programs in the community.
- * The right to access tools for communication
- * The right to say 'no'

People can be confident that they will be safe from harm when they know that:

- * They are part of the community.
- * The community cares about their well being.
- * There are laws that protect them from abuse and harm.
- * They know about laws that protect them.
- * That the laws are enforced in the same way as they would for other citizens
- * That they know that if they suffer harm or abuse, that they can tell someone about it and significant action will be taken.

The Role of Respite

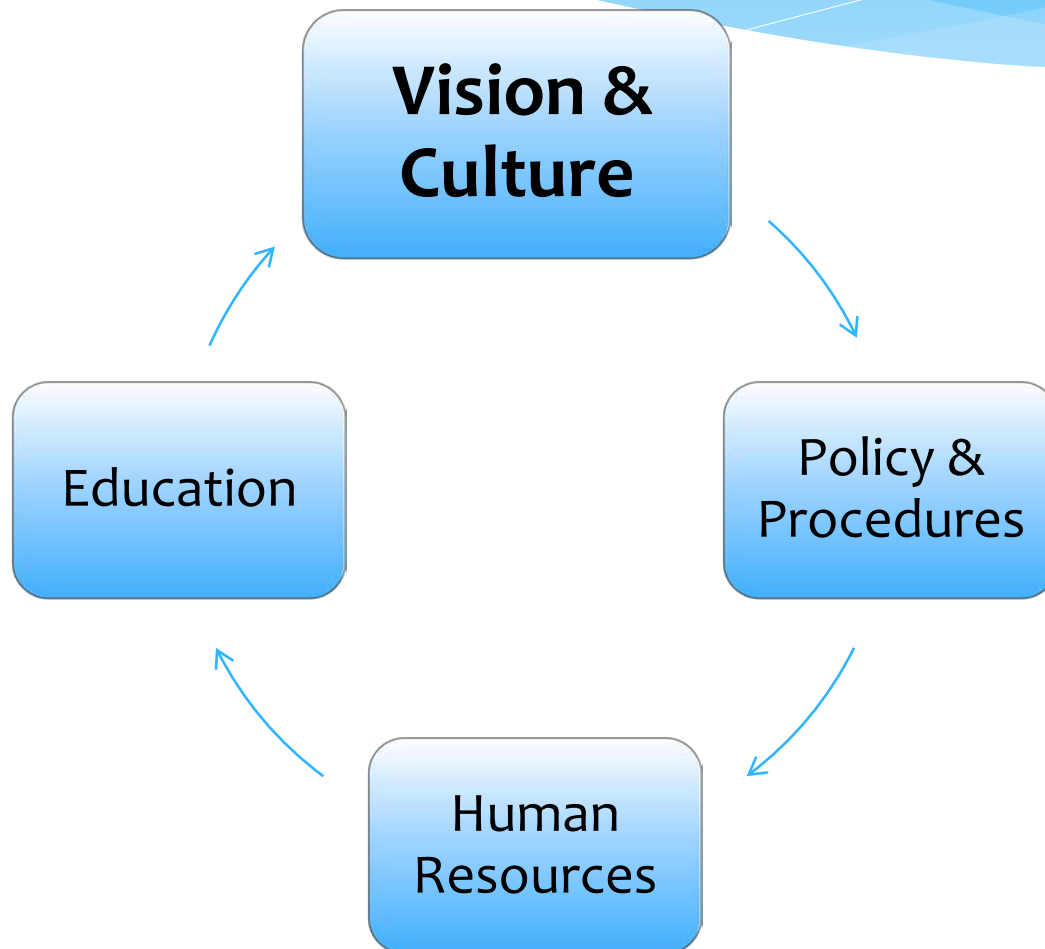
How can respite help reduce the risk?

How can respite help create an effective system to respond when abuse occurs?

How can respite impact the broader community.

How can Respite Address the Risk?

- Address Vulnerability -

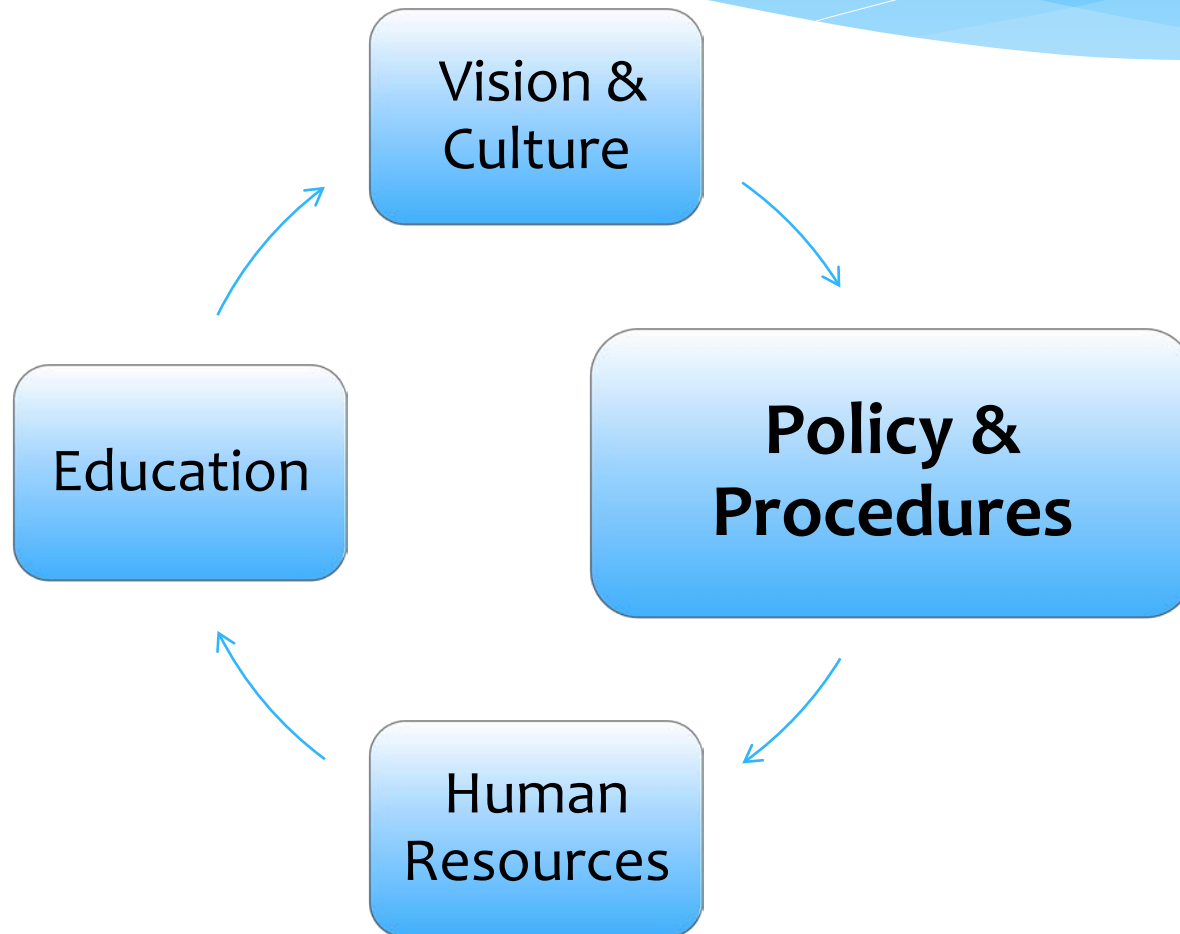


Vision and Culture

- ✓ **Create a Vision based on values that support equal rights**
- ✓ **Develop the culture in your workplace and community that embodies the Vision and Values.**

How can Respite Address the Risk?

- Address Vulnerability -



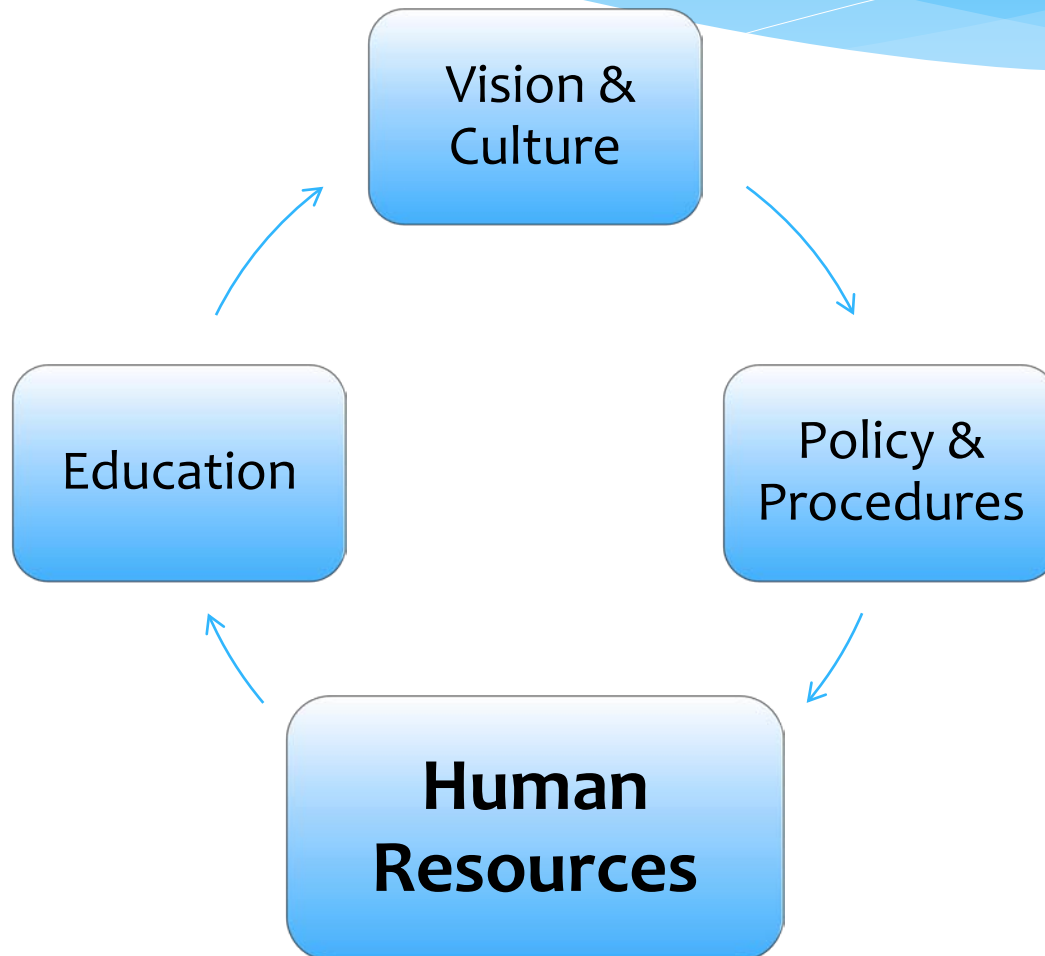
Policy and Procedures

Develop policy and procedures based on core values

- * Clear language. Understood by all.
- * Does this increase/reduce a persons vulnerability?
- * How do the policies fit with laws/law enforcement?
- * Does this give service providers the tools to act if abuse is suspected?
- * Does it balance safety and self– determination?

How can Respite Address the Risk?

- Address Vulnerability -



Human Resources

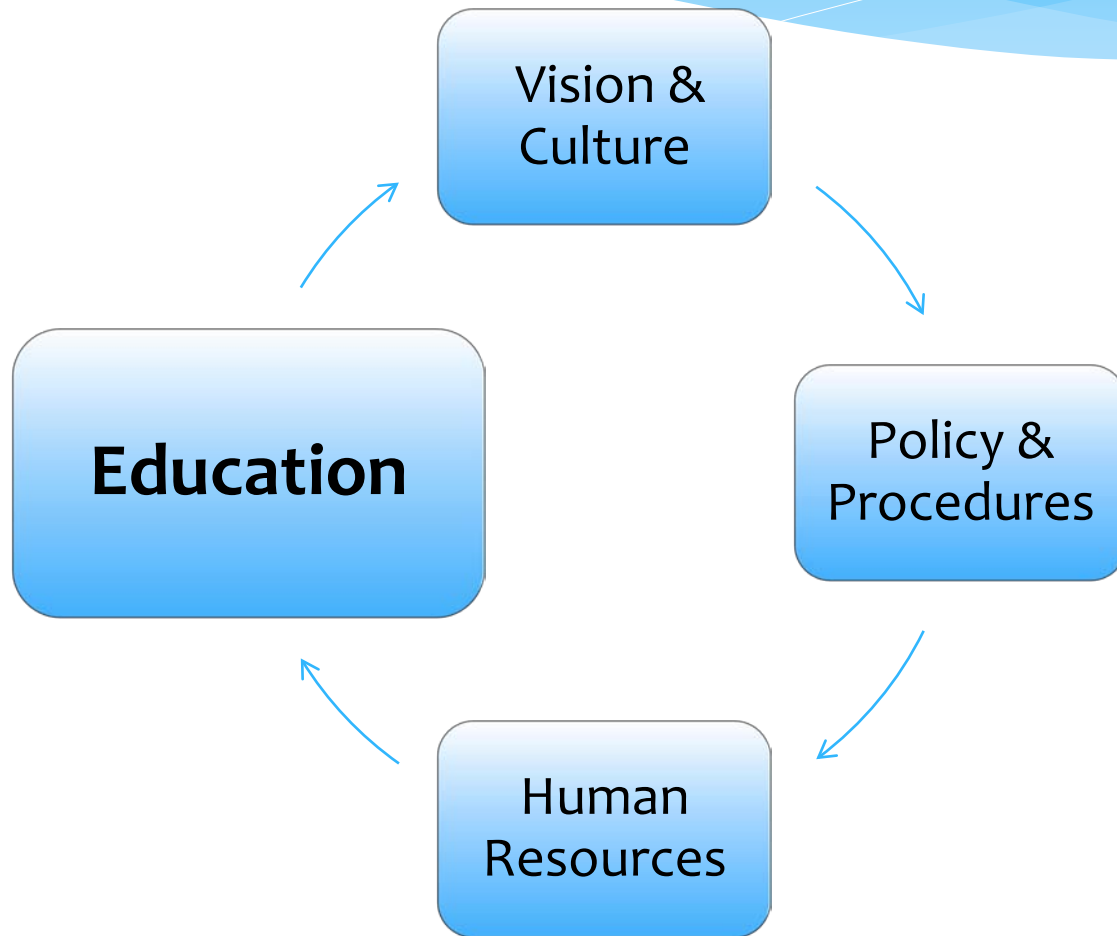
Shaping the Culture

People are Key

- * Create the culture through hiring practices.
- * Create common understanding through training.
- * Proper Supervision
- * Whistle blower protection
- * Disciplinary action/Dismissal
- * Clear policy on reporting suspected abuse to police
- * Support community involvement to reduce isolation of individuals and service providers

How can Respite Address the Risk?

- Address Vulnerability -



Educate and Empower Everyone

- ✓ **Individual**
- ✓ **Family**
- ✓ **Respite provider**
- ✓ **Agency**
- ✓ **Integrated services**
- ✓ **Broader Community**

Create a common language and understanding.

Education and Training

- * **Abuse: Recognition, Response, Reporting**
- * **Develop training for all to help reduce vulnerability.**



The Respite Learning Portal

Safeguards has developed a bilingual Respite Learning Portal used by many agencies as a pre-screening and orientation tool as well as training

There are 2 online courses, webinars resources and Parent Guide.

Next Online Course:

**Abuse: Recognition,
Response,
Reporting**



Training to Address Vulnerabilities

- * *Understanding rights*
- * *Decision-making*
- * *Social skills*
- * *Developing friendships*
- * *Assessing risky situations*
- * *Boundaries*
- * *Communication*
- * *Sex and relationships*
- * *Understanding and reporting abuse*

Addressing Vulnerabilities

The Culture and Training

V: Limited opportunities for social engagement

Action-> Create real social opportunities in the community

V: Socialization that promotes and rewards compliance

Action -> Encourage, teach independent decision-making

V: Limited social skills

Action-> Teach, practice social skills in the community.

V: Limited access to relationships

Action -> Provide opportunities to build relationships with others in the community. Allow the time and space for friendships to develop.

V: Poor social discrimination, limited understanding of dangerous and/or risky situations

Action -> Respite provides teachable moments.

-> Respite providers can point out possible risky situations and model behaviour.

My Body - My Boundaries

V: Limited knowledge of body and sexuality

Action: Teach about the body and what is private. The right to say no. Provide sex and relationship education.

V: Accustomed to intimate care in isolated settings

Action-> Teach staff proper care approaches.

Ensure staff ask for consent with intimate care each time.

V: Limited affective and sexual vocabulary

Action -> Provide language and communication tools.

V: Limited experience using assertiveness/boundaries

Action -> Teach and support decision-making.

How can respite help create an effective system to respond when abuse occurs?

- * Expect and demand equal access to services*
- * Educate everyone*
- * Create partnerships in the broader community*
- * Educate partners*
- * Educate the public*

The Broader Community

- * *Laws and Policy-makers*
- * *Law Enforcement/Criminal System*
- police, court, support services
- * ***Health, Mental Health, Trauma***
- * *Community Support Services*
- * *Other community businesses and organizations*

Laws and Policy -Makers



Law Enforcement, Judicial System and Victim Assistance

- * Better understand their issues*
- * Clarify expectations of equal access to services*
- * Share advice and educate each other*
- * Create protocols together*
- * Educate regarding communication and assistive communication devices.*
- * Provide referrals to related services*
- * Consider The Wellness Check Concept*

Health, Mental Health, Trauma

- * Demand equal access to services
- * Grow the services and expertise
- * De-stigmatize the profession of mental health services for disability sector.
- * Attract students to the field of study
- * Train and cross-train and train again

Community Support Services

Working Together to Address Isolation

- * Develop partnerships within related services*
- * Integrate Services*
- * Create a Communication Plan*
- * Develop Protocols for multiple support services and withdrawal from services*

What is Abuse?

Physical Abuse

- * Defined by the Criminal Code of Canada and is a form of common assault.
- * an act of assault , or threat of an assault that could cause physical injury or fear of physical injury

Physical abuse hurts or injures a persons body.

- * Examples- Hitting, slapping, punching, burning, kicking, shaking, beating, etc

Physical

Any physical restraint where it is misused.

- * All agencies and their staff should have clear policy and procedure with regard to the use of physical or mechanical restraints, this includes regular review.*
- * Consent and who has legal authority to consent for the person in care should be included.*

Verbal

- * The use of demeaning language and name calling. Negative verbal depictions of disability or attractiveness are also forms of verbal abuse.

Verbal

- * Examples- Yelling at, shouting at, making fun of, calling names, insulting or sarcastic remarks.
- * Threats to withhold help or care.

Sexual

- * Unwanted touching of a person's sexual body parts. The lack of consent is the defining feature. Here it is important to note that the hierarchy makes it impossible for there to be consent between a person with a disability and their care provider. Sexual Abuse is also about the denial of a person's right to engage in consenting sexual behaviour. QAMT

Sexual Abuse

- * Sexual abuse is any forced or unwanted sexual contact or activity without consent.
- * Sexual Assault is the legal term
- * Other terms include
 - * Rape, date rape, sexual harassment, childhood sexual abuse
- * Sexually assaulting or abusing another person is against the law

Sexual

- * Examples

- * Forced kissing or touching of another, without consent
- * Forcing someone to have sex or sexual contact
- * Threatening or coercion as a means of obtaining consent
- * Forcing another person to look at sexual conduct, pictures, movies of sexual activity or nudity
- * Forcing/Coercing another person to end a pregnancy, take birth control, or forced sterilization

Psychological

- * Whenever constant criticism insulting threatening degrading humiliating intimidation or terrorizing of a person occurs, this is deemed psychological abuse
- * Denying choices, ordering a person to do things that he/she does not consent to, that are dangerous or harmful to the individual.

Psychological

- * Entering an individual's room without permission, taking or removing/withholding possessions without consent.(if for safety or other reasons a person's belongings are removed this should be done only under supervision of a qualified registered practitioner).**

Emotional Abuse

- * The misuse of power in any way to cause a person to lose respect for themselves.
- * Can also include the deameaning of ones faith or beliefs or the imposition of another 's faith onto the person

Financial Abuse

- * Constitutes the misuse , misappropriation or restriction of someone's financial assets for personal gain.
- * Theft or misuse of an individuals money or property.
- * Spending or stealing someone else's money is against the law.

Financial Abuse

Examples

- * Taking control of someone's money without their permission
- * Misuse of their funds for personal gain.
- * Refusing to let an individual direct or help decide how to spend their own money where they have competence to do so.
- * Using or borrowing an individuals money even temporarily, for personal use (this should not be done even with consent due to the power imbalance).

Neglect

- * Failure to provide the necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter care or supervision. People with disabilities have a right to expect that their basic care needs will be provided and that they will be provided with appropriate supervision for their age and developmental needs.
- * Neglect is against the law.

Neglect

Examples

- * Refusing any or all assistance or help that is needed.
eg. Personal care, feeding, bathing, assistance with mobility, provision of basic necessities
- * Isolation being left alone or ignored for prolonged periods of time.

Exploitation:

- * 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 person's best interest.

Harrassment

- * The use of any comments, conduct that are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading, offensive or discriminatory , directed toward an individual or group of individuals.

Sexual Harrassment

- * The use of comments or conduct of a sexual nature undertaken with the intent of causing offence or humiliation.
- Unwanted or unwelcome Sexual or gender related gestures or comments that are offensive. (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

Recognizing Abuse

- * Disclosure
- * Witnessed
- * Suspected Abuse
- * People who have a history of abuse may wish to talk about historic abuse, this is important and should be dealt with sensitively.

Common Signs of Abuse

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Behavioural</u>	<u>Circumstantial</u>
Abrasions	Aggression	Aggression in caregivers
Bites	Atypical attachment	Alcohol or drug use
Bruises	Disclosure	Devaluing attitudes
Burns or Scalds	Fearfulness	Isolation of social unit
Coma	Learning disabilities	Other forms of abuse
Dental injuries	Noncompliance	Other violence in setting
Dislocations	Regression	Previous history of abuse
Ear & eye injuries	Sleep disturbances	
Fractures	Withdrawal	
Lacerations	(PSTD)	
Ligature marks		Sobsey 1994
Welts		

Start Planning Today

What stage is your county at?

Where do you want to be?

What actions do you need to put into place?

What resources do you need to fulfill your goals?

Thanks

Leslie Atkinson

The Respite Learning Portal

Safeguards Training for Children and Adult Services

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