



# INDEPENDENT DISABILITY SERVICES



**Freedom from  
abuse and neglect**

*Changing lives, empowering people*

**Independent Disability Services (IDS) recognises the needs of people with disabilities. You have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect by IDS staff and receive support that respects your culture, beliefs, personal characteristics and values.**

Anyone who suspects that an IDS client is, or is at risk of, being neglected or physically, sexually, emotionally or financially abused, should immediately report it to IDS.

If an IDS team member thinks a client is being abused or neglected, they will ask the client some questions about their circumstances and whether they want to make a report. If we believe they are in danger we may make a decision to make a report on their behalf without permission.

As part of the service agreements between IDS and the agencies engaged by us, agency staff are required to report actual or suspected abuse or neglect to the IDS Individualised Support Manager or the CEO.

What happens once a report has been lodged, depends on the information received. Generally, we will meet with the client to establish the facts surrounding the incident. We may need to talk to other people to find out about the circumstances.

The client's best interests and well-being will be central to any actions we undertake, any action we take will take into account the personal circumstances of the client.

Clients have the right to request the support and guidance of family, friends, carers or independent advocates if required.



# ABUSE

## ● Physical abuse

**Physical abuse is any intentional and unwanted contact with a person or something close to their body. Examples of physical abuse are:**

- Scratching, punching, biting, strangling or kicking,
- Throwing something at a person such as a phone, book, shoe or plate,
- Pulling hair,
- Pushing or pulling,
- Using a knife, bat or other weapons,
- Imprisonment, preventing a person to leave,
- Forcing them to go somewhere.

## ● Emotional abuse

**Emotional abuse chips away at a person's feelings of self-worth and independence. It is common for physically abusive relationships to include aspects of emotional abuse.**

**Emotional abuse can include:**

- Verbal - yelling, insulting or swearing at someone,
- Rejection - pretending not to notice, someone's presence, conversation or value
- Put downs - name calling, public embarrassment, calling someone stupid, blaming them for everything,
- Isolation - limiting freedom of movement, stopping someone from contacting other people (friends or family),
- Bullying - purposely and repeatedly saying or doing hurtful things to someone.

## ● **Financial abuse**

**Financial abuse can be very subtle - telling someone what they can or cannot buy or pressuring a person to share control of their bank accounts**

**Here are some examples of financially abusive behavior:**

- Keeping a person from seeing shared bank accounts or financial statements,
- Using another person's personal details to obtain credit without permission,
- Using a person's credit cards without their permission.

## ● **Sexual abuse**

**Sexual abuse, also referred to as molestation, is usually undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another.**

**Examples of sexual assault and abuse are:**

- Unwanted kissing or touching,
- Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity,
- Rape or attempted rape,
- Keeping someone from protecting themselves from sexually transmitted infections,
- Sexual contact with someone who is very drunk, drugged or otherwise unable to give a clear and informed "yes" or "no",
- Threatening someone into unwanted sexual activity,
- Pressuring someone to have sex or perform sexual acts,
- Repeatedly using sexual insults toward someone.

## NEGLECT

**Neglect is a form of mistreatment resulting from inadequate attention through carelessness or disregard for the needs of others.**

- **Physical neglect:** includes failing to attend to a person's medical, hygienic, nutrition and dietary needs, such as dispensing medications, changing bandages, bathing, grooming, dressing, or failure to provide ample food to maintain health.
- **Emotional neglect:** involves failing to provide emotional support that a person should reasonably expect given the relationship. It includes causing emotional pain, distress or anguish by ignoring or belittling a person's needs, neglecting or discounting the emotional well-being and isolation.
- **Abandonment:** involves leaving an individual while neglecting to arrange sufficient support for the duration of the absence.
- **Financial neglect:** involves disregarding a person's financial obligations such as failing to pay rent or mortgage, medical insurance or invoices, utility and garbage bills, property taxes and assessments.
- **Self-neglect:** involves a person who fails to meet their own essential physical, psychological or social needs, which threatens their health, safety and well-being. This includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and health care for one's own needs.

## What to do if you or someone you know is being abused or neglected?

1. Tell the person causing harm to stop.
2. If the abuse or neglect involves a carer, other support worker, friend or family, report to the Individualised Support Manager or CEO at IDS.
3. The National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline offers a free, independent and confidential service for reporting abuse and neglect experienced by people with a disability.
4. If the situation requires immediate attention, call the emergency services **000**.

### **Provide as much information as possible to enable a thorough investigation, including:**

1. Your name and address.
2. Some information about the situation in which the abuse is occurring.
3. The name of the person or persons responsible for the abuse.
4. The name, age and address of the person being abused.
5. You will also need to give permission for the IDS to pass information onto other organisations who can investigate your report.

**The National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline exists to provide support to you or someone you may care for in cases of abuse and neglect of people with disability.**

**Telephone 1800 800 110**  
**[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)**

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IDS is committed to accessibility of our services and information.



IDS provides access to Interpreting services.



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