



Abuse:
How Do I Report Abuse and Still Protect Myself?
Guidelines for Direct Care Staff

Do you work with someone who has an intellectual disability? Is that person being abused? Are you afraid of retaliation if you report the abuse?

What Is Abuse?

Abuse is anything that prevents a person from exercising their rights, from having human dignity, or causes harm to an individual. Abuse can be verbal, physical, sexual, or emotional.

Your Obligation

When you see, hear about, or suspect abuse, you are required by the Intellectual Disabilities Incident Management Bulletin to report it. Fill out an incident report, record the incident in the program's daily log and report it to your immediate supervisor. You should always follow the procedures of your agency as long as they do not conflict with the Incident Management Bulletin (OMR Bulletin # 00-01-05
www.dpw.state.pa.us/omr/OmrBulletin/OmrBulletin00-01-05.asp)

Hotline Numbers

If you believe your reports are being ignored, if you do not see any correction of the problem, or if the abuse continues, you can call the following numbers:

- Your local county MH/MR Office
- Office of Developmental Programs (ODP); 1-888-565-9435

- Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP); 1-800-692-7443

All calls made to DRP are confidential and the reporter's name is not given to anyone

Protecting Yourself

When you report abuse, you are considered a protected reporter. You are sheltered from retaliation and you may not be punished or reprimanded in anyway. You are not obligated to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

If anyone tries to get back at you for reporting abuse, you can call 1-888-565-9435. This is the Office of Developmental Programs Customer Service line. Be prepared to give your name and phone number. Be specific about any cautions or protections, i.e.: "I don't want my employer to know that I called."

Remember to always keep a record of what you know about the abuse and who you tell about it. Write down the dates, times, and names of all the people involved in the abuse and everyone you have reported it to. Keep your papers in a safe place where no one else can get to them. If possible, get copies of the incident reports you write and keep them at work in a safe place that only you know.

If you have any questions about the information in this brochure or how to report abuse, call DRP.

Contact Information

If you need more information or need help, please contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TDD). The email address is: intake@disabilityrightspa.org.

The mission of Disability Rights Pennsylvania is to advance, protect, and advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Due to our limited resources, Disability Rights Pennsylvania cannot provide individual services to every person with advocacy and legal issues. Disability Rights Pennsylvania prioritizes cases that have the potential to result in widespread, systemic changes to benefit persons with

disabilities. While we cannot provide assistance to everyone, we do seek to provide every individual with information and referral options.

IMPORTANT: This publication is for general informational purposes only. This publication is not intended, nor should be construed, to create an attorney-client relationship between Disability Rights Pennsylvania and any person. Nothing in this publication should be considered to be legal advice.

PLEASE NOTE: For information in alternative formats or a language other than English, contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania at 800-692- 7443, Ext. 400, TDD: 877-375-7139 or intake@disabilityrightspa.org.