

# **TRAIN Florida – APD**

## **Zero Tolerance Learner Guide**

### **Module 3**

The Agency Supports Persons with Developmental Disabilities in Living, Learning, and Working in their Communities.

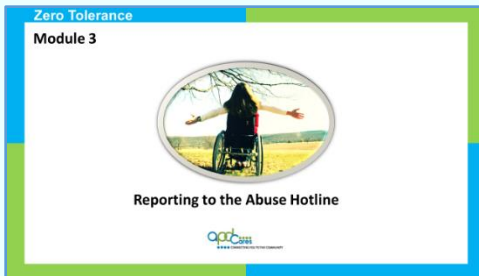


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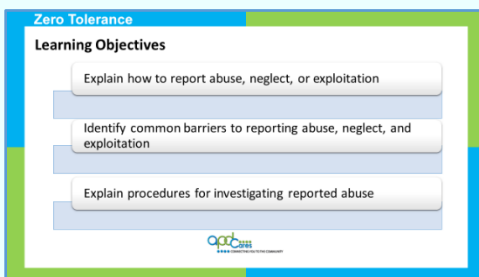
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### Slide 1 – Reporting to the Abuse Hotline



This module will explain how to report abuse, neglect, and exploitation when you know or suspect that it has taken place

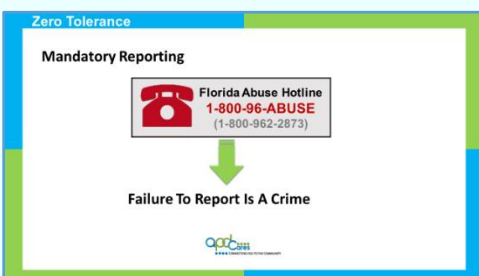
### Slide 2 – Learning Objectives



At the end of Module 3, you should be able to:

- Explain how to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Identify common barriers to reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Explain procedures for investigating reported abuse

### Slide 3 – Mandatory Reporting



Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that an individual with a developmental disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited, is required to report that information to the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE or 1-800-962-2873.

**Failure to report known or suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation is a crime.** Not reporting child abuse, neglect, or abandonment (or preventing someone else from reporting) is classified as a third degree felony in Florida. Someone convicted of a third degree felony can be required to serve up to five years in prison. Not reporting cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults with developmental disabilities (or preventing someone else from reporting) is classified as a second degree misdemeanor (which can result in serving up to 60 days in jail).

Keep in mind that, as a service provider, failure to report known or suspected abuse can also cause you to lose your job and/or face possible legal action. When in doubt, report it.


Turn to page 60 in the Participant's Guide for mandatory reporting requirements.

### Slide 4 – Client on Client Abuse

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**Client on Client Abuse**

Sexual assault or any other type of injury-causing physical altercation (such as punching, stabbing, choking, or hitting another individual with a heavy object) which takes place between two individuals with developmental disabilities.



#### Client on Client Abuse



Sexual assault or any other type of injury-causing physical altercation (such as punching, stabbing, choking, or hitting another individual with a heavy object) which takes place between two individuals with developmental disabilities must also be reported immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline as well as the police. Afterwards, an investigation may occur in order to determine whether or not the alleged abuse was the result of inadequate supervision or neglect on the part of a service provider or caregiver. In addition, service providers must also report the incident immediately to their supervisor as well as the local APD office to ensure the continued health and safety of the individuals involved.

### Slide 5 - What If You Suspect Abuse, Neglect Or Exploitation?

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**What if you Suspect Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation?**

If you know or suspect that an individual with a developmental disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited by a relative, caregiver, or household member then you should call the **Florida Abuse Hotline**



#### What if you Suspect Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation?

If you know or suspect that an individual with a developmental disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited by a relative, caregiver, or household member then you should do all of the following immediately.... Call the Florida Abuse Hotline.



Turn to page 61 in the Participant's Guide to find more information about reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

### Slide 6 – How to Report -

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**How To Report:**

- Call the **Florida Abuse Hotline** 1-800-962-2873 (Nationwide)
- Or Send a Faxed Statement to The 1-800-914-0004
- Or Report Online at <https://Reportabuse.Dcf.State.FL.US/>



#### How do you report abuse, neglect and exploitation?

Call the Florida Abuse Hotline, which is a nationwide, toll-free telephone number, at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), or send a faxed statement to the Abuse Hotline's statewide toll-free fax number, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 1-800-914-0004, or report online at <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>

Notify your supervisor, and then your supervisor will notify the regional Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) office in accordance with established APD incident reporting procedures.

If you know about a situation in which the life of an individual with a developmental disability is in immediate danger due to abuse, neglect, or exploitation, you should call 911 before calling anyone else.

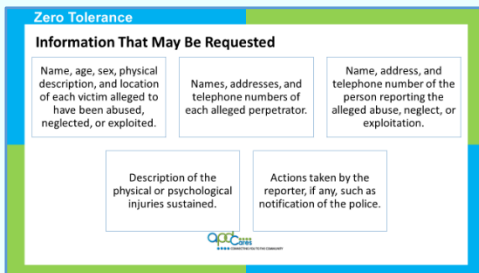
### Slide 7 – Other People to Call



**Direct service providers should report knowledge or suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to their supervisors who may be required to report this information to the regional APD office** (in accordance with established APD reporting procedures). However, provider agencies cannot require employees to report to them before contacting Florida Abuse Hotline or police.

In fact, any person who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from reporting known or suspected abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in Florida Statute 775.082 and 775.083.

### Slide 8 – Information That May Be Requested



**Hotline operators may request the following information:**

- Name, age, sex, physical description, and location of each victim alleged to have been abused, neglected, or exploited
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of each alleged perpetrator
- Name, address, and telephone number of the person reporting the alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Description of the physical or psychological injuries sustained
- Actions taken by the reporter, if any, such as notification of the police



**NOTE:** It is important that you do not delay calling the Hotline until you have all of the above information. Instead, call the Hotline with whatever information you have in order to protect the individual with developmental disabilities from continued abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

#### Slide 9 – What Happens after a Hotline Call is Made?

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**What Happens After a Hotline Call Is Made**

Sometimes, a report cannot be taken by the Florida Abuse Hotline because it does not involve an allegation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child or a vulnerable adult by their caregiver.



**This is what happens after a hotline call is made:**

After a call is received by the Florida Abuse Hotline, the hotline staff must first determine if the situation described is something that state law allows them to investigate. There are situations where a report cannot be taken by the Florida Abuse Hotline because it does not involve an allegation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child or a vulnerable adult by their caregiver. In those situations, Hotline staff can still assist callers by providing them with information and making referrals to other agencies, such as law enforcement, as necessary.



Turn to page 65 in your Participant's Guide to find out what happens after a hotline call is made.

#### Slide 10 – After a Report is Made

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**After a Report is Made**

After a report is made to the Florida Abuse Hotline, that information is used to assess the risk to the victim and determine findings. All information obtained during an investigation is confidential but can also be used as evidence in any court proceedings that may take place.




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#### Slide 11-After the Call is Made

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The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is required to conduct an investigation of all abuse reports received and accepted to determine if there is evidence that someone has been abused, neglected or exploited, and if assistance is necessary to protect the individual's health and safety.




**After the call is made:**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is required to conduct an investigation of all abuse reports received and accepted to determine if there is evidence that someone has been abused, neglected or exploited, and if assistance is necessary to protect the individual's health and safety. Within 24 hours of receiving a report, a protective investigator will make face-to-face contact with the alleged victim. If access to the alleged victim is refused, law enforcement may be called to assist with the protective investigator.

### Slide 12- If the victim is at risk

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If a victim is determined to be at risk and is not safe remaining in his/her present environment, the investigator may place the victim in a more suitable living arrangement such as that of the home of a relative or friend or another licensed residential placement.



If the victim is determined to be at risk the investigator will interview all of the individuals involved in the alleged incident, evaluate the information gathered, and then make a determination about the reported allegation as to whether it did or did not occur. If a victim is determined to be at risk and is not safe remaining in the current environment, the investigator may place the victim in a more suitable living arrangement such as that of a home of a relative or friend or another licensed residential placement.

As long as victims are capable of making their own decisions, they must request or consent to placement before it can occur. If victims are not capable of making decisions, they may be removed by the investigator and placed in a safer environment, but the investigator must petition the court for a hearing within 24 hours of removal so the court may decide if continued placement is necessary.

The Individuals who have a right to be present at any hearing include the victim of a report, the victim's spouse, guardian, legal counsel, adult children and next of kin.

### Slide 13- Barriers to Reporting

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**Barriers to Reporting**

Victims refuse to acknowledge there is a problem.

Individuals with disabilities are often taught to be compliant and passive and are sometimes unable to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact.

Individuals with disabilities may feel their report of abuse would not be believed.



#### Individuals with developmental disabilities may fail to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation for the following reasons:

- Victims refuse to acknowledge that there is a problem
- Individuals with disabilities are often taught to be compliant and passive and are sometimes unable to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact
- Individuals with disabilities may feel their report of abuse will not be believed


### Slide 14- Barriers to Reporting

**Zero Tolerance**

**Barriers to Reporting**

Physical/cognitive impairments make it difficult for the victim to seek help.

Most augmentative communication systems, such as communication or picture boards used by individuals who cannot speak, are not programmed to report abuse, neglect or exploitation.



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Most augmentative communication systems, such as communication or picture boards used by Individuals who cannot speak, are not programmed to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation.



### Slide 15-Barriers to Reporting

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##### Barriers to Reporting

Victims do not know where to turn for help, and they are often isolated.

Victims are, or perceive themselves to be, financially or otherwise dependent on the abuser for their needs.

The abuser tells the victim they will lose everything if anyone is told.



#### Barriers to Reporting

Victims do not know where to turn for help, and they are often isolated. Victims are, or perceive themselves to be, financially or otherwise dependent on the abuser for their needs. The abuser tells victim they will lose everything if anyone is told.

### Slide 16-Barriers to Reporting

#### Zero Tolerance

##### Barriers to Reporting

Victims fear loss of a caregiver, even an abusing caregiver; they are fearful that the solution to the problem is more negative or frightening than the problem itself; they are fearful they will be forced to leave their current families or homes.

Individuals with disabilities may be more easily coerced or threatened by the withholding of needed care or equipment.



#### Barriers to Reporting

Victims fear loss of a caregiver, even an abusing caregiver; they are fearful that the solution to the problem is more negative or frightening than the problem itself; they are fearful they will be forced to leave their current families or homes, individuals with disabilities may be more easily coerced or threatened by the withholding of needed care or equipment.

### Slide 17- Barriers to Reporting

#### Zero Tolerance

##### Barriers to Reporting

There is a general lack of understanding or awareness of the high rate of these types of crimes.

Individuals, including professionals and law enforcement, often do not recognize abuse of individuals with disabilities and they may be quick to dismiss the visible signs of abuse by saying it was probably caused by the individual's disability

Most people assume that no one would be capable of committing crimes against individuals with disabilities.



#### Barriers to Reporting

People sometimes fail to report abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals with developmental disabilities because there is a general lack of understanding or awareness of the high rate of these types of crimes. People often do not recognize abuse and are quick to dismiss the visible signs of abuse by saying it was probably caused by the individual's disability. Most people assume that no one would be capable of committing certain crimes against Individuals with disabilities.

### Slide 18-Barriers to Reporting

#### Zero Tolerance

##### Barriers to Reporting

Inability to believe a problem exists.

Fear financial or legal liability and retaliation if they report suspected abuse.

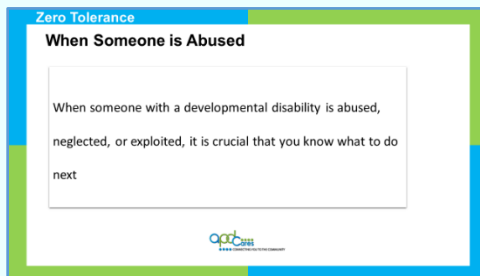
Believe their actions will not make a difference.



#### Barriers to Reporting

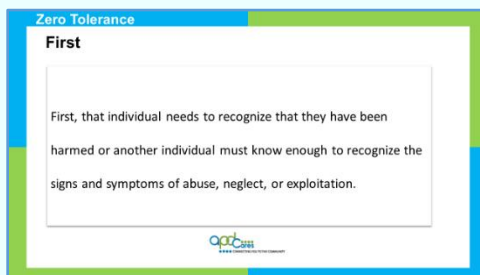
People sometimes fail to report abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals with developmental disabilities because they haven't seen actual physical abuse, and therefore they may not believe a problem exists. People fear financial or legal liability and retaliation if they report suspected abuse. Many people have the mistaken idea that their actions will not make a difference.

### Slide 19 – When someone is abused



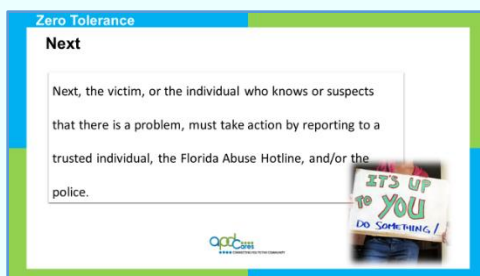
**When** someone with a developmental disability is abused, neglected, or exploited, a number of different things need to happen. It is crucial that you know the steps to take.

### Slide 20 - First



**First**, that individual needs to recognize that they have been harmed or another individual must know enough to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

### Slide 21-Next



**Next**, the victim (or the individual who knows or suspects that there is a problem) must take action by reporting (to a trusted individual, the Florida Abuse Hotline, and/or the police).

Police or abuse investigators must conduct a thorough investigation and be trained to work with Individuals with developmental disabilities.


Perpetrators of abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be arrested and prosecuted so they will no longer be able to have access to vulnerable individuals.

Domestic violence shelters and other victim assistance programs must be physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with developmental disabilities who have been victimized.

### Slide 22- Investigation

**Zero Tolerance**  
**Investigation**

In a perfect world, these steps would take place without problems but, unfortunately, that is not always the case. Failure or problems with any of these steps in the process may mean that the level of risk and danger for abuse, neglect and exploitation will remain high.




#### **The investigation process is next.**

In a perfect world, these steps would take place without problems but, unfortunately, that is not always the case. Failure or problems with any of these steps in the process may mean that the level of risk and danger for abuse, neglect, and exploitation will remain high.

### Slide 23- Summary

**Zero Tolerance**  
**Summary**

In this module, you learned that it is up to you to report any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of an individual with a developmental disability. Reports should first be made to Florida Abuse Hotline by phone, fax, or online which can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You also learned several common barriers to reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation. Individuals may not be aware that they are victims, may not understand how or where to seek help, or may be in fear of their abuser.



#### **Summary**

In this module, you learned that it is up to you to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an individual with a developmental disability.

Reports should first be made to Florida Abuse Hotline by phone, fax, or online which can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You also learned several common barriers to reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Individuals may not be aware that they are victims, may not understand how or where to seek help, or may be in fear of their abuser.

### Slide 24- Summary

#### Zero Tolerance

##### Summary

Additionally, other individuals who do not work with individuals with disabilities may not be aware of the high rate of these types of crimes, may not acknowledge the signs, or may assume that no one is capable of committing crimes against individuals with disabilities. Lastly, you learned the procedure for investigating abuse. After a report is made, the Florida Abuse Hotline assesses the risk and conducts an investigation to determine if there is evidence of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. If the individual is not safe in their current surroundings, the investigator may place the individual in a more suitable living arrangement.



Additionally, other individuals who do not work with individuals with disabilities may not be aware of the high rate of these types of crimes, may not acknowledge the signs, or may assume that no one is capable of committing crimes against Individuals with disabilities.

Lastly, you learned the procedure for investigating abuse. After a report is made, the Florida Abuse Hotline assesses the risk and conducts an investigation to determine if there is evidence of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

If the individual is not safe in their current surroundings, the investigator may place the individual in a more suitable living arrangement.

### Slide 25- Activity #3

#### Zero Tolerance

##### Activity #3



Turn to activity #3

#### Potential Signs

Match the description to the type of possible abuse neglect or exploitation

### Slide 26- Completion of module

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You have completed Module 3.  
You are now ready to go to Module 4.



You have completed Module 3.

You are now ready to go to Module 4 where you will learn about Prevention and Safety Planning

If you have not done so, please download the [How to Navigate APD Zero Tolerance](#) guide. The guide will display the steps will for completing the course.

### APD Technical Support and Communication



**We are just an email away!**

If you cannot find the answer to your problem or require technical assistance, **please do not contact** the PFH technical assistance or FDOH; instead, contact the TRAIN Florida APD Support Team at [apd.lmssupport@apdcares.org](mailto:apd.lmssupport@apdcares.org)