

WSC ADVISORY #2021-008
EDUCATING CLIENTS ABOUT ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION
MANDATORY ACTION

EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Waiver Support Coordinators (WSCs) and Consumer-Directed Care Plus (CDC+) Consultants are required to continuously educate clients about abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This includes providing information about both identification and mandatory reporting. Nationwide, individuals with developmental disabilities have a high incidence rate for abuse, neglect, or exploitation. WSCs and CDC+ Consultants play an important role in the identification, reporting, and follow-up on suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The following are guidelines to assist:

- When reviewing the [*Bill of Rights for Persons with Developmental Disabilities*](#) annually with APD clients, the WSC or CDC+ Consultant should verify the client's understanding of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Make sure that the client understands what this is and how to report it. Since each client receives and processes information differently, it is important for the WSC/CDC+ Consultant to communicate this information in a way that is best understood by the individual.
- Document all efforts to educate clients about this topic in case notes in APD iConnect.
- Make sure that clients and their legal representatives understand that they have an obligation to report allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the Florida Abuse Hotline, even if the allegation involves another client.
- Reporting is mandatory! If a WSC knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a person with a developmental disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited by a relative, caregiver, or household member or, in the case of self-neglect, by themselves, they are required to report such knowledge or suspicion 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 criminal offense. Such knowledge also requires WSCs and CDC+ Consultants to alert APD when an allegation is suspected.

WSCs and CDC+ Consultants can find additional resources related to this topic on the [APD Zero Tolerance website](#).