

Preventing Abuse & Neglect

You're Now an Employer of
Personal Care Assistants

PREVENTING ABUSE & NEGLECT

Connecticut Community Care, Inc. Self-Directed Support Services

The preparation of this document was financed under an agreement with the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities.

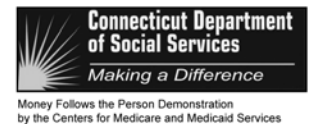
Getting Started

Building a trust between you and your personal care assistants is important, but make sure you are prepared in case issues occur. This may include stealing, risk to your physical safety, abuse or neglect. Look for signs from your personal care assistants at all times. These are known as “red flags.” If you see signs that are issues affecting your health and safety, get help immediately to address them.

This tip sheet will help you prevent issues from occurring and help you identify a serious problem. It will also provide you with resources should you have concerns of abuse or neglect.



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Prevention

Preventing abuse and neglect includes being able to see “red flags” that cause you to feel uncomfortable. Examples of “red flags” can include:

- Your personal care assistant says that she will take you to one particular store because then she can do her own personal shopping;
- Your personal care assistant tells you that he does not want to cook dinner and that you should buy dinner instead (for both of you);
- Your personal care assistant says she's completed a task, but you later find out she didn't.

If “red flags” are not addressed, these issues can become more serious and become safety issues at some point.

Abuse & Neglect

If issues between you and your personal care assistant are becoming more and more serious that you start to feel uncomfortable being around him/her, talk to someone about it. If you feel your health and safety is at risk, this may be a sign of abuse or neglect. Abuse and neglect can occur in a variety of ways. The definition of abuse and neglect is as follows:

Abuse – "the willful infliction by a caregiver of physical pain or injury or the willful deprivation of services necessary to the physical and mental health and safety of an individual. The term also includes the use of offensive language or acts to provoke or upset an individual or subject him or her to humiliation or ridicule. Willful means the intentional acts or omissions, or the reckless disregard for the safety and consequences of one's acts or omissions."

Neglect – "the failure by a caregiver through action or inaction to provide an individual

with the services necessary to maintain his or her physical and mental health and safety."

If you feel you are being abused or neglected, call the police or tell someone immediately and report it:

- ☑ Anyone who is 17 years old or younger, contact the Department of Children and Families: 1-800-842-2288;
- ☑ Adults between 18 and 59 years of age who have an intellectual disability and receive services through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), contact The Office of Protection and Advocacy: 860-297-4300 and your DDS case manager; and
- ☑ Anyone 60 years old or older, contact the Department of Social Services at 1-888-385-4225.

Tell someone immediately if you feel your personal care assistant is abusing or neglecting you.



Examples of Abuse and Neglect

Hopefully you will never experience abuse or neglect from a personal care assistant. But it is still important you are prepared. Here are some examples of abuse and neglect:

- ▶ You ask your personal care assistant to help you eat breakfast and she refuses, saying she does not want to do this for you.
- ▶ You ask your personal care assistant to help you get dressed and he shuts at you saying you should be grateful he is there at all.
- ▶ Your personal care assistant leaves you in the shower without the support you need, and goes to make a personal phone call.
- ▶ Your personal care assistant tells you to wait to go to the bathroom until she is “ready” to assist you, or when she is done with her personal call.
- ▶ You have a heating pad on you and your personal care assistant leaves to go outside and smoke a cigarette or do a personal errand. This causes you to burn your skin.
- ▶ An accident occurs and you fall out of the lift you use to transfer. Your personal care assistant does not address the accident appropriately.
- ▶ You have a pressure sore on your back from your wheelchair. Your personal care assistant forgets to change the dressing daily.



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Ways To Prevent Abuse and Neglect

This list provides you with things you can do to help prevent safety issues that can lead to abuse or neglect:

- ▶ If you do not feel comfortable for whatever reason with one of your personal care assistants, talk about this **immediately** with someone you trust.
- ▶ If a personal care assistant is not supporting you in the way you want, communicate with him or her. If nothing changes or if you continue to be uncomfortable with the person, do something about this immediately. **Your safety is important!**
- ▶ Always have a back-up plan to get the help you need should a problem arise with one of my personal care assistants. Generally this can include assistance for a short period from other support professionals, and from unpaid supports in your life.
- ▶ Never leave anything valuable lying around. Store valuables in a safe place.
- ▶ Do not leave money, checkbooks, or credit cards out. Keep them in a drawer where only you know they are located, or keep them locked up if you do not need access to them very often.
- ▶ Do not provide keys to your house unless it is absolutely necessary. Give keys to a natural or personal support person in your life, such as a relative, or to people you know well and feel comfortable with. Consider getting an external key box such as realtors use that is accessed by a code or combination; this way, you can change it periodically.



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