

## **Sexual Abuse**

**Course 4413**

**Record 2632**

### **Definition of Sexual Abuse:**

Sexual abuse is any sexual contact without a person's consent, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, or using a person for sexual purposes, including but not limited to: fondling, flashing, masturbation, intercourse, and oral-genital contact. Sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent is also considered sexual abuse. It includes but not limited to unwanted touching; all types of sexual assault or battery, such as rape or sodomy; coerced nudity; and sexually explicit photographing. In cases of child sexual abuse, force or coercion is not necessary for a crime to occur since children are not capable of consenting to sexual activity with an adult. This does not include therapeutic touch and assisting with personal cares.

### **Sexual development in people with Developmental disabilities:**

Sexuality is a normal part of human development. Even though people with developmental disabilities may have low IQ's or deficits in their skills, they are to be treated with respect due their age. The onset of puberty varies widely among people with DD and sexual development may be reached at a later chronological age. Sexual interests and desires vary in intensity just like those in the non disabled population. Each individual has the right to express his or her sexuality in an appropriate manner. Some individuals may need assistance in expressing or meeting their sexual needs.

### **Our role as a staff person in supporting people with developmental disabilities:**

The individual and their team will determine what approaches to use to help meet the individual's sexual needs and address any inappropriate behaviors. The individual and team determine what information is appropriate to give the individual regarding sexuality, who will provide the information. We as staff have no right to impose our values regarding sexuality on the individuals we serve. We need to ensure that each individual is allowed to express his or her sexuality in appropriate ways, as desired by the individual. This includes things such as supporting, whenever possible, choices the individuals make about clothing, grooming, relationships with others and engaging in sexual self stimulation. Do not attempt to shame or embarrass individual when he or she displays sexual behavior. Assure the individual has privacy when he or she is engaging in sexual self stimulation.

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

#### **Physical signs or visible signs that may be indicators of sexual abuse:**

- injury, discomfort, bruising around breasts, thighs or genital areas;
- unexplained sexually transmitted disease or genital infections;
- unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding;

- complaints of stomach and abdominal pain;
- evidence of regressive bedwetting or incontinence;
- recurrent urinary tract infections or yeast infections;
- vaginal or penile discharge or foul odors from the genitalia, or;
- torn, stained or bloody underclothing.

**Emotional signs that may be indicators of sexual abuse:**

- changes in eating habits;
- changes in sleep patterns, nightmares or insomnia;
- showing fear of certain people;
- depression, crying episodes, self mutilation behavior, withdrawn;
- excessive or early masturbation, or;
- bowel movement accidents in toilet trained persons.

**Sexual activity between consumers involving force/coercion Policy**

**Responding**

Any AXIS employee who discovers the incident shall initially ensure the safety of the consumer. Once the safety of the consumer has been addressed, staff shall contact the local Police Department as soon as possible and follow all of the directions given by police including the preservation of evidence. The consumer shall be transported to the hospital and hospital officials shall be alerted to the nature of the injuries.

**Reporting**

The AXIS employee who discovers the incident shall notify the Administrator as soon as possible as to the nature of the injuries and information known to the employee and complete an incident report form. The Administrator shall then determine what staff within the house or within AXIS Management will conduct the investigation. The investigator will conduct the investigation consistent with AXIS investigation policies including contacting the consumer's guardian, if applicable, and all other appropriate third parties such as the Common Entry Point, DHS, or the Local Sheriff's Office (within 24 hours). Once the investigation has been completed, the investigation will be forwarded to the Director of Program Services who will then take appropriate follow-up action.