

Screening Patients and Residents for Abuse

1. Introduction

Providence Health Care (PHC) fosters an environment of trust and safety where patients, families and employees are treated with respect and dignity.

The safety and security of patients, residents, and their families is a priority at PHC and PHC supports an interdisciplinary approach to preventing and responding to abuse that focuses on patient and resident autonomy, safety, and working collaboratively with community partners.

Adults are entitled to live in the manner they wish and to accept or refuse support and assistance as long as they are not a danger to others, and are capable. Adults are presumed to be capable until the contrary is demonstrated. Adults, who are not capable of protecting themselves, will receive the most effective, but least intrusive, form of support and assistance.

1.1. Scope

This policy applies to patients and residents admitted to a PHC facility.

2. Policy

Employees of PHC screen patients and residents for abuse and offer assistance and support to establish safety and security. If a person discloses abuse, employees offer the patient or resident a referral to the Social Worker and document accordingly in the patient or resident's Health Record. Social Work will refer to the appropriate practice guideline to the response to Child Protection and Adult Protection concerns.

2.1 Child Abuse and Neglect Concerns

In accordance with the Child, Family and Community Services Act, employees of PHC report child protection concerns to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

2.2 Adult Abuse and Neglect Concerns

In accordance with the BC Adult Guardianship Act, Part 3, employees of PHC identify, respond, investigate and provide support and assistance in cases of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable adults.

3. Responsibilities

On admission, employees of PHC routinely screen all patients and residents in private regarding the presence of violence or abuse in their lives.

4. Compliance

All employees of PHC are responsible for adhering to this policy and monitoring their activities in accordance with the policy.

5. Supporting Documents

5.1. Related Policies

[Code White Emergency Response](#)

[Consent to Health Care](#)

[Domestic Violence Routine Screening for Patients](#)

[Domestic Violence Policy for Employees](#)

[Information Privacy and Confidentiality](#)

[Managing Disrespectful, Violent or Aggressive Behaviours of Visitors](#)

[Release of Information and Belongings to Law Enforcement](#)

[Respect at Work](#)

[Search of Inpatient Rooms and/or Belongings](#)

[Violence Prevention in the Workplace](#)

CPF0150 Honoria Conway Abuse Policy (available on site at Honoria Conway)

[Adult Protection: Abuse Neglect and Self Neglect of Vulnerable Adults](#) (VCH)

5.2. Guidelines/Procedures/Forms

PHC Residential Care Local Protocol to Act on Adult Abuse and Neglect

PHC – Child Abuse and Neglect – Duty to Report

Social Work Departmental Standard – Domestic Violence

Workplace Violence Prevention Program [Capability and Consent Tool](#)

[Cognitive Evaluation and Intervention Guideline for the Adult Population \(PHC-VCH\)](#)

[VCH Risk Assessment Tool](#)

[Child Abuse and Neglect Duty to Report Guideline](#)

[PHC Ethical Decision Making Framework](#)

Adult Protection: Duty to Report – All Staff – *In draft*

Adult Protection: Designated Responder Guideline – Designated Responders – *In draft*

Interpersonal Violence Guideline – *In draft*

6. Definitions

“Abuse” means the deliberate mistreatment of an adult that causes the person physical, mental, or emotional harm, or damage to or loss of assets.

Examples of abuse include:

Physical Abuse: Acts of violence or rough treatment, including slapping, shaking, punching or rough handling

Psychological Abuse: Severe and continuing intimidation, humiliation, isolation and exclusion from events, activities and decision-making

Sexual Abuse: Any unwanted or exploitive sexual behaviour including harassing, assaulting or using adults for sexual purposes without their consent.

Financial Abuse: Misusing an adult's money and property; taking money, property or possessions by coercion; influencing the making of a will, cashing cheques without authorization, using bank accounts without authorization; or misusing a power of attorney or representation agreement.

Medication abuse: Withholding needed medication, or giving too much or too little medication.

Violation of Entitlements: Censoring mail, invading or denying privacy, denying access to visitors, restricting the movement of an adult, or withholding information to which the adult is entitled

"Capable Adult" means an adult is able to understand and appreciate the risks and benefits of accepting or refusing assistance and is able to take steps to access support.

"Vulnerable Adult" is defined by the Adult Guardianship Act ("AGA") as an adult who is experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect and is unable to seek support and assistance because of physical restraint, a physical handicap that limits their ability to seek help, or an illness, disease, injury or other condition that affects their ability to make decisions about the abuse or neglect.

"Neglect" means any deliberate or unintentional failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance or attention to an adult that causes the adult, or is reasonably likely to cause within a short time:

- serious physical, mental or emotional harm
- substantial damage to or loss of assets

"Self-neglect" means any failure of an adult to take care of himself or herself that causes serious physical, mental or emotional harm substantial damage to or loss of assets. Examples of self-neglect include:

- living in grossly unsanitary conditions
- suffering from an untreated illness, disease or injury
- suffering from malnutrition to such an extent that, without intervention, the adult's physical or mental health is likely to be severely impaired
- creating a hazardous situation that will likely cause serious physical harm to the adult or others or cause substantial damage to or loss of assets
- suffering from an illness, disease or injury that results in the adult dealing with his or her assets in a manner that is likely to cause substantial damage to or loss of the assets.

"Child in Need of Protection" means a child (defined as any person under the age of 19) whom, under the Child, Family and Community Services Act, s.13, a child is in need of protection when there is:

- Actual or likely physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation
- Actual or likely physical harm because of neglect
- Emotional harm
- Parent is not providing/consenting to necessary health care
- Abandonment
- Unwillingness of parent to resume care

- Linked to parental acts or the parent's failure to protect
- Parent is unable or unwilling to protect the child from physical harm, abuse or exploitation

"Domestic Violence/Interpersonal Violence" is when an adult is experiencing abuse, neglect and self-neglect and is **able** to seek support and assistance. Domestic Violence/Interpersonal Violence is indicated by a pattern of coercive control that usually involves violence or the threat of violence, and is perpetrated by a current or former partner, or a family member or other member of the public.

7. References

1. *Adult Guardianship Act*, 2000
2. *Gunshot and Stab Wounds Disclosure Act* (Dec. 20th, 2010).
3. *Occupational Health and Safety Manual*
4. Patient Safety Learning System: http://phc-connect/programs/patient_safety/psls/Pages/default.aspx
5. Public Trustee of British Columbia
6. Government of British Columbia (2007). *The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*. Retrieved from: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf
7. Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital Intimate Partner (Domestic) Violence Policy
<https://www.oha.com/Documents/Dupont-Daniel%20Inquest%20-%20Implementing%20the%20Recommendations%20-Suicide.pdf>
8. [BC Institute of Family Violence \(www.bcifv.bc.ca\)](http://www.bcifv.bc.ca)
9. Family Services of Greater Vancouver
10. Legal Services Society (www.lss.bc.ca)
11. Vancouver Police Department (<https://vancouver.ca/police/>)

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	2	September 1, 2017		Risk Management
	3	July 3, 2020	Removed guideline information and ensured alignment with legislative policies and guidelines	Social Work