

Expectations for AAW Supports Coordinators Regarding the Right to be Free from Abuse ODP Announcement 19-094

AUDIENCE:

Adult Autism Waiver (AAW) Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs) and Supports Coordinators (SCs)

PURPOSE:

To communicate the process to be followed for SCs in the AAW, effective immediately, to comply with the Office of Developmental Programs' (ODP) initiative regarding the Right to be Free from Abuse.

DISCUSSION:

The AAW requires SCs to inform individuals about abuse, neglect, and exploitation. As part of this discussion, SCs must advise individuals about the protections available to them. This task aligns with the Information Sharing and Advisory Committee's (ISAC's) recommendation #5: Promote Health, Wellness, and Safety. ODP will assess completion of this activity through the Quality Assessment and Improvement (QA&I) process.

PROCESS

Effective on the publication date of this notice, AAW SCs are required to review and complete the Right to Report Abuse Notification handout annually with all individuals. The Right to Report Abuse Notification handout must be completed during one of the quarterly in-person monitoring visits. The SC must record the action in a Service Note in

the Home and Community Information System (HCSIS). **SCs must record detailed information outlining completion of all steps listed below.**

To meet ODP's expectation for completing the Right to Report Abuse Notification handout, the following must occur:

- In a location that affords the individual privacy, discuss the meaning of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
 - The discussion must take place in a format understood by the individual and using means of communication, which the individual prefers.
- Advise the individual/surrogate that they have the right:
 - To be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation
 - To report abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Discuss with whom the individual may report (e.g. family members, friends, SCs, Disability Rights of Pennsylvania (DRPA), protective service organizations, law enforcement, etc.)
- Complete the handout by filling in the blank space, indicating contact information and establish a place where the individual may readily access it.
- Advise the individual that they can report abuse, neglect, and exploitation to another person, if the first person they notified failed to take action.
- After the meeting, document the conversation and the contact information (names and phone numbers) in a Service Note in HCSIS. The record must clearly indicate that the conversation took place in a location that affords privacy.
- As part of the monitoring process, SCs should revisit the discussion with the individual to ensure that they continue to feel safe, remember the handout, and have access to it.

If an individual discloses any allegation, the SC must be prepared to take all necessary actions to ensure that the individual's immediate health and safety needs are being addressed per ODP policy and according to law.

DIGITAL VERSION OF THE NOTIFICATION HANDOUT:

[The Right to Be Free from Abuse Handout](#)

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

ASERT, in partnership with researchers at the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center at the Medical University of South Carolina, developed the Be Safe Resource Collection comprised of infographics, social stories, eLearning courses and other resource materials focused on the prevention of sexual abuse as well as intervention strategies to support individuals who experience abuse.

Resources are designed to provide information and tips on how to prevent sexual abuse and assault in individuals with autism. There are general resources that are appropriate for all ages and developmental levels, as well as specific resources for caregivers, professionals and individuals with autism.

AAW SCs are encouraged to be familiar with and utilize these resources for supporting individuals and their families.

<http://www.paautism.org/resources/All-Resources/All-Resources-Details/itemid/8988/Be-Safe-Resource-Collection>

INQUIRIES REGARDING THIS COMMUNICATION:

Please direct questions regarding this announcement to the appropriate BAS Regional Office.