

A Brief Look at Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

You must be aware of your patient's safety at home including his/her safety from harm done by others. This harm is called abuse, neglect and exploitation.

DEFINITIONS:

- Abuse - Physical force that results in bodily injury, physical pain or impairment. This includes hitting, beating, biting, pushing, shoving, shaking or burning. Emotional abuse includes the infliction of anguish, pain or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts such as intimidation, insults, threats, humiliation and harassment.
- Neglect - Failing to give proper attention or care. Examples are failure to provide life necessities such as food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene and/or medicine.
- Exploitation - Illegal or improper use of patient's funds, property or assets.

If you suspect that your patient is being abused, neglected or exploited, you **MUST** report it to both the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and the Texas Department of Human Services. The telephone numbers are in the Agency's Policy Manual. Also, report it to your supervisor and document.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Abuse - bruises, especially in the shape of fingers or a belt; burns, lacerations, sudden difficulty walking or sitting, the patient appears fearful of the primary caregiver or withdraws from him/her.
- Neglect - dehydration or hunger because fluids and food are being withheld, new pressure ulcers, physical problems because meds are being withheld, absence of aids such as eyeglasses and hearing aids.
- Exploitation - Does the patient express fear or anxiety when discussing finances? Does s/he mention that a relative has been expressing an interest in his/her finances? Do the caregiver and patient resist assistance that costs money?

If you're attentive to the signs, you may help to keep you patient out of harm's way!

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Quiz

Employee: _____ Date: _____

Graded By (RN): _____ Grade: _____

1. Abuse means physical force that results in bodily harm.
 - a) True
 - b) False
2. Neglect means failing to give proper attention or care.
 - a) True
 - b) False
3. Exploitation means improper use of the patient's funds, property or assets.
 - a) True
 - b) False
4. Bruises, dehydration and fear or anxiety could be signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
 - a) True
 - b) False