

# MODULE 5: OBSERVING, PROTECTING AND REPORTING



- Objective: To equip caregivers with the knowledge and skills to effectively plan and respond to emergencies, understand client-specific emergency plans, and ensure safe evacuations. Additionally, caregivers will learn to recognize, manage, and implement advance directives and the POLST form, ensuring clients' wishes regarding life-sustaining treatments and medical decisions are respected, especially when they are unable to decide for themselves.

- LESSON 1: OBSERVATION, DOCUMENTING AND RESPONDING
- LESSON 2: CLIENT SAFETY, PROTECTION AND RIGHTS
- LESSON 3: LEGAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

# LESSON 1: Observing, Documenting, and Responding to Client Needs





- Objective: To observe and document changes in a client's condition, accurately record the care provided, and manage situations where a client refuses care, while respecting their rights and dignity.

# Observing Changes in Clients

- As a Long-Term Care (LTC) worker, your role in observing changes in a client's physical, mental, or emotional condition is essential for providing timely and appropriate care.
- By using all your senses—sight, touch, smell, and hearing—you can detect changes such as confusion, weight loss, difficulty breathing, or shifts in mood and behavior.



# Observing Changes in Clients

- Paying attention to verbal cues like anxiety or talk of financial problems is also crucial. Promptly reporting these changes ensures that clients receive the necessary care and support to maintain their well-being.

# Documentation in Client Care

- Documentation is vital in client care, ensuring accurate communication among care teams and facilitating coordinated treatment.
- Timely and precise documentation helps track a client's health, well-being, and any changes, supporting continuous care and minimizing errors.



# Documentation in Client Care

- Best practices include maintaining privacy, writing clear and objective records, and following legal and ethical guidelines.
- Effective documentation not only improves care quality but also serves as a legal safeguard.



# Documentation in Client Care

- Effective documentation and reporting are critical in healthcare settings.
- When recording an incident or observation, it is important to include all relevant details: the when (date and time), the what (objective facts about what happened), the where (location of the event), the how (duration and frequency), and the who (people involved or notified).

# Documentation in Client Care

- Additionally, document the what action you took and the outcome.
- This comprehensive approach ensures clarity, accuracy, and accountability, enabling other team members to understand the situation fully and take appropriate action. Proper documentation is essential for providing consistent care, preventing errors, and maintaining legal and ethical standards.

# Documentation in Client Care

- When documenting client information, always prioritize privacy by ensuring that notes or forms are kept secure and out of view.
- Write clearly and legibly, using black ink to ensure readability.
- Stick to observable facts and describe what you see, avoiding personal opinions or interpretations.



# Documentation in Client Care

- If you didn't witness an event or take an action, don't make the entry or sign for it.
- Remember that any documentation you make is a legal record, so accuracy and confidentiality are paramount.
- By following these guidelines, you help maintain the integrity of client records and ensure that care is well-documented and easily understood by others.

# Reporting in Client Care

- As a caregiver, it's essential to closely monitor the health and well-being of your clients.
- You are responsible for documenting observations and reporting any changes or concerns to ensure coordinated care.
- Effective documentation is crucial for clear communication, especially when care team members work across different shifts or departments. Timely, accurate, and thorough reporting helps ensure that all necessary individuals are informed and that the client receives the best possible care.





# What to Do if a Client Refuses Care

- Clients have the right to refuse care at any time, and it's important to approach these refusals with empathy and understanding.
- By communicating openly with the client, caregivers can learn about the reasons behind their decision, which could range from fear or confusion to past negative experiences.
- Addressing these concerns may open the door to the client accepting care later or finding an alternative approach that meets their needs.



# What to Do if a Client Refuses Care

- When a refusal occurs, documenting the incident is essential, especially if safety or well-being could be compromised as a result.
- Accurate documentation helps maintain a clear record of the refusal and ensures that the care team is informed and can take necessary follow-up actions.



# What to Do if a Client Refuses Care

- If there are any concerns that the refusal may lead to harm or if it's unclear whether the refusal should be documented or reported, it is crucial to consult a supervisor.
- Supervisors can provide guidance on when and how to document, as well as whether a report needs to be filed, especially in situations where the client's safety is at risk.



# What to Do if a Client Refuses Care

- Proper documentation and communication with the care team not only protect the client's rights but also ensure that their care continues to be safe, effective, and aligned with their needs.
- Following the proper protocols in cases of refusal helps to maintain both client autonomy and quality care.



# LESSON 2: Client Safety, Protection, and Rights



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- OBJECTIVE; To recognize signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect, understand your role as a mandated reporter, ensure the appropriate use of restraints, and protect client confidentiality in accordance with legal and ethical standards.

# Recognizing and Responding to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

- ensuring the safety and well-being of the vulnerable adults in your care.
- recognize signs of abandonment, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and understand how to respond appropriately.



**What is Abandonment, Abuse,  
Neglect, and Exploitation?**

# Abandonment:

- Abandonment occurs when a person responsible for a vulnerable adult's care leaves them without the necessary resources, such as food, shelter, healthcare, or safety, leaving them unable to care for themselves.
- Essentially, it involves leaving the individual without support to meet their basic needs.



# Abuse

- Abuse is the intentional harm or mistreatment of a vulnerable adult, which can include physical injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or punishment. It encompasses sexual abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse, and exploitation.



# Physical abuse

- Physical abuse refers to the intentional infliction of bodily harm or physical mistreatment on a vulnerable adult.
- This can include actions like hitting, slapping, pinching, choking, kicking, shoving, or prodding, all of which cause physical injury or discomfort.
- The key element of physical abuse is that it is willful, meaning it is done intentionally to harm or control the individual.



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# Signs

- Signs of physical abuse include unexplained bruises, cuts, or burns, and marks that don't match the explanation given. The adult may also show fearful behavior around the person in charge or flinch when touched.

# Sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse is any non-consensual sexual activity, including unwanted touching, sexual assault, or coercion.
- It also includes sexually explicit actions, such as inappropriate photographing or sexual harassment.





# Sexual abuse

- According to RCW 71A.12, sexual abuse also covers any sexual contact between a staff member (who is not a resident or client) and a vulnerable adult in a facility or program authorized under RCW 71A.12.
- This is considered abuse, whether or not the vulnerable adult agrees, due to the inherent power imbalance and the duty of care.

# Signs

- Signs of sexual abuse include difficulty walking or sitting, unexplained sexually transmitted infections or injuries, and inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge that is beyond the individual's age or development level.

# Mental abuse

- Mental abuse refers to intentional actions that cause emotional harm to a vulnerable adult.
- This includes verbal or non-verbal behavior meant to threaten, humiliate, intimidate, isolate, or punish the individual.
- Examples of mental abuse are yelling, ridiculing, swearing, belittling, or making the person feel worthless or afraid.



# Mental abuse

- It can also involve isolating the person from others, controlling their movements, or using threats to manipulate them.
- The purpose of mental abuse is to undermine the adult's sense of self-worth and emotional well-being.

# Signs

- Signs of mental abuse include extreme anxiety, depression, or withdrawal. The person may seem fearful, isolated, or always on edge. They might also show signs of humiliation, like avoiding eye contact or trembling when speaking to certain individuals.

# Exploitation

- Exploitation happens when someone uses a vulnerable adult for their own benefit, taking advantage of their dependency or trust.
- This can involve making the adult work without compensation, stealing or misusing their money or belongings, or pressuring them to perform tasks or services for someone else's profit.
- Exploitation can also include manipulating the vulnerable adult to make decisions that benefit the exploiter, often through coercion or deceit, without regard for the adult's well-being or consent.



# Signs



- Signs of financial exploitation include sudden financial difficulties, missing personal belongings, or unusual changes in behavior, such as giving away large sums of money or property without clear reasons. The person may also be reluctant to discuss their finances or possessions.

# Personal exploitation

- Personal exploitation happens when someone pressures or tricks a vulnerable adult into doing things they don't want to do or that aren't good for them.
- This can include making them do work for the benefit of the person exploiting them or convincing them to make decisions that help someone else, even if it's not what they would normally do.





# Financial exploitation

- Financial exploitation is when someone takes or uses a vulnerable adult's money, property, or belongings without permission, for their own gain.
- This can include stealing money, using their things, or pressuring them to give away their possessions.



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# Neglect

- Neglect happens when a caregiver fails to provide the basic necessities a vulnerable adult needs to stay healthy and safe, such as food, medical care, or a secure living environment.
- It can also occur if the caregiver does not respond to the adult's emotional and physical needs or prevent harm from happening. Neglect can be seen as a pattern of ignoring responsibilities or actions that put the vulnerable adult at significant risk.

# Neglect

- This includes situations where the caregiver's actions—or lack of actions—cause immediate danger to the adult's health, safety, or well-being, as defined by RCW 9A.42.100.

# Signs

- Signs of neglect include poor hygiene (like body odor, unkempt hair, or dirty clothing), weight loss or malnutrition (suggesting a lack of proper care or nutrition), unsafe living conditions (such as an unsanitary or cold home), and missed medical appointments or failure to take prescribed medications.

# Your Role as a Mandated Reporter

- As a mandated reporter in Washington State, you have a legal and ethical duty to report any suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment of vulnerable adults.
- Vulnerable adults are individuals who, due to age, disability, or living situation, are at an increased risk of harm and may be unable to fully care for themselves.
- This includes those over the age of 60, individuals with developmental disabilities, and people living in care facilities such as adult family homes, assisted living, or receiving home-based services.



# Your Role as a Mandated Reporter

- When you suspect abuse, it is critical to act on reasonable suspicion, not requiring proof, but based on the signs or concerns you observe.
- Reporting must be immediate to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and if the abuse involves physical or sexual assault, you must report to both DSHS and law enforcement.
- If the suspected abuse leads to death, you are required to notify the coroner or medical examiner, as well as law enforcement.



# Where to report:

- For adults in an adult family home or assisted living facility: Call 1-800-562-6078.
- For adults living in their own home or receiving home care: Call 1-866-363-4276 or 1-866-End Harm.
- If the abuse involves physical or sexual assault, report to both DSHS and law enforcement.

# Where to report:

- By reporting in good faith, you are protected from legal liability, even if your suspicion is later determined to be unfounded.
- Failing to report suspected abuse is a gross misdemeanor, and your identity will remain confidential throughout the process.
- Your role is crucial in helping prevent harm and ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults who may not be able to protect themselves.





# Self-neglect

- Self-neglect refers to a situation where a vulnerable adult is unable to meet their own basic physical or mental needs, which can result in serious harm or an increased risk of harm.
- This can manifest in various ways, including poor hygiene, malnutrition, lack of medical care, unsafe living conditions, or neglecting personal safety.



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# The Use of Restraints in Care Settings

- Restraints, whether physical, chemical, or environmental, should never be used for discipline or staff convenience.
- The focus should always be on ensuring the safety, dignity, and autonomy of the client, with alternatives to restraint explored whenever possible.
- Understanding and following facility protocols is essential to ensure that restraints are used only when absolutely necessary and in compliance with regulatory standards.





# Protecting Client Records and Confidentiality

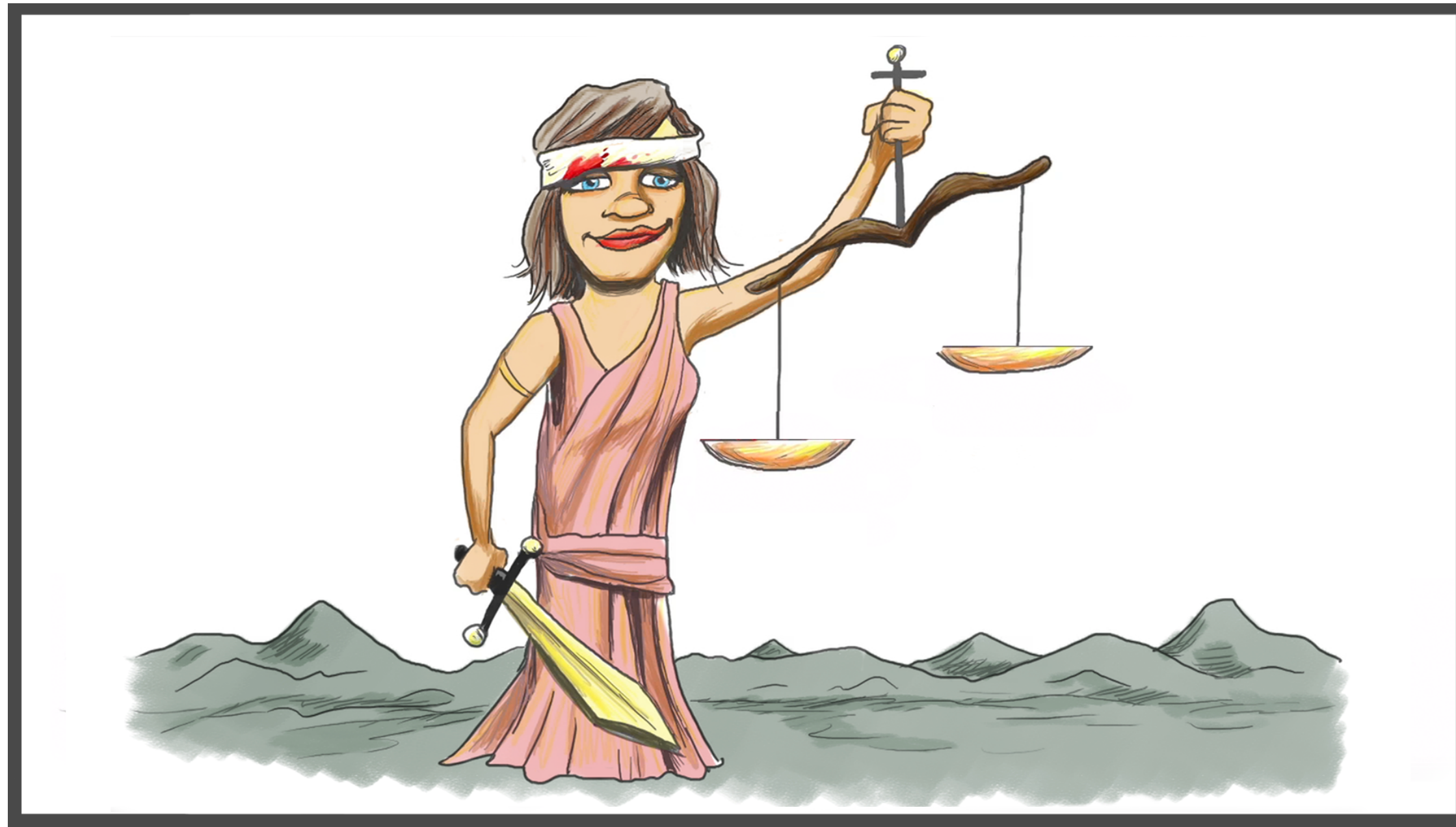
- Protecting client records and confidentiality is essential in maintaining trust and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.
- Best practices for securing client records include keeping them locked and restricting access to authorized personnel only.
- Sharing information within the care team should be done on a need-to-know basis, ensuring that only relevant parties are informed.
- It is vital to handle records with care, ensuring they remain secure and private, to safeguard both the client's rights and the integrity of the care provided.

# Protecting Client Records and Confidentiality

- To protect client confidentiality, always ensure that records are not left unattended and are promptly re-filed in their proper location once you're finished with them.
- Be mindful of your surroundings when reviewing or updating records, ensuring that unauthorized individuals are not present.
- Never discuss any information from a client's records with anyone outside the care team.
- Following these practices helps safeguard sensitive information and maintains the trust and privacy of your clients.



## LESSON 3: Legal and Ethical Responsibilities



- Objective: To effectively collaborate with your supervisor in reporting concerns and documenting incidents, ensuring proper follow-up and compliance with facility policies and legal requirements.



# Working with Your Supervisor and Reporting Concerns

- If you suspect abuse, neglect, abandonment, or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult, it's crucial to report it right away, starting with informing your supervisor.
- Your facility will have specific policies and procedures for handling these situations to ensure proper documentation and compliance with the law. These procedures help guide how the situation is addressed, ensuring the safety of the client.





# Working with Your Supervisor and Reporting Concerns

- However, it's important to remember that while your supervisor will play a key role in managing the situation, notifying them does not relieve you of your legal responsibility as a mandated reporter.
- You are still required to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation directly to the appropriate authorities, such as the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or law enforcement, as needed.

# Working with Your Supervisor and Reporting Concerns

- This ensures that the necessary steps are taken to protect the vulnerable adult and comply with the law.
- By following both facility protocols and your reporting duties, you help ensure the safety, well-being, and legal protection of the individuals in your care.

# Incident Logs and Documentation Requirements

- Incident logs are important for keeping track of any events that affect a client's well-being in Adult Family Homes (AFHs) and Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs).
- AFHs must keep a log of all incidents, including suspected abuse, accidents, or injuries.
- ALFs don't need to keep a log, but they must document any investigations into suspected abuse or other incidents that affect a client's health or safety.

# Incident Logs and Documentation Requirements

- It's your job to know how to record these events, where the log is kept, and make sure it is filled out correctly.
- Proper documentation helps ensure the safety of clients and meets legal requirements.

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