3.11 ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF ADULTS

Overview:
Employees, volunteers and others who are involved in the lives of the individuals that BACI serves are often in positions of trust and authority over those people. Individuals served may have physical, intellectual and/or developmental limitations that make them at a higher risk of abuse and neglect.

This policy is intended to guide employees and volunteers (including Board Members) in: (1) Dealing with suspicions of abuse, or; (2) Reports of abuse or neglect, and; (3) Handling situations where abuse or neglect has occurred or might occur. Where programs are under the jurisdiction of Community Care Licensing, the intent is to provide direction which is consistent with the Residential Care Regulations. Where programs are funded by Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), the intent is to provide direction which is consistent with CLBC's policies and guidelines for practice. All applicable laws and legal reporting requirements also apply in this policy.

Definitions and Categories of Abuse:

1. **Definition**
   Abuse is an action, inaction or behaviour that may result in physical, sexual, emotional or psychological harm to an individual by a person in a position of trust, power, and/or authority. This may also include abuse by one supported individual against another supported individual.

2. **Categories of Abuse**
   (Informed by BC's Residential Care Regulations and CLBC.)

   Physical
   - Assault (for example: slapping, hitting, kicking, punching).
   - Rough handling without regard for the individual's comfort (for example: unnecessary force applied during lifts, transfers and activities of daily living).
   - Physical neglect (for example: withholding food, personal or medical care, including untreated pain).

   Emotional/Psychological
   - Verbal or emotional abuse (for example: yelling, making demeaning or derogatory remarks, teasing, swearing, and/or name-calling.)
   - Psychosocial neglect (for example: lack of attention, isolation, confinement).
   - Setting individuals up for ridicule or scorn by peers or others.
   - Interactions that are, or could reasonably be interpreted as, disrespectful.

Financial

- Misuse of an individual's finances for inappropriate purposes (for example: payments made to caregivers to provide food or benefits are not implemented or used for other purposes).
- Theft of money or personal property.
- Fraud, which is deceitful manipulation of finances.
- Solicitation for compensation (example; undue and inappropriate pressure placed on the individual to pay for more services or support).

Sexual Abuse/Assault

- Any form of sexual abuse/assault by force or threat of force by any individual including an employee, a person in position of power, a trust or authority, family member, roommate or co-supported adult.
- Any sexual exploitation by an employee, or any other person in a position of trust, power or authority.
- Any form of sexual contact by a person in a position of power, authority, or trust.
- Any attempt to engage in sexual activities by a person in position of power, authority, or trust.
- Unnecessary disregard for privacy.
- Unnecessary touching of a person's private parts (for example: disregard for Personal Care Policy 9.6).

Note: Consensual sexual activity and/or behaviour between supported adults is a respected right. While people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are at greater risk of experiencing sexual abuse than the general population, they face significant institutional barriers to pursuing consensual sexual relationships. Nothing in BACI's policies regarding sexual abuse and assault should be interpreted as a prohibition against the people they support pursuing and conducting consensual sexual relationships with people who are not in positions of power, trust, or authority over them.

Medication Abuse

- Medicating or sedating unnecessarily.
- Over-sedation or non-compliance with medication refills.
- Misuse of an individual's medications and prescriptions.
- Misuse of non-prescription medications.

Neglect

- Intentional neglect: Willful withholding of basic necessities and care (including pain).
- Unintentional neglect: Withholding of basic necessities and care, usually due to a lack of experience or information (including pain).
- Failure to respond to an individual's need for interaction, inclusion, or routine interaction on a daily basis.

Violation of Rights

- Denial of basic civil/human rights – linked directly to Policy 9.1 - Rights and Responsibilities of People with Disabilities.

Discrimination

- Unfair, unequal, or prejudicial treatment of an individual based on a personal characteristic, identity, or protected ground. Intentional discrimination occurs when a person knowingly treats someone unfairly because of a personal characteristic or protected ground (for example: refusing to provide a service because of a person's disability, race, religion, gender identity; excluding a person from activities based on stereotypes or personal beliefs.)
- Unintentional discrimination occurs when practices, assumptions, communication styles, or barriers unintentionally disadvantage or exclude a person or group, even when there is no intent to cause harm (for example: making decisions based on assumptions about a person's abilities, health, or capacity or using communication methods that are not accessible to the individual.)

Policy

BACI will support individuals in a safe, positive, and nurturing manner at all times. The support will be free of any abuse, neglect and/or harm to the individuals. BACI is committed to the safe care of the individuals receiving support and will not tolerate any form of abuse, neglect and/or harm. If an individual receiving supports is at risk or the victim of abuse, harm and/or neglect, BACI will take every measure to ensure the individual is safe and no longer at risk, as well as ensuring reporting requirements are met.

BACI's Responsibilities

BACI will provide services in an environment that is safe and free from any abuse or neglect.

BACI will report allegations of abuse to family members and/or appropriate authorities, including legal authorities (i.e. RCMP, city police department).

BACI will ensure the investigation of any allegations of abuse. To make sure individuals are supported without fear of abuse, every effort will be made to ensure that all reported incidents are investigated and dealt with quickly. We will try to maintain confidentiality but it cannot be guaranteed, particularly if there are legislative reporting requirements.

BACI will take any necessary action to ensure that individuals are, and feel, safe and secure and that abuse does not re-occur. Any employee who, upon investigation, has abused or neglected an individual that we serve will face disciplinary measures up to, and including, immediate dismissal. Resulting discipline

does not preclude or replace any ensuing legal actions or outcomes taken by the authorities.

Employees' and Volunteers' Responsibilities
If an employee or volunteer witnesses the abuse or neglect of a person served, they must immediately intervene – if safe to do so – to ensure the individual's safety and then report the incident to the supervisor immediately afterwards.

Employees or volunteers who suspect that abuse or neglect has occurred have the responsibility to report their suspicions immediately. If the accused is a supervisor, the suspicions must be reported immediately to the manager.

Employees or volunteers who know, or could reasonably be expected to know, about an incident of abuse or neglect and who do not report it will be treated as having aided the abuse or neglect and will face disciplinary measures up to, and including, dismissal.

Linking Policies

1.8 Code of Ethics
9.1 Rights & Responsibilities of People
9.2 Family Involvement
9.3 Advocate & Friend Involvement
9.4 Promoting Friendships of People with Disabilities
9.5 Involvement in Decision-making
9.6 Personal Care Assistance
9.7 Behavioural Interventions

Statement of Compliance

I have read BACI's policy on the Abuse and Neglect of Adults.
I fully understand the terms of this document and agree to abide by them.

_____ _____
(Board member, employee, or volunteer name) (Date)

_____ _____
(Witness) (Date)