



Definitions of Abuse

January 2010

Whereas the CODA Committee recognizes that the abuse of people with disabilities takes place in the context of systemic discrimination in all aspects of society, such as but not limited to:

- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Service Delivery
- ✓ Interpersonal Relationships

Whereas the CODA Committee recognizes that various constitutional, legislative and regulatory provisions serve to protect people with disabilities from forms of abuse, the work of the Committee will focus on the following types of abuse, as listed and defined below:

1. *Physical*
2. *Sexual*
3. *Psychological*
4. *Financial/Material*
5. *Neglect/Desertion*
6. *Spiritual*

Types of Abuse Defined:

1. Physical Abuse:

Direct infliction of physical pain or injury:

- 1.1 Assault including rough or inappropriate handling, grabbing, striking, hair-pulling, biting, arm-twisting, punching, shoving, slapping, pinching, hitting, kicking, choking, hitting with objects, use of harmful weapons, and confinement including use of harmful restraints or restriction of freedom of movement
- 1.2 Over/under medication abuse.
- 1.3 Removal of required aids (e.g. cane, dog guide).

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2. Sexual Abuse:

A completed sex act without the victim's consent, an attempted sex act without the victim's consent, abusive sexual conduct, non-contact sexual abuse and unspecified sexual violence:

- 2.1 Verbal and physical sexual harassment, unwanted sexual touching including fondling the genitals, sexual assault, rape, sexual battery, forced sodomy.
- 2.2 Non-verbal, forced abortion or sterilization, denial of sexual information/education (about birth control and childbirth).

3. Psychological Abuse:

Intentional infliction of anxiety, hurt, guilt or fear through verbal (tone and or words) or non-verbal acts, and, degrading and undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and self-esteem while rejecting their opinions and needs:

- 3.1 Verbal: name calling, insulting, threatening, yelling, constant criticism, intimidation, coercion, and humiliation.
- 3.2 Emotional: socially isolating, withholding affection, denying privileges, manipulation, silent treatment, and the threat of having one's children taken away.
- 3.3 Denying the abuse ever happened; and shifting responsibility for abuse, using the statement "it's your fault".
- 3.4 Abuse of power or authority.

4. Financial/Material Abuse:

Taking and maintaining control of a person's financial resources without their consent, rendering them financially dependent, and, theft, by a relative or caregiver, of money or object of value belonging to the disabled person:

- 4.1 Forging signatures, misuse of money, defrauding, creating debt.
- 4.2 Withholding funds or denying access to financial resources; making them beg for their own money for necessary items.
- 4.3 Giving an allowance and requiring justification for all money spent.
- 4.4 Destruction of property or personal items.
- 4.5 Hurting the individual's pet(s).

5. Neglect/Desertion:

- 5.1 Failing to provide necessities of life such as adequate heat, food, clothing, and cleanliness including inappropriate personal or medical care, and providing inadequate supervision.

6. Spiritual:

- 6.1 Preventing the individual from engaging in their spiritual practices.
- 6.2 Ridiculing the individual's spiritual beliefs.
- 6.3 Handling the individual's spiritual belongings disrespectfully.