

Caregiver Responsibilities



Ethics of the Professional Caregiver

As a professional caregiver, you are responsible for:

Recognizing a consumer as an individual

- Find out and follow a consumer's likes and dislikes.
- Ask how the consumer wants things done.
- Get to know and follow a consumer's routines.
- Become aware of a consumer's cultural preferences.



Promoting a consumer's autonomy (independence)

- Be knowledgeable and respectful of consumer's rights.
- Promote and work with consumer to ensure highest level of functioning.
- Encourage consumer's choice.
- Ensure consumer participation in all care decisions.
- Maintain a consumer's privacy and dignity.

Providing mindful caregiving

- Balance the skill and art of caregiving by following the consumer's authorized service plan (Notice of Action).
- Observe the consumer closely, watching for changes in mental, emotional and physical behavior.
- Report changes with care and accuracy to team members (social worker, family members, and doctors) as necessary.

Professional Caregiver Conduct

- Be reliable and considerate of the consumer.
- Cooperate with team members.
- Be effective and efficient with time and supplies.
- Follow procedures.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate, neat and clean.
- Leave personal problems at home.
- Do not borrow or ask for a financial loan.
- Do not ask for consumers medication or offer your own medication to consumer.



Honoring Confidentiality & Establishing Trust

What is Confidentiality?

Confidentiality simply means a promise not to disclose any personal information about your consumer's health, finances, family members, etc. to a third party.

Confidentiality Agreement

As part of your employment, it is good to put together a confidentiality agreement. The following wording is an example of the wording in a confidentiality agreement:



"I understand that it is my responsibility to keep confidential any medical, financial, family, or personal information concerning the IHSS consumer. I will not divulge any information which may identify the consumer or his/her family or which may cause embarrassment to his/her family. I will not give out the consumer's name, address or phone number."

The consumer is also responsible to respect the IHSS caregiver's right to privacy and confidentiality.

Confidentiality Tips

- Information given to you about the consumer should never be casually shared with another person, except for reporting abuse or dangerous situations to the police or adult protective services. Confidentiality is protected under the California Welfare & Institutions Code Section 10850. Violation of a consumer's confidentiality is punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.
- If the consumer shares family problems or concerns, it is good to stay neutral and not take sides.

Trust and Respect

Trust is important in any healthy relationship, because with it comes openness, sharing, and growth. For a frail, elderly or disabled person, who has sustained many losses, trust is especially important. Losses can cause a person to turn inward and replace what was once confidence with fear. You can help to reverse this trend by building trust.

Here are some tips to follow as you encourage a trusting relationship:

- Decide on a mutually good time for your work schedule prior to starting work.
- Follow the consumer's instructions.
- Be dependable; call as soon as possible if you cannot come to work.
- Respect the privacy and individuality of the person.
- Do not start anything you are not prepared to carry through.
- Be honest about your limits.
- Respect consumers, calling them by their last name unless asked to call them by their first name.
- Advise the consumer of the name you would like to be called to help the consumer get to know you.



Communication

Communicating with an IHSS Consumer



Always use your best communication skills when talking with a consumer.

- Take time to learn more about your consumer.
- Discover their favorite foods, clothes, games, music, animals, recipes, or memories. Include these favorites in conversations when you are doing approved activities.
- Learn what your consumer likes to be called and use that name.
- Listen and show respect for your consumers concerns.

Take time to understand ways a consumer interprets communication:

- His/her preferred ways of greeting
- How (or if) they express emotions
- His/her use of humor
- His/her perception of time and punctuality
- How he/she uses and interprets body language

Getting Started

There are many reasons you or your consumer might need help in getting good communication started.

- You and your consumer may need to get to know each other.
- You will be helping with personal care and that requires talking about private matters.
- Your consumer may not want to be reminded about all the things he/she can no longer do.

Setting the Pace

Pace your words when speaking to a consumer. The consumer may need time to process the information you are giving. Find a pace that is comfortable for the consumer. Watch for his/her facial expressions and feedback that show you he/she fully understands what you are saying. When in doubt, ask.

"Please let me know if I am going too fast. I will be happy to slow down."

If a consumer has trouble hearing

- Get a consumer's attention verbally or by touch.
- Position yourself so the consumer can see you.
- Speak slowly and form words carefully.
- Raise the volume of your voice if necessary.
- Use simple sentences.
- Reduce background noise and distraction as much as possible.
- Use gestures and facial expressions to help explain.
- Check to make sure the consumer has understood what you said.



If the consumer has trouble talking

- Ask questions that can be answered with one word or hand gestures.
- Be patient, even if you must ask the same question many times.
- Reduce background noise and distraction as much as possible.
- Keep paper and pencil handy if they can be of use.
- If you do not understand, ask again for clarification.
- Limit conversations that may tire the consumer.

Reporting Abuse

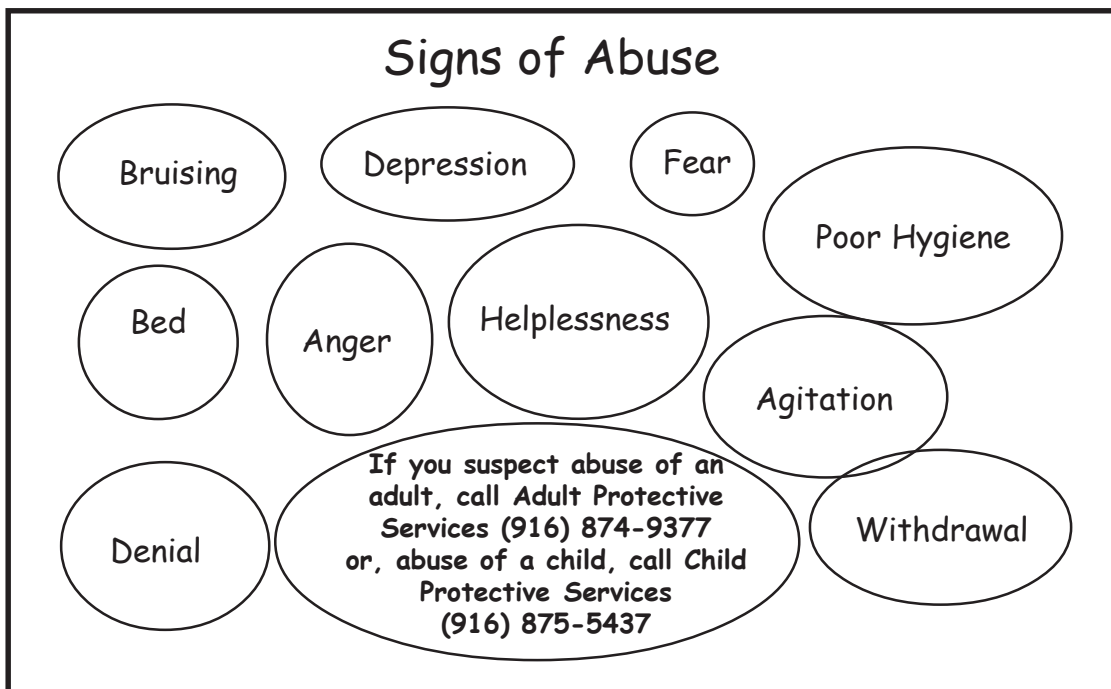
As an In-Home Support Services caregiver you are a mandated reporter. This means that you are required by law to report:

- Suspected abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation of any dependent adult or child

Failure to make a report could result in a \$5000 fine and/or up to 6 months jail time.

Elder and Child Abuse

Report elder and child abuse if you observe it, suspect it, or it is reported to you. Elder and child abuse and neglect are serious and growing problems. The growing number of elderly people requiring in-home care has exposed more families to stresses that can result in abuse and neglect when support is not available. It is important to remember that abuse can exist in any situation where a person is dependent on someone else for care. People of any age who are ill or disabled may be at risk of abuse by a caregiver, family member, friend or neighbor.



Types of Abuse

Neglect

Failure of the responsible person to provide basic needs such as food, water, personal care, shelter, and medical care.

Psychological Abuse

Verbal assaults, threats, or harassment; subjecting a person to fear or serious emotional distress; withholding emotional support; isolation and loss of companionship.

Material/Financial Abuse

Theft or misuse of money, credit cards, or property; extortion or fraud; telephone, mail, home repair, and other scams; forced signature of documents.

Physical Abuse

Infliction of physical pain or injury; physical coercion; confinement; slapping, bruising, cutting, lacerating, burning, restraining, pushing, shoving, etc.

Sexual Abuse

Unwanted sexual advances, including assaultive behavior accomplished through coercion, intimidation, force, or fear.

Abandonment

Desertion by a person who has assumed responsibility for providing care for an individual.

Misuse of Restraints

A consumer **may not** be locked in rooms, tied down, or over-medicated. Only a physician can write a prescription for restraints.



How do I report suspected abuse?

Call Adult Protective Services at (916) 874-9377 if you suspect abuse of an adult. If you suspect child abuse call the Child Protective Services 24-hour number at (916) 875-5437. Or call the local police or sheriff's department to report suspected abuse.

What is fraud? Fraud is when a person makes a deliberate attempt to deceive, or to obtain something in an unlawful or unfair manner. It may also be fraud if you are asked to do something by a consumer or caregiver that is not allowed by IHSS. If you are asked to do something and are unsure if the IHSS program allows you to do it, contact IHSS. Here are some examples of deliberate and unintentional fraud.

1. Working for an IHSS consumer while the consumer is in the hospital or out of the home for any reason:

IHSS assistance is provided to allow people to remain safely in their homes. An IHSS *consumer* is not eligible to use the in-home care hours while placed in a nursing facility, hospital, or out of the home. If a caregiver claims hours on a timesheet while the *consumer* is in a nursing facility, hospitalized, or out of the home, it is fraud.

When a *consumer* returns home, if no additional care is needed, the IHSS social worker must adjust the number of hours for that month. A caregiver cannot work additional hours to make up for hours not worked while the *consumer* was out of the home.

2. An IHSS caregiver claims all the hours they are authorized to work, even if they did not work all authorized hours:

Only the actual hours worked may be claimed on the timesheet. If a timesheet is signed claiming more than the actual time worked, it is fraud.

3. My IHSS consumer is not available to sign my timesheet, can I just sign it and let them know later?

No. The IHSS *consumer* is the employer. Only the *consumer* or their authorized representative may sign the timesheet. Having someone other than the authorized caregiver or *consumer* sign the timesheet is fraud. If circumstances (death or incapacitation) make it impossible for the IHSS *consumer* to sign the timesheet, the caregiver should contact the IHSS social worker assigned to the *consumer*.

4. Claim all the hours authorized and then split the wages between the IHSS caregiver and consumer:

Claiming hours not worked on a time sheet is fraud. If a caregiver works all the authorized hours and the *consumer* wants the caregiver to split the wages earned, the caregiver should contact the *consumer's* social worker.

5. Can an IHSS consumer still approve hours if they are put in jail or prison?

No. Care is provided to *consumers* in their home. A *consumer* must notify IHSS immediately if they are jailed or imprisoned. If a *consumer* signs a timesheet approving hours worked by the caregiver while the IHSS *consumer* is incarcerated, this is fraud.

6. As a caregiver, I cannot work all the hours the consumer needs. Can I hire someone else to do the work for me and claim the hours on my timesheet?

No. This would be fraud. Only the consumer may hire a caregiver, and you may not claim hours worked by others.

IHSS Fraud (continued)

7. Can a caregiver submit a timesheet early showing all the hours they intend to work prior to actually performing the duties?

No. The *consumer* can only sign a timesheet AFTER the time has been worked.

8. If a caregiver reports a check missing, completes an affidavit, and then receives the missing check: can the check be cashed?

No. Once an affidavit is signed, the check is void. Cashing two checks for the same pay period is fraud. A person is entitled to one paycheck for services provided. The voided check should be returned.

9. What will happen to me if I am reported for IHSS fraud?

You will be investigated. If the allegations are found to be true, you can be prosecuted.

10. What do I do if I suspect someone of IHSS fraud?

You should call the IHSS social worker.

If you do not understand the information on this sheet, call your IHSS social worker for assistance.