



## **Arc Guide to How to Empower Individuals to Prevent Abuse**

Use person first language. Use 'person with a disability' instead of disabled person

Approach victims with disabilities with the same dignity & respect as a victim without disabilities

Ask the individual if he/she needs help. If the person needs help, ask him/her how you can help and the best way to assist him/her.

Be clear on your role as a victim advocate. Communicate that to the person. Be patient. Allow the person to tell his/her own story.

Listen without judgement or shock.

Support the person in making his/her own decisions. Offer options when there is choice to be made. If you are taking some action, inform the person about what you are doing and why.

Determine how the person best receives information. Provide information in that format. Use qualified interpreters when there is a language issue.

Report any suspected neglect or abuse. Remember it is not your job to determine whether or not the abuse actually occurred, but it is your job to report it.

Be familiar with your agency's policy on reporting abuse or neglect, including the internal investigation process.

Engage in regular training opportunities regarding your agency's abuse/neglect policies and procedures.

Assist guardians, caregivers, and providers to understand and look for signs of abuse.

Become aware of the relationships of the person with a disability. Be alert to "red flags".

Acknowledge any negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes you have. Strive to overcome them.



Remember that family members, personal care assistants, and services providers could be perpetrators or want to protect the perpetrator.

Be sure all individuals know the importance of reporting abuse and the action needed to report it.

Do not hesitate to refer suspected abuse.

Educate yourself about obstacles around this issue that is unique to individuals with disabilities.

**For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Minnesota at 952-920-0855 or toll-free at 833.450.1494 or visit [www.arcminnesota.org](http://www.arcminnesota.org).** (Please note: *This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.*)

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