

**Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Office of Families and Children
Adult Protective Services**

**Policy and Practice Guidance Document #017
Suggested Adult Protective Services (APS) Intake Screening Guidelines**

December 17, 2021

Background

The Adult Protective Services (APS) Section at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Office of Families and Children worked with county APS agencies to develop these suggested guidelines to assist county APS staff in gathering sufficient and significant information necessary to make screening decisions when a referral is made regarding adult abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.

Screening is the point at which a decision must be made about the need for intervention to ensure an adult's safety. The information obtained from the referent is used to determine both the necessity for APS staff to intervene as well as the timeframe and nature in which APS staff should respond.

Included with this guidance is a table showing a list of screening criteria based on type of alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation, along with an APS Intake Screening Information Desk Aid that can be used by those taking referrals).

Please Note: Use of these APS Suggested Screening Guidelines is not mandatory. It is intended to be best practice guidance developed to assist APS staff in making critical safety decisions.

Key Term Definitions as Used in this Document

Definitions are based on Section 5101:2-20-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

1. **Abandonment** means desertion of an adult by a caretaker without having made provision for transfer of the adult's care to someone else.
2. **Abuse** means the infliction upon an adult by self or others of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation or cruel punishment with resulting physical harm, pain, or mental anguish.
3. **Activities of daily living (ADLs)** refer to an adult's ability to provide self-care. Common ADLs include feeding, bathing, dressing, grooming, completing work assignments, homemaking, cleaning oneself after toileting and leisure.
4. **Adult** means any person sixty years of age or older within this state who is handicapped by the infirmities of aging or who has a physical or mental impairment which prevents the person from providing for their own care or protection, and who resides in an independent living arrangement
5. **At-Risk Adult** means those who are 60 years old or older who are susceptible to mistreatment or self-neglect because the adult is unable to perform or obtain services necessary for his or her health, safety, or welfare. This also applies to adults who lack the sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions concerning their person or affairs.
6. **Caretaker** means the person assuming the primary responsibility for the care of an adult by any of the following means:
 - On a voluntary basis;
 - By contract;
 - Through receipt of payment for care;
 - As a result of a family relationship;
 - By order of a court of competent jurisdiction.
7. **Emergency** means that the adult is living in conditions which present a substantial risk of immediate and irreparable physical harm or death to self or any other person.
8. **Emotional Abuse** means to threaten, humiliate, intimidate, or psychologically harm an adult; also, the violation of an adult's right to make decisions and loss of privacy.

9. **Exploitation** means the unlawful or improper act of a person using, in one or more transactions, an adult or an adult's resources for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain when the person obtained or exerted control over the adult or the adult's resources in any of the following ways:
 - Without the adult's consent or the consent of the person authorized to give consent on the adult's behalf;
 - Beyond the scope of the express or implied consent of the adult or the person authorized to give consent on the adult's behalf;
 - By deception;
 - By threat;
 - By intimidation.

10. **In need of protective services** means an adult known or suspected to be suffering from abuse, neglect, or exploitation to an extent that either life is endangered, or physical harm, mental anguish or mental illness results or is likely to result.

11. **Incapacitated person** means a person who is impaired for any reason to the extent that he lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make and carry out reasonable decisions concerning the person's self or resources, with or without the assistance of a caretaker. Refusal to consent to the provision of services shall not be the sole determinative that the person is incapacitated.

12. **Independent living arrangement** means a domicile of a person's own choosing, including, but not limited to, a private home, apartment, trailer, or rooming house. "Independent living arrangement" includes a residential facility licensed under section 5119.34 of the Revised Code that provides accommodations, supervision, and personal care services for three to sixteen unrelated adults, but does not include any other institution or facility licensed by the state or a facility in which a person resides as a result of voluntary, civil, or criminal commitment.

13. **Intake** is a function of the county department of job and family services (CDJFS) or designated agency through which reports of alleged adult abuse, neglect or exploitation are received, screened, and prioritized.

14. **Neglect** means any of the following:
 - Failure of an adult to provide for self the goods or services necessary to avoid physical harm, mental anguish, or mental illness;
 - Failure of a caretaker to provide such goods or services;
 - Abandonment.

15. **Non-Emergency** is a result of an adult living in conditions which present a low to medium risk of immediate and irreparable physical harm to self or any other person.

16. **Physical Abuse** is the intentional use of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment.
17. **Physical harm** is bodily pain, injury, impairment or disease suffered by an adult.
18. **Protective services** are services provided by the CDJFS or its designated agency to an adult who has been determined by evaluation to require such services for the prevention, correction or discontinuance of an act of, as well as conditions resulting from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Protective services may include, but are not limited to, case work services, medical care, mental health services, legal services, fiscal management, home health care, homemaker services, housing-related services, guardianship services, and placement services as well as the provision of such commodities as food, clothing, and shelter.
19. **Referral** is an allegation of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation made orally or in writing.
20. **Report** is a referral accepted by the CDJFS or designated agency for further investigation or assessment.
21. **Reporter/Referent** is the person alleging abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult.
22. **Screening** is the process by which the CDJFS or designated agency determines whether information contained in an allegation constitutes a report of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation.
23. **Sexual abuse** means non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an adult regardless of age of the perpetrator.

Suggested Intake Screening Criteria Related to Neglect

Screening intake reports of **Neglect** include **Self-Neglect** and **Neglect by Other**. Examples of various types of Neglect are categorized by situations (e.g., lack of basic needs, hazardous living conditions, unmet medical needs, etc.).

ORC DEFINITIONS	SCREEN IN EXAMPLES	SCREEN OUT EXAMPLES
Self-Neglect	Lack of Basic Needs	Lack of Basic Needs
<p>Failure of an adult to provide for himself the goods or services necessary to avoid physical harm, mental anguish or mental illness.</p> <p>[ORC 5101.60 (O)]</p>	<p>No food or food in the home is not safe for consumption.</p> <p>Inadequate clothing (i.e., multiple layers in summer and not enough layers in the winter).</p> <p>Lack of shelter posing health and safety concerns.</p> <p>Lack of adequate year-round shelter.</p> <p>Lack of utilities without access to alternative provisions which causes safety threat to the adult (e.g., lack of electricity for medical monitors or breathing machines, no access to water for personal hygiene; no heating source in winter).</p> <p>Wandering (i.e., driving or walking away from a location and is unable to return without assistance)</p>	<p>No food in the home but the adult receives community services (meals on wheels) and/or family services.</p> <p>No permanent shelter, but the adult has alternative housing (tent, camper, lives in homeless shelter) that is safe in all weather conditions.</p> <p>Lack of utilities but has access to alternative provisions and no safety threat (e.g., no water in the home, but the adult brings water into the home or utilizes neighbor's facilities).</p> <p>Driving or walking away from a location and is able to return safely without assistance.</p>

	<p>Imminent risk of losing shelter (e.g., eviction).</p> <p>Poor financial decisions that negatively impact the adult's ability to provide adequate basic needs, such as self-care, food, shelter or medical care.</p>	
	<p>Hazardous Living Conditions</p>	<p>Hazardous Living Conditions</p>
	<p>The adult's home content presents health or safety hazard (e.g., clutter or debris are present to the point that it prevents entrance to or exit from dwelling; exposed wiring within reach; fire hazards including combustible materials near the furnace; excessive garbage or rotted food that threatens health; human/animal waste accessible in living quarters; improper disposal of human waste; structural issues that impact the safety of the residence).</p> <p>Bugs and/or rodents that pose a health and safety hazard (e.g., cockroaches inhabiting bedding; rat bites or maggots on the adult's body; maggots on kitchen counters, stove, etc.)</p>	<p>The conditions of the home do not pose health hazards or safety issues.</p> <p>Clutter of dirty clothes, newspapers, boxes, etc., that does not interfere with entrance to and exit from the home, or access to the kitchen and/or bathroom.</p> <p>The adult has access to weapons but has expressed no threat to harm themselves or others.</p>

	<p>Older adult has access to weapons which creates threat of harm to themselves or others.</p> <p>Illegal drugs and/or other substances within the home that create a dangerous environment for the adult.</p>	
Neglect by Caretaker	Unmet Medical Needs	Unmet Medical Needs
<p>Failure of a caretaker to provide goods or services necessary to avoid physical harm, mental anguish, mental illness or abandonment.</p> <p>[ORC 5101.60 (O)]</p>	<p>Failure of a caretaker to provide the adult with personal, psychiatric or medical care for a potential life-threatening condition, illness or injury. The adult's health is adversely affected (e.g., self-mutilation, eating disorder, suicidal threat, bleeding, painful skin condition, loss of teeth or hair, chronic tooth pain, etc.).</p>	<p>Failure of a caretaker to provide medical care, but the lack of/limited care does not impact the adult's health and safety; this may include decisions based on religious beliefs.</p>
	Over/Under Utilization of Medication	Over/Under Utilization of Medication
	<p>Caretaker fails to provide medication or fails to follow through to see that medication is being managed properly.</p>	<p>An unimpaired adult refuses referral to prescribed medical treatments or refuses to take prescribed medications.</p>
	Immobile/Limited Mobility	Immobile/Limited Mobility
	<p>Caretaker fails to provide for the adult's basic needs. The adult has limited or no access to food, water, clothing, bathroom needs, heat, electricity, a telephone etc.).</p>	<p>Caretaker has intermittent access to the adult who has limited mobility, but the adult basic needs are met and have access to an emergency response system when needed.</p>

	High risk of falls during mobility and/or transfers. Caretaker failure to provide a means to exit the home in case of an emergency; or does not have the emergency response system readily available when needed.	
	Abandonment	Abandonment
	Caretaker and/or any other person legally responsible for the care of the adult has deserted them without guaranteeing appropriate care.	The adult has been left alone to care for themselves and is able to meet their own basic needs without assistance.

Suggested Intake Screening Criteria Related to Abuse

Screening intake reports of **Abuse** include **Physical, Emotional, and Sexual**. Examples of various types of Abuse are categorized by situations (e.g., hitting, kicking, threatening, humiliation, nonconsensual sex, etc.)

ORC DEFINITIONS	SCREEN IN EXAMPLES	SCREEN OUT EXAMPLES
Abuse	Physical Injury	Physical Injury
The infliction upon an adult by self or others of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting physical harm, pain, or mental anguish. [ORC 5101.60 (B)]	Physical assault by a caretaker, spouse, relative, friend, etc., of a vulnerable adult by physical force or violence that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. Restraint or confinement without medical authorization.	There are alleged physical injuries to the adult that are not intentional, the documentation of how the injury occurred is accurate and treatment has been accessed.

	<p>The adult has physical injuries and there is no reasonable explanation of how the injuries occurred; or injuries are inconsistent with the explanation provided. Serious inflicted and/or multiple injuries to any area of the body.</p>	<p>Physical assault by persons not known to the adult and/or is not involved in regular care (e.g., a stranger).</p> <p>Restraint under medical supervision.</p> <p>Superficial injuries that are accidental, are caused by the adult, and do not require medical treatment (e.g., minor cuts, bruises, or abrasions).</p>
	<p>Emotional</p>	<p>Emotional</p>
	<p>The adult is being threatened, humiliated, intimidated, and/ or enduring psychologically harm (e.g., the adult is being subjected to yelling, cursing, and belittling; threatened with abandonment or access to food/medication/social visitations).</p> <p>A pattern of domestic violence exists in the household which impacts the adult's basic and safety needs being met. The adult is a frequent witness to domestic violence of caregivers or others in the household.</p> <p>The adult is threatened with a weapon by caregiver for any reason.</p>	<p>The adult and their caretaker have a history of personality conflicts that result in mutual disrespect toward one another.</p>

	<p>The adult's right to make decisions and privacy are being violated.</p> <p>The adult received injury as a result of a domestic violence incident.</p> <p>The adult is being threatened with nursing home placement.</p>	
	Sexual	Sexual
	<p>Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.</p> <p>The adult is the recipient of unwanted sexual acts or words.</p> <p>The adult is forced to watch or listen to sexually explicit videos or songs.</p> <p>Forcing an impaired adult to be sexually photographed, videotaped and/or viewed without clothing or partially clothed;</p>	<p>Consensual sexual contact.</p> <p>The adult is a willing participant in viewing sexually explicit material (e.g., video, song, printed material, live acts, etc.)</p>

Suggested Intake Screening Criteria Related to Exploitation

Reports of **Exploitation** are categorized by the situation (e.g., illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets; coercing or deceiving an older person into signing a document such as a contract or will; and the improper use of conservatorship, guardianship, or power of attorney, also includes exploitation not related to finances.

ORC/OAC DEFINITIONS	SCREEN IN EXAMPLES	SCREEN OUT EXAMPLES
Exploitation	Exploitation	Exploitation
<p>Exploitation means the unlawful or improper act of a person using an adult or an adult’s resources for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain when the person obtained or exerted control over the adult or the adult's resources in any of the following ways:</p> <p>(1) Without the adult's consent or the consent of the person authorized to give consent on the adult's behalf;</p> <p>(2) Beyond the scope of the express or implied consent of the adult or the person authorized to give consent on the adult's behalf;</p> <p>(3) By deception;</p> <p>(4) By threat;</p> <p>(5) By intimidation.</p>	<p>Taking money or other items from the adult’s home or bank accounts.</p> <p>Using coercion, fear, and/or acting with malicious intent in order to “scam” or take financial advantage of an adult.</p> <p>Selling or transferring the adult’s property against their wishes or best interests.</p> <p>Failing to provide agreed upon services to the adult, such as caregiving, home or vehicle repair, or financial management.</p> <p>Using the adult’s credit card for unauthorized purchases.</p> <p>Using the adult’s name or good credit to open new accounts.</p>	<p>The adult is believed to be unimpaired, independent, and able to meet their own needs (e.g., food/shelter/clothing/medical care), and willingly chooses to give money to a caregiver.</p> <p>The adult, who is <u>currently</u> impaired, gifted property or assets at some time in the past, and they were believed to be unimpaired at the time of the transfer.</p>

<p>[ORC 5101.60(J)]</p>	<p>Inappropriately withholding financial information or access to the adult's account(s).</p> <p>Misusing the adult's Power of Attorney (POA) or misusing the responsibilities of guardianship.</p> <p>Refusing to return borrowed money or property as agreed upon, or when requested by the adult or their agent.</p> <p>Creating or changing living trusts for the benefit of the caretaker.</p> <p>Changing the adult's will, trust or inheritance for the caretaker's benefit.</p> <p>Human trafficking such as the alleged perpetrator profiting from the exploitation of the adult through the use of force, fraud, and coercion.</p> <p>Benefits trafficking, including withholding food stamps, social security benefits, Medicaid, veteran's benefits in exchange for sex, drugs, money, or as a tool of coercion.</p>	
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	<p>Profiting from the sale of explicit pictures of an adult without their consent.</p> <p>Forcing the adult to provide childcare without payment or not providing appropriate living conditions or food.</p>	
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Additional Information

Suggestions Related to screening out a referral based on Information and/or Referral (I&R)

Information and/or Referral (I&R) is a reason for screening out a referral when the actual need for services should be met by another agency or department. At intake, this is applicable when the CDJFS determines the information received does not constitute an allegation of neglect, abuse or exploitation and the CDJFS refers the reporter to another appropriate social service agency or provider. If appropriate, a cross referral should be made in accordance with section 5101:2-20-14 of the Ohio administrative code to the following:

1. The local county board of developmental disabilities if the CDJFS or its designated agency knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the adult is an individual with a developmental disability
2. The office of the state long-term care ombudsman program if the subject is a resident of a long-term care facility.
3. The department of health if the subject is a resident of a nursing home and has allegedly been abused, neglected, or exploited by an employee of the nursing home.
4. The public children services agency of that county if the subject is a child.
5. The local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the area where the subject resides if the subject is being or has been criminally exploited.

Contacts

If you have questions regarding these Suggested APS Intake Screening Guidelines, please contact the Adult Protective Services Section via email at APS_Mailbox@jfs.ohio.gov