

Having a Conversation about Assault or Abuse

This tip sheet can be distributed to direct support professionals or used in training on how to talk about assault and abuse with the individuals they support.

What is Assault?

Assault is when someone harms you physically, gives you unwanted physical contact, or threatens or attempts to do either. It can be one action but can hurt for a long time, even after your body has healed. **Assault is NOT OK.**

What is Abuse?

Abuse is when someone treats you badly, which can hurt you for a long time. It might have happened for a long time (not just once). **Abuse is NOT OK.**

Talking about Assault or Abuse

It is important to talk about what abuse and assault could be, so that the person you support can help recognize when it is happening.

Here are some questions with possible answers to help you get started. Remember, these are only suggested questions. You may have better ones. You may not want to do this all at once. You might ask a couple of questions and then agree to come back together to continue at another time. Let's get started.



Hurting You Physically

1. What if someone hits or slaps you? Is that OK?
No, it's not OK!
2. What if someone kicks or shakes you? Is that OK?
No, it's not OK!
3. Are there other things that a person could do that would hurt you?
If someone shook, shoved, choked, or burned me. If someone tied me up or put me in a room by myself. If someone gave me medicine that keeps me quiet.
4. Are any of them OK?
No, it's not OK to do any of these things.



Forcing You to Do Something Uncomfortable

1. What if someone wants to touch you in places you don't want them to? Is that Okay?
No, it's not OK!
2. What if someone wants you to touch their body in places you don't want to? Is that Okay?
No, it's not OK!

3. What other things could someone do that would make you feel uncomfortable?

If someone tried to make me do anything sexual against my will, took or showed me nude photos, made me look at magazines with nude men or women, talked about sex all the time, it would make me feel uncomfortable.

4. Are any of them OK?

No, it's not OK to do any of these things.



Saying Hurtful Things

1. What if someone calls you names, yells at you, or threatens you? Is that OK?

No, it's not OK!

2. How would that make you feel?

I wouldn't like that. It would make me feel sad, depressed, angry, frustrated, and powerless.



Stealing Money

1. What if someone takes your money? Is that OK?

No, it's not OK!

2. What if someone makes you pay for things that you did not want to buy? Is that OK?

No, it's not OK!

3. What other things might someone do to cheat you?

Someone might steal credit cards – and use them. Someone might give me bad advice about what to do with my money – on purpose. Someone might try to get me to spend all my money on them.

4. Are any of them OK?

No, it's not OK!



Wrapping Up

1. So if any of these things happen to you, what can you do to make it stop?

Get Help. Don't Wait. *Make sure I do something to make it STOP.*

2. Who can you talk to, to help make it STOP?

I can talk to someone I trust. I could tell my support staff or someone at the Regional Center.

3. What should you do if you feel in danger and need help right away to feel safe?

*If I feel in danger and need help right away to feel safe - **Call 911.***

References:

- <https://www.purdue.edu/timely-warnings/safety-tips/aggravated-assault.html>
- <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/dspt/year-1-2-trainer-and-student-resource-guides/>
- <http://www.calcasa.org/wp-content/uploads/files/angie-blumel-advocate-guide-safety-planning-final-printer.pdf>
- <https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/domestic-violence-disabilities-2/>