



## Potential indicators and risk factors for violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination against participants<sup>1</sup>

Taking one indicator on its own may not be evidence of abuse, however this list aims to assist all staff within ICAS to identify characteristics and/or behaviours in participants that may indicate exposure to abuse and/or neglect.

### Physical abuse

Physical indicators:	Behavioural signs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• direct or indirect disclosure of abuse or assault</li><li>• unexplained cuts, abrasions, bruising or swelling</li><li>• unexplained burns or scalds, cigarette burns</li><li>• rope burns or marks on arms, legs, neck, torso</li><li>• unexplained fractures, strains or sprains; dislocation of limbs</li><li>• bite marks</li><li>• dental injuries</li><li>• ear or eye injuries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• avoidance of particular staff, fear of a particular person</li><li>• sleep disturbances</li><li>• changes in behaviour (e.g. unusual mood swings, uncharacteristic aggression)</li><li>• changes in daily routine, changes in appetite</li><li>• unusual passivity, withdrawal</li><li>• self-harm, suicide attempts</li><li>• inappropriate explanations of how injuries occurred</li><li>• excessive compliance to staff</li><li>• persistent over-activity (misuse of medication)</li><li>• unusual levels of confusion/disorientation (misuse of medication)</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/preventing-responding-abuse-neglect-exploitation/identifying-abuse-neglect-exploitation/indicators-signs>

## **Sexual abuse**

<b>Physical indicators:</b>	<b>Behavioural signs:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct or indirect disclosure of abuse or assault</li> <li>• trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs</li> <li>• difficulty walking or sitting</li> <li>• pain or itching in genital and/or anal area; bruising, bleeding or discharge</li> <li>• self-harm, abuse, suicide attempts</li> <li>• torn, stained or blood-stained underwear or bedclothes</li> <li>• sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy</li> <li>• unexplained money or gifts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sleep disturbances</li> <li>• changes in eating patterns</li> <li>• inappropriate or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge</li> <li>• changes in social patterns</li> <li>• sudden or marked changes in behaviour or temperament</li> <li>• anxiety attacks, panic attacks, clinical depression</li> <li>• refusal to attend usual places (e.g. work, school, respite)</li> <li>• going to bed fully clothed</li> <li>• excessive compliance to staff.</li> </ul>

## **Psychological/emotional abuse**

<b>Physical indicators:</b>	<b>Behavioural signs:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speech disorders</li> <li>• in the case of a child, lags in physical development, failure to thrive</li> <li>• injuries sustained from self-harm or abuse</li> <li>• suicide attempts</li> <li>• anxiety attacks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-harm or self-abusive behaviours</li> <li>• challenging/extreme behaviours</li> <li>• excessive compliance to staff</li> <li>• very low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness</li> <li>• clinical depression</li> <li>• marked decrease in interpersonal skills</li> <li>• extreme attention-seeking behaviour.</li> </ul>

## **Financial abuse**

<b>Physical indicators:</b>	<b>Behavioural signs:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no access to, or unwarranted restrictions on, personal funds or bank accounts</li> <li>• no records, or incomplete records kept of expenditure and purchases</li> <li>• no inventory kept of significant purchases</li> <li>• person controlling the finances does not have legal authority</li> <li>• misappropriation of money, valuables or property</li> <li>• forced changes to a person's will</li> <li>• persistent failure to produce receipts</li> <li>• receipts indicating unusual or inappropriate purchases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• person has insufficient money to meet normal expenses</li> <li>• person is persistently denied outings and activities due to a lack of funds.</li> </ul>

## **Neglect**

<b>Physical indicators:</b>	<b>Behavioural signs:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical wasting, unhealthy weight levels</li> <li>• poor dental health</li> <li>• food from meals left on face and/or clothes throughout the day</li> <li>• dirty, unwashed body and/or face, body odour</li> <li>• person always wearing the same clothes</li> <li>• ill-fitting and/or unwashed clothes</li> <li>• person is always over- or underdressed for the weather conditions</li> <li>• food is consistently poor quality, insufficient, inedible and/or unappetising.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constant tiredness</li> <li>• persistent hunger</li> <li>• unexpectedly poor social/interpersonal skills</li> <li>• signs of loss of communication and other skills</li> <li>• staff member, service provider, carer or support person consistently fails to bring the person to appointments, events, activities</li> <li>• person is persistently denied opportunities to socialise with others in the community.</li> </ul>