



# ODP Announcement

## Expectations for Supports Coordinators Regarding the Right to be Free from Abuse

### ODP Communication Number 105-18

*The mission of the Office of Developmental Programs is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives.*

**AUDIENCE:** Individuals and Families, Administrative Entities (AEs) Administrators and Directors, County Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities (MH/ID) Program Directors, Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs), Supports Coordinators (SCs), and Providers

**PURPOSE:** To inform all stakeholders of the Office of Developmental Programs' (ODP) initiative regarding the Right to be Free from Abuse. This includes ODP's transparent effort to provide guidance to SCs regarding this important matter

**DISCUSSION:** Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs) are required to inform Individuals about abuse, neglect, and exploitation. As part of this discussion, Supports Coordinators (SCs) must advise individuals about the protections available to them. This task aligns with the Information Sharing and Advisory Committee's (ISAC's) recommendation #5: *Promote Health, Wellness, and Safety*. ODP assesses completion of this activity through the Quality Assessment and Improvement (QA&I) process.

### **PROCESS**

ODP requires SCs to review and complete the [Right to Report Abuse Notification handout](#) annually with all individuals and record the action in a SC Monitoring Tool in the Home and Community Information System (HCSIS). Documentation of this activity is not satisfied by strictly answering "Yes" to the question of: "Was the individual (and involved family or other unpaid caregivers, as appropriate) informed about abuse, neglect, and exploitation protections AND was information about how to report provided?" **SCs must record detailed information outlining completion of all steps listed below.**

To meet ODP's expectation for completing the Right to Report Abuse Notification handout, the

following must occur:

- In a location that affords the individual privacy, discuss the meaning of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
  - The discussion must take place in a format understood by the individual and using means of communication, which the individual prefers.
- Advise the individual/surrogate that they have the right:
  - To be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation
  - To report abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Discuss with whom the individual may report (e.g. family members, friends, SCs, Disability Rights of Pennsylvania (DRPA), protective service organizations, law enforcement, etc.)
- Complete the handout by filling in the blank space, indicating contact information and establish a place where the individual may readily access it.
- Advise the individual that they can report abuse, neglect, and exploitation to another person, if the first person they notified failed to take action.
- After the meeting, document the conversation and the contact information (names and phone numbers) in a SC Monitoring Tool in HCSIS. The record must clearly indicate that the conversation took place in a location that affords privacy.
- As part of the monitoring process, SCs should revisit the discussion with the individual to ensure that they continue to feel safe, remember the handout, and have access to it.

If an individual discloses any allegation, the SC must be prepared to take all necessary actions to ensure that the individual's immediate health and safety needs are being addressed per ODP policy and according to law.

#### **DIGITAL VERSION OF THE NOTIFICATION HANDOUT:**

[The Right to Be Free from Abuse Handout](#)

#### **TRAININGS RELATED TO THIS TOPIC:**

[Session 2: Changes in Individual Monitoring](#) from the 2017 Orchestrating Success Series

[Session 10: Empower: Respect, Ask, Believe, Respond - A Conversation about Abuse from the 2018 Orchestrating Success Series](#)

#### **INQUIRIES REGARDING THIS COMMUNICATION:**

Please direct questions regarding this Announcement to the appropriate ODP Regional Office.