



This month's topic is **NEGLECT**. Residents have the right to be free from every type of mistreatment. Neglect can be just as harmful to one's mental and physical health as other types of abuse... So it is important to learn the signs of neglect, how to identify it, and how to prevent it from happening.

## Definition of Neglect

*"Neglect is the failure to meet [one's] basic needs. These needs include food, water, shelter, clothing, hygiene, and essential medical care."*

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

## Examples of Neglect

Residents whose needs are not being met in the following ways are being neglected:

- ⇒ Being left wet or soiled with feces
- ⇒ Not getting assistance with personal hygiene
- ⇒ Lack of adequate supervision to prevent harm
- ⇒ Not being turned and positioned, leading to pressure ulcers
- ⇒ Call lights being shut off without assisting the resident
- ⇒ Not assisting with eating or other ADLs, as needed
- ⇒ Malnutrition or dehydration as a result of residents not getting enough food or drink
- ⇒ Lack of attention to significant, unplanned weight loss
- ⇒ Failure to manage pain
- ⇒ Not assisting with range of motion exercises

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK98786/>

Sometimes, neglect is obvious. But at times, it can be hard to know whether a resident's condition is the result of staff honoring the resident's choices, the person's medical condition, or poor care. Here are a few examples. Why not talk these through with some co-workers and see how you would respond?

\* Mr. Toll, a very sharp and determined resident, usually refuses showers. The other residents are starting to complain about his lack of hygiene. Is this neglect? Is there a reason Mr. Toll is not comfortable getting help with his shower that staff could address? Or is this an example of honoring the resident's right to refuse care? What can staff do to support this resident?

\* Staff are concerned about Mrs. Alvarez who has advanced cancer and has lost a lot of weight. Short staffing in the facility has made it hard to spend time helping Mrs. Alvarez eat her meals, which takes a long time. Staff are not sure if her poor condition is due to her cancer or because staff have not had enough time to care for her. How should staff respond? Should this be reported as neglect?

\* Mr. Jackson has been back and forth to the hospital and has several pressure sores. They seem to be getting worse but staff don't know if they developed in the hospital or the nursing home, or if staff should have been doing more for him. What should staff do?



## When in Doubt... Report!

Staff don't have to be experts in a resident's medical condition or know the whole background in a situation, **but they must report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation!**

## Protecting Your Residents

As frontline workers, you play a critical role in helping protect your residents!

Developing relationships with residents and paying careful attention to anything that doesn't seem right will help keep residents free from neglect. Would you be worried if one of your family members was getting the same quality of care? If so, think about whether the resident may be suffering from neglect.



Here are some things you can do: Take notice of residents showing emotional distress and/or changes in health. Quickly take care of any sanitary or safety concerns. Encourage family and friends to visit and spend time with residents. They may notice things that staff miss.

Neglect can happen even when staff is trying their best to care for residents. Sometimes, there aren't enough staff (even if the nursing home is trying to hire new staff members), or staff may not have been trained to provide the particular care some residents need.

**So, what should I do if I think a resident's needs are not being met?**

**Talk to your supervisor.**

If you suspect serious neglect (or abuse) of a resident by another staff person, this **must also be reported to LARA** (Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs) by calling **(800) 882-6006** or emailing:

**BCJS-Complaints@Michigan.gov.**

*"The simple act of caring is heroic."  
(Edward Albert)*

## To Report Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation

Of an adult living anywhere in the community or an adult in a nursing home, if the abuse is by anyone who is *not* a staff member: **Call Adult Protective Services (APS) Centralized Intake: (855) 444-3911**

If you think a crime has occurred, call your local police/sheriff department and LARA. If the danger is immediate, call 911



**High-five to all of you who have hung in there, to protect your residents—  
THANK YOU!!**

## For More Information

Long Term Care Ombudsman: (517) 394-3027

Tri-County Office on Aging: (800) 405-9141

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