Doing the Right Thing
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Making Ethical Decisions and Preventing the Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation of People with Disabilities
What are we trying to prevent?
Abuse – verbal/psychological, physical and sexual

Neglect - lack of supervision, failure to provide needed care

Exploitation – of money, resources or person
Why do people commit acts of abuse, neglect and exploitation?

Premeditation vs. Bad Decisions
Areas of where making ethical decisions matter:

1. Creating a Culture of Respect
2. Use of Power
3. Boundaries
4. Fatigue, Frustration and Fear
5. Objectivity
A Brief Discussion of Ethics
What does it mean to do the right thing?
What does it mean to be good?
Should I do what I know is right or do what everyone else is doing?
Will I intervene if I am a bystander to abuse, neglect or exploitation?
What guides you?

What does your conscience tell you to do?
“Compassion is the basis of morality.”

Arthur Schopenhauer
Do unto others as you would have them do unto you
What is your moral compass?
Do you follow it?
Ethics (or Moral Philosophy) is concerned with questions of how people ought to act and the search for a definition of right conduct and the good life.

Sources: Santa Clara University, Philosophybasics.com
Some Ethical Philosophies:
- Being Virtuous
- Following the Rules
- Choosing the Greater Good
Creating a Culture of Respect
What does it mean to you?
Do you and your colleagues treat each other with respect?
Are you a good role model for the people entrusted to your care and supervision?
Are you treating everyone the way you would like to be treated?
Power
Caregiving role: One person has power over and responsibility to the other (The Fiduciary Responsibility)
It’s important not to let the balance of power slide heavily onto the caregiver’s side of the relationship.

University of Wisconsin/Wisconsin Department of Health Services
The use of power for good vs. the abuse of power
You have been entrusted with the power to do good!
Boundaries

Your “space”

Their “space”

Boundary
It’s a professional relationship
What are good vs. bad boundaries?
Potential problem areas when it comes to boundaries:

1. Information
2. Money
3. Touching
4. Relationships
Do you have good boundaries with your co-workers?

Can you be objective?
Fatigue
Frustration
& Fear
Fatigue can lead to:

- Apathy
- Distraction
- Sleeping on job
- Short tempers
Frustration and Fear can lead to:
- Over-reactions
- Avoidance
- Violence
Pay attention to your own feelings of fatigue, frustration and fear and signs of these feelings in others and ask for support!
Objectivity
Lack of Objectivity can lead to:
- Making false assumptions
- Personal biases affecting decisions
- Denial
- Ignoring facts
Lack of Objectivity can lead to:

- Not reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation when you know about it.
- Covering things up.
Fact vs. Fiction:
What are the facts?
Can you be objective when it comes to your co-workers?
Misuse of power, poor boundaries, fatigue, frustration, fear and lack of objectivity can lead to victimization.
Victimization cause trauma and can be lifelong.
So how can we prevent abuse, neglect & exploitation?
Be respectful, kind, and patient
Be a good role model
Avoid “Me first” behavior
Avoid Abuse of Power
Avoid Boundary Crossings
Monitor Fatigue, Fear & Frustration
Observe & Report Objectively
Intervene to protect the person entrusted to your care.
Questions?
Comments?
Suggested Reading:

1. “Why Can’t We Be Good” by Jacob Needleman

2. “From Inquiry to Insight” (Guided Discussions for Preventing Abuse and Neglect of Persons with Cognitive Disabilities) by Arthur Dykstra and Amy Tabor
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