

# Your Life, Your Rights

## Chapter 2:

# Safety and Freedom in Life

Easy Read Guidebook



Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

6 Harrington Rd, Cranston, RI 02920

Main Phone: 401.462.3421 Español: 401.462.3014 Website: [www.bhddh.ri.gov](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov)

*This easy read guidebook has been designed using images from Flaticon.com*

# How to Use This Guidebook



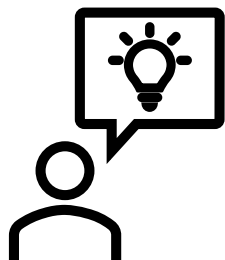
This Guidebook is about your right to safety and freedom in life.



Safety rights are about your health and safety in your home and community.



It is important to learn what your rights are.



When you learn what your rights are you are better able to protect them.



This guidebook will explain what your different safety rights are.



You can use this guidebook as a tool to keep yourself safe.



Some of the information in this guidebook talks about abuse.



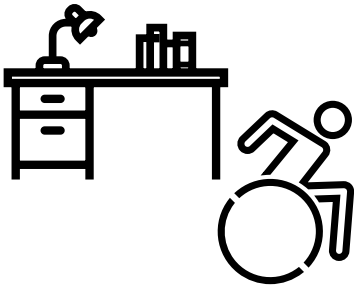
Learning about this information may make you sad or upset.



Please remember to take care of yourself as you read this guidebook.



Stop reading this guidebook and ask for support if you start to feel upset.



You do not have to read this guidebook all at once.

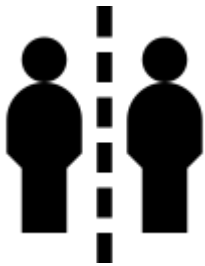


It is okay to take breaks as you read this guidebook.

# Part 1: Right to Personal Space and Boundaries



You have the right to personal space and boundaries.



Personal space is how close or far you want to be near other people.



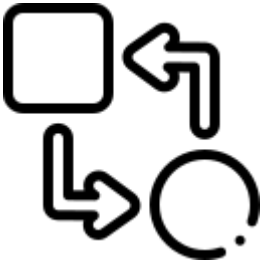
Personal space is one type of boundary.



Boundaries are rules you have about how you want people to treat you in relationships.



Boundaries are rules you have about things you are okay with and not okay with.



You can have many boundaries that change depending on where you are who you are with.



You decide how much personal space you need and what your boundaries are.



The people you have relationships with should respect your boundaries.

# Your rights to personal space and boundaries are:



**1. You can take breaks when needed to relax.**



It is good to take breaks when you are tired, upset, or too excited.



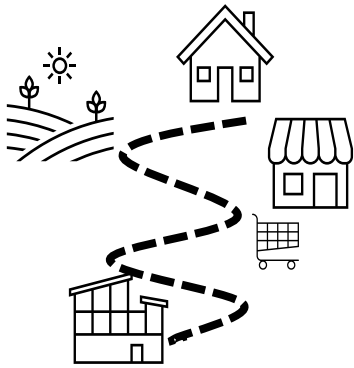
**2. You decide when you need help and from who.**



This includes how and where you want to be helped.



### **3. You have safe places you can go.**



This can include places in your home, the home of a friend or family member, or places in the community.



### **4. You have people you trust to talk to.**



This can be friends, family, support staff, or other people you know in your community.



# Part 2: Right to Safety in the Community



You have the right to safety in the community.



This includes safe travel to places using a car, taxi, bus, or strolling down the street.



This also includes feeling safe when you are in the community for events or work.



Everyone should feel safe in the community.

# Your rights to safety in the community are:



**1. You can ask for space when you need it.**



This is true no matter where you are or what you are doing.



**2. Your personal boundaries will be respected.**



This means people will treat you the way you want to be treated even if they don't agree with your boundaries.



### **3. You will have information about travelling safely.**



This includes guides on getting from one place to another by walking or taking a car or bus.



This also includes tips on how to be more aware of your surroundings, so you know where you are and who is around you.



This information can come from people you know and trust, public transportation offices, or the internet.



**4. You will have information about safe places to go to for help.**



This can be local stores, libraries, fire departments, or other safety offices.



You can decide which places you feel safest in.



You do not have to go anywhere or enter any building you do not feel safe in.

# Part 3: Right to Health and Medical Safety



You have the right to health and medical safety.



Your health is your physical and mental health.



**Physical health** is how well your body and organs are working.



**Mental health** is how well your mind is working so you can cope with stress, learn, and do things you enjoy.



Medical safety is about healthcare.



**Healthcare** is the care you get from doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers.



Medical safety can include medicine, therapy, and other care plans.



Everyone has the right to good quality healthcare so they can stay healthy and safe.

# Your rights to health and medical safety are:



**1. You can make decisions about your health.**



This includes picking your own doctor and deciding what you want them to help you with.



**2. You can make an appointment with your doctor when you need to.**



No one should stop you from meeting your doctor when you are sick or want to talk about your health and care plans.



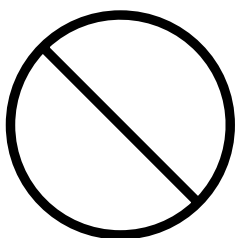
**3. You can talk to your doctor about starting or stopping treatment.**



Your doctor and the people you trust should respect your choice even if they do not agree with you.



**4. You can go to the emergency room for serious injuries.**



The emergency room providers cannot turn you away from treatment.



# Part 4: Right to Freedom from Abuse



You have the right to be free from abuse.



Abuse is when someone treats another person bad.

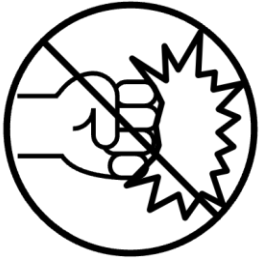


Abuse is harmful and can cause injuries.



Everyone deserves to live a safe and happy life without abuse.

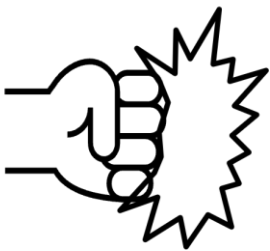
# Your rights to freedom from abuse are:



## 1. You will not be harmed physically.



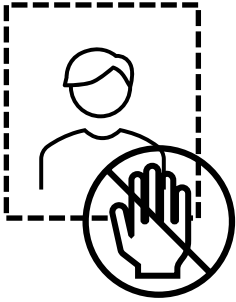
**Physical abuse** is when someone hurts your body and causes injuries.



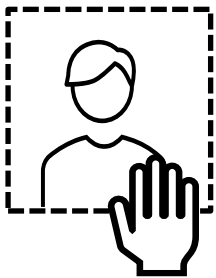
Physical abuse can be hitting, biting, hair pulling, and more.



Using medicine or ties to stop a person from moving as punishment is another example of abuse.



## 2. You will not be harmed sexually.



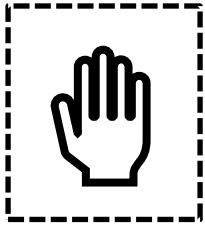
**Sexual abuse** is when someone makes sexual comments or contact with you that you do not want.



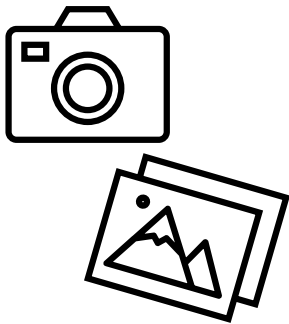
**Sexual comments** are sexual things people say that upset you.



**Sexual contact** are sex acts that involve your private body parts.



Sexual abuse is someone touching your privates or making you touch them.



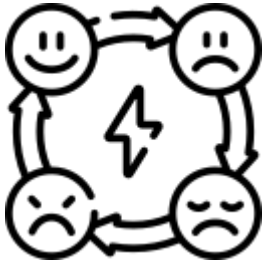
Someone making you take pictures, say things, or look at things about sex are other examples of abuse.



**3. You will not be harmed verbally.**



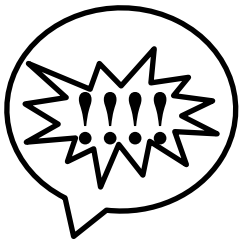
**Verbal abuse** is when someone says and does things that hurts your feelings.



Another term for verbal abuse is emotional or psychological abuse.



This type of abuse includes spoken and non-spoken messages that make you feel down.



Verbal abuse can be yelling, swearing, and bullying.



Verbal abuse can be threatening you and making you feel afraid.



## 4. You will not be taken advantage of.



Being taken advantage of means someone is using you for your money or belongings.



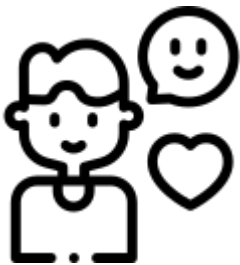
Being taken advantage of is a type of abuse called **material or financial abuse**.



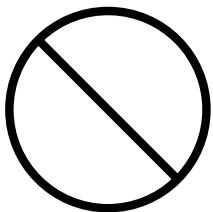
This type of abuse can be someone stealing from you, making you give them things, and not letting you use your money.



**5. You will be treated with dignity and respect.**



Being treated with dignity and respect means people are kind and polite to you.



No one should mistreat you.



**Mistreatment** is a type of abuse that happens when someone treats you badly.



This type of abuse is someone stopping you from moving, doing things, and being with others.



**6. You will get the correct treatment you need.**



The people you rely on to help you stay healthy and safe must give you good support.



**Neglect** is a type of abuse that happens when the people who should help you do not give you good support.





Neglect is when someone does not get you to a doctor when you are hurt or sick.



This type of abuse includes someone giving you the wrong medicine or treatment.



Neglect is when someone does not pay attention to things you need, like food and hygiene.



Neglect is when someone expected to give you services does not.



## 7. You will get help living a safe and healthy life.



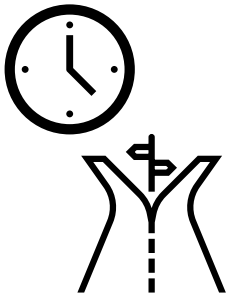
This includes getting the services and supports you need.



The people in your support team must give you the services they say they will give you.



You must get the services and supports listed in your care plan.



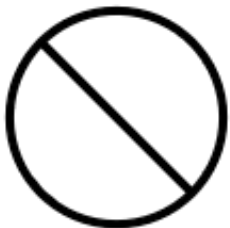
**Abuse can happen to anyone at anytime and in any place.**



**People who abuse could be strangers, support staff, family, or friends.**



**No one should abuse you no matter how angry they get or how much they disagree with you.**



**No type of abuse is okay.**

# Part 5: Protecting Your Rights



You are the best person to protect your right to safety and freedom in life.



You should get help right away if you feel your rights have been broken and you are unsafe.

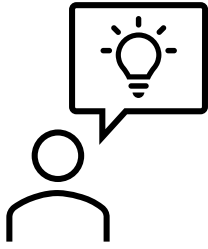


Call the BHDDH Quality Assurance (QA) hotline at **(401) 462-2629** to report abuse so it does not keep happening.



Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room if you are in danger and need help right away.

# Part 6: Resources



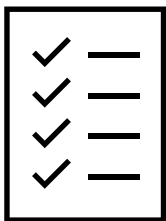
There are places you can go to learn more about your right to safety and freedom from abuse.



These places are state offices and community centers that will support you.



You can learn about abuse and how to stay safe from abuse by exploring the resources.



You will find a list resources starting on the next page of this guidebook.

**Call 911 if you are in danger and need help right away.**

### **BHDDH Quality Assurance Unit**

- State office to report abuse of adults with disabilities
- Hotline: (401) 462-2629
- <https://bhddh.ri.gov/quality-management-report-suspected-abuse/report-suspected-abuse>

### **Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging**

- State office to report abuse of adults aged 60 or older
- Hotline: (401) 462-0555
- <https://oha.ri.gov/what-we-do/protect/elder-protective-services>

### **RI Office of the Attorney General**

- State office that helps people who were abused seek justice
- Phone: (401) 274-4400, prompt 7
- <https://riag.ri.gov/about-our-office/divisions-and-units/criminal-division/victim-services>

## Day One

- Community agency that provides support to people who were sexually abused
- Hotline: (800) 494-8100
- <https://dayoneri.org/about/who-we-are-overview>

## Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center (BVAC)

- Community agency that provides support to people who are being abused
- Hotline: (401) 723-3057
- Online chat option
- <https://www.bvacri.org/helpline/>

## Helpline RI

- Community agency that provides phone support to people who are abused
- Phone: (800) 494-8100
- Online chat option
- <https://www.helplineri.com/>

## Nonviolence Institute

- Community agency that supports people impacted by violence.
- Phone: (401) 785-2320
- <https://www.nonviolenceinstitute.org/initiatives>

## RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- Community agency that has facts about abuse and safety. The agency shares resources and advocates for safety.
- Hotline: (800) 494-8100
- Online chat option
- <https://ricadv.org/resources/>

## R3 App

- Free app that teaches adults with disabilities what abuse is and how to report it.
- Please note, this app has details on reporting abuse in Massachusetts. **To report abuse in Rhode Island, call (401) 462-2629.**
- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-r3>