

**Effective 9/1/2024**

**Superseded 5/7/2025**

**26B-6-201 Definitions.**

As used in this part:

- (1) "Abandonment" means any knowing or intentional action or failure to act, including desertion, by a person acting as a caretaker for a vulnerable adult that leaves the vulnerable adult without the means or ability to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical or other health care.
- (2) "Abuse" means:
  - (a) knowingly or intentionally:
    - (i) attempting to cause harm;
    - (ii) causing harm; or
    - (iii) placing another in fear of harm;
  - (b) unreasonable or inappropriate use of physical restraint, medication, or isolation that causes or is likely to cause harm to a vulnerable adult;
  - (c) emotional or psychological abuse;
  - (d) a sexual offense as described in Title 76, Chapter 5, Offenses Against the Individual; or
  - (e) deprivation of life sustaining treatment, or medical or mental health treatment, except:
    - (i) as provided in Title 75A, Chapter 3, Health Care Decisions; or
    - (ii) when informed consent, as defined in Section 76-5-111, has been obtained.
- (3) "Adult" means an individual who is 18 years old or older.
- (4) "Adult protection case file" means a record, stored in any format, contained in a case file maintained by Adult Protective Services.
- (5) "Adult Protective Services" means the unit within the division responsible to investigate abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults and provide appropriate protective services.
- (6) "Capacity to consent" means the ability of an individual to understand and communicate regarding the nature and consequences of decisions relating to the individual, and relating to the individual's property and lifestyle, including a decision to accept or refuse services.
- (7) "Caretaker" means a person or public institution that is entrusted with or assumes the responsibility to provide a vulnerable adult with care, food, shelter, clothing, supervision, medical or other health care, resource management, or other necessities for pecuniary gain, by contract, or as a result of friendship, or who is otherwise in a position of trust and confidence with a vulnerable adult, including a relative, a household member, an attorney-in-fact, a neighbor, a person who is employed or who provides volunteer work, a court-appointed or voluntary guardian, or a person who contracts or is under court order to provide care.
- (8) "Counsel" means an attorney licensed to practice law in this state.
- (9) "Database" means the statewide database maintained by the division under Section 26B-6-210.
- (10)
  - (a) "Dependent adult" means an individual 18 years old or older, who has a physical or mental impairment that restricts the individual's ability to carry out normal activities or to protect the individual's rights.
  - (b) "Dependent adult" includes an individual who has physical or developmental disabilities or whose physical or mental capacity has substantially diminished because of age.
- (11) "Elder abuse" means abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elder adult.
- (12) "Elder adult" means an individual 65 years old or older.
- (13) "Emergency" means a circumstance in which a vulnerable adult is at an immediate risk of death, serious physical injury, or serious physical, emotional, or financial harm.
- (14) "Emergency protective services" means measures taken by Adult Protective Services under time-limited, court-ordered authority for the purpose of remediating an emergency.

(15)

- (a) "Emotional or psychological abuse" means knowing or intentional verbal or nonverbal conduct directed at a vulnerable adult that results in the vulnerable adult suffering mental anguish, emotional distress, fear, humiliation, degradation, agitation, or confusion.
- (b) "Emotional or psychological abuse" includes intimidating, threatening, isolating, coercing, or harassing.
- (c) "Emotional or psychological abuse" does not include verbal or non-verbal conduct by a vulnerable adult who lacks the capacity to intentionally or knowingly:
  - (i) engage in the conduct; or
  - (ii) cause mental anguish, emotional distress, fear, humiliation, degradation, agitation, or confusion.

(16) "Exploitation" means an offense described in Section 76-5-111.3, 76-5-111.4, or 76-5b-202.

(17) "Harm" means pain, mental anguish, emotional distress, hurt, physical or psychological damage, physical injury, serious physical injury, suffering, or distress inflicted knowingly or intentionally.

(18) "Inconclusive" means a finding by the division that there is not a reasonable basis to conclude that abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurred.

(19) "Intimidation" means communication through verbal or nonverbal conduct which threatens deprivation of money, food, clothing, medicine, shelter, social interaction, supervision, health care, or companionship, or which threatens isolation or abuse.

(20)

- (a) "Isolation" means knowingly or intentionally preventing a vulnerable adult from having contact with another person, unless the restriction of personal rights is authorized by court order, by:
  - (i) preventing the vulnerable adult from communicating, visiting, interacting, or initiating interaction with others, including receiving or inviting visitors, mail, or telephone calls, contrary to the expressed wishes of the vulnerable adult, or communicating to a visitor that the vulnerable adult is not present or does not want to meet with or talk to the visitor, knowing that communication to be false;
  - (ii) physically restraining the vulnerable adult in order to prevent the vulnerable adult from meeting with a visitor; or
  - (iii) making false or misleading statements to the vulnerable adult in order to induce the vulnerable adult to refuse to receive communication from visitors or other family members.
- (b) "Isolation" does not include an act:
  - (i) intended in good faith to protect the physical or mental welfare of the vulnerable adult; or
  - (ii) performed pursuant to the treatment plan or instructions of a physician or other professional advisor of the vulnerable adult.

(21) "Lacks capacity to consent" is as defined in Section 76-5-111.4.

(22)

- (a) "Neglect" means:
  - (i)
    - (A) failure of a caretaker to provide necessary care, including nutrition, clothing, shelter, supervision, personal care, or dental, medical, or other health care for a vulnerable adult, unless the vulnerable adult is able to provide or obtain the necessary care without assistance; or
    - (B) failure of a caretaker to provide protection from health and safety hazards or maltreatment;
  - (ii) failure of a caretaker to provide care to a vulnerable adult in a timely manner and with the degree of care that a reasonable person in a like position would exercise;

- (iii) a pattern of conduct by a caretaker, without the vulnerable adult's informed consent, resulting in deprivation of food, water, medication, health care, shelter, cooling, heating, or other services necessary to maintain the vulnerable adult's well being;
  - (iv) knowing or intentional failure by a caretaker to carry out a prescribed treatment plan that causes or is likely to cause harm to the vulnerable adult;
  - (v) self-neglect by the vulnerable adult; or
  - (vi) abandonment by a caretaker.
- (b) "Neglect" does not include conduct, or failure to take action, that is permitted or excused under Title 75A, Chapter 3, Health Care Decisions.
- (23) "Physical injury" includes the damage and conditions described in Section 76-5-111.
- (24) "Protected person" means a vulnerable adult for whom the court has ordered protective services.
- (25) "Protective services" means services to protect a vulnerable adult from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- (26) "Self-neglect" means the failure of a vulnerable adult to provide or obtain food, water, medication, health care, shelter, cooling, heating, safety, or other services necessary to maintain the vulnerable adult's well being when that failure is the result of the adult's mental or physical impairment. Choice of lifestyle or living arrangements may not, by themselves, be evidence of self-neglect.
- (27) "Serious physical injury" is as defined in Section 76-5-111.
- (28) "Supported" means a finding by the division that there is a reasonable basis to conclude that abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurred.
- (29) "Undue influence" occurs when a person:
- (a) uses influence to take advantage of a vulnerable adult's mental or physical impairment; or
  - (b) uses the person's role, relationship, or power:
    - (i) to exploit, or knowingly assist or cause another to exploit, the trust, dependency, or fear of a vulnerable adult; or
    - (ii) to gain control deceptively over the decision making of the vulnerable adult.
- (30) "Vulnerable adult" means an elder adult, or a dependent adult who has a mental or physical impairment which substantially affects that person's ability to:
- (a) provide personal protection;
  - (b) provide necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, or mental or other health care;
  - (c) obtain services necessary for health, safety, or welfare;
  - (d) carry out the activities of daily living;
  - (e) manage the adult's own financial resources; or
  - (f) comprehend the nature and consequences of remaining in a situation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- (31) "Without merit" means a finding that abuse, neglect, or exploitation did not occur.