

## Vulnerable Adult Guidance

A vulnerable adult is defined as an individual age 18 or older who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves. It can also refer to one who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. A vulnerable adult is one that has a substantial mental or functional impairment.

Substantial functional impairment is an inability referring to physical limitations.

Substantial mental impairment is a disorder of mood, thought, perception, memory, or orientation. This grossly impairs the person's judgement, behaviour, or ability to be independent.

The life experiences of these individuals, as a result, can vary significantly from someone that has not been diagnosed as a Vulnerable Adult. This does not necessarily mean that the adult lacks competency.

A vulnerable adult's activities of daily living are usually impaired. The severity of cognitive impairment in vulnerable adults can range from

mild cognitive impairment to severe cognitive impairment. Mild forms of such impairment include not knowing or being able to learn the skills necessary to communicate when help is needed; not knowing how and not being able to learn to read or write complex documents when required and thus, avoiding them rather than seeking help to resolve them; not knowing or being able to learn how to navigate basic money management or personal finance; and so on. These factors can limit the ability of the vulnerable adult to either give or receive human communication with another adult who does not have such impairments.

Common acts of abuse are domestic abuse, institutional abuse, and self-neglect. Examples of institutional abuse include inappropriate use of power, lack of choice, lack of personal possessions, a non-flexible schedule and/or physical or verbal abuse.