



# Healthy Relationships

Discussion Guides for Working with Adults with Disabilities

## Responding to a Disclosure

### What is a Disclosure?

When working with adults with disabilities, they may say things to you that they might not say to others. This is especially true if you are a trusted person in their life, or if you are talking about topics that bring up a memory for them.

A **disclosure** can be any mention of something that prompts concern for the wellbeing of the individual, as it relates to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

### How to Respond to a Disclosure

Someone may say something that gives you reason to be concerned. At that point, you should **pause, and REVERSE – meaning back up, get more information, and make sure the person is okay.**

### When Should I Report Something?

A report should be made **immediately** when a person makes a discovery that suggests potential abuse or neglect. For more information on reporting, you can review our [Mandatory Reporting Guide for professionals](#).

Remember to <b>REVERSE</b>	
<b>R</b>	<b>Repeat:</b> Repeat what the person said to make sure you understand what happened
<b>E</b>	<b>Explore:</b> Ask follow-up questions to determine if this has been reported already, when it happened, who knows about it, and how you can help.
<b>V</b>	<b>Validate:</b> Let them know that you understand these things can be hard to talk about, they are brave for telling you, and it was the right thing to tell someone. It is not their fault it happened.
<b>E</b>	<b>Empathize:</b> Make sure you offer empathy and kindness throughout your conversation, and make them feel safe.
<b>R</b>	<b>Report:</b> If you are a mandatory reporter, let them know you are required by law to make a report.
<b>S</b>	<b>Support:</b> Make sure they have adequate informal supports and refer to appropriate professional support services.
<b>E</b>	<b>Explain:</b> Be honest about what is happening. If you need to make a report, let them know they are not in trouble, answer questions, and explain the next steps in the process.

## Resources

[Healthy Relationships ECHO February: Working with Adult Protective Services](#)

*This work is supported by the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council, grant number 2401UTSCDD, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$671,698.00 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.*

