



Adult Protective Services Ethical Standards

Adult Protective Services (APS) Ethical Standards provide APS workers with a framework for appropriate professional conduct. The APS worker preserves the rights, safety, and individual differences of older adults and adults with disabilities. APS workers conduct themselves with honesty, respect, integrity, and compassion and in accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, State regulations, and Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) guidance.

APS provides person-centered service, incorporating supported decision-making, to attain the least restrictive outcome for older or incapacitated adults while adhering to the following ethical standards of conduct. The APS worker shall:

- Exercise due diligence and best practice when responding to valid reports, investigating allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation and providing services to the adult.
- Support the adult's preferences even when the interests of family, community, and others compete.
- Employ the least-restrictive, person-centered services to preserve the rights, safety, independence, and lifestyle of the adult to the greatest degree possible.
- With informed consent, provide service planning that prioritizes the adult's needs, goals, preferences, cultural traditions, informal and formal supports, and values.
- Advocate in the best interests of the adult's choices, safety, and well-being.
- Presume that the adult has decision-making capacity unless a court determines otherwise.
- Safeguard confidentiality by protecting information gathered during investigations and while providing protective services.
- Collaborate with community partners to assist with the adult's care and support.
- Promote community awareness and provide education and leadership regarding adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Participate in professional development opportunities, research, and studies, in order to remain knowledgeable about APS best practices.
- Avoid imposing personal values on others, maintain professional boundaries, and be non-judgmental.