

Self -Neglect

What is Self- Neglect?

Self – Neglect covers...

‘A wide range of behaviour, neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding’ (The Care Act 2014)

With the potential for serious consequences to the health and wellbeing of the individual and sometimes to their community.

What can you do?

- **Always be aware** of the possibility of Self-Neglect with adults with care and support needs.
- **Report** concerns of self-neglect on the same day you become aware or are informed of the concerns.
- **Build good relationships** to enable interventions to be accepted with time and allow decision-making capacity to be monitored.
- **Question their reasoning**, are ‘lifestyle choices’ really ‘chosen’? Or does the person lack viable options, executive capacity or hope that their life could be different?
- **Reach out** to the person, do not expect them to come to you and do not give up on them.
- **Assessments** should be multi-disciplinary, multi-agency, involving the individual and their family network. Considering the individual’s culture, beliefs, and history both medical & social.
- As a practitioner you may feel stuck or frustrated, don’t take it personally and **get support for yourself to keep going.**

What are the indicators of Self-Neglect?

- **Lack of self-care** i.e., neglect of personal hygiene, nutrition, hydration and/ or health
- **Lack of care of the domestic environment** i.e., living in squalor (unsanitary conditions) or hoarding
- **Refusal of services** that would mitigate risk to safety and wellbeing i.e. non-compliance with health or care services & unwillingness/ refusal of medication or treatment of illness

Why do adults Self-Neglect?

Self- Neglect can sometimes be the result of physical or cognitive difficulties. Research also suggests that it could be the result of:

- Loss and/or loss of control
- Pride in self sufficiency
- A sense of connectedness to place and possessions
- To preserve continuity of identity and control
- Past trauma and events that have had life changing effects.
- Mental health issues
- Substance Abuse



What have we learnt?

- Self- Neglect can raise significant issues when considering intervention.
- It is particularly difficult for agencies to understand how to act when those struggling with Self-Neglect are not willing to accept help, even on their own terms. **(SAR Adult T)**
- Assessing capacity for a person resistant to outside intervention will occasionally require innovative approaches. Especially where there are no clear legal grounds to intervene, or risks could be high/lead to death. **(SAR Adult V)**
- Self- Neglect can arise from a complex interplay of multiple factors i.e. substance abuse, family dynamic, loss, physical and/ mental illness and domestic abuse. **(SAR Adult J)**

*SAR = Safeguarding Adults Review

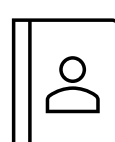
Source: [Join the Safeguarding Adults Reviews \(SARs\) Library network - SCIE](#)

Contact details:

OSAB@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Worried about an adult?

[How to report concerns - Oxford Safeguarding Adults Board \(osab.co.uk\)](#)



Resources

[Self-neglect: At a glance | SCIE](#)

[Protocols used in Oxfordshire - Oxford Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

[OSAB-Threshold-of-Needs-Matrix-January-2021-MASTER.pdf](#)

