

Social Work Practice - A Balancing Act throughout the Life Course

Amanda Casey, Principal Social Worker
for Adult Safeguarding and Assisted
Decision Making, Ireland East Hospital
Group



Who am I?



28 years clinical experience,
mainly in Medical Social Work



Management role for 10 years



Moved to new post in June
2023 to support hospitals with
implementation of the ADMA
and Adult Safeguarding Policy




Member of HSE ADM
Transitional Oversight Group
and DoH Expert Advisory
Group on Protection of Liberty
Safeguards



Member of Safeguarding
Ireland National Safeguarding
Advisory Committee



Adjunct Lecturer UCD and
member of Advisory Board



What will I be talking about today?

- Adult Safeguarding; what is it?
- Where do social workers come across it?
- Why is it challenging?
- What are the barriers to responding?
- Rights, Risks and Assisted Decision Making

What is Adult Safeguarding?



Intersection between SW practice and unhealthy relationships


- Maternity services
- Young adults and abusive relationships
- Disability services
- Institutional abuse
- Aging and Healthcare
- Mental health services
- Inclusion Health



Care versus Control

- Balancing care and control in child protection work
- Older dependent relationships/coercive control
- When does safeguarding become abuse?





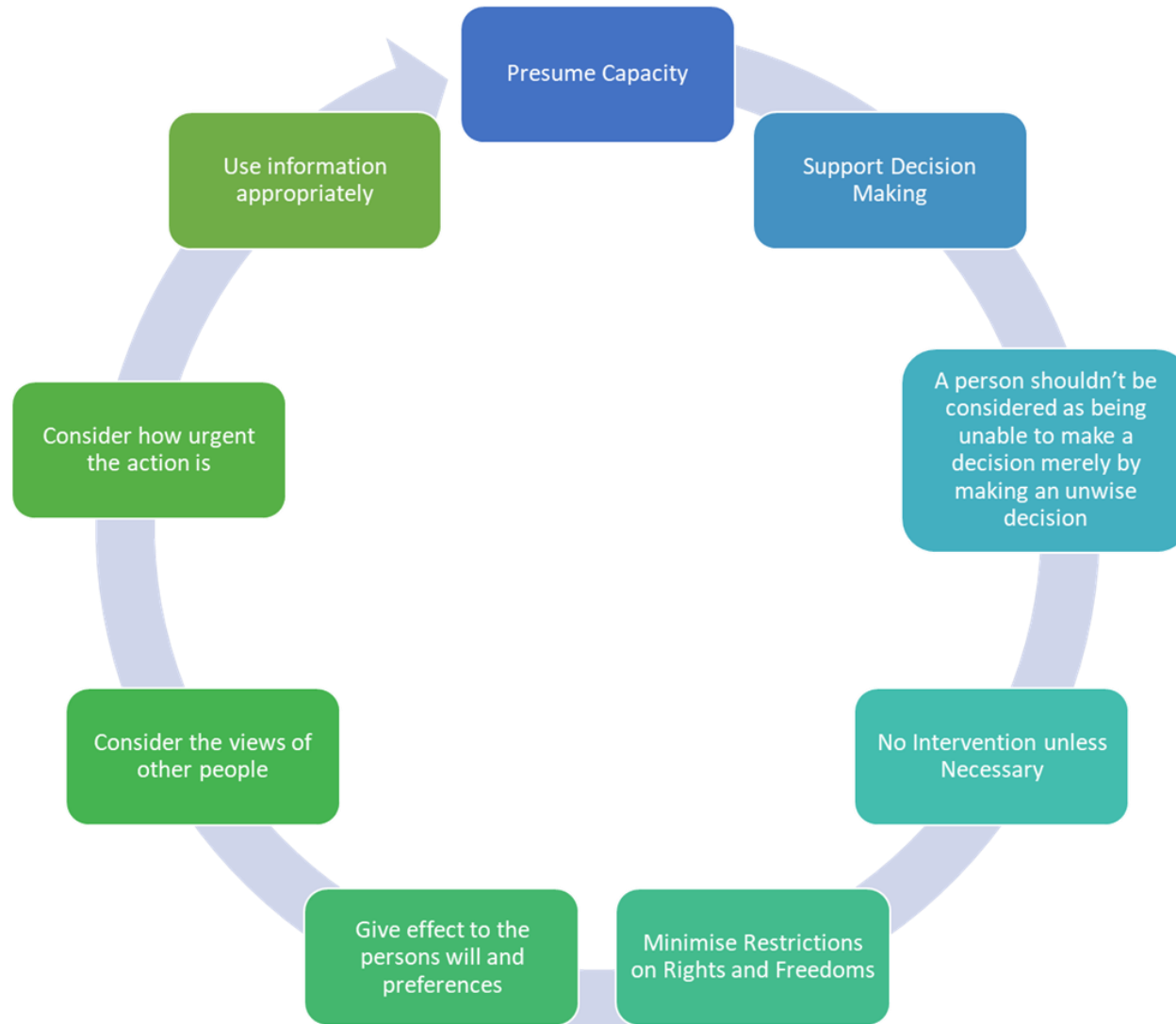
What are the barriers to responding to abuse?

- Lack of legislation
- Culture
- Consent
- Social work as the barrier
- Lack of confidence/competence
- Dept of Health Safeguarding Policy public consultation

Risks versus Rights

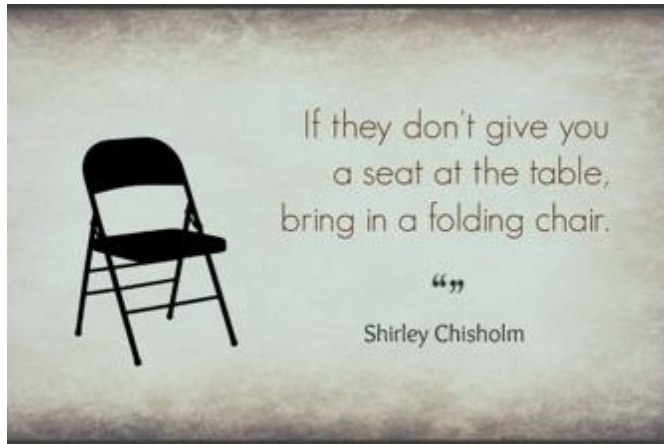
- Human Rights and Social Work
- Absolute rights, do they exist??
- Carer Harm
- Self neglect – what if I don't want to be protected from harm?
- What happens when my risky decision impacts on others?





Assisted Decision Making; A brave new world or the Emporers New Clothes?

Final Thoughts



Be tenacious



Be curious



Seek and accept
support



Think Maslow

Thank You for
listening and I
wanted to make a
special mention to
the following people
for their generosity
in sharing their
expertise

Frieda Quinlan in CHO2

Dr Sarah Donnelly in UCD

Gillian McMurray and Karen
McCormack in NHM

Eimear Lacey in the Alders Unit

Gerrita Russell in CHO7

Caoimhe Gleeson in the HSE Human
Rights and Equality Policy Office.

Some useful references

- [file:///C:/Users/acasey/Downloads/IASW%20Adult%20Safeguarding%20Position%20Paper%202022%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/acasey/Downloads/IASW%20Adult%20Safeguarding%20Position%20Paper%202022%20(2).pdf)
- <file:///C:/Users/acasey/Downloads/82554-IASW-Code%20of%20Ethics%206pp%20DL-V3.pdf>
- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/socialcare/safeguardingvulnerableadults/safeguardingvuladts.html>
- <https://socialworkcatsandrocketscience.com/2024/02/16/the-overwhelming-risk-of-safety/>
- <http://www.gov.ie/AdultSafeguardingConsultation>
- <https://familycarers.ie/media/2991/understanding-carer-harm-2023.pdf>
- [The-CAPACITY-TO-ACT-5-Nations-Ellie-Atkins-2024.pdf \(safeguardingireland.org\)](#)
- <https://www.lenus.ie/bitstream/handle/10147/231913/SexualViolenceAgainstPeopleWithDisabilities2011.pdf?sequence=1>
- <https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/09/Disability-and-Discrimination.pdf>
- <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/residents-with-disabilities-at-hse-home-at-constant-risk-of-abuse-watchdog-finds-1.4695381>