

## Philosophy of Adult Protective Services

The following principles are basic to the planning and delivery of Adult Protective Services (APS):

- Proper protection of adults may require an APS worker to advocate for the right of the capable adult to make his or her own choices even when the community or family may oppose these choices.
- The least restrictive and least intrusive intervention necessary to protect the adult and stabilize the situation is the most appropriate.
- The adult has the right to make decisions on his or her own behalf until he or she delegates that responsibility voluntarily or the court grants that responsibility to another individual.
- Adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation are primarily social problems and their resolution, for the most part, should be sought through the provision of social services and medical services rather than through the legal system. (Note: This does not include incidences of domestic violence, which should be addressed by the legal system, nor does it include felony abuse and neglect as defined in § 18.2-3.69 of the Code of Virginia.
- Services that support and strengthen the adult's informal support system are vital to the protection of adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Legal action is considered only after all other alternatives have been explored. When legal intervention is required, the least restrictive means of intervention shall be used.