

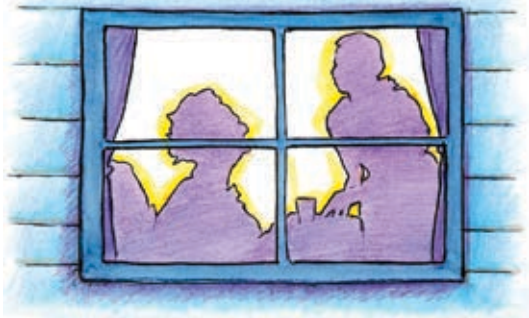
Elder Abuse

What You Need to Know

Elder abuse can happen when an older person is vulnerable. Everyone deserves to be safe – know what to look for and what to do about elder abuse.

Who might abuse an elder?

- ✓ Older adults can become victims of abuse by someone close to them, by a paid or unpaid caregiver, or by a family member or friend.
- ✓ Sometimes the abuser is a complete stranger.



Who is at risk of elder abuse?

- ✓ Abuse can happen to anyone.
- ✓ Older adults who are dependent on others for basic care are at a greater risk of being abused.

Abuse can take many forms.

An older adult may face:

- ✓ Physical, sexual or verbal abuse
- ✓ Neglect
- ✓ Financial abuse
- ✓ Self-neglect



Signs of elder abuse include:

- Unexplained cuts, bruises, burns or other injuries.
- Changes in the person's behavior or emotional well-being.
- Refusal of caregiver to allow private conversations with the person.
- Changes in the person's finances due to missing checks, unexplained withdrawals, credit card charges or property transfers.
- Extreme weight loss, bed sores or poor hygiene.
- Complaints of poor or improper treatment.

Self-neglect can also be a problem.

- ✓ Sometimes an older person neglects his or her own well-being or safety.
- ✓ He or she may live alone and eat poorly, or live in unsafe or unclean conditions.
- ✓ The person may not seek the medical care he or she needs, or may not know where to get help.



Watch for financial scams.

- ✓ Scammers may try to get credit card, Social Security or bank account numbers.
- ✓ They may promise money, rewards, free trips, home repairs or other services.
- ✓ They may send fake bills or charity requests. They may use mail, phone calls, email, door-to-door sales or TV ads.
- ✓ A person can be scammed by someone he or she knows, or by a stranger. Everyone should be careful about giving out personal information.

Are you a caregiver under stress?

- ✓ Caregivers who are tired or burned out risk becoming abusers.
- ✓ If you feel overwhelmed, please get help.
- ✓ Every state has agencies to assist caregivers with:
 - Respite care
 - Caregiver education
 - Elder abuse prevention



If you suspect abuse...

- ✓ Don't confront the suspected abuser yourself. It may not help and it could make the older person more vulnerable.
- ✓ Do contact Adult Protective Services or other local social services agency. Or speak with a professional such as a doctor, nurse, police officer or social worker.

If you are a victim of abuse...

- ✓ Talk to someone you trust such as your doctor, religious leader or close friend.
- ✓ Physicians have a legal obligation to report abuse and to help an elder find safety.
- ✓ If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency number.

Anyone can be the victim of abuse. Everyone deserves to be safe.

To find information about support groups and services in your area, consult your local phone book or search online. You can also call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, or visit its website at www.eldercare.gov on the Internet.



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