



Indicators of Possible Elder Mistreatment, Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

| Behavioral Signs | Physical Signs: Bodily Signs | Other Outward Signs of Physical Abuse |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Anger ✓ Anxiety, agitation ✓ Apathy ✓ Avoids eye contact or darts eyes ✓ Confusion or disorientation ✓ Contradictory statements, implausible stories ✓ Depression ✓ Fear ✓ Hesitation to talk openly ✓ Isolation, withdrawal ✓ Nervousness ✓ Non-responsiveness, resignation, ambivalent or passive ✓ Startles easily or cringes, or backs off quickly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bone fractures, broken bones, and skull fractures ✓ Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, burns, bruises, welts, black eyes, rope marks or other signs of being restrained ✓ Dehydration or malnutrition without illness-related cause ✓ Laboratory findings of medication overdose or under utilization of prescribed drugs; ✓ Injury that is inconsistent with explanation for its cause ✓ Injury that has not been cared for properly ✓ Open wounds ✓ Pain from touching ✓ Poor coloration ✓ Sprains, dislocations, and internal injuries/bleeding; bleeding gums ✓ Unexplained hair loss, possibly from hair pulling ✓ Weight loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An elder's report of being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated ✓ An elder's sudden change in behavior ✓ Broken eyeglasses/frames ✓ Delay between injury or illness and seeking medical attention ✓ Disparity in reporting between the victim and the abuser ✓ Forced isolation ✓ Frequent use of hospital or health care/doctor-shopping ✓ Inappropriate administration of medication ✓ Lack of compliance with medical plan ✓ Lack of necessities such as food, water, or utilities ✓ Lack of personal effects, pleasant living environment, personal items ✓ Many trips to the emergency room ✓ Repeated falls ✓ Soiled clothing or bed ✓ Sunken eyes or cheeks ✓ The caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to see an elder alone. ✓ Untreated injuries in various stages of healing |

| Signs of Financial Abuse | Signs and symptoms of financial or material exploitation |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A recent will when elder seems incapable of writing will ✓ Caregiver's name added to bank account ✓ Caregiver's refusal to spend money on elder ✓ Elder signs on loan ✓ Elder unaware of monthly income ✓ Elder unaware of reason for appointment with banker or attorney ✓ Elder's personal belongings, papers, credit cards missing ✓ Frequent checks made out to "cash" ✓ Frequent expensive gifts from elder to caregiver ✓ Irregularities on tax return ✓ Numerous unpaid bills ✓ Signatures on checks or legal documents that do not resemble elder's signature ✓ Unusual activity in bank account | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents ✓ An elder's report of financial exploitation. ✓ Discovery of an elder's signature being forged for financial transactions or for the titles of his/her possessions ✓ Substandard care being provided or bills unpaid despite the availability of adequate financial resources ✓ Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to an elder's affairs and possessions ✓ Sudden changes in bank account or banking practice, including an unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money by a person accompanying the elder ✓ Sudden inability to pay for food, health care or other basic needs ✓ The inclusion of additional names on an elder's bank signature card ✓ The provision of services that are not necessary ✓ Unauthorized withdrawal of the elder's funds using the elder's ATM card ✓ Unexplained disappearance of funds such as social security check ✓ Unexplained loss of valuable possessions such as jewelry or art work ✓ Unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family |

| Signs of Caregiver Abuse | Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Anger, indifference, aggressive behavior toward elder ✓ Conflicting accounts of incidents ✓ Flirtation or coyness as possible indicator of inappropriate sexual relationships ✓ History of substance abuse, mental illness, criminal behavior, or family violence ✓ Lack of affection toward elder ✓ Prevents elder from speaking to or seeing visitors ✓ Withholds affection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An elder's report of being sexually assaulted or raped. ✓ Bruises around the breasts or genital area ✓ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing ✓ Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding ✓ Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections |
| Signs And Symptoms Of Neglect | Signs And Symptoms Of Abandonment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An elder's report of being mistreated. ✓ Dehydration or malnutrition hazardous or unsafe living condition/arrangements (e.g., improper wiring, no heat, or no running water) ✓ Inappropriate clothing ✓ Poor personal hygiene (appears dirty, has fecal or urine odor) ✓ Unattended or untreated health problems ✓ Unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g. dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, fecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing) ✓ Unexplained skin rashes, irritations, ulcers or bed sores | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An elder's own report of being abandoned ✓ The desertion of an elder at a hospital, a nursing facility, or other similar institution ✓ The desertion of an elder at a shopping center or other public location |

| Signs of Emotional of Psychological Abuse | Signs and Symptoms of Emotional of Psychological Abuse Symptoms |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Abandoning ✓ Enforced social isolation such as Isolating an elderly person from his/her family, friends, or regular activities ✓ Giving an older person the "silent treatment." ✓ Harassment ✓ Humiliation: rejection; treating a person like they are worthless; telling a person they are worthless ✓ Insults such as naming, blaming or shaming; putting down; ridiculing ✓ Intimidation: making a person fear for safety of self or others; playing mind games; make a person feel "crazy" or guilty ✓ Manipulating with lies ✓ Repeatedly frightening ✓ Threats: to hurt a person; to damage property; to leave ✓ Treating an older person like an infant ✓ Verbal assaults: Screaming, shouting, yelling; constantly criticizing; ✓ Withholding affection as punishment ✓ Withholding approval as punishment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An elder's report of being verbally or emotionally mistreated. ✓ Being emotionally upset or agitated ✓ Being extremely withdrawn and non communicative or non responsive ✓ Unusual behavior usually attributed to dementia (e.g., sucking, biting, rocking) |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Signs And Symptoms Of Self-Neglect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dehydration, starvation or malnutrition ✓ Grossly inadequate housing or homelessness ✓ Hazardous or unsafe living conditions/arrangements (e.g., improper wiring, no indoor plumbing, no heat, no running water) ✓ Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing ✓ Lack of the necessary medical aids (e.g., eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures) ✓ Poor personal hygiene ✓ Unsanitary or unclean living quarters (e.g., animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet, fecal/urine smell) ✓ Untreated or improperly attended medical condition |

| What You Can Do | Who Can Help: If Elder Abuse is Suspected |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Listen ✓ Believe ✓ Inform the person about available support services ✓ Report if abuse is suspected | <p>Discuss concerns with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the family doctor ✓ knowledgeable health professionals such as a nurse or therapist ✓ social workers ✓ psychologists or psychiatrists ✓ the state's Adult Protective Services (can provide relevant information and often direct assistance) ✓ the National Center on Elder Abuse (a good starting point in the search for information and resources) |

The most common definition for elder abuse is: "knowing, intentional, or negligent act by any person or a caregiver that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult."

These descriptions are not necessarily proof of abuse, mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation. But they may be clues that a problem exists, or that counseling needs to be offered or a report needs to be made to law enforcement or Adult Protective Services (APS).

How to Report Suspected Elder Abuse

Contact your local Adult Protective Services (APS) through your state's hotline. The APS agency screens calls for potential seriousness, and it keeps the information it receives confidential. If the agency decides the situation possibly violates state elder abuse laws, it assigns a caseworker to conduct an investigation (in cases of an emergency, usually within 24 hours).

If the victim needs crisis intervention, services are available. If elder abuse is not substantiated, most APS agencies will work as necessary with other community agencies to obtain any social and health services that the older person needs.

The older person has the right to refuse services offered by APS. The APS agency provides services only if the senior agrees or has been declared incapacitated by the court and a guardian has been appointed. The APS agency only takes such action as a last resort.

Here is the States Elder Abuse Hotlines Internet Link.

<http://www.elderabusecenter.org/default.cfm?p=statehotlines.cfm>

Other Internet Resources:

This is an easy to read brochure about caregiver stress and elder abuse, with a list of resources for help.

http://www.elderabusecenter.org/pdf/family/fact_sheet.pdf

The Elder Abuse Awareness Kit

<http://www.elderabusecenter.org/pdf/basics/speakers.pdf>