

Why Should I Care About Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is an under recognized problem with devastating and even life threatening consequences.

What is Elder Abuse?

In general, elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or “trusted” individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder. Physical abuse; neglect; emotional or psychological abuse; verbal abuse and threats; financial abuse and exploitation; sexual abuse and abandonment are considered forms of elder abuse. In many states, self-neglect is also considered mistreatment.

Who is at Risk?

Elder abuse can occur anywhere - in the home, in nursing homes, or other institutions. It affects seniors across all socio-economic groups, cultures, and races. Based on available information, women and “older” elders are more likely to be victimized. Dementia is a significant risk factor. Mental health and substance abuse issues - of both abusers and victims - are risk factors. Isolation can also contribute to risk.

TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE

- **Physical abuse:** Use of force to threaten or physically injure an elder.
- **Emotional abuse:** Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause or could cause mental anguish, pain or distress to a senior.
- **Sexual abuse:** Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon an elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.
- **Exploitation:** Theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over an older person’s money or property.
- **Neglect:** A caregiver’s failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder’s safety, physical, or emotional needs.
- **Abandonment:** Desertion of a frail or vulnerable elder by anyone with a duty of care.
- **Self-neglect:** An inability to understand the consequences of one’s own actions or inaction, which leads to, or may lead to, harm or endangerment.

REPORT ELDER ABUSE

24 HOUR HOTLINE - 1-800-490-8505

Abuse reports can be made on behalf of an older adult whether the person lives in their home or in a care facility such as a nursing facility, personal care home, hospital, etc. The reporters may remain anonymous and have legal protection from retaliation, discrimination and civil or criminal prosecution.

Together, we have the power to prevent elder abuse.