

Recognizing and Preventing Elder Abuse: Protecting the Safety, Dignity, and Well-Being of Older Adults

Every older adult deserves to feel safe, respected, and cared for. Unfortunately, elder abuse affects millions of seniors each year and often goes unnoticed. Understanding the warning signs can help protect vulnerable individuals and ensure they receive the support they deserve.

What Is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse can take many forms, including:



Physical Abuse

Any use of force that causes pain, injury, or distress, including:

- Hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, or pinching
- Burning or biting
- Improper use of medications
- Inappropriate use of physical restraints
- Physical punishment of any kind



Sexual Abuse

Any unwanted sexual contact or behavior, including:

- Inappropriate touching
- Sexualized comments or actions
- Forcing someone to view sexual content
- Photographing an individual in inappropriate or suggestive ways



Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Behaviors that cause fear, distress, or emotional harm, such as:

- Yelling, threatening, or humiliating
- Repeated criticism or disrespect
- Treating an older adult like a child
- Isolating them from family, friends, or activities
- Controlling behavior through intimidation or coercion



Neglect

The failure to meet an older adult's basic needs, whether intentional or unintentional, including:

- Lack of food, water, or proper clothing
- Missed medications or medical care
- Poor personal hygiene
- Failure to provide assistance with daily activities
- Social isolation or emotional neglect



Financial Exploitation

The unauthorized or improper use of an older adult's money, property, or assets, including:

- Forging checks or signatures
- Misusing credit cards or bank accounts
- Taking Social Security or retirement benefits
- Changing legal documents, insurance policies, or property titles without consent

Did You Know?

According to the National Council on Aging:

- ✓ Elder abuse affects people of every background, income level, race, and culture.
- ✓ Nearly 6 out of 10 elder abuse cases are committed by family members.

What Should You Do If You Suspect Abuse?



If Someone Is in Immediate Danger

Call 911 or local law enforcement immediately.

If the Situation Is Not an Emergency

Report your concerns to:

- Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Local law enforcement
- A Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- A trusted healthcare provider

If You Need Help

You are not alone. Support is available.

Helpful Resources

- National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) - ncea.acl.gov
- Eldercare Locator - <https://eldercare.acl.gov> – 800-677-1116
- National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) - napsa-now.org/

The CNS Cares Commitment

At CNS Cares, protecting the health, safety, and dignity of our patients is at the heart of everything we do. If you have concerns about abuse, neglect, or exploitation involving a patient, family member, or loved one, please speak with your Care Manager or a member of your CNS Cares care team immediately.

Who You Choose Matters. Talk To The Team Who Cares.