



## Recognizing the Signs of Elder Abuse and Neglect

Elder abuse and neglect are all too common problems for thousands of older American adults. Unfortunately, many elders will not report physical or psychological abuse out of fear or shame, especially when the abuser is a family member. Abuse can take place at home or in facilities and in different forms:

- **Physical abuse:** This not only includes hitting, pushing, kicking, or otherwise physically hurting an elderly person, but also the inappropriate use of drugs, restraints, and other forms of confinement. Warning signs include suspicious injuries and broken bones, bruises, and signs of being restrained.
- **Emotional abuse:** Emotional abuse includes insults, ridicule, threats, yelling and other forms of intimidation, isolation from others, and deliberate neglect or abandonment. Warning signs may be depression and changes in the elderly person's personality and behavior.
- **Sexual abuse:** Along with unwanted sexual contact, sexual abuse also encompasses forcing the elderly person to undress, or view sexual material or sexual acts.
- **Neglect:** Signs of neglect include weight loss, untreated physical problems, poor hygiene and dirty or unsuitable clothing, an unsanitary living environment, and unsafe living conditions.
- **Financial abuse:** Financial abuse is widespread and can take the form of outright theft of money or belongings, check forgery, and identity theft. Warning signs include unusual or large bank withdrawals from the elderly person's accounts, unpaid bills, missing medications, and suspicious changes in insurance policies, wills or other documents.

Older adults with dementia or limited cognitive abilities may be especially vulnerable. If you suspect that someone you know is being abused in any way, talk privately with the person if possible to express your concerns and offer help. Many

states such as Connecticut have mandatory reporting requirements, and certain professionals are bound by law to report suspected elder abuse or neglect.

## Resources

In Connecticut, the Dept. of Social Services administers [Protective Services for the Elderly \(PSE\)](#), a program designed to safeguard people who are 60 and older from physical, mental and emotional abuse, neglect, and/or financial abuse and exploitation. To make a report, call: **1-888-385-4225**. After business hours or on weekends or state holidays, call **Infoline at 2-1-1**.

The [Long Term Care Ombudsman program](#) is a free, confidential resource that works to improve the quality of care of for Connecticut citizens living in nursing homes, residential care homes, and assisted living facilities.

Additional resources include the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) and the national [Eldercare Locator](#).

If you, or someone you know, is interested in primary care, addiction recovery services, or mental health care for children or adults, contact InterCommunity. To receive services at any of our Hartford or East Hartford locations, please call 860-569-5900.

