



# RED FLAGS OF ABUSE



*Does someone you know—a senior or adult with a disability—display any warning signs of mistreatment?*

## » Neglect/Self Neglect

- Lack of basic hygiene, adequate food, or clean and appropriate clothing
- Lack of medical aids (glasses, walker, teeth, hearing aid, medications)
- Person with dementia left unsupervised
- Person confined to bed is left without care
- Home cluttered, filthy, in disrepair, or having fire and safety hazards
- Home without adequate facilities (stove, refrigerator, heat, cooling, working plumbing, and electricity)
- Untreated pressure “bed” sores (pressure ulcers)

## » Financial Abuse/Exploitation

- Lack of amenities victim could afford
- Vulnerable elder/adult “voluntarily” giving uncharacteristically excessive financial reimbursement/gifts for needed care and companionship
- Caregiver has control of elder’s money but is failing to provide for elder’s needs
- Vulnerable elder/adult has signed property transfers (Power of Attorney, new will, etc.) but is unable to comprehend the transaction or what it means

## » Psychological/Emotional Abuse

- Unexplained or uncharacteristic changes in behavior, such as withdrawal from normal activities, unexplained changes in alertness, other
- Caregiver isolates elder (doesn’t let anyone into the home or speak to the elder)
- Caregiver is verbally aggressive or demeaning, controlling, overly concerned about spending money, or uncaring

## » Physical/Sexual Abuse

- Inadequately explained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores or burns
- Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases



To report an incident of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation,  
please call our intake line at (216) 420-6700

## 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. *In many states, younger adults with disabilities may qualify for the same services and protections.* **Physical abuse; neglect; emotional or psychological abuse; 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.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT ABUSE?

### Report your concerns.

Most cases of elder abuse go undetected. Don’t assume that someone has already reported a suspicious situation. The agency receiving the report will ask what you observed, who was involved, and who they can contact to learn more.

**You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring; it is up to the professionals to investigate the suspicions.**

» **To report suspected abuse in the community**, contact your local Adult Protective Services agency. For state reporting numbers, visit [www.apsnetwork.org](http://www.apsnetwork.org), visit the NCEA website at [www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov) or call the *Eldercare Locator* at **1-800-677-1116**.

» **To report suspected abuse in a nursing home or long-term care facility**, contact your local Long-Term Care Ombudsman. For reporting numbers, visit [www.ltombudsman.org](http://www.ltombudsman.org), visit the NCEA website at [www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov) or call the *Eldercare Locator* at **1-800-677-1116**.



The mission of the Division of Senior and Adult Services is to empower seniors and adults with disabilities to age successfully by providing resources and support that preserve their independence.

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**CUYAHOGA COUNTY DIVISION OF SENIOR AND ADULT SERVICES**

*Services & Solutions for Better Living*

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