

PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE

- ⇒ If you are a friend, family member, neighbor, or any concerned individual in an elder's life, there are steps you can take to help prevent abuse or to stop existing abuse.
- ⇒ Take an interest. Call and visit the elder as often as you can.
- ⇒ Keep an eye out for the warning signs of any type of abuse and report it promptly.
- ⇒ Monitor the elder's medications to ensure the proper medications are taken at the proper times.
- ⇒ Offer to stay with the elder to give caregivers a break. Not all abuse is committed by hardened criminals. Stress and burnout in caregivers is a significant cause of abuse. Encourage caregivers to remember to care for themselves as well and to ask for help if they need it.

LOCAL ELDER CARE RESOURCES

Department of Children and Families
Florida Abuse Hotline
800-962-2873

Elder Options
[http://www.agingresources.org/
options@agingresources.org](http://www.agingresources.org/options@agingresources.org)
800-262-2243

Easter Seals at Altrusa House
2002 NW 36 Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32605
352-377-7708

Al'z Place
1610 NW 23 Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32605
352-265-9200

For more information on elder abuse, including statistics, warning signs, and how to help, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/index.html> or the National Institutes of Aging at <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/elder-abuse>.

CONTACT US:

9-1-1 FOR EMERGENCIES

352-955-1818 FOR NON-EMERGENCIES

ACSO Important Phone Numbers

ACSO Main Administration	352.367.4000
Crime Prevention Unit	352.374.1800
Crime Stoppers & Gun Bounty	352.372.7867
Dept. of the Jail	352.491.4444
Evidence Section	352.367-4076
Human Resources	352.367.4040
Narcotics Tip Line	352.374.1849
Patrol	352.367.4101
Public Information Office	352.367.4050
Property Unit	352.367.4078
Records Bureau	352.367.4006
Victim Advocate Unit	352.367.4199



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

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ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



ELDER ABUSE



WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is any intentional act, or failure to act, that causes or creates a risk of harm to an adult 60 years of age or older. (www.cdc.gov)

There are several different types of elder abuse.

- ⇒ **Physical abuse** occurs when an elderly person suffers illness, pain, injury, impairment, distress, or death as the result of the intentional infliction of physical force such as hitting, kicking, pushing, slapping, or burning.
- ⇒ **Emotional/Psychological abuse** is verbal or nonverbal behavior that results in anguish, mental pain, fear, or distress to an elder adult. This can be humiliation or disrespect, threats, harassment, or isolation.
- ⇒ **Neglect** occurs when caregivers fail to meet an older adult's basic needs for food, water, shelter, clothing, hygiene, and medical care.
- ⇒ **Sexual abuse** occurs when unwanted sexual interaction is forced upon an elderly adult. This may involve anything from sexual harassment to sexual penetration.
- ⇒ **Financial abuse** is when a caregiver, family member, or other person illegally and without the elder's authorization uses or obtains the elder's money, benefits, belongings, property, or assets for a use which does not benefit the elder.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS

Approximately 1 in 10 adults aged 60 or older experience abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Those most affected by elder abuse tend to be elders isolated by geography (no family or friends living nearby), disabled elders, or those suffering from disabilities or dementia.

WHO ARE THE OFFENDERS

According to a study by the University of Southern California, relatives are the ones most likely to take advantage of or abuse an elder. Since the abuse typically happens where the senior lives, abusers are usually a partner, spouse, or adult child/grandchild. Abuse can also happen with third party caregivers or employees in institutional settings like long-term care facilities.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is an all too common problem in the United States, affecting approximately five million people per year and costing approximately \$5.3 billion per year in direct medical costs.

CONSEQUENCES OF ELDER ABUSE

Elders who experience abuse, neglect or exploitation can suffer long term physical and psychological consequences. Often, victims are anxious or fearful and may have problems with trusting other people.

While financial abuse is possibly the fastest growing form of elder abuse, many victims experience physical injuries. These range from minor issues like cuts, scratches, and bruises, to serious injury or death. Victims can have lasting disabilities and pain resulting from injuries inflicted on them.

WARNING SIGNS OF ELDER ABUSE

What signs should you look for that an elderly friend or loved one is being abused at the hands of a family member or other caregiver? There are several red flags that can alert you that an elder is experiencing some form of trauma.

Broken bones, open wounds and cuts, dislocations and sprains, broken eyeglasses, bruises, or signs of being restrained are signs of **physical** abuse.

Elders suffering from **emotional or psychological** abuse may become emotionally withdrawn or upset, easily agitated, exhibit unusual behavior such as rocking, have changes in sleeping or eating patterns, or display obvious personality changes, anxiety, or depression.

A **neglected or abandoned** elder may be dehydrated, malnourished, have untreated pressure (bed) sores or other untreated health problems, or exist in living conditions which are unsanitary and/or unsafe.

An elder who is a victim of **sexual** abuse may have bruising around the breasts or genitals, suffer from genital infections or STDs, have unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding, or exhibit personality changes such as displaying fear or anxiety around a specific person.

While prevalent, financial abuse and exploitation is one of the hardest types of elder abuse to prosecute because it often involves family members or skilled scam artists. The hallmarks of this type of abuse are sudden changes in banking practices, unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money by a third party, the addition of other names to an elder's accounts, the unexplained disappearance of valuables, forged signatures on financial transactions, or the unexplained transfer of assets to a previously uninvolved (or unknown) family member or other third person.



Another red flag of elder abuse of any type is a caregiver who refuses to leave the elder alone with you for any time or that the elder seems unusually wary or afraid of.