



ELDER ABUSE

A Community Issue



Presented by the Area Agency on Aging and Adult Protection

Abuse is...

any intentional or negligent act by any person that causes harm to a vulnerable adult.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

Any person 18 years or older who is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation due to physical or mental impairment which affects their judgment or behavior to the extent that they lack sufficient understanding or capacity to make, communicate or implement decisions regarding their person.

Idaho Statute 39-5302(10)

Characteristics of the Abused

- Frailty, disability or impairment
- Social isolation
- Dependent on the abuser
- Substance abuse
- Changes in behavior

Who are the abusers?

- Family members in the majority of cases
- Male or female
- Younger than 60 years of age
- Financially dependent on victim
- Substance abuse
- Caregivers experiencing stress and feeling overburdened

Types Of Abuse

- ▶ **Physical** - Inflicting or threatening to inflict, physical pain or injury on a vulnerable elder.
- ▶ **Emotional** - Inflicting mental pain, anguish or distress on an elder person through verbal or nonverbal acts.
- ▶ **Sexual** - Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.
- ▶ **Exploitation** - Illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property or assets of a vulnerable elder.
- ▶ **Neglect** - Refusal or failure of those responsible to provide food, clothing, shelter or health care for a vulnerable elder.
- ▶ **Abandonment** - The desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Bruises, bed sores, broken bones, abrasions, and burns may be an indication of physical abuse, neglect, or mistreatment.
- Behavior such as belittling, threats, and the use of intimidation to gain power and control over someone are indicators of verbal or emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse: Subtle, but discernable changes in behavior, abnormal bruises on the body, changes in personal cleaning habits, or an elder's report of being sexually assaulted or raped.

Indicators of Neglect

- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores, and poor personal hygiene
- Unattended or untreated health problems
- Hazardous or unsafe living conditions and/or arrangements (e.g., improper wiring, no heat, or no running water)
- Unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g. dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, fecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing)
- An elder's report of being mistreated

Indicators of Self-Neglect

Changes in behaviors including:

- Failure to take essential medications
- Refusing to seek medical treatment
- Frequent unsafe behaviors
 - Poor Hygiene
 - Not wearing suitable clothing for the weather
 - Inability to attend to housekeeping

Indicators of Exploitation

- Unusual bank account activity
- Checks or other documents signed when the elder cannot write or understand
- Numerous unpaid bills when someone else has been helping
- Change in spending patterns
 1. The appearance of a new person or family member who begins a new close relationship
 2. Changes in legal documents like wills and bank accounts.

Why Does Abuse Go Unreported?

- Fear
- Love for the abuser
- Lack of / or impaired understanding
- Shame and / or guilt
- Acceptance of abuse or neglect as normal
- Unaware of resources / options

Screening Questions ...

- Has anyone ever hurt you?
- Does anyone ever talk or yell at you in a way that makes you feel bad?
- Has anyone ever taken anything from you or used your money without permission?
- Are you afraid of anyone or has anyone ever threatened you?
- Are food clothing and medications available to you at all times?
- Do you get to see friends/relatives and leave your home when you wish to do so?

Information AP Will Need:

- Name, age, and address of vulnerable adult.
- Names and addresses of caregiver or others who care for the person.
- Information about the health and mental status of the vulnerable adult.
- Allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Name and address of alleged perpetrator.

Need more information?

*Area Agency on Aging
of North Idaho's*

Adult Protection Services

208-667-3179

or

1-800-786-5536