

**Adult Protection Services (APS)** is responsible for investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation against *vulnerable* disabled and senior populations. A vulnerable person is one who is unable to protect themselves due to a physical or mental impairment that affects their judgment or behavior. Competent adults retain the right to refuse services and an adult is presumed competent unless deemed otherwise by a court of law. APS works with agencies within the community to help eliminate or reduce the risk in an effort to protect the victim.

Abuse is the intentional or negligent infliction of physical pain, injury or mental injury. Some of the signs of abuse are: physical indicators such as bruises, burns, broken bones and dislocations; imposed isolation of the vulnerable adult or a sudden change in their behavior including agitation in the presence of particular persons are also warning signs.

Neglect is the failure of a caregiver to provide food, clothing, shelter or necessary medical care. Self-neglect is the failure of a vulnerable adult to provide these items for themselves. Signs neglect may be happening include unkempt appearance and poor hygiene in someone who has previously been fastidious in their appearance, unplanned weight loss, inadequate food, little or no medical care, inadequate resources like heat and electricity, dehydration and the lack of necessary medications.

Exploitation is the misuse of a vulnerable adult's funds, property or resources by another person for profit or advantage. Signs of exploitation include new and previously uninvolved persons appearing in a senior's life, sudden changes to legal documents including wills, property titles and Powers of Attorney, the level of resources being spent for care does not match the level of available assets, bills going unpaid when you know their income is sufficient to pay them, new large ticket items (cars, boats, etc.) being purchased when the vulnerable adult has no known use for them and items of value are missing from the home.

Effective interventions can help prevent or stop abuse of vulnerable adults. If you have knowledge of a vulnerable adult being abused, neglected or exploited call your local law enforcement or Adult Protective Services at **(208) 667-3179** or **800-786-5536**.

Resources:

National Adult Protective Services Association: <http://www.apsnetwork.org/>

Idaho Statutes Title 39, Chapter 53: Adult Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Act  
<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title39/T39CH53.htm>