

Elder abuse is not acceptable. Every person, no matter how young or old, deserves to be safe from harm by those who live with them, care for them, or come in day-to-day contact with them. It is a complex problem that many communities are just now coming to grips with. Experts agree that for every report of abuse to authorities as many as fourteen cases go unreported. Most people think of elder abuse as happening primarily in nursing homes. This is a myth. While there are incidents of abuse happening in facilities, most elder abuse and neglect takes place at home and the abusers are not strangers. Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of sex, ethnicity, religious affiliation or income level.

- Nearly 5 Million cases of elder abuse occur each year, but 85% go unreported.
- Abused elders have a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those not mistreated.
- Family, friends, caregivers and neighbors are the culprits in financial abuse cases more than half the time.
- By 2030, the numbers of older Americans over age 85 – those most at risk for abuse – will more than double.

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Many factors leave the elderly vulnerable to abuse, including physical and cognitive impairments such as dementia, social isolation, greater dependency upon others for care and a history or family dynamic of long standing domestic violence. Often the victim does not report the abuse due to embarrassment, loyalty, self-blame, denial or fear of retribution. If you have reason to believe a senior is being abused call local law enforcement or the Area Agency on Aging's Adult Protection Program at 1-800-786-5536.

Resources:

National Center on Elder Abuse:

http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main_Site/index.aspx

National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse:

<http://www.preventelderabuse.org/>