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# **ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

# WHAT IS AN ELDER ABUSE

- **Abuse** means physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment or willful confinement.
- **Elder abuse** - mistreatment of an older person by someone who has a relationship with the elder. It could be a spouse, adult child, friend, neighbor, or caregiver.



# WHAT IS AN ELDER ABUSE

- According to Illinois Department on Aging, elder abuse refers to the following types of mistreatment to any Illinois resident 60 years of age or older who lives in the community. The abuse must be one of the following types and must be committed by another person on the elder.
- **Elder abuse** can happen to anyone by anyone regardless of his or her social class or ethnic background.



# WHAT IS AN ELDER ABUSE

## Elder abuse is very complex:

- Generally, a combination of factors contributes to elder **mistreatment**.
- It is often inflicted in a subtle way, especially if it is pre-meditated and deliberate.
- Elder abuse can be difficult to identify because some diseases and chronic illnesses can mask or mimic the visible signs of abuse.



# LEARNED BEHAVIOR

- Violence is a learned behavior that in some families is passed on from one generation to the next.
- In these families, abusive behavior is their usual response to life because they have not learned other more appropriate ways to respond.



# RISK FACTORS

Risk factors that may contribute to elder abuse are:

- Mental illness
- Alcoholism
- Drug addiction
- Financial difficulty
- Caregiver stress
- Ageism
- Caregivers who lack proper caregiving skills.





# WHAT IS AGEISM

- **Ageism** is a form of prejudice against older people based upon negative images and stereotypes.
- The abuser uses these prejudiced attitudes to justify mistreatment of an elder.



**AGEISM**

**SAY NO  
TO AGEISM!**



# THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF ELDER ABUSE

- The **legal definition of elder abuse** varies from state to state but it is generally agreed that the forms of elder abuse include:
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional and psychological abuse
- financial exploitation
- neglect
- self neglect
- abandonment.



# PHYSICAL ABUSE

**Physical abuse** is any intentional and unwanted contact with you or something close to your body. Sometimes abusive behavior does not cause pain or even leave a bruise, but it's still unhealthy.

**Examples of physical abuse are:**

- Scratching
- Punching
- Biting
- Tangling
- Kicking.



# SEXUAL ABUSE

- **Sexual abuse**, also referred to as molestation, is usually undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another.
- When force is immediate, of short duration, or infrequent, it is called **sexual assault**.
- The offender is referred to as a **sexual abuser** or (often pejoratively) **molester**.



# PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

- **Psychological abuse** (also referred to as **psychological violence, emotional abuse or mental abuse**) is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting, or exposing, another person to behavior that may result in:
  - psychological trauma
  - anxiety
  - chronic depression
  - post-traumatic stress disorder.



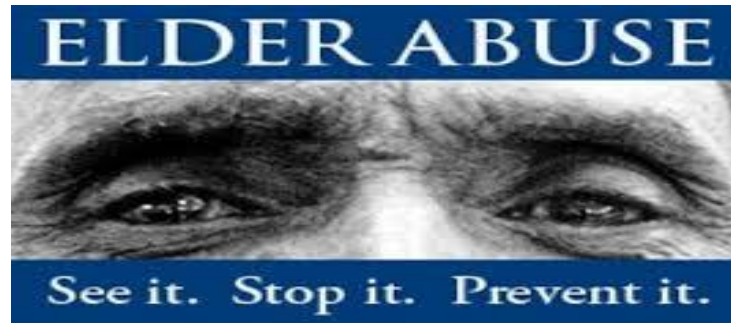
# FINANCIAL ABUSE

- **Financial abuse** is a common tactic used by abusers to gain power and control in a relationship.
- The forms of financial abuse may be subtle or overt but in general, include tactics to limit the partner's access to assets or conceal information and accessibility to the family finances.



# WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

- In 35% of the elder abuse cases in 30 states surveyed, the abuse was perpetrated by the victim's adult children.
- The National Aging Resource Center on Elder Abuse estimates the incidence of abuse in domestic settings (not institutions) at approximately 2.5 million cases per year.





# NEGLECT

- **Neglect is a leading form of elder abuse.**
- Typically means the refusal or failure to provide the necessary care to an elder by someone who has assumed that responsibility.
- It includes the **refusal** or **failure** to provide the elder with life necessities such as food , water, clothing , personal hygiene, medicine, shelter, health care, or protection for a vulnerable elder, or personal safety.





# SELF NEGLECT

- **Self-neglect** occurs when elders who are taking care of themselves do so in a way that jeopardizes health and well-being .
- Examples include living in an unsanitary home, poor personal hygiene, not eating or drinking enough or eating non-nutritious meals, and taking too much or not enough medication.
- The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the National Adult Protective Services Association define self-neglect as “an adult's inability, due to physical or mental impairment or diminished capacity, to perform essential self-care tasks”.



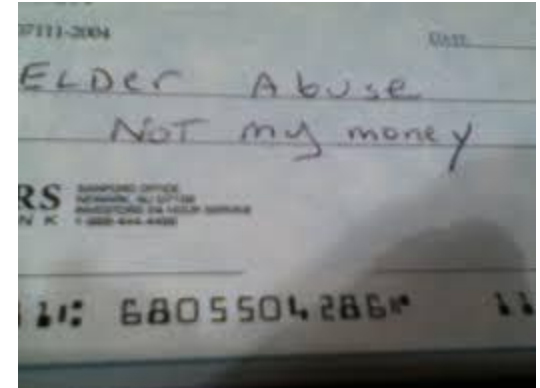
# ELDER ABANDONMENT

- **Abandonment** - desertion or willful forsaking of an elder by any person having the care and custody of that elder, under circumstances in which a reasonable person would continue to provide care of custody.
- Elder abandonment is generally defined as the purposeful and permanent desertion of an elderly person.
- The victim may be left at a hospital, a nursing home, or in a public location.
- Perhaps the abandoning person feels overburdened or believes he or she lacks the resources to care for the victim.



# FINANCIAL EXPLORATION

- **Financial exploitation** means the misuse or withholding of the older adult's resources by another to the disadvantage of the older adult or the profit of another.



# WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS OF ELDER ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

- Physical Indicators
- Financial Indicators
- Family and Caregiver Indicators
- Behavioral Indicators of Client.



# PHISICAL INDICATORS

- Injuries that have not been properly treated;
- Injuries incompatible with explanatory statements;
- Cuts, lacerations or puncture wounds;
- Bruises, welts, discoloration, especially bilateral or
- multiple in various stages of healing;
- Dehydration, malnourishment or weight loss
- without medical explanation;
- Pallor or poor skin hygiene;
- Sunken eyes or cheeks;
- Evidence of inadequate care, such as improperly
- treated bedsores;
- Eye problems, retinal detachment;
- Pulled out hair;
- Soiled clothing or bed, le□ in own waste;
- Burns such as by cigarettes, acids or ropes;
- Locked in room; tied to furniture or toilet;
- Broken bones.

# FINANCIAL INDICATORS

- Unpaid bills when income is adequate;
- Food, clothing and care needs not met;
- Overcharged for rent or services;
- Personal loans not repaid;
- Complaints of the of property or money;
- Missing checks, jewelry or other valuables;
- Power of attorney signed by confused person;
- Suspicious changes in titles to property;
- Caregiver overly concerned with person's money;
- Promises of lifelong care in exchange for assets,
- ATM transactions by homebound elder;
- Utility shut-offs or threats of shut-offs;
- Large telephone bills run up by caregiver;
- Checks for food, etc., written over amount needed;
- Large or unusual bank transactions.

# FAMILY AND CAREGIVER INDICATORS

- Indifference or hostility to client;
- Excessive blaming of client;
- Problems with alcohol or drugs;
- Previous;
- Failure to comply with the care plan;
- Social isolation of the victim; withholding of affection;
- Conflicting accounts of incidents;
- Treats and intimidation of client.






# BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CLIENT

- Withdrawn, depressed, resigned, helpless;
- Hesitates to talk openly;
- Gives implausible stories about injuries or events;
- Denies problems;
- Appears fearful of caregiver or family member;
- Has lost touch with family and friends other than caregiver or alleged abuser.



# WHEN MUST ELDER ABUSE BE REPORTED?

- When an older adult, because of dysfunction, is unable to self-report, professionals and state employees must report, **within 24 hours**, any suspected abuse, neglect or financial exploitation to the **Department on Aging's Elder Abuse and Neglect Program**.
  - The requirement to report includes any time a mandated reporter is engaged in carrying out his or her professional duties.
  - Everyone is encouraged, even when not required, to report any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of a **person 60 years of age or older**. The voluntary reports are handled in the same way as mandatory reports.
  - Again, if a **mandatory** reporter is unsure whether an older adult whom he or she suspects is being mistreated is able to self-report, the Illinois Department on Aging encourages the reporter to make a voluntary report of the situation. **Voluntary** reporting is strongly recommended in all cases of elder abuse.
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# WHO IS REQUIRED TO REPORT UNDER THE ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT ACT?

**“Mandated Reporter”** includes any of the following people who suspect abuse of an older adult living in the community while engaged in carrying out professional duties:

- A professional or professional’s delegate while engaged in:
- social services,
- the care of an eligible adult or eligible adults,
- education,
- law enforcement,
- any of the occupations required to be licensed.



# WHERE TO REPORT?

- Anyone who suspects that an older adult is being mistreated by another should call the designated Agency.
- Elder Abuse Provider Agency in the client's area. If that number cannot be reached, the following phone numbers are available:

**The Department on Aging's 24-Hour Elder Abuse Hotline  
at 1-866-800-1409, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).**

**NO EXCUSE FOR  
ELDER ABUSE** 

# WHERE TO REPORT?

## **State of Illinois Department on Aging**

One Natural Resources Way, #100

Springfield, IL 62702-1271

## **Senior HelpLine:**

**1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)**

[www.state.il.us/aging](http://www.state.il.us/aging)

## **24-Hour Elder Abuse Hotline:**

**1-866-800-1409, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)**



THE END