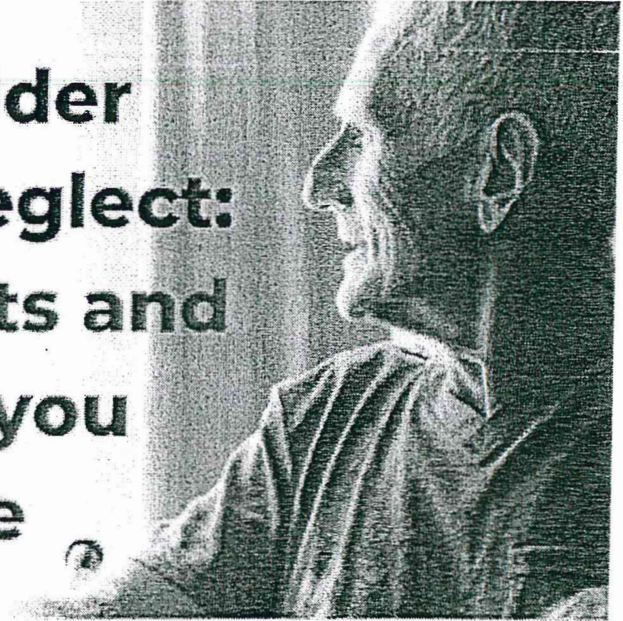


## Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect

# Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect: Know the facts and what to do if you suspect abuse



Did you know that every day 10,000 people turn 65 in the United States? Our demographics are shifting and we will soon have more older adults in the U.S. than ever before. Every year, an estimated 5 million older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and that's only part of the picture. According to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, an estimated 93% of elder abuse cases go unreported each year.

### What Is Elder Abuse and Neglect?

Elder abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a person, including a caregiver or trusted individual, that cause harm to a vulnerable elder. Mistreatment of elders takes many forms, including:

- 1. Physical Abuse** - Use of force causing harm or pain to an individual, which includes (but is not limited to) hitting, kicking, pinching, slapping, shoving, shaking, and burning. Other forms of physical abuse involve the inappropriate use of medication or physical restraints.
- 2. Financial Abuse/Exploitation** - Wrongfully taking or using an older adult's funds or property through theft, scams, fraud, or predatory lending. (For more specific information on exploitation of elders, see our Elder Financial Exploitation page.)
- 3. Psychological Abuse** - Causing emotional pain through verbal assaults, threats, or harassment. Perpetrators intimidate, humiliate, or attempt to isolate their victims.





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KEYWORD

LOCATION

GET HELP

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FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

NEWSROOM

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

ABOUT 211 MARYLAND -

# Suspect Abuse?

211MD.ORG > AGING & DISABILITY > SUSPECT ABUSE?

To report suspected abuse: Call 1-800-917-7383, 24 hours a day, from anywhere within the state of MD or [click here](#) to find the number to your local Department of Social Services, Adult Protective Services office

Adult Protective Services (APS) is a program that serves adults, 18 and over, who are in a situation of vulnerability and either at risk of, or experiencing exploitation and harm. They investigate situations of suspected abuse and provide professional services designed to protect the well being of vulnerable adults. There are a variety of types of abuse and neglect that warrant a report being made to Adult Protective Services:

- **Physical Abuse** - inflicting physical pain or injury on a senior, e.g. slapping, bruising, or restraining by physical or chemical means.
- **Sexual Abuse** - non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.
- **Neglect** - the failure by those responsible to provide food, shelter, health care, or protection for a vulnerable elder.
- **Exploitation** - the illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of a senior for someone else's benefit.
- **Emotional Abuse** - inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder person through verbal or nonverbal acts, e.g. humiliating, intimidating, or threatening.
- **Abandonment** - desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.
- **Self-Neglect** - characterized as the failure of a person to perform essential, self-care tasks and that such failure threatens his/her own health or safety.

*(taken from the Administration on Aging- National Center on Elder Abuse's website, for more information, [click here](#))*

Just as there are multiple types of abuse, there are a variety of signs of abuse. These include:

Physical Abuse

Behavioral Social

Financial



# MARYLAND COURTS

*Fair, Efficient, & Effective Justice For All*

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YOU ARE IN:

Court-Appointed Guardians

Orientation Program

Guardians of Disabled Persons Training Program

Guardians of Minors Training Program

Attorney-Guardians

Guardian Video Series

Guardianship Forms

Resources for Guardians

Court-Appointed Attorneys

Maryland Guardianship Language Portals

## Types & Signs of Abuse

This video defines physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and explains how guardians can recognize their signs.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 911. If you suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation, contact Adult Protective Services or Child Protective Services.

### RESOURCES

- Transcript
- Español transcripción
- Transcription française
- русский перевод
- 한국 영적 동영상
- 中文记录
- Additional Information:
  - Adult Protective Services
  - Child Protective Services

### SELF-HELP

Maryland Courts Self-Help Center  
Free legal help with your civil matter



410-260-1392  
8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday-Friday

**Emotional/Psychological Abuse Defined**

The infliction of mental pain, anguish, or distress.

- Verbal assaults
- Threats
- Insults
- Intimidation
- Humiliation
- Harassment
- Isolation

3:51 / 4:59

### Additional videos:

- Attorney-Guardian Ethics Program
- Court-Appointed Guardian Orientation Program
- Decision-Making Standards

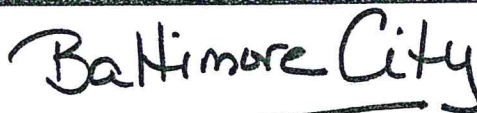
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Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CITY OF BALTIMORE



Behavioral Health

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All Health Topics by Category

Medications

Medical Tests

Interactive Tools

Symptom Checker

Other Resources

## ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse refers to any of several forms of maltreatment of an older person by a caregiver, family member, spouse, or friend.

### CATEGORIES OF ELDER ABUSE

The 1987 Amendment to the Older Americans Act identified three separate categories of elder abuse:

- **Domestic elder abuse** usually takes place in the older adult's home or in the home of the caregiver. The abuser is often a relative, close friend, or paid companion.
- **Institutional abuse** refers to abuse that takes place in a residential home (such as a nursing home), foster home, or assisted-living facility. The abuser has a financial or contractual obligation to care for the older adult.
- **Self-neglect** is behavior of an older adult that threatens his or her own health or safety. Self-neglect is present when an older adult refuses or fails to provide himself or herself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medicine, and safety precautions.

### ACTS OF ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse can include:

- Acts of violence, such as hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, choking, or burning. The inappropriate use of medicines or physical restraints, force-feeding, and physical punishment of any kind also are examples of physical abuse.
- Forced sexual contact or sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent. It includes unwanted touching and all types of sexual assault or battery, such as rape, sodomy, forced nudity, and sexually explicit photography.
- Emotional or psychological abuse, such as name-calling, insults, threats, intimidation, humiliation, and harassment. Treating an older person like a baby, giving an older person the "silent treatment," and isolating him or her from family, friends, or regular activities are examples of emotional or psychological abuse.
- Neglect such as failing to provide an older person with food

#### RELATED CATEGORIES

- 🔗 Mental and Behavioral Health
- 🔗 Senior Health

#### RELATED ARTICLES

- 🔗 Bruises and Blood Spots Under the Skin
- 🔗 Domestic Violence
- 🔗 Domestic Abuse
- 🔗 Physical Abuse

## PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Under the Protective Services Law, adults age 60 and older who – because of mental or physical dysfunction – are at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation or dangerous situations, may be reported in need of Protective Services.

## PREVENTING ABUSE

Family members and close friends are not the only ones in a position to recognize when an older person is at risk of abuse or neglect. Unfortunately, sometimes they are the perpetrators, with the risk being greater if the caregiver has a history of violence, drug or alcohol abuse, or is unemployed or financially unstable.

Many adult children accept the responsibility of caring for an older parent or relative without a full understanding of the time and money involved.

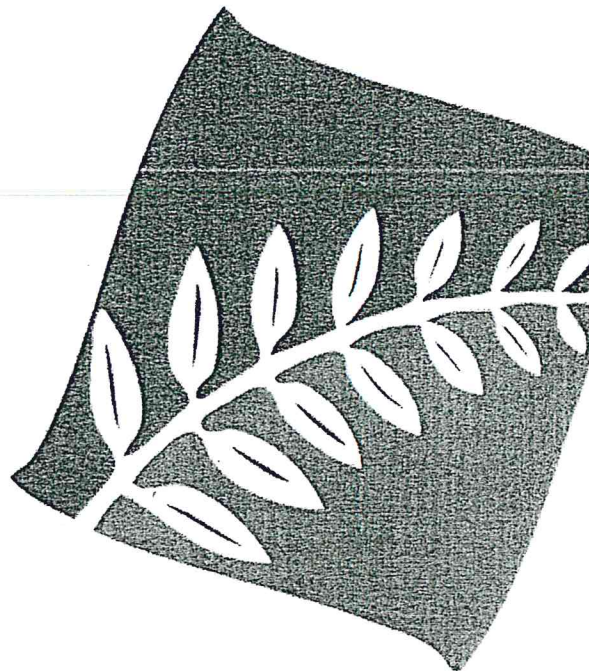
If you are considering assuming this responsibility, be honest about what you can do, be aware of your financial situation, and seek outside support.

## Older Adult Protective Services

Office Open Monday – Friday  
8:00 am to 4:30 pm

### Central Office:

Human Services Center  
1430 Dekalb St., Box 311  
Norristown, PA 19404-0311  
(610) 278-3601  
Fax (610) 278-3769



### ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE

To report a case of suspected elder abuse to Protective Services, call 1-800-734-2020



Montgomery County Board of Commissioners

Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Chair  
Kenneth E. Lawrence, Jr., Vice Chair  
Joseph C. Gale, Commissioner



[www.montcopa.org/mcaas](http://www.montcopa.org/mcaas)

## OLDER ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

A program of the Montgomery County Office of Aging & Adult Services (AAS)

### What is Elder Abuse?

Older adults who are frail, vulnerable and experiencing difficulty caring for themselves are potential victims of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. Family members, caregivers and others sometimes become the perpetrators of mistreatment.

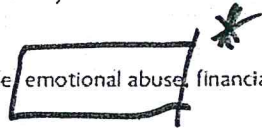
Statistics tell us that victims are often female and 75 years of age or older. They are often dependent on others for care, food and shelter. Elder abuse is a problem that is easily hidden, but records indicate that hundreds of thousands of elders nationally are abused each year.

### How can you identify Elder Abuse?

Elder Abuse can present in many forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, financial exploitation, caregiver neglect and self-neglect.

Elder Abuse is not always easily identified. The following are a few warning signs of Elder Abuse:

- Bruises and other injuries may be blamed on self-caused falls. However, injuries may be the result of a frustrated or ill equipped caregiver.



Every call is appreciated, as we depend on a concerned public to draw our attention to the need!

Employees and administrators of nursing facilities, personal care homes, adult day cares and home health agencies who

## Recognizing the Abuse

- Leave your home if it is unsafe.
- Prepare an emergency get-away kit (cash, medications, important papers, keys, etc.) Keep it in a safe place where your abuser can't find it.
- Arrange a signal with a trusted neighbor, friend, or co-worker: to let them know when you need help.
- Get medical attention if you have been injured.
- Get a Protection Order from the court.



## Where to Get Help

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence  
1-800-MD-HELPS

301-352-4574 • FAX 301-809-0422  
e-mail: mnadv@aol.com • www.mnadv.org  
6911 Laurel Bowie Road, Suite 309, Bowie, MD 20715

Maryland Department of Human Resources

(for Adult Protective Services and other information)

1-800-91-PREVENT

Your Local

Domestic Violence Program  
(Listed on the back of this brochure.)

Call 911 in an Emergency

- ALLEGANY COUNTY  
301-759-9244 • TTY 301-759-9244
- ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY  
410-222-6800
- BALTIMORE CITY  
Home of Ruth • 410-889-7854  
TTY 410-889-0047  
TourAround • 410-828-6390
- BALTIMORE COUNTY  
410-828-6390
- CALVERT COUNTY  
410-535-1121 • 301-855-1075
- CARROLL COUNTY  
410-857-0077
- CAROLINE, KENT, DORCHESTER, QUEEN ANNE'S, AND TALEOT COUNTIES  
1-800-927-4673
- CECIL COUNTY  
410-996-0333
- CHARLES COUNTY  
301-645-3336 • 301-843-1110
- FREDERICK COUNTY  
301-662-8800 • TTY 301-662-1565
- GARRETT COUNTY  
301-334-9000
- HARFORD COUNTY  
410-836-8430
- HOWARD COUNTY  
800-752-0191 / 410-957-2272
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
240-777-4673 • TTY 240-777-4850
- PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
1-866-382-7474 • 301-731-1205
- ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
301-863-6661
- SOMERSET, WILCOMICO & WORCESTER COUNTIES  
410-749-4357 • 410-641-4357
- WASHINGTON COUNTY  
301-739-8975 • TTY 301-739-1012

12/01



## Domestic Abuse... A Problem At Any Age



Domestic Violence Without Ageist Stereotypes

1-800-MD HELPS  
(24 Hour Statewide Helpline)

## What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behavior used by one person in a relationship to gain power and control over another, usually an intimate partner. The pattern can include physical, sexual, emotional, and/or economic abuse.

## Domestic Abuse in Later Life

Like younger victims, older adults may be subjected to a pattern of abusive behavior in their relationships. The abuse may be committed by family members such as an adult child or grandchild, or by someone with whom they have an intimate relationship, such as a spouse or life partner. In some cases the family member or intimate partner may also be the caregiver.



**DIR** Funding provided by DEER Office of Victim Services

## Forms of Abuse in Later Life

**Physical abuse** - hitting, kicking, pushing, beating, slapping, choking, punching, burning, restraining

**Sexual abuse** - forcing the victim to perform unwanted sexual activities, degrading treatment

**Emotional abuse** - making humiliating remarks, name-calling, mocking, yelling, blaming, swearing, interrupting, threatening, harming pets, destroying personal property, withholding affection, not respecting the victim's feelings, rights and opinions

**Financial abuse** - stealing money or property, using money as a way to maintain control

**Neglect** - withholding or failing to provide food, water, assistive devices, shelter, clothing, personal care, medical treatment

## Possible Signs of Abuse

- Repeated "accidental injuries"
- Injuries that do not match the account of what happened
- Statements about being afraid
- Vague, chronic complaints
- Missed medical appointments
- Signs of depression
- Limited or no social contact outside of the abusive relationship
- References to the other person's anger or temper
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts

## Assisting the Victim



- Believe the victim and offer hope and support.
- Explain that abuse can happen to anyone at any age.
- Explain that abuse does not have to include violence.
- Refer them to their local domestic violence program. If the victim is a vulnerable adult, contact Adult Protective Services.

## Questions to Ask...

- How are things going with your spouse/partner/family member?
- Are you getting to see your friends?
- Has anyone made you feel afraid or threatened?
- Does anyone threaten you or force you to do things you don't want to do?
- Have you ever been hurt by someone close to you?
- Have you ever been forced into sexual acts you did not wish to do? Is this going on now?

Always speak to the victim first and alone.



## Tips for Professionals Working with Older Victims

Domestic abuse is ongoing intentional behavior that stops victims from doing what they wish or forces them to behave against their will. It is not an isolated incident of abuse.

Abusers may use a range of tactics to maintain control, such as threats of institutionalization, denial of access to medical care or assistive devices, or isolation from family and friends. They may demand that victims continue to take care of them and the household, or that they sign over all financial resources.

Domestic abuse happens to older adults who are physically and mentally healthy as well as "vulnerable adults" who lack the physical and mental ability to care for themselves.

Not all abuse of older adults is domestic abuse. In some cases, medical or mental health problems may trigger violent behavior from the abuser. In other cases, attempts to help an older adult may lead to unintentional injury, or the stress of caregiving may lead to episodic abuse, sometimes referred to as "caregiver stress." These situations should not be confused with domestic abuse.

To focus on victim safety and avoid colluding with the abuser, assume it is a case of power and control until proven otherwise. Recognizing and accurately assessing domestic abuse is critically important for appropriate intervention.