

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Recognizing these warning signs of elder abuse can be a very effective tool in early intervention and prevention of further abuse.

PHYSICAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, welts, or scars, especially if they appear symmetrically on two sides of the body• Broken bones, sprains, or dislocations• Report of drug overdose or apparent failure to take medication regularly (a prescription has more remaining than it should)• Broken eyeglasses or frames• Signs of being restrained, such as rope marks on wrists• Caregiver's refusal to allow the elder to be seen alone
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	<p>In addition to the general signs above, indications of emotional elder abuse include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threatening, belittling, or controlling caregiver behavior that is witnessed• Behavior from the elder that mimics dementia, such as rocking, sucking, or mumbling to oneself
SEXUAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruises around breasts or genitals• Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections• Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding• Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing

<p>NEGLECT BY CAREGIVERS OR SELF-NEGLECT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration• Untreated physical problems, such as bed sores• Unsanitary living conditions: dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes• Being left dirty or unbathed• Unsuitable clothing or covering for the weather• Unsafe living conditions (no heat or running water; faulty electrical wiring, other fire hazards)• Desertion of the elder at a public place
<p>FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant withdrawals from the elder's accounts• Sudden changes in the elder's financial condition• Items or cash missing from the senior's household• Suspicious changes in wills, power of attorney, titles, and policies• Addition of names to the senior's signature card• Unpaid bills or lack of medical care, although the elder has enough money to pay for them• Financial activity the senior couldn't have done, such as an ATM withdrawal when the account holder is bedridden• Unnecessary services, goods, or subscriptions
<p>HEALTHCARE FRAUD AND ABUSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Duplicate billings for the same medical service or device• Evidence of overmedication or under-medication• Evidence of inadequate care when bills are paid in full• Problems with the care facility:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Poorly trained, poorly paid, or insufficient staff- Crowding- Inadequate responses to questions about care