

# Elder Abuse Awareness



## WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

Elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or “trusted” individual that led to harm of a vulnerable elder. Physical abuse, neglect, emotional or psychological abuse, verbal abuse and threats, financial abuse and exploitation, sexual abuse, and abandonment are all forms of elder abuse.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

Elder abuse can occur in the home, in nursing homes, or in other institutions. It affects elderly adults across all socioeconomic groups, cultures and races. Women and “older” elders are more likely to be victimized, with dementia being a significant risk factor.

JUNE

15

## WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD)

Providing an opportunity for communities worldwide to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons; raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

- Launched: June 15, 2006
- Founders: International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations

## VULNERABLE AND ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

- Observed in North Carolina from May 8 to June 19 (Mother’s Day to Father’s Day)



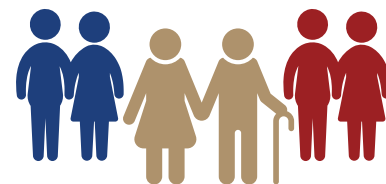
Every year an estimated  
**5 MILLION**  
older Americans are victims of elder  
abuse, neglect, or exploitation.



Experts believe that for every  
case reported, as many as  
**23** cases go unreported.



In state fiscal year  
2014 – 15, more than  
**24,500** reports of  
abuse, neglect, or exploitation of older  
adults were made to North Carolina’s 100  
County Departments of Social Services,  
an increase of **60%** since 2008.



**90%** of abusers are family  
members or trusted others.

## HOW TO REPORT ELDER ABUSE

- (N.C. GEN. STAT. §108A-102(a)) If you receive information of abuse or neglect from a member of the public:
  - Make an Adult Protective Services (APS) report to the County Department of Social Services (DSS) where the adult resides ([www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local))
- If you receive information of abuse or neglect from a law enforcement officer:
  - Make an APS report
  - Have report screened by DSS for an APS evaluation



*APS is required by statute (N.C. GEN. STAT. § 108A-109) to notify the district attorney upon finding evidence indicating that a person has abused, neglected, or exploited a disabled adult.*

# Identifying Elder Abuse

## PHYSICAL & SEXUAL ABUSE

- Bruises, welts, lacerations, broken bones, broken eyeglasses
- Open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries
- Sprains, dislocations, internal injuries
- Findings of medication overdose or under-utilization of prescribed drugs
- Sudden change in behavior
- Unexplained genital infections or bleeding
- Torn, stained, bloody underclothing
- An elder's report of being assaulted

## PSYCHOLOGICAL & EMOTIONAL

- Caregiver isolates the elder person
- Being emotional or agitated
- Being withdrawn and non-communicative
- Unusual behavior usually attributed to dementia (e.g., sucking, biting, rocking)
- Intimidation through yelling, threats, habitual blaming
- Ignoring, terrorizing, or menacing the elderly person
- An elder's report of being mistreated

## FINANCIAL ABUSE & EXPLOITATION

- Sudden changes in bank account (e.g. withdrawals by another person, names added to elder's bank card)
- Abrupt changes in will or other such documents
- Unexplained disappearance of funds or possessions
- Substandard care or unpaid bills despite having adequate resources
- An elder's forged signature
- Sudden transfer of assets
- The provision of unnecessary services
- An elder's report of financial exploitation

## NEGLECT & ABANDONMENT

- Unusual weight loss, dehydration, malnourishment, untreated bed sores, poor hygiene
- Untreated health problems
- Hazardous living conditions (e.g., no heat, water)
- Unsanitary living conditions
- The desertion of an elder at a hospital, nursing facility, public place
- Failure to fulfill a caretaking obligation
- An elder's report of being mistreated and / or abandoned

## MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- NCDHHS  
[www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local)
- NCEA  
[www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov)
- Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services  
[www.aoa.acl.gov](http://www.aoa.acl.gov)
- North Carolina Court System  
[www.NCcourts.org](http://www.NCcourts.org)