

CORAL GABLES POLICE DEPARTMENT
Threat Management Unit
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Elder Abuse

-- Help put
an end to it



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Everyone can help stop elder abuse.

For example, people can help by supporting:

Prevention programs

to help identify and assist victims of elder abuse and their families. More research into the causes, treatment and prevention of elder abuse is also needed.

Education

to fight negative attitudes toward older people and people who have disabilities.



Remember,

everyone has an obligation to report suspected cases of elder abuse to the police or social service agencies.

Resources

for older people and their caregivers. These include:

- home health aides
- meal delivery
- day care
- transportation
- counseling
- help with daily living tasks.

Greater public awareness

of the problem. No policy or program will succeed unless concerned citizens get involved.



Legislation

to help older people use the courts, find treatment and gain protection from further abuse.

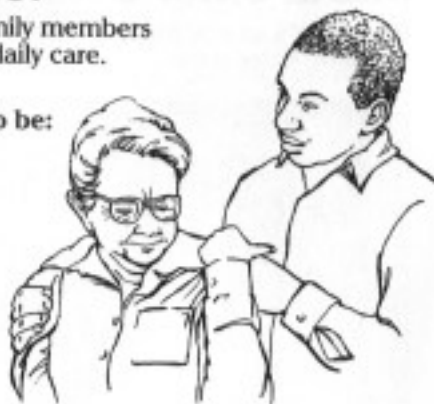
For more information, contact organizations that provide protective services for older people, such as your Area Agency on Aging, or your state's Office on Aging or Adult Protective Services agency.

Who are the victims of elder abuse?

Victims often live with family members and depend on them for daily care.

Victims are most likely to be:

- age 75 or over
- women
- dependent on the abuser for basic needs
- suffering from a mental or physical illness.



But, situations vary.
Many other victims are financially independent and in good health.

Who are the abusers?

Usually, they're family members who are acting as caregivers. Abusers often suffer from:

Stress

When added to personal and financial problems, the strain of caring for an older person can cause frustration. Unrelieved stress increases the possibility of abuse.

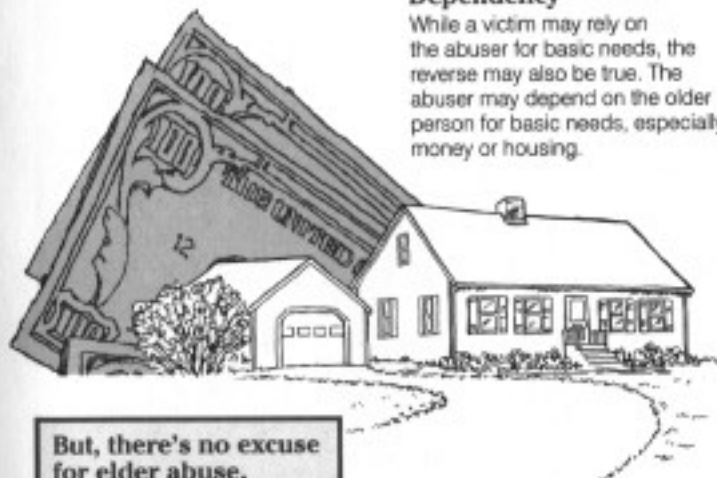


Alcohol and other drug problems

Alcoholism and other drug use may play a major role in elder abuse.

Dependency

While a victim may rely on the abuser for basic needs, the reverse may also be true. The abuser may depend on the older person for basic needs, especially money or housing.



But, there's no excuse for elder abuse.

How are older people abused?

In lots of ways. Elder abuse may take the form of:

Physical abuse

Victims are kicked, punched, slapped, beaten -- even raped. Pain, injury or death may result.



Neglect

Failure to provide medicine, food or personal care (such as help to the bathroom) is a common form of abuse.



Financial exploitation

Abusers may steal or mismanage money, property, savings or credit cards. Older people may be forced to sign a will or turn over assets.

Rights violations

Victims may be unfairly confined or forced out of the home. Their behavior may be strictly controlled.



Psychological abuse

Elder people may be intentionally isolated or denied companionship. Abusers may threaten or verbally attack them.

Other abuse

- Older people may be forced to live in unsanitary conditions, or in unventilated, poorly heated or cooled rooms.
- Overmedicating, or withholding aids (eyeglasses, dentures, etc.) is abuse, too.

What caregivers can do

If you're a caregiver, it may help to:

Talk out problems

if you're experiencing conflict with family members or elderly relatives.



Plan free time

to do something you enjoy each day.



Seek help

from friends and family members when you need it.

Join a support group

for care providers. Many communities have them.



Consider using an adult day-care center,

hiring a home health aide or taking caregiver-training classes.

Elder abuse is a serious problem.

Learn the facts

about elder abuse.

Seek help

for victims and abusers.

Support efforts

to end elder abuse.



It's everyone's responsibility to stop elder abuse.

What is elder abuse?

It's the mistreatment or neglect of an older person, usually by a relative or other caregiver.

Elder abuse includes:

- physical violence
- threats
- verbal abuse
- financial exploitation
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- violation of an older person's privacy or other basic rights.

The home should be a place of comfort, not a source of punishment and fear.



Why should I know about elder abuse?

Because it's an extremely serious problem! Elder abuse is:

Very common

Incidents occur with alarming frequency. They occur in families from all backgrounds and in every part of the U.S.

Often hidden

Most cases go unreported. Many victims are ashamed or unable to report abuse – or fearful of what may happen if they do.



You can help put a stop to elder abuse.