

Elder Abuse

Elders are abused, neglected, or exploited each day in this country and around the world. Unfortunately, the abuse is rarely reported because the victim fears retaliation, fears being institutionalized or left alone, is physically or mentally unable to report the abuse, or wants to protect the abuser especially if it is their child.



According to the National Center on Elder Abuse the victim in almost 90% of elder abuse cases knows the abuser. More than two-thirds of the abusers are related to the victim and adult children are the most frequent abusers.

Types of Elder Abuse

When we hear the term “elder abuse” we often think of physical abuse but abuse can take many forms:

- ◆ Physical Abuse – the infliction of physical pain or injury, and/or the use of restraints that results in physical pain.
- ◆ Sexual Abuse – non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person.
- ◆ Emotional Abuse – a pattern of verbal or nonverbal acts such as threats, humiliation, intimidation, or

isolation that inflict mental anguish or distress.

- ◆ Financial Exploitation – the illegal or improper use of an elder’s funds, property, or resources.
- ◆ Neglect – failure or refusal to fulfill any part of a person’s obligations or duties to an elder. Self-neglect occurs when elders are unable to meet their own needs.

Warning Signs of Abuse

We look for changes in an elder’s behavior, appearance, or spending habits as well as the following signs:

Emotional:

- Depression
- Fear/anxiety
- Anger/agitation
- Shame
- Withdrawn/unresponsive
- Self-medication with alcohol or prescription drugs

Social:

- Isolated, no visitors
- Caregivers, or family, restrict visitors to the elder
- Elder not allowed to speak to others without caregiver/family present
- Unsafe/unsanitary living conditions

Physical Signs:

- Unexplained fractures, bruises, burns, lacerations
- Unexpected deterioration of health
- Malnutrition or dehydration
- Poor hygiene; dirty, unshaven
- Bed sores
- Misuse of medication; over- or under-medicated
- Genital infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Torn or bloody underclothes

Financial Signs:

- Inability to pay bills
- Unexplained withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between income and living conditions
- Suspicious activity on credit cards
- Changes in the elder’s will or other documents
- Improper use of power of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship
- Missing property/assets

A warning sign of all abuse is when an elder reports being abused



Reporting Elder Abuse

If you suspect elder abuse please call:

Adult Protective Services

24 hour Adult Abuse Reporting Line
1-877-SOS-ADULT (1-877-767-2385)
- or report online at www.azdes.gov,
click on "Seniors" then "Adult Protective
Services"

Mesa Police Department

Emergency : 9-1-1
Non-emergency : (480) 644-2211

You can make a report anonymously if you choose to do so. Please be able to provide the alleged victim's name, age, address, telephone number, and reasons why you suspect they are being abused.

Other Agencies Involved in Elder Abuse Investigation and Prevention

Area Agency on Aging

24-hour Senior HELPLINE
(602) 264-HELP (602-264-4357)

- Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (MEAPA)
- Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Elder Emergency Housing Program

Office of the Attorney General

⇒ Task Force Against Senior Abuse
(602) 542-2124
⇒ AHCCCS Fraud Control Unit
(602) 542-3881

Department of Health Services

Office of Long Term Care
(602) 674-9705

How Can You Help?

- ⇒ **Be aware** of the signs of elder abuse, and share this information
- ⇒ **Report** suspected abuse to law enforcement or Adult Protective Services.
- ⇒ **Schedule** a presentation for your group on elder abuse

ELDER ABUSE, NEGLECT, & EXPLOITATION



Information provided by the
Mesa Police Department
www.mesaaz.gov/police

