

ELDER ABUSE



What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is when a person acts (or refuses to act) in a way that creates risk or causes harm to an older adult. It happens where there is a relationship of trust between the older adult and the other person. This can be a family member, neighbor, spouse, or even a new friend that they trust. There are many kinds of abuse, including financial, physical, psychological, sexual, spiritual, and intentional neglect. You may sometimes hear elder abuse referred to as elder mistreatment or abuse in later life.

What increases the chances someone will face elder abuse?

An older adult is more likely to experience abuse if their physical and mental health decline, they are less mobile, they are isolated, or have substance use disorder. This can especially be true if an older adult relies on another person for care, money, housing, or other needs. Learn more from [Adult Protective Services](#).

What are the signs of elder abuse?

Signs of abuse depend on the type of abuse. For example, dirty clothing, dehydration, or unsafe living conditions could be a sign of neglect if the older adult has a caregiver. Other signs could be cuts, bruises, or showing fear around a person. For more information on signs of abuse, check out the [National Institute on Aging](#) or the [Elder Justice Initiative](#).

I know an older adult experiencing abuse, but they will not accept help or report it. Does this mean they are incapacitated and need a guardian?

Not necessarily. There are many reasons a person may not report abuse or accept help. For example, they may be afraid or don't want to get the abuser in trouble. A person is not incapacitated just because they will not accept help. Adults are allowed to make decisions that put them at risk of harm, as long as they understand the risks and consequences.



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Can guardianship protect someone from elder abuse?

There are some tools that may be available to guardians to protect an older adult: a guardian can seek an order of protection to stop further contact by an abuser; they can arrange qualified home health care; and they can help gather evidence for criminal prosecution of the abuser. However, a guardian cannot monitor the older adult at all times. For example, a guardian may not be able to physically prevent an abuser from contacting the older adult or threatening their caregivers.

How else can I help someone experiencing elder abuse?

Talk to the person when they are alone and express your concerns. Encourage the person to connect with their community or programs through their [local office for the aging](#). You can also report abuse to [Adult Protective Services](#) (APS) by calling (844) 697-3505. Referrals to APS can be anonymous.



WHERE DO I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

- [Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons](#) provides free information, support, and resources for individuals concerned about people experiencing abuse or financial exploitation in New York State. Call (844) 746-6905.
- [NYC Aging's Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center](#) (ECVRC) helps older adults impacted by crimes such as financial scams and theft, robberies, harassment, and physical assaults. Call Aging Connect at (212) AGING-NYC (212-244-6469) to be connected to ECVRC.
- For elder justice programming, contact your [local Office for the Aging](#). If you're in NYC, [contact NYC Aging](#).