

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ELDER ABUSE

TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE

- **Physical abuse:** which causes bodily injury, pain, or impairment.
- **Emotional abuse:** which may involve humiliation or threats, implicit or explicit.
- **Financial abuse:** which may include the unauthorized withdrawal of funds from a bank, use of credit cards, forgery, and schemes to defraud an individual or property.
- **Sexual abuse:** which is sexual contact without consent.
- **Neglect:** which is the failure to provide a dependent person with clothing, food, medicine, or shelter.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Unexplained physical injury
- Agitation, trembling, confusion, or disorientation
- Emotional distress like crying and/or depression
- Withdrawn, shows no emotion
- Self-destructive behavior
- Social and physical isolation
- Unexplained loss of financial independence and/or control
- Home in disarray, lacks basic necessities

BE AWARE IF...

- Older adult appears fearful of caregiver or family members.
- Older adult appears reluctant to respond when questioned.
- Caregiver or family members seek to prevent elder from interacting privately with you.
- Older adult, family member, or caregiver gives conflicting accounts of incident.
- Caregiver or family member is indifferent or angry towards elder and refuses to provide necessary assistance.

SIGNS OF A POTENTIAL ABUSER

- Abusers often have addictions to alcohol, drugs, and/or gambling.
- Previous history of abuse or family violence.
- Shared living space or financial stress can lead to an abusive situation.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN INTERVIEWING AN OLDER ADULT

- Always interview the older adult alone.
- **Impaired vision:** ensure the older adult is in a lighted area and can see the interviewer's face.
- **Hearing loss:** always speak face-to-face in a quiet area.
- An older adult with decision-making capacity has the right to exercise free choice in making decisions that are harmful.
- **NOTE:** Decision-making capacity may need a mental health assessment.
- Dementia or cognitive impairment does not mean the older adult is not a valid reporter.

WHEN SCREENING OLDER ADULTS FOR ABUSE

ASK ABOUT ABUSE

- Has anyone called you names, put you down, or humiliated you?
- Has anyone close to you threatened to hurt you or harm you recently?

BRUISES

- Are you afraid of anyone in your life?

UNMET NEEDS

- Are you free to use the telephone anytime you want?
- Do you have access to your funds?

SAFETY CONCERNS

- Has anyone forced you to do things you did not want to do?
- Are you afraid for your safety?

FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

- Has anyone taken things or money that belongs to you without your permission?