

ELDER ABUSE

TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING AND COMBATING ELDER ABUSE



Do you feel unsafe in your own home?

Does someone who is caring for you make you feel afraid?

Is someone keeping you from seeing your family and friends?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” it is time to speak up and get help!

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the intentional infliction of pain or bodily injury which can include shoving, slapping, punching, kicking, biting or choking.

Over time, elder abuse can harm an individual’s physical and psychological health, destroy social and family ties, and cause devastating financial loss. That is why it is so important to identify and report these abusive behaviors to L.A. County Adult Protective Services (APS) and to the police.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office prosecutes physical abuse cases involving elderly and

dependent adult victims. We seek to utilize counseling, treatment and/or incarceration while ensuring that victims are protected and that a just result is reached.

Warning Signs

- There are lacerations, abrasions, fractures, welts, bruises, discoloration or swelling not associated with a known medical condition or treatment.
- The older adult has unexplained pain or tenderness on mere touch.
- There is evidence of the use of restraints or suspicious marks on their body.
- The older adult becomes withdrawn or seems unusually protective of a suspected abuser.
- The caregiver refuses to allow family members or friends to visit the older adult alone.
- The older adult has a loss of interest in social events or family gatherings.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse, such as verbal assaults, threats, insults, humiliation, or isolation can make a person feel anxious and helpless. This can result in psychological and emotional trauma, which can affect one’s overall health and quality of life.

Verbal threats, insults, intimidation, shouting and other acts of rage directed at an older adult, over a period of time, can be a crime. Often the abuser is an adult child, a family member, spouse, caregiver, or friend. Emotional abuse can occur during instances of physical abuse, financial exploitation or neglect.

Older adults should not blame themselves for the emotionally abusive and dysfunctional behavior of others. It is important to stop the abuse and protect this vulnerable population.

Warning Signs

- The older adult seems depressed, sad or withdrawn.
- The older adult displays unusual mood swings or anger.

- The older adult appears afraid of being touched or approached by others.
- The older adult seems unusually introverted, fearful or shies away from contact.
- The older adult has changes in their eating or sleeping patterns.

Prevention

- Do not allow older adults to live with someone who is known to be abusive or violent.
- Older adults should not be afraid to speak up and notify friends, family, Adult Protective Services, and police about any type of suspected abuse.
- Older adults should keep in touch with family and friends and avoid becoming isolated.
- Friends and relatives of an older adult should closely watch the behavior of the older adult and the actions of the caregiver.
- Intervene immediately when abuse is suspected.
- Educate others about how to recognize and report abuse.



GEORGE GASCÓN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



Helping Crime Victims Become Survivors

To report physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect, call the police or the Los Angeles County Elder Abuse Hotline (APS).

(800) 992-1660
(877) 477-3646

More resources to help combat elder abuse are available on the District Attorney's website. Visit da.lacounty.gov/seniors

Neglect

Neglect is the failure by a caregiver to provide the older adult with their basic needs, comforts, services, or assistance. This can include either the refusal or failure to provide such life necessities as food, water, clothing, shelter, assistance with personal hygiene, medicine, medical care, and personal safety.

Adult children, especially those with a history of mental illness, substance abuse or criminal activity, may be at risk to neglect their elderly parents. You should avoid placing an adult child, family member or caregiver with these types of problems in charge of the physical care or financial control of an older or dependent adult.

A person can also neglect themselves. Self-neglect can occur when there is no one to take care of the older adult, which can result in a person not eating or seeking the appropriate medical treatment. While self-neglect is not a crime, it can cause an older or dependent

adult to be placed in an unhealthy or dangerous situation.

Report any instances of neglect or self-neglect to the Los Angeles County Elder Abuse 24-hour Hotline (APS).

Warning Signs

- The older adult seems to be isolated by a caretaker and unable to speak freely or spend time with others.
- The older adult appears unwashed, unkempt, poorly groomed or wears soiled, ill-fitting or inappropriate clothing.
- The older adult appears to be dehydrated or malnourished or has an unusual or sudden weight loss.
- Lack of necessary medical aids such as glasses, walker, teeth, hearing aids, or medications accessible to the older adult.
- There is a failure to seek medical treatment for an injury or to attend medical appointments.

Prevention

- Visit the older adult unexpectedly to see the quality of their care when the caregiver is not expecting a guest.
- When possible, share caregiving responsibilities with others to help prevent caregiver fatigue.
- If hiring an unlicensed caretaker to provide home care, ask for multiple references and check them carefully.
- Before placing an older adult in a nursing home or care facility, or hiring a licensed professional to provide home care, visit our Safe Older Adult Care Resources page at da.lacounty.gov/seniors/safe-senior-care to find additional information on providers and facilities.
- If you are concerned about the physical or emotional welfare of an older adult family member, neighbor, or friend, contact the Los Angeles County Elder Abuse 24-hour Hotline (APS).

Helpful Resources

Adult Protective Services (APS)

To Report Elder Abuse

(213) 351-5401

Bet Tzedek

Legal Services for Older Adults

(323) 939-0506

California Department of Aging

The California Department of Aging administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the state

(916) 419-7500

Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office

Representatives assist residents in long-term care facilities with issues related to day-to-day care, health, safety and personal preferences

(800) 231-4024

WISE and Healthy Aging

Community Resources and Programs for Older Adults

(310) 394-9871