



ELDERLY ABUSE PREVENTION

How to Report a Tip

 Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)

 Use our **Mobile App**
Download app name: Crime Stoppers Houston

 Go to [crime-stoppers.org](https://www.crime-stoppers.org)

Tipsters will remain anonymous and could be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$5,000.



Elder abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, and abandonment. Perpetrators include children, other family members, and spouses—as well as staff at nursing homes, assisted living, and other facilities.

Did you know?

- As high as 5 million elders are abused each year
- Around 1 in 6 elderly people experienced some form of abuse in the past year
- Only 1 in 14 cases are reported to any agency
- Legislatures in all 50 states have passed some type of elder abuse law
- 90% of abusers are family members, 2/3 of perpetrators are adult children or spouses
- Most victims are dependent on their abuser for basic needs

Forms of abuse

Physical: When enough force is used to cause unnecessary pain or injury, even if the reason is to help the older person.

Examples of this behavior are:

- Slapping and/or shoving
- Assaulted or threatened with a weapon
- Inappropriately restrained
- Inappropriate use of medications

Signs are:

- Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones
- Unexplained injuries
- Physical pain and/or soreness
- Injury that has not been cared for properly

Emotional: Any type of coercive or threatening behavior that sets up an imbalance of power.

Examples of this behavior are:

- Humiliation
- Controlling behavior
- Social isolation
- Name calling
- Silent treatment
- Trivializing needs

Signs are:

- Being emotionally upset or agitated
- Being extremely withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive
- Unusual behavior usually attributed to dementia such as sucking, biting, rocking, etc.

Sexual: Any unwanted sexualized behavior including acts the elder is unable to understand or to communicate.

Examples of this behavior are:

- Unwanted touching
- All types of sexual assault or battery, such as rape, sodomy, coerced nudity, etc.

Signs are:

- Vaginal infections or STD's
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Inappropriate, unusual, or aggressive sexual behavior

Financial: Unauthorized / improper use of the resources of an elder for monetary / personal benefit, profit, or gain.

Examples of this behavior are:

- Misuse of funds
- Embezzlement
- Taking money under false pretenses
- Denying someone of his/her funds
- Forced property transfers
- Forgery and/or fraud

Signs are:

- Signatures on checks do not match the elder's signature
- Unusual ATM activity and/or large withdraws from bank accounts
- Missing valuables
- Adding additional names on bank signature card
- Unpaid bills, delinquent utility notices

Social isolation and mental impairment (such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease) make elder vulnerable to abuse/neglect. Nearly half of those with dementia have experienced abuse or neglect. Victims may not be able to communicate abuse – Look for signs such as crying or tension when someone is near!

Neglect

Failing to meet physical, social or emotional needs of an elder you are responsible for caring including failing to keep him or her safe from harm.

Examples of this behavior are:

- Withholding appropriate attention
- Not providing adequate nutrition
- Prevents elder from speaking to or seeing visitors

Signs are:

- Indifferent towards elder
- Talks of elder as a burden
- Bedsores
- Lack of medical aids such as glasses, walkers, hearing aids, medications
- Lack of affection towards elder
- Lack of basic hygiene



Protecting Yourself from Elder Abuse:

- Make sure your financial and legal affairs are in order.
- Enlist professional help to assist with legal affairs, with the assistance of a trusted friend or relative if necessary.
- Open your own mail.
- Use direct deposit for checks.
- Keep in touch with family and friends and avoid becoming isolated.
- If you are unhappy with the care you're receiving, whether it's in your own home or in a care facility, speak up. Tell someone you trust and ask that person to report the abuse, neglect, or substandard care to an elder abuse helpline or long-term care ombudsman, or make the call yourself.



Tips for Caregivers:

- If you find yourself becoming angry, call family, a friend, or a neighbor for help.
- Take a break, even if it's stepping outside for fresh air.
- Practice stress management, we all need ways of cooling off during stressful moments.
- Stay healthy and get medical care for yourself when necessary.
- Seek counseling for depression.
- Find a support group for caregivers of the elderly.



Reporting Elder Abuse:

If the victim is in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or his/her home relying on a home health provider, call the Texas Department of State Health Services at (800) 458-9858.

If the victim is a resident of a long-term care facility that receives Medicaid funding, report criminal abuse, neglect or exploitation to the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit at (512) 463-2011 (Austin), toll-free at (800) 252-8011 or mfcu@texasattorneygeneral.gov.

Abuse of a senior who is not in a health care facility can be reported to Adult Protective Services at (800) 252-5400 or <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

Texas law states that anyone who thinks a child, a person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to DFPS. A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. Reporting suspected abuse makes it possible for a family to get help.

The Human Resources code Chapter 48 (48.051) requires a person having cause to believe that an elderly or disabled person is in the state of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to report the information required immediately.

Elder victims have the right to refuse services offered by Adult Protective Services. Services will only be provided if the senior agrees or has been declared incapacitated by the court and a guardian has been appointed.