



ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION

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?

- There were nearly 60,000 elder abuse cases in Texas in 2019.
- In 2019, Houston ranked 2nd in Texas for most elder abuse investigations.
- According to the United Health Foundation's 2019 American Health Ranking Senior Report, Texas Ranks 40th in the nation for overall senior care and 50th in nursing home quality.
- Females victims make up 64% of Texas elder abuse investigations.
- There is a 16% depression rate amongst senior adults nationwide and this is the highest depression rate amongst this population in history.
- Suicide rates amongst senior adult males has increased by 7% and 16% for senior adult females nationwide from 2013 to 2019.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice, only 1 in 20 cases of physical abuse to elders is reported.

FORMS OF ABUSE

- **Physical abuse:** Any form of violence or harm that leaves an elderly person significantly injured. Signs of physical abuse include burns from appliances or cigarettes, broken bones, hair or tooth loss, bruises, dislocated joints, sprains.
- **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual contact with an elder who, because of mental illness or dementia, cannot communicate their approval/disapproval of the behavior or cannot communicate full consent. Signs of sexual abuse include pelvic injury, unusual problems walking or sitting, STDs, torn, bloody, or stained underwear, bruises of the genital or inner thigh area, bleeding from genitals, panic attacks, signs of PTSD, agitation, socially or emotionally withdrawn, engaging in unusual or aggressive sexual activities, suicide attempts.
- **Emotional abuse:** Any form of verbal or nonverbal psychological maltreatment. Forms of emotional abuse include blaming, scapegoating, humiliating, terrorizing, intimidating, isolating from friends, family, or social occasions, yelling, or threatening. Signs of emotional abuse include avoiding eye contact, low self-esteem, appears depressed or withdrawn, seems disturbed, scared, or hopeless, self-injury, violence towards others, acute mood swings, changes in eating and sleeping patterns.
- **Neglect & Abandonment:** Elder neglect is when a caregiver fails to meet the needs of an elderly person who cannot care for themselves. Signs of elder neglect include loss of weight, displaying signs of trauma like rocking back and forth, acting agitated or violent, becoming withdrawn, ceasing to participate in activities typically enjoyed, unkempt appearance, bed sores, unsanitary living conditions. Elder Abandonment occurs when a caretaker permanently deserts an elderly person who was in their care. Signs of elderly abandonment include absence of necessities including food, water, and AC, untreated or unexplained worsening of medical or mental conditions, inadequate or unsafe living environment, animal or insect infestations, dehydration or malnutrition.

FORMS OF ABUSE [CONTINUED]

- **Financial Exploitation:** Unauthorized or improper use of an elderly person's resources for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain. Forms of financial abuse include forging signatures, forcing an elderly to sign documents, stealing property or money, false promises in exchange for money or property, unauthorized use of money or property, fraud, telemarketing scams, unauthorized credit card charges.

PROTECT YOURSELF

- Make sure your financial and legal affairs are in order.
- 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.
- Stay active in the community.
- Be cautious of online scams – ask for assistance when something does not seem right.

PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES


- Keep elders engaged in their communities.
- Support the primary caregiver. Having multiple trusted adults share the caregiving responsibilities or provide emotional, financial, and overall support can greatly lower the stress of caring for an elderly loved one.
- Keep elder active.
- Look out for caregivers or friends who need financial help as this could be a tempting scenario for financial exploitation of an elder.
- Find and utilize community resources like financial and emotional support, caregiver education, and breaks for personal time in efforts to reduce stress.
- If your loved one lives in a nursing home be sure to educate them on the signs of abuse, and communicate or visit them regularly.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT

ALWAYS CALL 911 IF AN ELDER IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.

- 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 at **1-800-252-5400**.
- 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 **1-800-458-9858**.
- If the victim is a resident of a long-term care facility that receives Medicaid funding, report to the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit at **512-463-2011** (Austin) or toll-free at **1-800-252-8011**, mfcu@texasattorneygeneral.gov.
- Abuse of a senior who is not in a health care facility can be reported to Adult Protective Services toll-free at **1-800-252-5400**; <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

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)**

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suspecting that an elder has been abused or
neglected must immediately make a report to
1-800-252-5400.