

INDICATORS OF VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

Physical Abuse Indicators:

- Bruises and discoloration on inner arm/thigh, thumb/finger prints, choke marks, presence of old and new bruises in the same place, different colored bruises, and suspicious shapes caused by coins, cords or belts used as restraints.
- Scratches, cuts, pinch marks, cigarette burns, rope burns, and fractures.
- Physical injury on head, scalp or face, e.g. black eye.
- Bruises around breast or genital areas, unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding, or torn, stained and bloody under clothing.
- Broken bones.
- Physical restraint use not ordered by a doctor and used for the convenience of care provider, e.g., persons tied in bed, strapped into wheelchairs while slumping over or sitting out of alignment, etc.
- Drowsiness, dry and cracked lips, drooling, vacant stare from over- medication.
- Injuries not properly cared for or injuries incompatible with the victims' history.
- Dehydration, malnourishment or weight loss without a medical explanation.
- Eye problems such as a detached retina.
- Pulled out hair.
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Neglect Indicators:

- Poor hygiene, e.g., unkempt appearance, stained or torn clothes.
- Dirty or uncut finger or toe nails.
- Inadequate dental hygiene.
- Signs of feces on resident or in bathroom and smell of urine.
- Person lying in urine or feces.
- Unexplained weight loss, malnutrition and dehydration.
- Persons left unattended on toilet.

- Bruising or fractures from rough handling or frequent falls due to lack of attention.
- Bedsores on buttocks, heels, elbows, shoulder blades, etc.
- Staffing problems in care facilities lead to neglect, e.g., limited number of staff on nights and weekends, staff inadequately trained or experienced for assignment, and high staff turnover.
- Caregiver is indifferent or hostile to the client, including excessive blame on the victim.
- Caregiver has previous history of violence and/or fails to comply with the care plan.
- Social ISOLATION or withholding of affection from the victim.
- Caregiver threatens and intimidation of the victim.

Types of Neglect:

- **"Active"** neglect refers to behavior that is willful - that is, the caregiver intentionally withholds care or necessities. The neglect may be motivated by financial gain (e.g. the caregiver stands to inherit) or reflect interpersonal conflicts
- **"Passive"** neglect refers to situations in which the caregiver is unable to fulfill his or her care giving responsibilities as a result of illness, disability, stress, ignorance, lack of maturity, or lack of resources

Relational Abuse Indicators:

- The elder is not given the opportunity to speak for him/herself.
- Family or care providers restrict activity, outside contacts.
- Family or care providers do not allow the elder to be alone with anyone.
- Family and/or care providers provide conflicting reports on condition of the elder.
- **There are suspicions of substance abuse by caregiver.**

Financial Abuse:

- Unpaid bills, eviction notices, or notices to discontinue utilities

- Withdrawals from bank accounts or transfers between accounts that the older person cannot explain
- Bank statements and canceled checks no longer come to the elder's home
- New "best friends"
- Legal documents, such as powers of attorney, which the older person didn't understand at the time he or she signed them
- Unusual activity in the older person's bank accounts including large, unexplained withdrawals, frequent transfers between accounts, or ATM withdrawals
- The care of the elder is not commensurate with the size of his/her estate
- A caregiver expresses excessive interest in the amount of money being spent on the older person
- Belongings or property are missing
- Suspicious signatures on checks or other documents
- Absence of documentation about financial arrangements
- Implausible explanations given about the elderly person's finances by the elder or the caregiver
- The elder is unaware of or does not understand financial arrangements that have been made for him or her
- ATM transactions by "homebound" elders
- Large or unusual bank transactions
- Power of Attorney signed by a confused elder person
- Personal loans not repaid to the victim

Behavioral Abuse Indicators of the Victim:

- Fear
- Helplessness/Resignation
- Implausible Stories
- Anger
- Withdrawal
- Hesitation to Talk Openly
- Confusion or Disorientation
- Denial
- Depression
- Anxiety

- Agitation
- Non-Responsiveness
- Has lost touch with family and friends