

# **Elder Abuse - Possible Indicators of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation**

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**The following descriptions are not necessarily proof of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. But they may be clues that a problem exists, and that a report needs to be made to law enforcement or Adult Protective Services.**

## **Physical Signs**

- Injury that has not been cared for properly
  - Injury that is inconsistent with explanation for its cause
  - Pain from touching
  - Cuts, puncture wounds, burns, bruises, welts
  - Dehydration or malnutrition without illness-related cause
  - Poor coloration
  - Sunken eyes or cheeks
  - Inappropriate administration of medication
  - Soiled clothing or bed
  - Frequent use of hospital or health care/doctor-shopping
  - Lack of necessities such as food, water, or utilities
  - Lack of personal effects, pleasant living environment, personal items
- Forced isolation

## **Behavioral Signs**

- Fear
  - Anxiety, agitation
  - Anger
  - Isolation, withdrawal Depression
  - Non-responsiveness, resignation, ambivalence
  - Contradictory statements, implausible stories

- Hesitation to talk openly
- Confusion or disorientation

### **Signs by Caregiver**

- Prevents elder from speaking to or seeing visitors
  - Anger, indifference, aggressive behavior toward elder
  - History of substance abuse, mental illness, criminal behavior, or family violence
  - Lack of affection toward elder
  - Flirtation or coyness as possible indicator of inappropriate sexual relationships
  - Conflicting accounts of incidents
  - Withholds affection
  - Talks of elder as a burden

### **Signs of Financial Abuse**

- Frequent expensive gifts from elder to caregiver
  - Elder's personal belongings, papers, credit cards missing
  - Numerous unpaid bills
  - A recent will when elder seems incapable of writing will
  - Caregiver's name added to bank account
  - Elder unaware of monthly income
  - Elder signs on loan
  - Frequent checks made out to "cash"
  - Unusual activity in bank account
  - Irregularities on tax return
  - Elder unaware of reason for appointment with banker or attorney
  - Caregiver's refusal to spend money on elder
  - Signatures on checks or legal documents that do not resemble elder's signature