

Understanding Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and Neglect:

Elder abuse and neglect are serious problems that occur in our communities and in our senior care institutions. People are most at risk for abuse and neglect when they are unable to take care of themselves mentally and physically. This makes children and elders targets for abuse and neglect.

Senior Caregivers need to understand abuse and neglect to protect themselves and the seniors in their care.

4 Abuse and Neglect Skills

1. Know the Signs of Abuse and Neglect
2. Watch for These Signs
3. Know how to Appropriately Report Suspected Abuse and Neglect
4. Protect Yourself from being Charged with Abuse or Neglect of a Patient

Senior Care Abuse Definition: Abuse is any action by a trusted individual that causes physical or emotional harm to the victim. There are a number of different kinds of abuse including:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Financial Abuse

Neglect Definition: When someone fails to do tasks that are necessary to meet the needs of an elderly person this is considered neglect. Neglect can happen by a family member or a caregiver who does not provide the caregiving services which are required.

There are 3 types of neglect:

Passive Neglect: when people don't mean to do harm. This can happen because of lack of knowledge about a situation or medical condition.

Active Neglect: when people know the care needs but fail to do what is needed for the care of the elderly person.

Self-Neglect: proactively choosing to neglect your own personal care needs such as eating, bathing and maintaining your home when you are physically capable of caring for yourself.

Abuse and neglect can happen anywhere, both in the home or in an institutional caregiving setting. This is why there are nursing home violation reports in order to regulate the industry. Because even in facilities, abuse and neglect can occur. Unfortunately, sexual abuse also occurs in institutional settings as predators target these types of communities. This is why it is vital for all caregivers to know how to recognize signs of abuse.

Sometimes neglect happens because caregiving staff is overworked, stressed or poorly trained. It is important to understand that even if you are having a difficult day, you must remain professional and not become verbally abusive to a senior nor neglect a necessary task. Sometimes family members are exhausted by the challenges of senior care or may be battling their own drug or alcohol challenges which may expand into elder abuse of a family member. Know the signs and take action in order to protect both the senior and yourself.

Elder Abuse Defined: Elder abuse is harm done to people over the age of 65 by someone in a position of being trusted to provide care and support.

Adult children and spouses are often abusers, as they are the people who are most trusted. Many times the senior will not report the abuse because of shame. Sometimes caregiver stress leads to abuse.

Signs of Abuse:

- Lack of necessary items
- Senior behaves oddly when a family member is present
- The senior is punished for being incontinent or forgetful
- Family members are abusing drugs or alcohol

- You hear two different stories about how the senior got a bruise or other injury
- A family member refuses to allow you to complete the patient's care
- Home is not kept up
- Grocery shopping not kept up
- Bills not paid

Physical Abuse

The use of physical force that may cause pain, injury or impairment.

Examples of Physical Abuse include:

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Shoving
- Shaking
- Kicking
- Pinching
- Burning
- Physical Restraints
- Forcing Food or taking food
- Restricting food or water
- Not protecting someone in severe weather
- Physical Punishment
- Inappropriate sexual contact

Sexual Abuse

Using force for sexual contact with another without consent.

Examples of Sexual Abuse:

- Inappropriate Touching
- Unsolicited Sexual Intercourse

Emotional Abuse

Causing pain and anguish by use of words and actions (what you say and what you do).

Examples of Emotional Abuse:

- Insults
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Humiliation
- Harassment
- Silent Treatment
- Keeping Away from Friends
- Dishonesty
- Controlling Activities

Financial Abuse

Theft or misuse of someone's money by a trusted individual.

Examples of Financial Abuse:

- Forging Checks
- Committing Fraud
- Stealing ATM Card
- Over-charging for a Service
- Cashing another person's check
- Keeping Someone Away from Their Money
- Forcing a Change in Will
- Forcing a Transfer of Property
- Keeping "the change" After Grocery Shopping
- Charging for Services Not Needed
- Ordering Items on a Senior's Credit Card

Appropriately Reporting Abuse or Neglect

1. Keep your suspicions confidential
2. Report the item to your Care Manager
3. Report only the facts
4. Document any specific incidents when you observe them
5. Do not make assumptions

Remember, you are required by law to report elder abuse and neglect and can even be fined or punished with jail time if you fail to report elder abuse and neglect in most states. Every state in the U.S.A. maintains a special department of trained experts to investigate elder abuse and these professionals will effectively manage an abuse or neglect allegation.

Chain of Command for Reporting Abuse

- First thing to do is to report abuse to the Morning Glory Main Office **IMMEDIATELY** at (618)667-8400.
- You will be required to write a detailed summary of what happened, time of abuse, and the events that occurred. You need to be very detailed and give all information.
- We then will ask you to come to the Main Office to speak to Rachael Stuart or Cathy Callahan to go over the incident.
- Rachael or Cathy will then report the incident to the State of Illinois.
- Please contact us, if even in question that you believe there is elder abuse occurring.