

# What is Elder Abuse?

*from the National Center on Elder Abuse*

Elder abuse can affect people of all ethnic backgrounds and social status and can affect both men and women. The following types of abuse are commonly accepted as the major categories of elder mistreatment:

**Physical Abuse**—Inflicting, or threatening to inflict, physical pain or injury on a vulnerable elder, or depriving them of a basic need.

**Emotional Abuse**—Inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder person through verbal or nonverbal acts.

**Sexual Abuse**—Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind, coercing an elder to witness sexual behaviors.

**Financial Exploitation**—Illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of a vulnerable elder.

**Neglect**—Refusal or failure by those responsible to provide food, shelter, health care or protection for a vulnerable elder.

**Abandonment**—The desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.

**Do you have questions about elder abuse?**

**Call us**   
**We're here to help!**

For more information or materials contact:

**C.E.A.S.E.**

**Coalition Empowering Against Senior Exploitation**

CareWell Services Southwest  
(269) 966-2450 or (800) 626-6719

**Help Is Available**

It is a crime to take something that doesn't belong to you or harm another person. If someone has done this to you or someone you know, call:

**State of Michigan  
Elder Abuse Hotline:  
1-855-444-3911**

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**Together We Can  
End Elder Abuse**



**THERE IS NO EXCUSE  
FOR ELDER ABUSE**

REGION 3B AREA AGENCY ON AGING

**CareWell**  
**services** 

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## Why are seniors at risk?

### Factors that increase the risk for elder abuse:

- A steady income (77% of the nation's wealth is held by seniors)
- A trusting nature
- Cognitive impairments that affect financial decision-making and judgement
- Limited experience with current technology
- Possible increase in vulnerability due to care needs

## Who might be an abuser?

### An exploiter could be someone you least expect.

- In-home caregiver
- Family member
- Neighbor
- Friend of acquaintance
- Sales person
- Phone solicitor
- Online acquaintances from social media or games



We can work together to stop elder abuse by knowing the signs and reporting any suspected abuse immediately.

## Recognizing the signs of elder abuse

- Repeated injuries that are unusual or difficult to explain
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Sudden changes in weight, behavior or finances
- Lack of eye contact, appearing fearful
- Poor hygiene, such as dirty clothing or bedding

You can help to stop elder abuse by keeping in touch with older family members and friends, knowing where to report abuse, and by asking for help when needed.

## Report suspected elder abuse to:

**Michigan Elder Abuse  
Reporting Hotline  
1-855-444-3911**

## What happens after suspected abuse is reported?

Adult Services and Adult Protective Services (APS) are both part of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). It is the responsibility of APS to take reports of abuse, investigate those reports, and take action to safeguard and enhance the welfare of vulnerable adults at risk of harm.

The goal of APS is to assist vulnerable adults to take the steps necessary to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, but they need your help! APS cannot help vulnerable adults unless everyone is diligent about watching for and reporting abuse.