



Care Partner Information

Tips for Providing Older Adult Care

Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse is any action (done on purpose or by accident) that hurts an older adult, or puts them at risk of getting hurt. There are different kinds of elder abuse.

Type of Abuse	What Is It?	Warning Signs
Physical	Someone uses force to hurt the older adult.	Unexplained bruises or cuts in places they would not normally be found; the reasons the older adult gives for the bruises or cuts don't seem likely; the older adult may seem afraid, or won't talk openly in front of a certain caregiver or family member.
Emotional	Someone uses words to threaten, scare, or be mean to the older adult all the time.	The older adult seems depressed, nervous, or afraid to make eye contact; they might work hard to make sure a certain caregiver or family member is happy, and seem nervous if that person is not happy.
Sexual	Someone forces sex on the older adult.	The older adult may be afraid of a certain person or place; they might have bruises/marks on their private body areas.
Financial	Someone steals the older adult's money or property.	The older adult may have missing money or personal items; they might take out a new loan for someone else; they might stop talking to longtime friends or family; they might only talk to a new friend or a new caregiver.
Neglect	Someone is not providing basic care or safety for the older adult.	The older adult might have bed sores, lose a lot of weight, have dirty hair, skin or clothes. They might live somewhere that is unclean or unsafe.
Self-Neglect	The older adult is not taking care of themselves.	The older adult might not shower or dress in clean clothes; they might live somewhere unsafe; they might not take their medicines the right way, or at all.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu

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People who hurt older adults (abusers) can be family members, including adult children and spouses, paid or unpaid caregivers, strangers, or new “friends.” Often older adults will not tell anyone they are being hurt because they are afraid of what will happen to them; they worry about the abuse getting worse; they worry about causing trouble or getting someone in trouble; they might feel ashamed, or believe the abuse is their fault.

If the older adult has a caregiver at home

Caregiving is a stressful job. It can make a caregiver feel overwhelmed, depressed, tired and lonely. Many caregivers have their own health problems. To reduce their risk of hurting the older adult they are caring for, it is important for caregivers to take care of themselves:

• Eat well	• Make time to be active - every day is best
• Get regular health checks	• Make time for hobbies
• Spend time with friends and family	• Ask for help from community resources

If the older adult lives away from home

If the older adult needs to move into a nursing or assisted living home, be sure to talk with other older adults who live there to see if they are happy and think the care provided is good. Ask how many and which staff members will be taking care of your loved one. After the older adult moves in, here are some other things to do:

What You Can Do To Prevent Abuse if the Older Adult Lives Away from Home

- Visit often - at different times during the day and night.
- Watch for new bruises, or changes in behavior.
- Make a list of valuables. Check often to be sure they are still there.
- Keep bank statements or other important information in a locked safe or with a trusted family member.

- If you think an older adult is being abused or is in danger call 911

Useful Websites

National Center on Elder Abuse: <https://ncea.acl.gov>

National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: www.preventelderabuse.org

Eldercare Locator: www.eldercare.acl.gov or call 1-800-677-1116

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