

VITRA Health

Caregiver Education May Edition

Prevention of, and reporting of abuse, neglect,
mistreatment & misappropriation, financial
problems



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Warning signs of physical abuse include:

- Bruises, black eyes, welts, lacerations, or rope marks Bone fractures, broken bones, or skull fractures.
- Open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing Sprains, dislocations, or internal injuries/bleeding
- Broken eyeglasses/frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, or signs of being restrained.
- Laboratory findings of medication overdose or under-utilization of prescribed drugs
- An elder's report of being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated.
- An elder's sudden change in behavior

Did this happen to you or somebody you know? Questions to consider:

- Has anyone hit, kicked, bit, slapped, or thrown things at you?
- Has anyone held or tied you down, or locked you in a room or building? Has anyone shaken, pinched, or burned you?
- Has anyone physically hurt you so that you suffered some injury, such as cuts, bruises, or other marks?
- Has anyone pushed, shoved, or grabbed you? Has anyone used a knife or gun on you?
- Has anyone not allowed you to go the bathroom?
- Has anyone given you too much or too little medication?

Warning signs of financial exploitation include:

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices, including an unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money by a person accompanying the elderly.
- The inclusion of additional names on an elder's bank signature card.
- Unauthorized withdrawal of the elder's funds using the elder's ATM card.
- Abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents.
- Unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions.
- Substandard care being provided, or bills left unpaid despite the availability of adequate financial resources.

- Discovery of an elder's signature being forged for financial transactions or for the titles of his/her possessions.
- Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to an elder's property or possessions.
- Unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family.
- The provision of services that are not necessary.
- An elder's report of financial exploitation.

Did this happen to you or somebody you know? Questions to consider:

- Has anyone taken or spent your money without your permission?
- Has anyone sold or used things that belonged to you without your permission? This could include your bank or credit cards, your checks, your personal property or your documents.
- Has anyone made you sign legal documents you didn't understand?
- Has anyone forced, convinced or misled you to give them something that belonged to you? This could include a bank account, a credit card, a deed to a house, personal property, or other documents.
- Has anyone pretended to be you to obtain goods or money?
- Has anyone kept money from you that belonged to you?
- Has anyone stopped you from using your own money or kept information about your money from you?

Warning signs of neglect include:

- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores, and poor personal hygiene.
- Unattended or untreated health problems.
- Hazardous or unsafe living conditions/arrangements (e.g., improper wiring, no heat, or no running water).
- Unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g., dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, fecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing).
- An elder's report of being neglected.
- The desertion of an elder at a hospital, a nursing facility, or other similar institution.
- The desertion of an elder at a shopping center or other public location.
- An elder's report of being abandoned.

Did this happen to you or somebody you know? Questions to consider:

- Has the person who is supposed to take you to the grocery store, shopping, or to a place of worship stopped taking you there?

- Has the person who is supposed to help with household chores or cooking or eating stopped helping you?
- Has the person who is supposed to help get you to the doctor, or take medicines at the right time or amounts, or get glasses or dentures stopped helping you?
- Has the person who is supposed to help you bathe or shower, or get in and out of bed, or get dressed, or go to the toilet stopped helping you?
- Has the person who is supposed to help you pay bills or manage your money stopped helping you?
- Has anyone left you alone or deserted you at home or elsewhere for a long period of time?

Sources:

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/physical-abuse>

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/financial-abuse>

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/neglect-abandonment>