

Warning Signs of Elder Abuse

If you notice any of these signs in an elder, contact Adult Protective Services of Hamilton County Job and Family Services at 421-LIFE (5433).

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- change in behavior
- cuts, bruises, burns
- confinement
- isolation

Indicators of Psychological Abuse

- depression
- change in behavior or attitude
- isolation
- fear/anxiety

Indicators of Neglect/Self Neglect

- mental confusion
- poor hygiene
- poor environment
- inadequate health care
- inability to perform daily tasks of living

Indicators of Exploitation

- unusual bank withdrawals
- change in power of attorney
- personal belongings missing
- different signatures on checks

What can I do?

If you suspect that an elder is abused or neglected, call 421-LIFE (421-5433).

What is 421-LIFE?

421-LIFE (5433) is Hamilton County's 24-hour elder abuse and neglect reporting line. Since 1981, Ohio has required counties to investigate reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation involving adults 60 and older.

Adult Protective Services (APS), a part of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, operates 421-LIFE. APS workers receive and investigate reports, identify risks to the safety and well-being of alleged victims, and work to improve situations by connecting older adults with social services and other resources. APS workers sometimes make referrals to police for criminal investigation.

APS workers cannot force older adults to take help. Mentally competent adults have the right to refuse APS assistance and intervention.

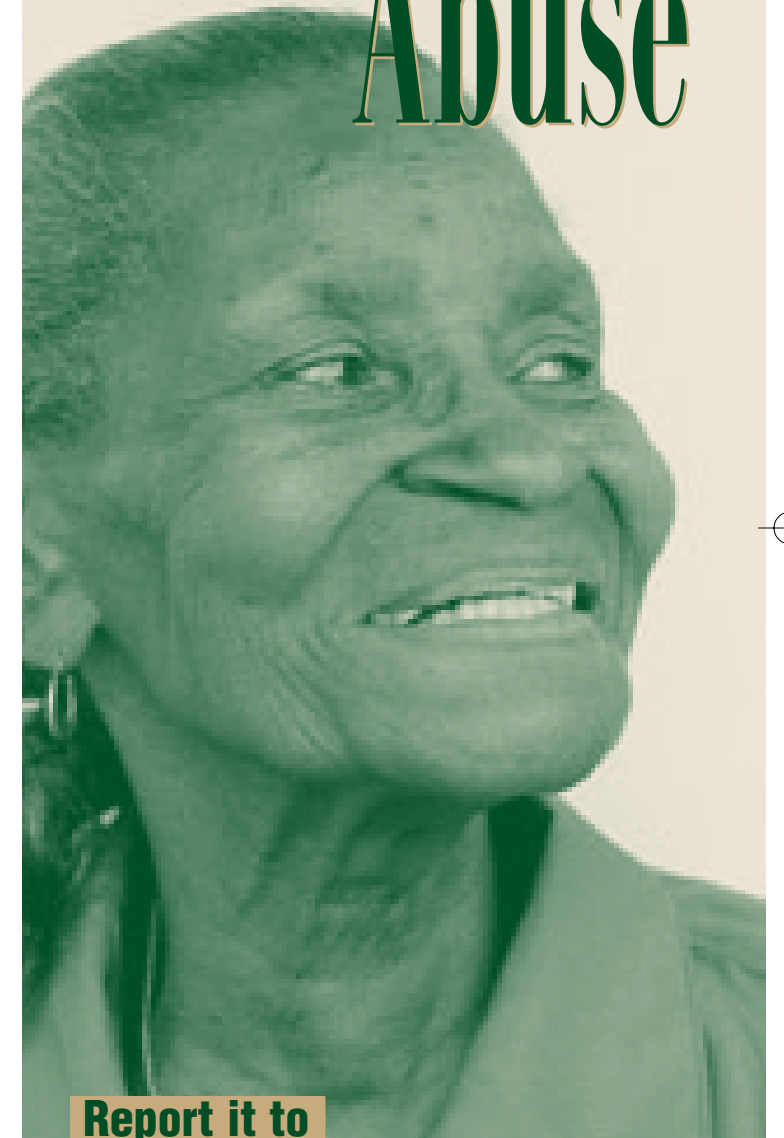
APS workers cannot make older adults go into nursing homes. In fact, APS is committed to helping adults stay in their own homes as long as they safely can, or helping them find the least restrictive alternative.

We urge you to become familiar with the warning signs of elder abuse and neglect contained in this brochure... and call 421-LIFE if you have concerns. All calls are confidential.



www.hcjfs.org
222 East Central Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Under authority of Hamilton County Commissioners

Elder Abuse



Report it to

421-LIFE

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Phil, a 75-year-old retired teacher, forgets the boiling soup and the kitchen catches fire.

Carol receives an eviction notice after giving rent money to her grandson.

Laura thinks her 65-year-old mother's mental confusion is stubbornness. In her frustration, Laura continually threatens her mother with nursing home placement.

Michael slaps his 80-year-old mother for urinating on the carpet.

Sam loves his 82-year-old bedridden wife, Sarah. But he's too weak to lift her to change the soiled bed sheets.

Mary is 68. She has always cared for her parents, now in their 90s. But several days a week she feels too sick to prepare meals.

These snapshots illustrate the complex and growing problem of elder abuse. The Committee on Aging estimates that 1 in 20 older adults is abused each year. As the number of older Americans increases, that number is expected to rise.

Elder abuse can happen to any older adult regardless of income, education, race, culture or religion.

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse takes many forms. It includes abuse, neglect, self neglect or exploitation.

Neglect/Self-Neglect

Daily living needs are not met by the caregiver or the older adult.

Neglect can be intentional or unintentional.

- A caregiver unintentionally neglects, forgets or is physically unable to meet the needs of the elder.
- A caregiver deliberately withholds necessities such as food, medical treatment or personal care.

Self neglect occurs when older adults are unwilling or unable to care for themselves due to mental confusion or physical inability.

Psychological Abuse

Deliberate conduct that causes mental anguish.

Psychological abuse dehumanizes or belittles the elder. Often, psychological abuse takes the form of name calling, threats of physical harm or threats of nursing home placement.

Physical Abuse

Nonaccidental conduct that causes bodily harm.

Physical abuse includes hitting, scratching, cuts, bruises, broken bones, physical restraint, attempted murder and murder.

Exploitation

Theft or misuse of money, assets or other valuables.

Assets include cash, Social Security and retirement funds, real estate, jewelry, furniture or any other items of value.

Exploitation can be perpetrated by family members, caregivers, housekeepers, sales persons, telephone scams, etc.

Why does elder abuse occur?



Most older adults eventually need help with daily living tasks such as meals, housekeeping, shopping, etc. Family members provide the majority of that care – only 5 percent of older adults live in nursing homes. Caring for an elderly person can be overwhelming or become physically impossible. Most families care for elders with love and respect, but when abuse occurs, a family member or caregiver is usually involved.

Why don't older adults ask for help?

Only one in six cases of elder abuse is reported. Abused elders rarely tell because of:

- Shame or embarrassment
- Fear of retaliation
- Sense of resignation or powerlessness
- Family loyalty
- Lack of credibility
- Fear of nursing homes or institutions