Elder Abuse: Signs and Resources

What is Elder Abuse?

There are various forms of elder abuse.

Elder abuse can be:

- Financial exploitation
- Neglect
- Isolation
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

Sometimes, a combination of these forms of abuse can happen at the same time.

Did you know most elder abuse is perpetrated by a family member, caregiver or anyone providing care—including professionals? Two things can be true at the same time – a person can love their partner/family member and want the abuse to stop.

What to do if you Suspect Abuse?

If you suspect that an older adult is in a life-threatening situation or immediate danger, please promptly call 911 or the local police department.

Otherwise, please report to the applicable resources **located on the back of this page.**

Not sure if you need to report abuse?

Call **Helping Hand** at 207.805.5555. Helping Hand can assist you with your concerns and let you know how/if you need to call Adult Protective Services (APS). They can also help make the call with you to APS if needed. These calls are anonymous.

Signs of Abuse

Financial:

- Changes in banking or spending patterns, and abrupt changes made to wills or other financial documents
- Unexplained credit charges, forged signatures, or unauthorized withdrawals

Neglect/Isolation:

- Poor hygiene, sudden weight loss, dehydration, and malnutrition
- Bedsores or unattended medical needs
- Hazardous or unsanitary living conditions

Physical:

- Unexplained injuries: bruises, broken bones, or abrasions
- Broken eyeglasses, signs of being punished or restrained

Sexual:

- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections, vaginal or anal bleeding
- Changes in demeanor, such as showing fear when a specific person is around

Emotional:

- Withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities or unusual depression onset
- Increased agitation and unusual behavior such as biting or rocking
- Witnessing the abuser making threats, making the abused feel fear or humiliation

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Please remember that if you suspect abuse, call your local police department, Adult Protective Services (APS), or bank.

Important Resources:

Adult Protective Services (APS)/DHHS – 1.800.624.8404 or Adult Protective Services | AccessMaine
- Reports to the state about older adults who are being abused or do not have capacity. If appropriate, a case manager will be assigned to help connect to various supports and work one-on-one with the individual or family.

Through These Doors (Cumberland County) – 1.800.537.6066 or their online form
Caring Unlimited (York County) – 1.800.239.7298, mail@caring-unlimited.org, or their online form
- Both provide an array of services, including answering questions, legal advocacy, support and transitional housing.

Legal Services for Maine Elders – 1.800.750.5353 or 207.623.1797
- Legal resources and support for Maine residents, age 60 and older.

Elder Abuse Institute of Maine – 207.805.3708 or info@eaime.org
- Provides outreach, education and direct support services including transitional housing for older Maine residents who have experienced abuse and support services to Maine's older adults with APS involvement.

Immigrant Resource Center of Maine – 207.955.3229 or 207.520.7859
- Various supports for new Mainers focused on gender-based violence, domestic abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking support.

The Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program – 1.800.499.0229 or 207.621.1079
- Offers advocacy and support to residents of nursing homes, assisted housing programs including residential care and assisted living, consumers receiving home care services including homemaker, Adult Day Programs, and hospice. They also provide support to those in the hospital who need assistance receiving long-term care services.

Financial Exploitation Resources:

AARP National Elder Fraud Hotline – 1.877.908.3360 or Report Fraud to the AARP Fraud Helpline
- You can report fraud, get next action steps to take if you've experienced fraud, emotional support, guidance for families, and referrals to law enforcement or other agencies.

Attorney General Office – 207.626.8800 or Office of the Maine AG: Contact the Consumer Protection Division
- You can file a complaint and also get information on next action steps.

Federal Trade Commission – 1.877.382.4357 or Reportfraud.ftc.gov
- You can report fraud and get next action steps.