Elder Abuse: Prevention through Prosecution

Physical Abuse
Neglect
Psychological Abuse
Financial Abuse
Sexual Abuse

Stop Elder Abuse.

This Resource Guide was created in collaboration with WISE & Healthy Aging, and was funded by The County of Los Angeles Area Agency on Aging and The City of Los Angeles Department of Aging.
RECOGNIZE the SIGNS of ELDER ABUSE

Help stop the abuse of elder and dependent adults by being aware of these signs.

Physical Abuse
- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, welts, scars, broken bones or sprains
- Report of drug overdose or apparent failure to take medication regularly
- Broken eyeglasses or frames
- Signs of being restrained, such as rope marks on wrists
- Caregiver's refusal to allow you to see the person alone
- Physical or chemical restraints for caregiver's convenience

Emotional Abuse
- Threatening, belittling, or controlling caregiver behavior that you witness
- Behavior from the elder that mimics dementia, such as rocking, sucking, or mumbling

Sexual Abuse
- Bruises around breasts or genitals
- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing

Neglect by Caregivers or Self-Neglect
- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration
- Untreated physical problems, such as bed sores
- Unsanitary living conditions: dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes
- Dirty or unbathed
- Unsuitable clothing or covering for the weather
- Unsafe living conditions (no heat or running water; faulty electrical wiring, fire hazards)
- Desertion of the elder at a public place

Financial Exploitation
- Significant or unauthorized withdrawals from the elder's accounts
- Sudden changes in the elder's financial condition
- Items or cash missing from the household
- Suspicious changes in wills, power of attorney, titles, and policies
- Addition of names to the elder's signature card
- Unpaid bills or lack of medical care, although the elder has enough money to pay for them
- Financial activity the elder couldn't have done, such as an ATM withdrawal by a bedridden account holder
- Unnecessary services, goods, or subscriptions

Healthcare Fraud and Abuse
- Duplicate billings for the same medical service or device
- Evidence of overmedication or undermedication
- Evidence of inadequate care when bills are paid in full
REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

Dial 911 to report elder abuse or neglect to the Police NOW if the abuse is immediate and life-threatening.

Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-877-477-3646 or 1-800-992-1660 to report allegations of abuse when you are unsure on where to call.

Adult Protective Services, County of Los Angeles, 1-888-202-4248 if you suspect elder abuse in the community. Call 213-351-5401 if you are outside of Los Angeles County.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman, at WISE & Healthy Aging 1-800-334-9473 and report suspected abuse occurring at board and care homes, nursing homes and assisted living facilities in LA County. Statewide Ombudsman after hours crisis line: 1-800-231-4024.

RESOURCES for SURVIVORS

- Los Angeles County District Attorney Victim-Witness Assistance: http://da.co.la.ca.us 1-800-380-3811 or 1-626-927-2500
- Ageless Alliance http://agelessalliance.org (uniting against elder abuse through awareness, support and community engagement)

Domestic Violence

- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233
- Domestic Violence Hotline Southern California 1-800-978-3600 (callers may receive help in 13 languages)
- Jewish Family Service Family Violence Project 1-818-505-0900
- VINE- Victim Information and Notification Everyday (a service by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department to notify you when the status of an inmate changes) 1-877-846-3452

Mental Health

- County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health, Older Adult Services ACCESS Center Help regarding hoarding and other mental health issues: 1-800-854-7771
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
RESOURCES to FIGHT ABUSE

Mobile Apps: Available for Download on the Android and iPhone App Store

- 368+: Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Guide for CA Law Enforcement
- GEAR: A Guide for Elder Abuse (includes practical information on abuse, tools, resources, and ways to report abuse)

General Information

- City of Los Angeles Department of Aging and Information and Assistance: 1-213-252-4030
- County of Los Angeles Area Agency on Aging: 1-800-510-2020
  Department of Community and Senior Services: www.css.lacounty.gov  1-213-738-4004
- Los Angeles County Information and Referral, for senior services dial: 211
  www.infoline-la.org
- WISE & Healthy Aging Information & Referral for senior services: 1-310-394-9871 ext. 464

Social Security Administration

- www.socialsecurity.gov  Fraud Hotline: 1-800-269-0271

Legal Assistance

- Bet Tzedek Legal Services: www.bettzedek.org  1-323-939-0506
- California State Attorney General: www.oag.ca.gov  1-800-952-5225
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles: www.lafla.org  1-800-399-4529
- Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office Elder Abuse Hotline: 1-877-477-3646
- Los Angeles County Bar Association Lawyer Referral & Information: www.lacba.org  1-213-243-1525
- Los Angeles County District Attorney Elder Abuse Section:  1-213-580-3383
- Los Angeles County Public Administrator – Public Guardian: 1-213-974-0515
- CANHR State Bar Certified Lawyer Referral Service: 1-800 474-1116

Medicare or Medi-Cal Fraud

- California Attorney General Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud & Elder Abuse: 1-800-722-0432
  On-line complaint form: www.oag.ca.gov/bmfea
- Center for Health Care Rights/California Health Advocates:  www.cahealthadvocates.org
  Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP)
  Medicare and healthcare counseling: 1-800-434-0222
- Department of Health Services for Medi-Cal fraud  1-800-822-6222
- U.S. Health & Human Services TIPS Hotline to report Medicare fraud:  1-800-447-8477
RESOURCES to FIGHT ABUSE

Financial Fraud and Exploitation

Credit Card Fraud
If you are a victim of identity theft, or you want to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft, call these agencies to freeze new accounts being opened in your name. Also for disputes regarding your credit record.
Experian: www.experian.com 1-888-397-3742
Equifax: www.equifax.com 1-800-525-6285
TransUnion: www.transunion.com 1-800-680-7289
Free Annual Credit Report – request a free credit report: www.annualcreditreport.com 1-877-322-8228

Mail Fraud
Opt-out from unsolicited mail, pre-approved credit card and insurance offers: 1-888-567-8688
Direct Marketing Association Inc. – remove name from mailing & emailing list: www.dmachoice.org

Telephone Fraud
Do Not Call Registry – stop telemarketers from calling you: www.donotcall.gov 1-888-382-1222

Internet Crime / Spam
Internet Crime Complaint Center: www.ic3.gov

Brokers/Investments Fraud
California Department of Corporations
Seniors Against Investment Fraud (SAIF): 1-866-275-2677
Concerns about brokers, investment advisers, financial planners, mortgage lenders and bill payers: www.corp.ca.gov
Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) BrokerCheck – check the background of a broker or brokerage: 1-800-289-9999

Consumer Issues
California Department of Consumer Affairs – check licenses for doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals: www.dca.ca.gov 1-800-952-5210
California Department of Insurance – insurance concerns: www.insurance.ca.gov 1-800-927-4357
California Department of Real Estate – real estate concerns: www.dre.ca.gov 1-213-620-2072
California Public Utilities Commission – utility complaints: www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc 1-800-649-7570
Contractors State License Board – concerns regarding licensed and unlicensed contractors: www.cslb.ca.gov 1-800-321-2752
Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs – landlord/tenant issues, housing discrimination, homebuyer issues, consumer complaints: www.dca.lacounty.gov 1-800-593-8222 or 1-213-974-9778
DO:
• Stay active with your local senior center. It can be a valuable source of information.
• Plan for your care as you age. Identify reliable people who can provide assistance if needed.
• Review your finances regularly. Be extremely cautious when selecting “trustworthy” individuals to help manage your affairs when needed.
• Participate in community activities. Volunteering is a great way to have contact with others and make friends. Call WISE & Healthy Aging at 1-310-394-9871 for volunteer opportunities.

DON’T:
• Don’t put off preparing your future physical and financial needs.
• Don’t accept personal care from anyone in exchange for property or assets without a lawyer or other trusted advocate to witness the transaction.
• Don’t allow others to keep details of your finances from you.
• Don’t give out personal or financial information to people you don’t know, especially over the phone.
• Don’t sign legal documents that you do not understand.

WISE & Healthy Aging is a non-profit, social services organization recognized for its wide range of innovative support services designed to meet the needs of a diverse clientele within the greater Los Angeles area.
Our mission is to enhance the independence, dignity and quality of life of older adults through leadership, advocacy and innovative services.