

## WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT ELDER ABUSE?

- Over 500,000 persons age 60 and above experience abuse, neglect and or self-neglect each year. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2008)
- The violence usually occurs at the hands of a caregiver or someone the elder trusts.
- 90% of known perpetrators are family members, with two thirds of them being adult children or spouses.
- 20% of elder abuse is substantiated by Adult Protective Services involved physical abuse, 13% involved caregiver neglect, 10% involved financial exploitation, 8% involved emotional/verbal abuse, and less than 1% involved sexual abuse. (Treasurer, P. 2003)
- Washington State RCW 74.34 (Civil) Vulnerable Adult Protection Order is designed to protect vulnerable adults from abandonment, abuse, neglect, financial exploitation or threat thereof. This order can be issued on an emergency or temporary basis or can remain in effect for up to one year.

*Call to Get Help*  
**1.866.751.7119**



*Program of*

### **Lutheran Community Services**

210 W. Sprague Ave., Spokane, WA 99201  
Tel: 866.751.7119 (24 Hours)  
Fax: 509.747.0690

### **Your Resource for Information and Assistance**

Spokane Crime Victim Service Center  
**1.866.751.7119**

National Center on Elder Abuse  
**202.898.2586**  
*www.elderabusecenter.org*

Elder Abuse Helplines and Hotlines  
**1.800.677.1116**

Eldercare Locator  
**1.800.677.1116**

*Always dial 911 or local police during emergencies*



Protecting the rights of crime victims



SPOKANE CRIME VICTIM  
SERVICE CENTER

Your Resource for Information and Assistance

**ELDER ABUSE/VICTIMIZATION**

# WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE/VICTIMIZATION?

**E**lder abuse includes several types of violence that occur among those aged 60 years and older. The violence usually occurs at the hands of a caregiver or a person the elder trusts. Here are seven types of elder abuse:

- **Physical abuse**—the willful infliction of physical pain or injury, such as slapping, bruising, hitting, pushing, pinching, burning, force-feeding, over and under medicating, or physically restraining an individual.
- **Sexual abuse**—non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse**—causing mental or emotional anguish by humiliation, intimidation or threats.
- **Financial or material exploitation**—misusing the resources of an elder, with or without his/her consent, for someone else's benefit.
- **Neglect**—the refusal or failure of a caretaker to provide goods and services necessary to avoid physical harm, mental anguish or illness including abandonment or denial of food, medicine or health related services.
- **Self-neglect**—behavior of an elder person that threatens his/her own health or safety.
- **Abandonment**—this happens when a caregiver leaves an elder alone and no longer provides care for him or her.

## If You Are a Victim of Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is becoming a growing problem in America. Elder abuse has been kept hidden by the belief that it is a civil or family matter. Abuse of the elderly can happen in private homes or institutions, and the perpetrators are more likely to be family members rather than strangers.

Elder maltreatment can have several physical and emotional effects on an elder.

Many victims suffer physical injuries. Some are minor like, cuts, scratches, bruises, and welts. Others are more serious and can cause lasting disabilities. These include head injuries, broken bones, constant physical pain, and soreness. Physical injuries can also lead to premature death and make existing health problems worse.

Elder abuse can have emotional effects as well. Victims are often fearful and anxious. They may have problems with trust and be wary around others.

Several factors can increase the risk that someone will hurt an elder. However, having these risk factors does not always mean violence will occur.

Some of the risk factors for hurting an elder include:

- Using drugs or alcohol, especially drinking heavily
- High levels of stress
- Lack of social support
- High emotional or financial dependence on the elder
- Lack of training in taking care of elders
- Depression

## How Can We Prevent Elder Abuse?

The goal is to stop elder abuse before it starts. While not much research has been done, there are several things we can do to prevent abuse:

- Listen to elders and their caregivers
- Intervene when you suspect elder abuse
- Educate others about how to identify and report elder maltreatment

If you take care of an elder here are some things you can do to prevent violence:

- Get help from friends, family, or local relief care groups
- Take a break—if only for a couple of hours
- Involve more people than just family in financial matters
- Find an adult day care program
- Seek counseling or other support if you are feeling depressed
- If you are having problems with drugs or alcohol abuse, get help

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