

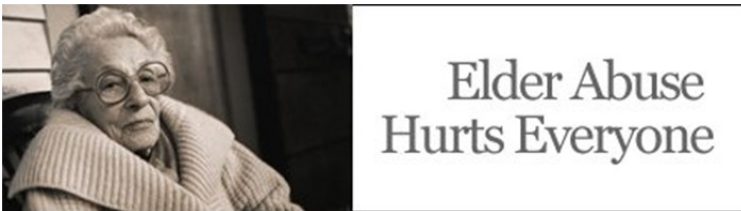


City of Greenacres
Department of Public Safety



Crime Prevention Tips

Elder Abuse



The Problem

Statistics uncover a frightening picture of elder abuse in this country. One of every 20 elderly people will be a victim of neglect or physical, psychological, or financial abuse this year. The problem may get worse as the number of elderly Americans increases. People over age 65 will number about 52 million in the year 2020. They will be a big part of the country's population - almost one-sixth of the total. Those aged 85 years or older are the fastest growing group. As the elderly population multiplies, so will the incidents of elder abuse...if we don't take action. We must recognize the seriousness of the problem and take steps to prevent it.

Types of Elder Abuse: - here are four general categories of elder abuse:

1. Physical Abuse

The beating, slapping or kicking of an elderly person, or restrictions on freedom of movement of an elderly person.

2. Psychological Abuse

Verbal harassment, threats, or other forms of intimidating behavior directed at an elderly person.

3. Financial (fiduciary) Abuse

The mismanagement of money or stealing of property belonging to an elderly person.

4. Neglect

The failure on the part of a caregiver, or elderly persons themselves, to provide the elderly person with basic necessities such as adequate food, shelter, medical treatment or personal care.

Who is Abused?

In most cases, the abused elderly person is female, over the age of 75, socially isolated, dependent on a caregiver, frail, and usually afraid or ashamed to admit that the abuse has taken place.

Who is the Abuser?

In most cases, the abuser is a relative, or someone living with the elderly person. The abuser may be someone who feels overwhelmed by his/her own personal problems. These problems may involve drug or alcohol abuse, dependency on an elderly person for money or housing, or day to day family pressure over an extended period of time. The abuser usually feels obligated to care for the elderly person, but is resentful of the time and effort required to maintain the level of care.



Elder Abuse continued

The Key Signs of Elder Abuse

Four key signs of possible elder abuse are listed below. These do not always mean abuse has occurred, but they can be clues to the need for further investigation.

1. Physical Appearance

The visible appearance of burns, head injuries, bruises, and/or malnutrition on an elderly person.

2. Behavior Changes

The apparent fear, withdrawal, depression and/or confusion on the part of an elderly person.

3. Misuse of Finances and Assets

The accumulation of numerous unpaid bills, when someone is supposed to be paying them. The lack of appropriate clothing when the elderly person's income appears to be adequate to cover the need. Missing personal belongings of the elderly person.

4. Family Interaction

The isolation of the elderly person by family members or caregivers. Refusing to let the elderly person speak for him or herself. An attitude on the part of the caregiver of anger toward the dependent elderly person.

What Can Be Done...

You as a concerned individual can be a friend to an elderly person. Take the time to visit or talk with them. Show concern for their well-being. Make yourself an informed individual on the facts concerning elder abuse and be alert to signs of possible abuse or neglect. Report suspected cases of elder abuse to the Elder Abuse Hotline, local law enforcement, or to Adult Protective Services when the abuse occurs in the community. Report suspected abuse occurring in nursing homes or in board and care homes to the Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman (*In Florida: <http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/>*). If an elderly person you know is being victimized, it is important for you to take action to stop it. Without intervention, abuse almost always escalates. Because victims are often reluctant to report, an elderly person's well-being may depend on your recognition and reporting of suspected abuse.