

Preventing Abuse Neglect & Exploitation

Safety from abuse, neglect, and exploitation means making sure you are protected from being hurt or used unfairly.

Abuse is when someone hurts another person on purpose.

This can happen in different ways:

- Physical Abuse: Hurting someone's body by hitting, kicking, or causing injuries.
- Emotional Abuse: Saying mean things, yelling, or making someone feel bad about themselves.
- Sexual Abuse: Forcing someone to do sexual things they don't want to do.
- Financial Abuse: Taking or using someone's money or belongings without permission.



Neglect is when a caregiver does not take care of someone properly. This could be:

- Physical Neglect: Not giving someone enough food, shelter, or medical care.
- Emotional Neglect: Ignoring someone's emotional needs, like not giving love or attention.
- Self-Neglect: When someone can't take care of themselves and doesn't get the help they need.



Exploitation happens when someone takes advantage of another person.

This could include:

- Financial Exploitation: Stealing or using someone's money or property unfairly.
- Labor Exploitation: Making someone work without fair pay.
- Sexual Exploitation: Forcing someone into sexual activities for money or goods.



How to Recognize Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

It's important to know the signs that someone might be in trouble. Look for these warning signs:

- **Physical Abuse**: Bruises, cuts, or injuries that don't have a good explanation.
- **Emotional Abuse**: Someone might seem scared, sad, or act differently.
- **Sexual Abuse**: Physical injuries in private areas or being afraid of being touched.
- **Neglect**: Poor hygiene, wearing dirty clothes, or not having enough food or medical care.
- **Financial Exploitation**: Missing money or valuable items, or strange changes in bank accounts.
- **Exploitation**: Working long hours without being paid or being forced to do things they don't want to.

How to Prevent Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Preventing these problems means we must watch for warning signs and take action before something bad happens. Here's how:

Education and Learning

- Learn how to spot the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Knowing what to look for helps stop it early.
- Learn about your rights and how to protect yourself from being harmed.

Support from Others

- Having friends, family, or people from the community check in regularly can help prevent problems.
- Caregivers need breaks sometimes to stay healthy and be good helpers. This is called respite care, and it helps stop neglect from happening.

Legal Protections

- A Power of Attorney is a way to have someone trustworthy handle money or legal decisions to keep you safe from exploitation. To learn more, see the [Rethinking Guardianship Power of Attorney Resource Guide](#).
- A "single protective arrangement" or "single transaction" is a legal way for someone else to help you make a special decision just one time. This could be for things like handling money, making health decisions, or other important choices. It's like giving permission for one specific thing to be taken care of, without setting up long-term plans or agreements.

Resources

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911.

If you suspect you or someone else is being abused, neglected, or exploited, contact Adult Protective Services at your county Department of Social Services (DSS). You can do this without telling anyone your name. You can find a map and directory at the [Department of Social Services](#) website.

Download Charting the Life Course's [Abuse Awareness and Prevention Guide](#).

You can find resources about protecting older adults from fraud and financial exploitation on the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) website.

Get Started Preventing Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Step 1. Learn how to spot the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Knowing what to look for helps stop it early.

Step 2. Learn about your rights and how to protect yourself from being harmed.

Step 3. Stay connected to your friends and family and tell someone if you suspect you or someone else is being abused, neglected, or exploited.