YWCA San Gabriel Valley

PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE – A TOOLKIT

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Revised 10-29-2010
The “Preventing Elder Abuse Toolkit” is intended to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of elder abuse. This awareness will enhance seniors’ quality of life by promoting safe home environments and care-giving relationships that will decrease the incidence of abuse.

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This screening test can be used to identify people at risk of elder abuse and who may need help from Adult Protective Services.

1. Are you afraid of someone?
2. Is someone making you feel unsafe?
3. Do you feel lonely?
4. Have you been hurt by someone?
5. Are you being forced to do things you do not want to do?
6. Do you help someone financially?
7. Are you signing forms you do not understand?
8. Do you trust your family members or caregiver?

If you suspect risk of abuse, please call 911 or the Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-877-477-3646.
INTRODUCTION

What is Elder Abuse?

Recognizing Abuse

California law states that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elder (person aged 65 or older) or dependent adult (person with a physical or mental health disability aged 18-64) is a crime. Adult Protective Service (APS) agencies in each county are assigned in investigating reports of abuse or self-neglect of any elderly person or dependent adult regardless of income. Suspected incidences of abuse or self-neglect can be made by any person by contacting your local police department or in LA County by contacting 1-877-477-3646.

Who can become a victim?

Abuse can happen to anyone, whether it is a man or woman, rich or poor, healthy or ill, and to all cultural or ethnic groups. Although elderly persons who are dependent in assistance with activities of daily living are most likely to be abused, healthy and active seniors can also become victims of abuse.

Who is an abuser?

Abusers are often trusted family members, caregivers, or friends. Although the person caring for the elderly person may have the best of intentions in providing care, factors such as stress, personal issues, financial problems, or substance abuse can lead to abusive behavior. Caregiving can cause stress, feelings of anger, resentment, or frustration which can lead to abuse or neglect.


The 2004 Survey of State Adult Protective Services: Abuse of Adults 60 Years of Age and Older

Key Points on Alleged Perpetrators of Victims Aged 60+ (p. 6)
- States reported that 52.7% of alleged perpetrators of abuse were female (11 states).
- Over three-fourths (75.1%) of alleged perpetrators were under the age of 60 (7 states).
- The most common relationships of victims to alleged perpetrators were adult child (32.6%) and other family member (21.5%) (11 states).
- Twenty-one states (40.4%) maintain an abuse registry or database of alleged perpetrators, while 31 (59.6%) do not.

Substantiated Reports, Victims Aged 60+ (p. 6)
- States reported that 65.7% of elder abuse victims were female (15 states).
- Of the victims aged 60+, 42.8% were 80 years of age and older (20 states).
- The majority of victims were Caucasian (77.1%) (13 states).
- The vast majority (89.3%) of elder abuse reports occurred in domestic settings (13 states).

Investigated and Substantiated Reports (p. 12-13)
There were a total of 461,135 investigations for adults of all ages in the 2004 study, representing a 16.3% increase from the 2000 Survey when states reported 396,398 investigations. Forty-nine states provided the total number of investigations, the same number of states as 2000.

For the 2004 study, 191,908 reports of abuse were substantiated for victims of all ages. This compares to 166,019 substantiated reports in 2000. Of the 42 states that could provide both the number of reports investigated and substantiated, the substantiation rate was 46.2%. This percentage is very similar to the 48.5% substantiation rate from the 2000 Survey. The median substantiation rate of individual states was 35.1%. Figure 1 summarizes the differences in total reports received, investigated, and substantiated in the 2004 and 2000 studies.

Figure 1. Comparison of Total APS Reports, 2004 and 2000 Surveys (All Ages)
INTRODUCTION

Adult Protective Services: Case Example

SITUATION – Maria is a 79 year old Hispanic female who lives alone in a mobile home that poses a health hazard due to clutter. Maria has difficulty walking due to low circulation in her legs. Maria has no family who may be able to provide her with any assistance. Maria was referred to Adult Protective Services (APS) for self-neglect requiring an APS social worker to visit Maria in her home. The APS social worker developed a care plan with Maria which addressed her needs.

CARE PLAN – Maria was assisted in obtaining:

- home making services from the Los Angeles County In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. IHSS awarded Maria 100 hours of homemaking services a month
- a walker, cane, toilet seat riser and shower chair that would improve mobility and safety while showering and toileting
- an amplified phone that would improve communication with emergency response services in the event of an emergency
- home delivery meal services that would improve access to nutritious meals
- a microwave oven that would enable proper heating of nutritious meals
- assistance with enrollment into ACCESS Para-transit services; this will enable access to county-wide transportation services.

Maria was able to achieve independence and self-sufficiency by increasing housing unit cleanliness and safety, mobility, access to nutritious meals, improved ability to communicate by telephone, county-wide transportation services improving access to medical services, and increased safety while toileting and bathing.
CHAPTER 1  Part A  Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, discomfort, pain, or impairment.¹

If you suspect physical abuse call 911 or the Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-877-477-3646

Visible Signs:
- Bruising
- Scarring
- Fractures
- Cuts near neck and wrist area
- Black eyes
- Cowering
- Bleeding scalp
- Scratches

Behavioral Warning Signs:
- Withdrawn
- Confused
- Depressed
- Angry
- Frightened
- Feelings of helplessness
- Anxiety

CHAPTER 1  Part B  Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse is the infliction of pain or distress through verbal or nonverbal acts by child, spouse, friend, or caregiver. The elderly should not blame themselves for the emotionally abusive behavior of others.

If observed please call the Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-877-477-3646

Visible Signs:
- Verbal assaults
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Lacking emotional support
- Yelling
- Swearing
- Humiliating remarks
- Disrespect
- Harassment
- Isolation
- Controlling activities

Behavioral Warning Signs:
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Fearful
- Nervous
- Extreme weight loss
- Cowering

CHAPTER 1 Part C  

Financial Abuse

Mismanaging or theft of resources of an elderly or disabled person for personal or monetary gain. ¹

If suspected please call the Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-877-477-3646

Visible Signs:  
- Unpaid bills  
- Threatening to withhold money by caregiver  
- Unexplained withdrawal of financial resources  
- Lack of necessities such as clothing, food, or personal items  
- Forced signatures of financial documents  
- Limited access to financial accounts

Behavioral Warning Signs:  
- Nervous  
- Fearful  
- Depression  
- Angry  
- Feelings of helplessness  
- Disoriented  
- Confusion

CHAPTER 1  Part D  Sexual Abuse

Non-consensual sexual contact with an elderly or disabled person or with a person that is not capable of giving consent.\(^1\)

If suspected, please call 911 and the Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-877-477-3646

Visible Signs:
- Reports unwanted touching
- Reporting of sexual assault or battery
- Rape
- Sodomy
- Explicit photographs

Behavioral Warning Signs:
- Soreness or bleeding in genital area
- Sudden change in behavior
- Wanting to be isolated
- Fearful
- Depression
- Feelings of helplessness
- Anxiety

CHAPTER 1  Part E  

Neglect/Self-Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a person with the responsibility to oversee the basic needs, comforts, financial or personal services required to provide adequate care for an elderly person.³

Self-neglect is the inability by an elderly person without a caregiver to independently and adequately perform activities of daily living thereby negatively impacting personal safety or independence.

If either neglect or self-neglect is observed, please call 1-877-477-3646.

Visible Signs:
- Untreated medical conditions
- Malnourished
- Dehydration
- Poor personal hygiene
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Health or safety hazards in home
- Poor cleanliness of housing unit

Behavioral Warning Signs:
- Memory loss
- Disoriented
- Depression
- Confusion
- Issues with hoarding
- Isolated

CHAPTER 2  Caregiving and Elder Abuse

There are many elderly people who need help with daily activities and receive caregiver assistance from family members or friends. Although many caregivers provide excellent services the reports of abuse from caregivers is on the rise.

Who is a caregiver?

A caregiver could be a person paid to provide assistance with daily activities or family member or friend who volunteers to assist with bathing, dressing, preparing meals, and shopping.

What are the potential behavioral signs in abusive caregivers? 4

- History of violence, aggressive, or verbally abusive
- Feels there is lack of support from others
- Has low self-esteem
- Caregiving performed due to sense of pressure or duty
- History of poor relationship with elderly person
- History of emotional or mental issues (anxiety or severe depression)
- Views care-giving as a burden
- Reports chronic fatigue or “burn out”
- History of drug or alcohol abuse by caregiver

Caregiving And Elder Abuse

Caregiver abuse can be identified as: ¹

1. Failing to assist in maintaining personal hygiene on an older adult.

2. Failing to provide medical assistance to address physical or mental health needs.

3. Failing to protect an older adult from health or safety hazards.

Cultural values dictate roles and responsibilities, decision-making, and how to address issues particularly within a family. Victims may fear what will happen to them if they report abuse for a variety of reasons including worrying about whether they may be forced into a nursing home, feelings of shame, or may fear retaliation.

How can cultural values impact the reporting of elder abuse?

- **Shame**
  - Blame themselves for abuse, belief they are contributing to abuse
- **Reliance on self to resolve issues**
- **Cultural role of female within family unit**
- **Reluctant to report family member**
  - Perceived loss of independence
  - Fear of abandonment
- **Uncertainty of legal system**
  - Fear of deportation
  - Distrust of authority figures
- **Psychologically or economically dependent**
  - Lack of external supports
  - Socially isolated
- **Non-native speaker of English language**
  - Unaware of community resources increases independence and isolation
- **Types of abuse viewed differently**
  - Emotional vs. Physical Abuse
  - Abuse accepted form of expression and observed as
Social workers, professional service providers, caregivers, family members, or friends should make an effort to address cultural factors that may impact the disclosure of abuse by the elderly person.

- Responding to the abuse
  - Reassure elderly person that they are not at fault
  - Ensure safety
  - Do not discuss issue with abuse
- Be respectful
  - Address elderly person as Mr./Mrs./Ms. last name
  - Be sensitive to culture, customs, language and religion
  - Speak in native language, when possible
- Provide written materials in native language
- Be patient, speak calmly and reassuring
- Acknowledge thoughts and feelings
- Do not tower over victim, sit or stand to be at eye level
- Give enough personal space as not to threaten elderly person

CHAPTER 3

Cultural Impacts
CHAPTER 4  

Reporting Elder Abuse

When the abuse is caused by a family member the elder will find it more difficult to report.

1. Make referral to abuse hotline, identity not revealed to victim.

2. If emergency, report immediately forwarded to police or emergency medical staff. If there is no immediate danger, may take 3-10 business days for contact by APS social worker.

3. APS social worker will interview victim alone, while family members or suspected abuser is interviewed separately.

4. If criminal act was committed, then report will be filed with police department by APS.

5. APS will work with family to eliminate the abuse, if desired by victim.

6. APS will link victim with community services that will enable elderly person to live self sufficiently and ensure safety as outlined in a care plan identifying goals and services. Victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation may also receive short-term services such as emergency shelter, home repair, transportation, home health services, etc.

7. If legally incompetent, APS will make referral to Public Guardian to determine conservatorship.

8. When care plan goals have been achieved, APS social worker will close case.

The blame is oftentimes shifted to oneself which lead them to believe that if they were a better spouse, parent, or recipient of care then the abuse would not happen.

Assessment Tool:
Elder Abuse Screening Test
(Page 3)

CHAPTER 4

CALL

In Los Angeles County
1-877-477-3646

or

Local Police Department

or

211

Adult Protective Services (APS) can not force assistance unless victim is under conservatorship

APS can not force an elderly person into a nursing home

APS will only discuss victim’s case to other agencies involved in providing services to victim

Mandated Reporters

LA County APS
Intake Fax:

(213) 738-6485

To obtain the Report of Suspected Dependent Adult/Elder Abuse please log onto the State of CA Adult Protective Services website located on page 21

CHAPTER 5  
Raising Awareness

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse has proposed to increase the awareness of elder abuse and has completed the Elder Abuse Awareness Community Toolkit. The toolkit provides various projects which aim at increasing knowledge and awareness of elder abuse and include:

- Plan a walk to raise awareness
- Support a Declaration or Proclamation
- Public Service Announcement
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Award
- Social networking to raise awareness
- Host a lecture, debate or presentation

CHAPTER 6

Resources

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: ¹

LA County Community and Senior Services
3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Telephone: (888) 202-4248
(General Information, toll-free in LA & vicinity)

LA COUNTY 24 Hour Abuse Referral Hotline
Phone: (877) 477-3646
Direct/Collect: (626) 579-6905
Intake Fax: (213) 738-6485
Website:
http://dpss.lacounty.gov/new_portal/dpss_elder_services.cfm

Los Angeles County Office of Ombudsman
The LA County Office of Ombudsman takes reports of suspected abuse or neglect that may have occurred to an elderly person residing in a long-term facility (skilled nursing, assisted living, residential care, adult day health).
510 S. Vermont Avenue, Ste. 215
Los Angeles, CA 90020
Phone: (213) 738-2003
Inquiries: (800) 801-0030
Fax: (213) 637-8662

COMMUNITY AGENCIES: ¹

211 LA County
Website: www.211losangeles.org

Alzheimer’s Association of Los Angeles
5900 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite #1100
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 938-3379

Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer’s Disease
Research at UCLA
10911 Weyburn Avenue, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90095-7226
Phone: (310) 794-3665
Fax: (310) 794-3148

Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center
LACRC’s mission is to help families and communities master the challenges of caring for adults with brain impairing conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, Parkinson’s and traumatic brain injury.

Administrative Office
3715 McClintock Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90089
Phone: 1-(800) 540-4442 (CA only)
Phone: 1-(213) 821-7777
FAX: (213) 740-1871
Email: lacrc@usc.edu

YWCA San Gabriel Valley
Senior Services and Domestic Violence Services
943 N. Grand Avenue
Covina, CA 91724
Phone: (626) 960-2995
Fax: (626) 814-0447
Website: www.ywcasgv.org

We offer urgent case management services that link seniors to community services that will enable them to live independently and self-sufficiently. Our agency also provides seniors in crisis emergency home delivery meals and group dining meals.

LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS:

Alhambra Police Department
211 S. 1st Street
Alhambra, CA 91801
(626) 570-5168

Altadena Police and Sheriff’s Station
780 E. Altadena Drive
Altadena CA 91001
(626) 798-1131

Arcadia Police Department
250 W. Huntington Drive
Arcadia, CA 91007
(626) 574-5123

Azusa Police Department
725 N. Alameda Avenue
Azusa, CA 91702
(626) 812-3200

Baldwin Park Police Department
14403 Pacific Avenue
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
(626) 960-4011

Claremont Police Department
570 W. Bonita Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 399-5411

Covina Police Department
444 N. Citrus Avenue
Covina, CA 91723
(626) 858-4413

Diamond Bar/Walnut Sheriff’s Department
21695 E. Valley Boulevard
Walnut, CA 91789
(909) 595-2264 or (626) 913-1715

Duarte Public Safety Sheriff’s Department
1042 Huntington Drive
Duarte, CA 91010
(626) 357-7938

Glendora Police Department
150 S. Glendora Avenue
Glendora, CA 91741
(626) 914-8250

El Monte Police Department
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, CA 91731
(626) 580-2100

Hacienda Heights Sheriff’s Department
150 N. Hudson Avenue
City of Industry, CA 91744
(626) 330-3322

La Puente Sheriff’s Department
150 N. Hudson Avenue
City of Industry, CA 91744
(626) 330-3322

La Verne Police Department
2061 3rd Street
La Verne, CA 91750
(909) 596-1913

Monrovia Police Department
140 E. Lime Avenue
Monrovia, CA 91016
(626) 256-8000

Monterey Park Police Department
320 W. Newmark Ave
Monterey Park, CA 91754
(626) 307-1211

Pasadena Police Department
207 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101
(626) 744-4501

Pomona Police Department
490 W. Mission Boulevard
Pomona, CA 91766
(909) 622-1241
CHAPTER 6

LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS:

**Rosemead Sheriff's Department**
8838 Las Tunas Drive
Temple City, CA 91780
(626) 285-7171

**San Dimas Sheriff’s Department**
270 S. Walnut Ave
San Dimas, CA 91773
(909) 450-2700

**San Gabriel Police Department**
625 S. Del Mar Avenue
San Gabriel, CA 91776
(626) 308-2828

**San Marino Police Department**
2200 Huntington Drive
San Marino, CA 91108
(626) 300-0720

**Sierra Madre Police Department**
242 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
(626) 355-1414

**Temple City Sheriff’s Department**
8838 Las Tunas Drive
Temple City, CA 91780
(626) 285-7171

**Walnut/Diamond Bar Sheriff’s Department**
21695 E. Valley Boulevard
Walnut, CA 91789
(626) 913-1715 or (909) 595-2264

**West Covina Police Department**
1444 W. Garvey Avenue South
West Covina, CA 91790
(626) 939-8500

**Whittier Police Department**
7315 Painter Avenue
Whittier, CA 90602
(562) 945-8250

ONLINE RESOURCES:¹

**211 LA County**
Website: www.211losangeles.org

**Alzheimer’s Association**
Website: www.alz.org

**AARP**
Website: www.AARP.org

**California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform**
Website: www.canhr.org

**California Department of Aging**
Website: www.aging.ca.gov

**California Department of Justice**
Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse
Website: www.ag.ca.gov/bmfea/

**Eldercare Locator**
Website: www.elder care.gov

**Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center**
Website: http://lacrc.usc.edu/ShowPage.php?PageID=1

**Los Angeles County Community and Senior Services (APS)**
Website: www.css.lacounty.gov/aps.aspx

**National Family Caregivers’ Association**
Website: www.nfcaca res.org

**State of CA Adult Protective Services (APS)**
Website: www.cdss.ca.gov/agedblinddisabled/PG1298.htm

**YWCA San Gabriel Valley**
Website: www.ywcasgv.org

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eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
san gabriel valley
943 N. Grand Avenue, Covina CA 91724
Tel: (626) 960-2995  Fax: (626) 814-0447
www.ywcasgv.org