

RESOURCE:

Abuse and Neglect Warning Signs Guide

This guide provides an overview of the key warning signs of abuse and neglect in vulnerable adults, particularly those in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and under in-home care. Families, caregivers, and advocates can use this resource to identify potential mistreatment and take appropriate action.

1. Physical Abuse Warning Signs

- ◆ Unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or fractures
- ◆ Frequent hospital visits or emergency room admissions
- ◆ Marks from restraints or pressure sores from prolonged immobility
- ◆ Fearfulness or flinching when touched

2. Emotional Abuse Warning Signs

- ◆ Sudden withdrawal or uncharacteristic mood swings
- ◆ Signs of depression, anxiety, or excessive fear
- ◆ Avoidance of eye contact or reluctance to speak around caregivers
- ◆ Verbal belittling, controlling, or threatening behavior from caregivers

3. Financial Abuse Warning Signs

- ◆ Unexplained bank withdrawals or large financial transactions
- ◆ Changes to financial documents, wills, or power of attorney
- ◆ Missing valuables, cash, or personal possessions
- ◆ Unpaid bills despite sufficient financial resources

4. Sexual Abuse Warning Signs

- ◆ Unexplained bleeding or bruising in sensitive areas
- ◆ Torn, stained, or bloody undergarments
- ◆ Sudden fear or avoidance of specific caregivers
- ◆ Diagnosis of a sexually transmitted infection (STI) without clear cause

5. Abuse of Privacy Warning Signs

- ◆ Personal belongings being searched or read without permission
- ◆ Medical information shared without consent
- ◆ Unauthorized video or photo recordings of the resident
- ◆ Restricted or monitored phone calls and visits

6. Nursing Home Neglect Warning Signs

- ◆ Poor personal hygiene, such as unwashed hair or soiled clothing
- ◆ Malnutrition or dehydration
- ◆ Untreated medical conditions or unexplained health deterioration
- ◆ Dirty living conditions, including soiled bedding and unsafe environments
- ◆ Frequent infections or bedsores

What to Do If You Notice These Signs

- ◆ **Document the Evidence:** Take photos of injuries or concerning conditions and keep a log of symptoms and behaviors.
- ◆ **Communicate with Care Providers:** Ask questions about medical treatments, behavior changes, and care plans.
- ◆ **Report Concerns to Authorities:** Contact Adult Protective Services or the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.
- ◆ **Seek Legal Assistance:** If you suspect abuse or neglect, [consult an elder law attorney for guidance.](#)