



Education Update



Elder Abuse: Did You Know?

The Typical Victim:

- ◆ Is a widowed, white female, in her mid-70's or older and living on a limited income.
- ◆ Usually lives with the abuser, who is often a spouse or child.
- ◆ Does not report being abused.

Typical Reasons For Not Reporting Abuse:

- ◆ Fear
- ◆ Shame
- ◆ Worry about having to leave one's home

The Typical Abuser:

- ◆ Is usually the spouse or adult child of the victim.
- ◆ May depend on the older person for housing, financial assistance, or emotional support.
- ◆ May suffer from increased stress, alcohol or substance abuse, and emotional and/or financial problems.

Warning Signs of Elder Abuse

The following signs do not always indicate an abusive situation, but can be important clues to possible abuse or neglect:

Symptoms of an abused older person:

- ◆ Unusual or unexplained injuries (cuts, burns, bruises)
- ◆ Unkempt appearance
- ◆ Pressure or bed sores
- ◆ Confinement against will (tied to furniture or locked in room)
- ◆ Dehydration or malnutrition without a medical cause
- ◆ Fear
- ◆ Withdrawal
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Visits to many doctors or hospitals
- ◆ Strange and inconsistent explanations for injuries
- ◆ Helplessness
- ◆ Hesitation to talk openly

Symptoms of an Abuser:

- ◆ Verbally assaulting, threatening or insulting the older person
- ◆ Concerned only with the older person's financial situation and not his or her health or well-being
- ◆ Problems with alcohol or drug abuse
- ◆ Not allowing the older person to speak for him or herself
- ◆ Placing blame on the older person
- ◆ Attitudes of indifference or anger toward the older person
- ◆ Social isolation of the older person from others

If you have questions or concerns, please talk to your immediate supervisor or contact the Social Work Department.