



## Elder Abuse

Elders are abused, neglected, or exploited each day in this country and around the world. Unfortunately the abuse is rarely reported because the victim fears retaliation, fears being institutionalized or left alone, is physically or mentally unable to report the abuse, or wants to protect the abuser especially if it is their child.

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse the victim in almost 90% of elder abuse cases knows the abuser. More than two-thirds of the abusers are related to the victim and adult children are the most frequent abusers.

## Types of Elder Abuse

When we hear the term “elder abuse” we often think of physical abuse but abuse can take many forms:

- ◆ Physical Abuse – the infliction of physical pain or injury, and/or the use of restraints that results in physical pain.
- ◆ Sexual Abuse – non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person.

- ◆ Emotional Abuse – a pattern of verbal or nonverbal acts such as threats, humiliation, intimidation, or isolation that inflict mental anguish or distress.
- ◆ Financial Exploitation – the illegal or improper use of an elder’s funds, property, or resources.
- ◆ Neglect – failure or refusal to fulfill any part of a person’s obligations or duties to an elder. Self-neglect occurs when elders are unable to meet their own needs.

## Warning Signs of Abuse

We look for changes in an elder’s behavior, appearance, or spending habits as well as the following signs:

Emotional:

- Depression
- Fear/anxiety
- Anger/agitation
- Shame
- Withdrawn/unresponsive
- Self-medication with alcohol or prescription drugs

Social:

- Isolated, no visitors
- Caregivers, or family, restrict visitors to the elder
- Elder not allowed to speak to others without caregiver/family present
- Unsafe/unsanitary living conditions

Physical Signs:

- Unexplained fractures, bruises, burns, lacerations
- Unexpected deterioration of health
- Malnutrition or dehydration
- Poor hygiene; dirty, unshaven
- Bed sores
- Misuse of medication; over- or under-medicated
- Genital infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Torn or bloody underclothes

Financial Signs:

- Inability to pay bills
- Unexplained withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between income and living conditions
- Suspicious activity on credit cards
- Changes in the elder’s will or other documents
- Improper use of power of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship
- Missing property/assets

**A warning sign of all abuse is when an elder reports being abused**



## Reporting Elder Abuse

If you suspect elder abuse please call:

### Adult Protective Services

Adult Abuse Reporting Line

1-877-SOS-ADULT (1-877-767-2385)

Or report online at:

[www.azdes.gov](http://www.azdes.gov), click on "Protect our Seniors"

or

### Mesa Police Department

Emergency : 9-1-1

Non-emergency : (480) 644-2211

You can make a report anonymously if you choose to do so. Please be able to provide the alleged victim's name, age, address, telephone number, and reasons why you suspect they are being abused.

## Other Agencies Involved in Elder Abuse Investigation and Prevention

### Area Agency on Aging

24-hour Senior HELPLINE

(602) 264-HELP (602-264-4357)

- Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (MEAPA)
- Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Elder Emergency Housing Program

### Office of the Attorney General

⇒ Elder Affairs Program

(602) 542-2124

⇒ AHCCCS Fraud Control Unit

(602) 542-3881

### Department of Health Services

Office of Long Term Care

(602) 674-9705

## How Can You Help?

- ⇒ **Be aware** of the signs of elder abuse, and share this information
- ⇒ **Report** suspected abuse to law enforcement or Adult Protective Services.
- ⇒ **Schedule** a presentation for your group on elder abuse

# ELDER ABUSE, NEGLECT, & EXPLOITATION



Information provided by  
Mesa Police Department  
Crime Prevention  
(480) 644-5014  
[www.mesaaz.gov/police](http://www.mesaaz.gov/police)