Elder Abuse

World Elder Abuse Awareness day is June 15th, how are ***you*** as an individual or company bringing this subject to light in your community?

It’s estimated that 1 in 10 Americans age 60+ have experienced abuse. Nearly 1 in 2 people with dementia experience some form of abuse by others. The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study estimated that only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse ever comes to the attention of authorities. Elders who experience mistreatment and self-neglect face a greater risk of ***dying*** sooner.

The different types of elder abuse are;

* Physical abuse: use of force to threaten or physically injure an older person
* Emotional abuse: Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause or could cause mental anguish, pain, or distress to an older person.
* Sexual abuse: Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon an older person, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.
* Exploitation: Theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over an older person’s money or property.
* Neglect: Failure or refusal to provide for an older person’s safety, physical, or emotional needs.

One of the most important ways we can all contribute to supporting the wellbeing and safety of elders is to know the warning signs of elder abuse. If you suspect abuse, **take action immediately**.

Everyone, at every age, deserves justice.

**Red Flags of Abuse**

Emotional and Behavioral Signs

Unusual changes in behavior or sleep, fear or anxiety, isolated or not responsive, depression.

Physical Signs

Broken bones, bruises, and welts. Cuts, sores or burns. Untreated bed sores. Torn, stained or bloody underclothing. Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases. Dirtiness, poor nutrition or dehydration. Poor living conditions. Lack of medial aides (glasses, walker, teeth, hearing aid, medications).

Financial Signs

Unusual changes in bank account or money management. Unusual or sudden changes in a will or financial documents. Fraudulent signatures on financial documents. Unpaid bills.

How do we as a community fight this horrific reality that our senior population is facing?

1. Learn the signs mentioned above.
2. Prevent isolation. Call or visit older loved ones and ask how they are doing on a regular basis.
3. Talk to friends and family members about how we can all age well and reduce abuse with programs and services like law enforcement, community centers, and public transportation.
4. Sign up to be a volunteer to an older person in our community.
5. Provide respite breaks for caregivers.
6. Send a letter to a local paper, radio or tv station suggesting they cover World Elder Abuse Awareness day (June 15th)

If you suspect elder abuse, the following programs are in place to help; Adult Protective Services and the Long-Term Care Ombudsmen. For reporting numbers, contact Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 ([www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov)). ***If you know someone is in a life-threatening situation or immediate danger call 911 or the local police.***

It is up to each and every one of us to prevent and address elder abuse. If you are unsure of abuse, reach out and talk to an informed individual. Trust your instincts. Be involved. Be the voice of those that are unable to speak for themselves. You have the ability to protect others just by speaking up and being an advocate for what is right. Don’t second guess yourself if you suspect abuse. Report it.