



# PROTECTING OLDER ADULTS FROM ABUSE

## Promoting Justice, Dignity, and Well-being in Our Communities

No matter our age, we all deserve to be treated as full, valued members of our communities. Yet elder abuse remains a serious public health issue that threatens justice and well-being for older adults across the United States. Mistreatment of older adults can take many forms—physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect—and often goes unreported.

## Recognize the Warning Signs

### Neglect

- Wearing unclean or weather-inappropriate clothing
- Poor hygiene
- Unsafe, unsanitary, or cluttered home environment
- Missing utilities such as electricity, plumbing, or heat

### Physical Abuse

- Bruises on the head or torso, especially hand- or finger-shaped
- Unexplained burns, cuts, or injuries
- Withholding food, water, medications, or assistive devices
- Unnecessary restraint or sedation

### Financial Exploitation

- Unusual account activity or large withdrawals
- Unpaid bills or shut-off utilities
- Presence of individuals exploiting the older adult for “gifts” or money

### Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained genital injuries or infections
- Bruising around breasts or genitals
- Torn or bloodied undergarments

### Emotional Abuse

- Intimidation, yelling, or humiliation
- Social isolation without cause
- Verbal threats or ridicule

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Preventing elder abuse starts with awareness and action. Here’s how we can all make a difference:

- Build supportive communities through senior centers and intergenerational programs
- Combat ageism to foster respect for aging adults
- Empower caregivers with training and resources
- Recognize and report abuse when you see it
- If you suspect abuse, report it to Adult Protective Services or call 911 in emergencies.

## LEARN MORE

Texas Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-5400  
[dfps.texas.gov/Training/APS\\_Reporting](https://dfps.texas.gov/Training/APS_Reporting)

UTHealth Houston Institute on Aging  
[go.uth.edu/aging](https://go.uth.edu/aging)