

August 2013



Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

Elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation are often silent crimes. Most of us never see it because most victims are abused behind closed doors by their own family members or a trusted caregiver. And, too often, people who do see it choose not to get involved because it's "none of my business". Kentucky law however says that it is our business. Kentucky Revised Statute 209 directs anyone who suspects abuse, neglect or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult to report it to the appropriate authority. You can report abuse using the 24 hour toll free hotline **1-877-597-2331**, or your local law enforcement agency. Calls may be made anonymously.

Learning to recognize the signs of self-neglect, caregiver neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and financial exploitation and reporting it, is one way you can have a positive impact in protecting vulnerable adults in your community. Some examples of the signs to watch for are as follows:

Neglect

- Malnutrition or dehydration
- Unkempt/torn and dirty clothing
- Hoarding/unsafe living conditions, (no utilities, exposed wiring, animal waste, insect or rodent infestation)
- Unmet medical needs
- Bedsore
- Noticeable significant weight loss

Be Aware of Elder Abuse in Kentucky

Know the Signs

By Steven Fisher, Adult Protection Branch Manager, Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Physical Abuse

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, burns, fractured bones
- Explanation of injury is not consistent with facts or observations or is of unknown origin
- Complaints of pain
- Adult appears frightened or withdrawn
- Adult is isolated from family or friends/ confined to house, room or bed
- Loss of bowel or bladder control

Sexual Abuse

- Evidence of sexually transmitted disease
- Irritation or injury to mouth, genitals or anus
- Upset when changed or bathed
- Fearful of a particular person
- Loss of bowel or bladder control

(Continued on back)

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Isolated from family and friends

Sudden dramatic change in behavior: appears withdrawn, depressed, hesitant to talk openly

Caregiver will not allow adult to speak for herself/himself

Caregiver scolds, threatens, insults adult

Adult is fearful, hopeless, anxious, angry or agitated

Financial Exploitation

Unusual bank activity; sudden large withdrawals, expenditures that are not consistent with past financial history

Use of ATM machines when adult is confined to home or bed

Unpaid bills

Missing household items

A recent Will or signing away Title to home or other rights when the adult seems disoriented, confused or otherwise incapable of understanding the consequences

Please remember, we all share a responsibility to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Each time a vulnerable adult is abused, neglected or exploited we potentially lose the sum of that life that included:

The courage gained from overcoming personal hardships and handicaps;
The strength earned by surviving sorrows and overcoming fears; and
The wisdom achieved through a lifetime of experience and compassion.

**If you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of a
vulnerable adult, report it, it's the law!**

Call 1-877-597-2331.

For additional information on elder abuse awareness, including opportunities to get involved in your community, please contact the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Adult Protection Branch.

502-564-7043 Or online @ <http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp/ea>

**Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Department for Aging and Independent Living**

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