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## Warning Signs of Elder Abuse

**Disclaimer:** No single or combination of these signs necessarily prove abuse. But the presence of any ONE of them should raise concern and inquiry.

### Emotional Abuse:

- **Elder withdraws from normal activities.**
- **Changes in elder's alertness, thinking, and/or physical functioning.**
- **Elder expresses hopelessness, powerlessness, or lack of control.**
- **Someone speaks to the elder in a threatening, attacking, demeaning, or belittling manner, or causes mental anguish or fear in the elder.**

### Financial Abuse/ Exploitation:

- **Elder does not have items s/he needs to live comfortably and could afford given his/her assets.**
- **Unexplained and sudden changes in elder's accounts and assets;  
Changes in the names associated with accounts.**

- **Requests for changes in wills, trusts, power of attorney assignment especially if elder cannot comprehend or explain the changes.**
- **Unusual account withdrawals, loans, or gifts given.**
- **Elder pays others excessive amounts charged for resources or services.**
- **New “best friends” or boy/girlfriend relationships.**
- **Home repairs, investment, mortgage, insurance offers with the promise of an amazing benefit.**
- **Service/repair contracts requiring a large down payment with little or no work completed.**

## **Physical Abuse:**

- **Red marks, bruising, burns, and blisters with unexplained origins.**
- **Broken bones with unexplained origins.**
- **Marks in the shape of a hand or fingers on the elder’s body.**
- **Elder appears frightened or intimidated in the presence of someone, has an exaggerated startle response or looks to someone else to answer questions about injuries.**

## **Sexual Abuse:**

- **Bruises, abrasions, or trauma to the sexual areas of the elder’s body.**
- **Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases.**
- **An elder who lacks the ability to consent to sexual activity.**

- **Elder appears frightened or intimidated in the presence of someone, has an exaggerated startle response or looks to someone else to answer questions about injuries.**

## **Neglect:**

- **An elder who is kept in an isolated part of a home or confined to bed without care.**
- **Lack of necessary medical aids for elder.**
- **Lack of appropriate supervision for an elder with cognitive dysfunction.**
- **Signs of lack of care- pressure sores, unexplained weight loss, poor nutrition, dehydration, lack of medical care or use of therapies as prescribed.**
- **Conditions of filth, garbage, junk or functional disrepair and safety hazards to the elder in the home.**
- **Caregiver who is alcoholic or drug user.**
- **Lack of appropriate food in the home.**
- **Caregiver who fails to pay bills and meet financial responsibilities assumed in caring for the elder.**
- **Failure to attend to the elder's emotional needs for safety, security, self-worth.**

## **Abandonment:**

- **An elder who has relied on someone for some kind of care is suddenly deserted by the caregiver who provides no suitable alternative care provider or options.**
- **Elder's physical, mental, and/or social functioning decline because of the lack of proper care assistance.**

## **Self-Neglect:**

- **Independent living results in poor physical, mental, and/or social functioning.**
- **Elder lacks the capacity to make decisions that allow for his/her well-being.**
- **Elder demonstrates little or no awareness, insight, or concern about problems with the condition of his/her home and health.**
- **Elder's home is filthy, cluttered to the extent of presenting a health hazard, inhabited by pests, or creates an environmental health hazard.**
- **Elder refuses assistance offered by others.**