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What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is intentional actions that lead to or may lead to harm by anyone in a relationship of trust with an elder. Adults who have physical or intellectual conditions that cause them to be dependent on others for basic care are included in laws regarding elder abuse.

Who is at Risk of Elder Abuse?

- Elders who have greater needs for assistance and support from others are more vulnerable to being abused.
- Elders who are socially isolated are more vulnerable to being abused. In addition, because of social isolation, once abuse has begun there are fewer possibilities for intervention, so the abuse is likely to continue.
- Females are more likely to be victims of family violence at all stages of their lives.
- Elder abuse happens to people from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Characteristics of Perpetrators of Elder Abuse

- The most common characteristic of perpetrators of elder abuse is that they are dependent upon the elder in some way: financial support; housing; emotional support, for example.
- Perpetrators often have alcohol/drug addictions.
- Elders trust the perpetrator to provide help of some kind.
- Perpetrators may have a history of being abused, themselves.
- Once abuse has begun in a relationship, the abuse becomes more frequent and more severe. The abuse continues until there is successful intervention, if that even occurs. Without intervention, the victim receives the message that no one cares. The perpetrator is taught that the abuse is appropriate and should continue.

Who to Call for Help

- Fresno Co. Adult Protective Services: (559) 255-3383
- Fresno Co. Sheriff's Dept. (559) 488-3111
- Fresno Police Dept. (559) 621-7000
- Madera Co. Adult Protective Services: (559) 675-2300
- Madera City Police: (559) 675-4200
- Madera Co. Sheriff's Dept. (559) 675-7770
- If the abuse occurs in a senior care facility call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman: (559) 224-9177