

## Warning signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation

- ▶ Unusual activity or no signs of movement from their homes.
- ▶ Improperly dressed for cold weather.
- ▶ Wandering outside at odd hours or into areas where they may be exposed to danger.
- ▶ Unpleasant odors associated with health, hygiene, or housekeeping problems.
- ▶ Mail, newspapers, or other deliveries piled up and you know the person should be home.
- ▶ Bruises, cuts, burns, repeated injuries, multiple injuries at one time, or untreated injuries.
- ▶ Injuries that don't fit the explanation given.
- ▶ They are dependent on a stressed, chemically dependent or mentally ill caregiver and their basic needs are not being met.
- ▶ They have income that should meet basic needs, but those needs are not being met or they are facing eviction or utility shutoffs.
- ▶ Paid caregivers, friends, relatives, or acquaintances showing unusual interest in the adult's finances.
- ▶ They are fearful of being alone with a caregiver or another person whom they would usually not be afraid.
- ▶ Torn, stained, or bloody clothing or bedding.

To report abuse, call Nebraska's

## *Adult & Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline*

Toll-Free:

**1.800.652.1999**

or

## **Law Enforcement**

Outside of Nebraska

National Elder Abuse Hotline

1.800.677.1116

## **Other important numbers:**

Nebraska Long-Term Care

Ombudsman

1.800.942.7830

Nebraska Spanish Helpline

Linea de Crisis en Nebraska

1.877.215.0167

National Domestic

Violence Hotline

1.800.799.SAFE(7233)

Rape, Abuse, Incest

National Network

1.800.656.HOPE(4673)

**NEBRASKA**

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



## **Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults**

*An Emerging  
Epidemic!*

**To report abuse, call:**

**1.800.652.1999**

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## Vulnerable adults

Persons 18 years old or older who:

- Have a court-appointed guardian.
- Are unable to live independently or provide self-care due to physical or mental impairments.
- Have grossly impaired judgment or behavior due to mental impairment.

## Types of abuse

### ➤ *Physical Abuse*

Physical abuse is intentionally causing injury to a vulnerable adult by striking, slapping, punching, burning, choking, or restraining.

### ➤ *Sexual Abuse*

Sexual abuse is sexual intercourse, touching, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult without consent, when they are unable to consent, or by coercion, force, threats, or deception and incest.

### ➤ *Neglect*

Neglect is when a caregiver denies basic needs of a vulnerable adult to the extent that there is physical injury or risk of harm.

### ➤ *Financial exploitation*

Financial exploitation is the taking of money or property of a vulnerable adult by theft, deception, extortion, or any unlawful means.

### ➤ *Self-neglect*

Self-neglect is the inability of a vulnerable adult to meet their own basic needs due to physical, mental, or functional impairments.

## Rights of vulnerable adults

- To be free from abuse and neglect.
- To make their own decisions, even if others disagree, as long as they are capable.
- The least restrictive intervention to remedy the abuse and neglect.

## What you can do

- Be aware of vulnerable adults in your home, neighborhood, or workplace.
- Watch for signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Make a report to 1-800-652-1999.
- Make a second report if there is new information or you still have concerns.
- Be willing to assist in improving the quality of life for vulnerable adults.

## What to report

Please provide as much information as possible when making a report including:

- Name, address, and age of the victim.
- Description of the situation or incident(s).
- Names of others who may have information.
- Name(s) of the abuser.

All reports are confidential. DHHS will not release a reporter's name except to law enforcement and county attorneys without a court order.

## Mandatory reporters

The following are required by state law to make a report if they have reason to believe a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect, or exploitation:

- Physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nursing assistants, and other medical personnel.
- Law enforcement personnel.
- Caregivers and employees of caregivers.
- Owners, operators, and employees of a sheltered workshop.
- Human services professionals and paraprofessionals.
- Owners, operators, and employees of any facility licensed by DHHS.

## After a report

If the report rises to the level of maltreatment requiring investigation, it will be assigned to a local caseworker.

The local caseworker will visit the vulnerable and adult and:

- Conduct an investigation of the reported allegations and assess the safety, risks, and needs of the vulnerable adult.
- Assist the vulnerable adult, caregiver, or others to maintain the adult's safety.
- Provide ongoing assistance with consent of the adult (or guardian) or if ordered by a court.