

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!*

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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.