

Ask the Experts...

Is Elder Abuse Really a Problem?

Why be concerned about this issue?

Elder abuse and neglect are crimes. Older adults are our parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors. They deserve our respect and care, not mistreatment.

How widespread is elder abuse and neglect?

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, between 700,000 and 3.5 million older adults are abused or neglected each year in the United States. For every case that is reported, five go unreported.

Are there different types of elder abuse and neglect?

Elder abuse may be physical, emotional, financial, or sexual. Neglect may be neglect by a caregiver or self-neglect.

Are there signs of abuse?

Sometimes abuse is obvious, such as when there are bruises or burns, malnutrition or dehydration, and soiled clothing. Often there are also behavioral signs of abuse. When an elder seems afraid, is isolated or withdrawn, or explains injuries in a way that does not make sense there may be a problem.

What can be done?

If you or someone you know is being abused or neglected, call the abuse hotline toll-free at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Also, keep in contact with older relatives, friends, and neighbors and check on their well-being.

How can I learn more about this issue?

To learn more about the prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation contact the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging, Inc. at 1-813-676-5609 or hendersop@elderaffairs.org