

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Abuse can happen to anyone—no matter the person's age, gender, race, religion, or ethnic background, or presence of disability. Each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over the age of 60 are abused, neglected, or financially exploited. This is called elder abuse.



Adult abuse most often take place in a person's home, where the abusers are frequently family members such as grandchildren, a spouse or partner. However, adult abuse can also occur in institutional settings, especially long-term care facilities such as an assisted living facility or nursing home.

What is abuse or neglect?

Adult abuse generally refers to mistreatment of a person by someone who has a special relationship with them, such as a spouse, sibling, child, friend, or caregiver who is often directly responsible for their care. Abuse may take the form of one or all of the following: physical, financial or emotional abuse, neglect or abandonment. Abuse includes intentional harm causing serious pain or injury, not letting a person leave the home if they want to and can safely do so, intimidation or forced sexual contact. Neglect may include refusal or failure by someone responsible to provide food, shelter, health care or other safeguards and care to a vulnerable person. Abandonment occurs when the person who has assumed responsibility for care or custody of an individual leaves.

What is exploitation?

Individuals who are disabled or who are elderly may also be at risk for exploitation. Exploitation refers to using an individual's money or property for one's own use. This can mean asking for gifts, taking things without permission, or asking someone to spend money on things they do not want.

How can I report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation?

1. Contact a waiver case manager or a provider representative if you have one. You can also always contact the DHCF Long Term Care Administration's agency hotline at 202-442-9533.
2. If you are concerned about a licensed health care provider, you may contact the DC Health's Health Regulation and Licensing Administration at: 202-442-5833.
3. You may wish to file a police report; you can contact the Metropolitan Police Department at 202-727-1010. Always call 911 in an emergency.
4. Contact the DC Health and Human Services Answers Please referral line at INFO 211 or 202-463-6211.
5. Call Adult Protective Services (APS) to report harm to someone over the age of 18 at 202-541-3950.
6. Contact the Long Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) at 202-434-2140 to connect with advocates or legal assistance.