

### What is elder abuse?

- Elder abuse includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, and abandonment. Perpetrators can be anyone, including children, other family members, and spouses—as well as neighbors, coworkers, and staff at nursing homes, assisted living, and other facilities.
- Approximately 1 in 10 Americans aged 60+ have experienced some form of elder abuse.
- Abusers can be of any gender. In almost 60% of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a family member. Two-thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.

### When does domestic violence become elder abuse?

- When the parent is under 65 years of age, the abuse is legally treated as domestic violence. When the parent is 65 or older, it's classified as elder abuse.
- Approximately 1 in 10 people experience elder abuse, but it's believed that the number is actually higher due to underreporting.
- About 60% of perpetrators are family members.

- Domestic violence and elder abuse occur within families across all demographics regardless of race, religion, culture, socioeconomic status, employment, education, gender, and age.

### Type of Abuses

**Physical abuse** means inflicting physical pain or injury upon an older adult.

**Sexual abuse** means touching, fondling, intercourse, or any other sexual activity with an older adult when the older adult is unable to understand, unwilling to consent, threatened, or physically forced.

**Emotional abuse** means verbal assaults, threats of abuse, harassment, or intimidation.

**Confinement** means restraining or isolating an older adult other than for medical reasons.

**Passive neglect** is a caregiver's failure to provide an older adult with life's necessities, including, but not limited to, food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.

**Willful deprivation** means denying an older adult medication, medical care, shelter, food, a therapeutic device, or other physical assistance, and exposing that person to the risk of physical, mental, or emotional harm—except

when the older, competent adult has expressed a desire to go without such care.

**Financial exploitation** means the misuse or withholding of an older adult's financial resources by another.

### What are the warning signs of elder abuse?

- **Physical abuse, neglect, or mistreatment:** Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, burns, welts, fractures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing, broken eyeglasses/frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, and signs of being restrained.
- **Emotional abuse:** Unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, or unusual depression; strained or tense relationships; frequent arguments between the caregiver and older adult. Includes but is not limited to verbal assaults, insults, threats, intimidation, humiliation, and harassment. In addition, treating an older person like an infant; isolating an elderly person from his/her family, friends, or regular activities; giving an older person the "silent treatment;" and enforced social

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- isolation are examples of emotional/ psychological abuse.
- **Financial abuse:** Sudden changes in financial situations, illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets. Examples include, but are not limited to, cashing an elderly person's checks without authorization or permission; forging an older person's signature; misusing or stealing an older person's money or possessions; coercing or deceiving an older person into signing any document (e.g., contracts or will); and the improper use of conservatorship, guardianship, or power of attorney.
  - **Neglect:** Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, unusual weight loss. Neglect typically means the refusal or failure to provide an elderly person with such life necessities as food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medicine, comfort, personal safety, and other essentials included in an implied or agreed-upon responsibility to an elder.
  - **Verbal:** Belittling, threats, or other uses of power and control by individuals. Insults constantly that effect or change personal self-esteem and standing up for themselves. Using personal health history to belittle or shame.