



Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation FAMILY FACT SHEET #5

Elder abuse can be defined as the infliction of physical, emotional, sexual harm, neglect or financial exploitation onto an older adult or loved one for whom you are providing care.

Becoming familiar with risk factors and ways you can manage stress can help you to maintain a positive and healthy caregiving relationship.

Important principles to remember

- While the majority of caregivers, both informal and paid caregivers, provide excellent and safe care for their loved ones, most elder abuse is perpetrated by a family member.
- Many elders are at risk of becoming abused by their caregivers because of their powerlessness within the caregiving relationship.
- Elder abuse is a complex phenomenon caused by many different factors. Caregiver stress does not cause elder abuse but it often related to the use of abusive techniques against recipients of care.
- To make a report of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an incapacitated or dependent adult, call the Adult Protective Service's nationwide 24-hour Hotline toll-free at 1-800-624-8404.

Risk factors for caregivers to be aware of

- Becoming fearful that you may use violence with your loved one
- Experiencing low self-esteem
- Feeling emotionally or mentally "burnout"
- Continuing or past history of domestic violence
- Feeling isolated
- Feeling hopeless or that you've lost control over your life

Self care is an important part of managing caregiver stress

- Stress is a normal part of caregiving
- Make time for exercise, relaxation and adequate sleep
- Support from family, friends, neighbors, and other community members or professionals is a valuable resource to you as a caregiver. Making use of these supports may help you reduce stress and better cope with caregiving demands. Your Area Agency on Aging is available to help you find these supports.

FAMILY CAREGIVING TIP

Recognizing and preventing abusive behavior is a critical component of maintaining the safety and health of those for whom you provide care. Take time for yourself through the assistance of family members, friends, and respite services. Those who cannot afford private pay services may qualify for financial assistance.

**For more information call your Area Agency on Aging
1-877-353-3771**

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