

## ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse/neglect is generally classified into four categories: physical, psychological, financial, and neglect by self or caregiver. Elder abuse refers to any individual 65 years or older or to a dependent adult from 18-64 years of age. A 1998 national incidence survey reported that there are more than 400,000 new cases of elder abuse every year. With the number of older Americans increasing each year, this number will only increase.

### History suggesting elder abuse/neglect

- Older person seeks medical care long after injury occurred.
- Lacerations and fractures that have healed without appropriate medical intervention.
- Caregiver insists on providing medical history rather than the older adult speaking for himself.
- Repeated admissions, numerous emergency visits, and readmissions for medical noncompliance.

### Behavioral Clues

- Abnormal or suspicious behavior of older person (extremely fearful or agitated, overly quiet and passive, or expressing fear of caregiver)
- Family or caregiver(s) do not visit or show concern.

### Physical Clues

- Bruises or scars that are unexplained by the history
- Urine burns
- Poor nutrition, hygiene, or personal care
- Impaired mental status
- Effects of under- and over-medication



*Violence Prevention Coalition of Orange County  
&  
American Academy of Pediatrics*

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**Ask About Elder Abuse/Neglect**

Interview the elder alone so he or she may speak openly. Ask straightforward questions and consider cultural sensitivities.

- *Has anyone at home ever hurt you?*
- *Has anyone ever touched you without your consent?*
- *Has anyone ever made you do things you didn't want to do?*
- *Has anyone taken anything that was yours without asking?*
- *Has anyone scolded or threatened you?*
- *Have you ever signed any documents that you didn't fully understand?*
- *Are you afraid of anyone at home?*
- *Are you alone a lot?*
- *Has anyone ever failed to help take care of you when you needed help?*
- *Does anyone help you with your finances?*

**Document Findings**

Take color photographs of any unusual bruises or markings.  
Document a detailed description of assessment and observations.

**Assess Safety**

- Discuss a safety plan. (What will he or she do if there is danger?)
- Evaluate the entire family system

**Make Referrals**

- Provide phone number of local services that can help-hospital, police, and social services.

**Reporting**

- Check agency policy and report abuse to Adult Protective Service at **714-825-3030 or 800-451-5155**.
- Mail written report using the "Report of Suspected Dependent Adult Elder Abuse" form (SOC 341) and mail within two (2) working days (form available at [www.oc.ca.gov/ssa](http://www.oc.ca.gov/ssa)).
- If the situation is urgent, contact local law enforcement. (California Penal Code Section 368)
- Be sure to follow your facility's procedures for reporting.

[www.vpcoc.org](http://www.vpcoc.org)

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