



First Judicial District of Pennsylvania

Elder Justice Resource Center

Warning Signs of Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Physical & Sexual Abuse

- Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, and burns – often accompanied with inconsistent explanation for how they occurred
- Internal injuries
- Victim statements

Neglect

- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Weight loss
- Poor hygiene
- Absence of needed supervision
- Lack of necessary equipment or health aids

Financial Exploitation

- Denied basic financial information
- Unpaid bills
- Asked to be a co-signer on documents
- Abrupt asset transfers
- Abrupt changes to an important document such as a will or Power of Attorney form

Other General Warning Signs

- Unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, and unusual depression
- Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, and unusual weight loss
- Belittling, making threats, and other uses of power and control by spouses, loved ones, or caretakers
- Strained or tense relationships, including frequent arguments between the caregiver and elderly persons
- Sudden changes in financial situations



First Judicial District of Pennsylvania Elder Justice Resource Center

Elder Abuse: Three Basic Questions

Abuse, neglect and exploitation of elders may not be obvious. However, there are often warning signs that you or a loved one may be at risk. It's never an easy conversation to have, but it may help save you or a loved one.

Start by asking three basic questions:

1. Is someone taking or using your money without your permission?
2. Are you afraid of anyone?
3. Is anybody hurting you?

Follow Up Questions

Have you or a loved one had a partner, family member, or trusted caregiver that:

- Embarrasses you by calling you bad names or putting you down?
- Looks at you or acts in ways that scare you?
- Destroys, damages or gives away your property?
- Hides details about your finances or property from you?
- Controls what you do, who you see, or where you go?
- Controls your money or legal documents without your permission?
- Uses your money in ways that do not benefit you?
- Makes all of the decisions without your input?
- Threatens to hurt you?
- Shoves, slaps, grabs or hits you?
- Ignores your physical, emotional or medical needs?
- Takes money that you need to pay your bills?
- Acts like everything is fine when others around me say I should be concerned?