

# How to Help Prevent Elder Abuse.

## CONTACT US



## Flathead County Sheriff's Office

### Family and friends visit them often and do these things:

- Talk to them in private
- Be observant and listen carefully to them and their caregiver
- Intervene and speak up when something looks or sound wrong
- Report any suspected abuse, neglect or self-neglect

### How you can help yourself:

- Tell someone you trust if you are being abused or neglected
- Seek medical help when you need it and don't be afraid to confide in your doctor if someone is harming you;
- Have someone you trust read through all important documents before signing or any you just aren't sure of
- Keep your social security number, credit card number and financial information private and only tell those you truly trust
- Don't live with someone who has a history of a violent behavior
- Don't let anyone hide your financial information from you or take or give money away you need to live on.

### Caregivers

You are an important part of an elderly person's life and sometimes you will need a break. Do not feel guilty if the demands are overwhelming you instead request help from friends, family or an agency so that you can keep your emotional and physical strength. It is crucial to stay mentally and physically healthy to assist them.

For more information on this and other department services, contact:

**Flathead County Sheriff's Office  
Community Resource Unit  
406.758.5602**

Or

Visit our website at [www.flatheadcountysheriff.com](http://www.flatheadcountysheriff.com)

- Programs and Services
- Local crime mapping
- Crime prevention tips
- And more.....



**Professionals in Law Enforcement**

## Elder Abuse



**Sheriff Chuck Curry**

**920 South Main Street, Suite 100**

**Kalispell, MT 59901**

**[www.flatheadcountysheriff.com](http://www.flatheadcountysheriff.com)**

# What is Elder Abuse?

## The definition of "Abuse" is:

The infliction of physical or mental injury, or the deprivation of food, shelter, clothing, or services necessary to maintain the physical or mental health of an older person (in the state of Montana 60 years of age or older).

Elder abuse can occur in all cultures, races and socio-economic groups.

## Signs and Symptoms:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, burns;
- Fear/anxiety or agitation around certain household members or caregivers;
- Changes in appetite or unusual/dramatic weight gain or loss;
- Unexplained changes in health;
- Increasing withdrawal/isolation;
- Lack of knowledge about personal finances or conflicting stories;
- Sudden inability to pay bills or buy food;
- Dependency of adult child/caregiver on the older individual for income and/or shelter;
- Poor personal hygiene; and wearing of inadequate or inappropriate clothing.

## Information on Elder Abuse:

- Abuse is most frequently caused by people closest to the elder. Even long-term care facilities can be a source of abuse.
- Victims tend not to seek help until it's too late because they are embarrassed, too trusting or proud to seek help.
- Only 1 in 5 cases of elder abuse is reported, but one important note is that it can happen to anyone, even you.

# Fraud Schemes

## Healthcare Fraud and Abuse:



there are countless actions caused by unethical doctors, nurses, hospital personnel and other professional care providers of healthcare fraud and abuse.

**Signs:** duplicate billings for the same service or device, problems with the care facility, acts of overmedication or under medications or inadequate care when bills are paid in full.

**Financial Exploitation:** unapproved use of elderly's funds or property caused by a caregiver or an outside scam artist.

**Signs:** unusual bank withdraws or checks written as "loans" or "gifts", altered wills and trusts, dramatic changes in accounts and finances, missing or lost items (jewelry, cash, or other valuable goods), unpaid bills or even unnecessary services, goods or subscriptions.



# Types of Elder Abuse

**Neglect:** can be intentional or passive by failure to fulfill a caretaking obligation

**Signs:** need for medical or dental care, unusual weight loss, untreated bedsores, poor hygiene, unclean clothing, unsanitary living conditions, malnutrition or dehydration

**Emotional Abuse:** speaking or treating an elderly person in a way that causes emotional pain or even distress

**Signs:** threatening or belittling behavior by caregiver, unexplained changes in alertness or withdrawal from normal activities

**Physical Abuse:** use of force (intentionally) against an elderly person and it results in physical pain, injury or impairment

**Signs:** bruises, broken bones, unexplained injuries, slap marks, pressure/restraint marks, broken/missing glasses or Inconsistent explanation of injuries

**Sexual Abuse:** non-consensual sexual contact of any kind

**Signs:** bruises around the breast or genital area; unexplained sexually transmitted diseases; torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.

For more information call

Adult Protective Services at (406) 755-6491

or the Sheriff's Community Resource Unit at

406.758.5602 or get more information at

[www.flatheadcountysheriff.com](http://www.flatheadcountysheriff.com)