



Elder Abuse & How to Recognize the Signs

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**Community Living, Aging, &
Protective Services**

Why should I care about adult abuse?

1 in 10 community residing adults

More than 5 million older adults

1 out of 23 to 1 out of 44 reported

Incidence & Prevalence of Adult Abuse in Oklahoma



25,655 referrals

Possible Warning Signs: Physical Abuse

- **Unexplained or untreated injury or illness**
- **Bruises, especially layered**
- **Malnutrition, weight loss, dehydration**
- **Abrasions, cuts, lacerations**
- **Burns, especially patterned**

Possible Warning Signs: Sexual Abuse

- **Genital injuries**
- **Human bite marks**
- **Imprint injuries**
- **Bruising on thighs, buttocks, or breasts**
- **Frequent unexplained physical illness or complaints**
- **Genital or urinary tract irritation, injury, infection, or scarring**
- **Sexually transmitted diseases***
- **Pregnancy***

Possible Warning Signs: Neglect

- **Unsafe living environment**
- **Malnutrition/dehydration**
- **Lack of medical care—untreated medical conditions**
- **Over or under medication**
- **Skin breakdown/decubitus ulcers**
- **Poor personal hygiene**
- **Inappropriate clothing**
- **Isolation**

Possible Warning Signs: Behavioral, Mental, & Emotional

- **Anger, irritability**
- **Apathy, fearfulness, nervousness**
- **Clothing dirty, seldom changed, inappropriate**
- **Confusion, disorientation, wandering**
- **Decreased quality of personal hygiene**

Possible Warning Signs: Environmental

- **Hoarding**
- **House in poor repair**
- **Inadequate clothing, food, or shelter**
- **Offensive odors (feces, urine, rotted food)**
- **Vermin infestations (rodents, insects, bed bugs)**

Possible Warning Signs: Financial

- **Forced, tricked, or manipulated signatures**
- **Unpaid rent or utilities**
- **Inappropriate bank activity**
- **Personal belongings missing**

Possible Warning Signs: Caregiver

- **Reacts inappropriately**
- **Isolates**
- **Refuses to allow medical care**
- **Refuses to pay for necessities or care**
- **Verbally critical and threatening**
- **Consistently over or underreacts**

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Case Study: Barbara

Who Is Being Abused?

- **Females and males**
- **Isolated**
- **People who have:**
 - **Disabilities**
 - **Memory problems or dementia**
- **Dependent on others for help**
- **Frail**

Who are the Perpetrators?

- Spouses or former spouses
- Current or former partners
- Another individual with whom the victim has an ongoing, personal relationship



- **Denial**
- **Fear**
- **Loss**
- **Shame**

Impact on Victims



Unique Challenges



Supporting Connectedness



- **Listen**
- **Do not discount an individual's claim simply because of a cognitive impairment or forgetfulness**
- **Watch for indicators**
- **Ask questions**

Action Steps

- **Speak out**
- **Collaborate**
- **Educate**
- **Initiate changes**
- **Increase knowledge of available resources**
- **Promote resources**
- **Offer assistance**
- **Contact Adult Protective Services**



APS Role & Responsibilities

Service Cases

- Allegation requires service planning only
- Examples include:
 - Self-neglect
 - No Alleged Perpetrator identified

Investigations

- Allegation requires an investigation
- Examples include:
 - Caretaker Abuse
 - Caretaker Neglect
 - Exploitation
 - Financial Neglect
 - Abandonment
 - Verbal Abuse
 - Personal Degradation
 - Self-Neglect when APS guardianship is required

Service Planning

**Self-
Determination**

**Client-
Centered**

**Least
Restrictive**

APS Services Through Temporary Guardianship

APS can only provide involuntary services when:

- **the client lacks capacity to consent;**
- **there is no one else available to make appropriate decisions for the client; AND**
- **the client is at substantial risk of death or immediate and serious physical harm or financial exploitation of the estate**

Case Closure



- **Situation is remedied**
- **Circumstances are stable**
- **Client retains capacity and refuses services**

Duty to Report: Title 43A §10-104

- **Who – any person having reasonable cause**
- **When - as soon as person is aware of the situation**
- **Where - to DHS or local law enforcement**

Mandatory Reporters: Title 43A §10-104

B. Persons required to make reports pursuant to this section shall include, but not be limited to:

- **Physicians**
- **Operators of emergency response vehicles and other medical professionals**
- **Social workers and mental health professionals**
- **Law enforcement officials**
- **Staff of domestic violence programs**
- **Long-term care facility personnel, including staff of nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, residential care facilities, and Veterans centers**

Mandatory Reporters: Title 43A §10-104 cont.

- **Job coaches, community service workers, and personal care assistants**
- **Other health care professionals**
- **Persons entering into transactions with a caretaker or other person who has assumed the role of financial management**
- **Staff of residential care facilities, group homes, or employment settings for person with DD**
- **Municipal employees**

Making an APS Referral

Report to:

- **Public Access**

Abuseisnotok.org (use Chrome)

- **Abuse & Neglect Hotline**

1-800-522-3511

- **Local law enforcement**



Questions