

## Responding to Elder Abuse

When we think about getting older most of us don't see our senior years including abuse or neglect. However, it is estimated that more than 2.5 million older people are victims of some form of maltreatment with 90% of the abuse being committed by someone the elderly victim knows, most often a family member.

An older person who is being abused, may seem depressed and withdrawn; will never accept invitations to spend time away from their family or a caregiver; seems afraid to make their own decisions; seems to be hiding something about a caregiver; never seems to have any spending money; may put off going to the doctor; or, seems to have too many household accidents.

An older person is also at greater risk than other age groups to suffer more serious effects of abuse or neglect. The effects can result in more serious injuries to elders whose bones break and tissues tear more easily. The ability to recuperate diminishes with age. Financial abuse can be devastating because the elderly are less likely to be able to work to make up for their losses.

If you or someone you know is frightened in their own home, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can help you think about options, before things get worse.

If someone is over the age of 60, help is also available in Pennsylvania through local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that include older adult protective services as an important component of their aging services. The phone number for the local AAA can be found in the phone book blue pages under Abuse/Assault.

Help is also available through the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

**1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)**

**TTY: 1-800-787-3224**

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

Help is available in English, Spanish, and many other languages. All contact with the hotline is free and confidential. You can also contact Western Behavioral Health for assistance in getting a referral at 1-888-251-0083 (TTY: 1-877-877-3580).

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare