

## How should you report elder abuse and neglect?

Long-term care staff must report abuse and neglect violations according to facility policy.

In most long-term care facilities, policy states that staff must report violations to the unit supervisor or administrator. State law requires the facility to report the abuse or neglect allegation to the Ohio Department of Health within 24 hours and complete an investigation within five days of the report.

Family and friends of elderly residents who suspect elder abuse or neglect can protect victims from further harm by reporting it immediately to the proper authorities.

### Law Enforcement:

- ◇ Call 911 if there is immediate danger
- ◇ Police Department or Sheriff

### Ohio Dept. of Health Complaint Hotline:

- ◇ (800) 342-0553 toll-free

### Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program, Attorney General's Office:

- ◇ (877) 5VICTIM (84-2846) toll-free

### To report Medicaid Fraud/Abuse and Neglect, call the Ohio Attorney General:

- ◇ (800) 642-2873 toll-free

### For help resolving complaints of elder abuse and neglect, call to speak with a resident advocate in ABLE's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:

- ◇ (419) 259-2891 in Toledo
- ◇ (800) 542-1874 toll-free

[ombudsman.ablelaw.org](http://ombudsman.ablelaw.org)

## Advocating for Quality of Life for the Elderly

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ABLE's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program serves Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Sandusky, Williams, and Wood Counties.



For more information or to request assistance, call

**(419) 259-2891**

in Toledo

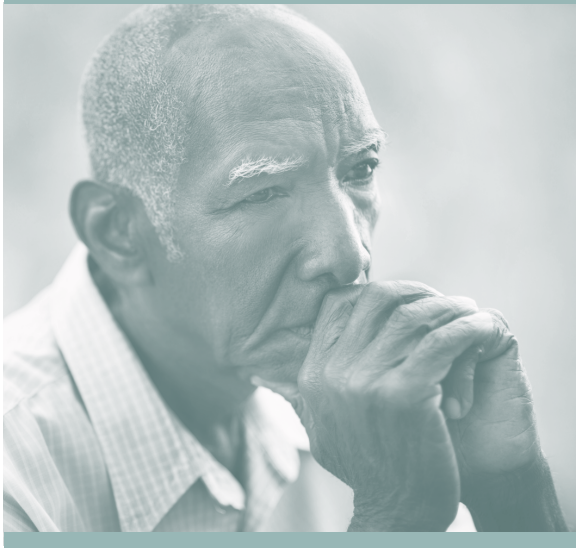
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toll-free

**ABLE**  
ADVOCATES  
FOR BASIC LEGAL  
EQUALITY, INC.



**Long-Term Care  
Ombudsman**



## What is elder abuse and neglect?

**Abuse** is the willful infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, isolation, intimidation, or punishment that results in physical harm, pain or mental anguish.

**Neglect** occurs when a person knowingly fails to provide goods and services necessary to avoid physical harm or mental anguish. Neglect includes withholding food, hydration or hygiene.

**Sexual abuse** includes nonconsensual sexual contact.

**Financial exploitation** is a form of abuse and includes taking control of an individual's financial resources through misrepresentation, coercion, or theft.

## Why does elder abuse and neglect happen?

Many factors can contribute to an elder abuse situation. Sometimes, there is misunderstanding or ignorance on the part of the caregiver, such as when a long-term care staff person does not understand the effects of aging. In nursing homes, in particular, staff may be prone to commit elder abuse because of insufficient staffing, lack of training, or stressful working conditions.

Abuse may happen when a caregiver does not know how to deal with a difficult or demanding situation and is under stress.

The caregiver may vent impatience, frustration, and anger on the elder whom they are assigned to protect and nurture.

## Indicators of elder abuse and neglect include:

- ◇ Make sure that the elderly person is eating properly and taking required medications. A weakened elder cannot think clearly about the care being provided to him or her.
- ◇ Look for signs of physical injury, as well as signs of psychological distress, such as becoming withdrawn, depressed, or agitated.
- ◇ Look for possible financial exploitation. Scan bank account and credit card statements for unauthorized transactions, if you have permission from the elder.
- ◇ Call and visit as frequently as possible. Keep the lines of communication open so that the elder feels comfortable talking about abusive behaviors.

## Elder abuse is a crime. Help is available.

Abuse of an elderly person can happen in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult group homes and other long-term care facilities. Abuse from a caregiver can also occur in private homes.

The National Center on Elder Abuse has estimated that more than one million seniors suffer abuse or neglect each year, many while in nursing homes. In 2001, a Congressional report revealed that 5,283 nursing homes, more than 30 percent of the 17,000 nursing homes nationwide, were cited for abuse violations from January 1999 through December 2000. Of the 9,000 violations reported, 1,600 were serious enough to directly harm residents.

**Family members and friends can help prevent elder abuse and neglect by knowing what to look for and how to respond.**

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