Report elder abuse: It's the law!

Report to the main line or your Department of Social Services regional office.

State of CT main line for Protective Services for the Elderly:

(1-888-385-4225)

#### **District Offices:**

*Bridgeport* Telephone: 203-551-2701

*New Haven* Telephone: 203-974-8029

*Stamford* Telephone: 203-251-9392



For more information, please visit:

State of CT Department on Aging: (1-860-424-5274) www.ct.gov/agingservices

National Center for Elder Abuse: www.ncea.aoa.gov

National Committee to Prevent Elder Abuse: www.preventelderabuse.org



Office of the Victim Advocate 505 Hudson Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Hartford, CT, 06106 860-550-6632 Toll Free 1-888-771-3126 Fax: 860-560-7065 www.ct.gov/ova

## A Guide to Dealing with Elder Abuse





### What is elder abuse?

According to Connecticut statutes 17b-450-452, elder abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- The willful infliction of physical pain, injury or mental anguish to a person aged 60 or older
- The willful deprivation by a caretaker of services which are necessary to maintain physical and mental health to a person aged 60 or older

#### According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, there are seven types of abuse:

- Physical Abuse: the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment
- Sexual Abuse: non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person
- Emotional or Psychological Abuse: the infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or nonverbal acts
- Neglect: the refusal or failure to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elder
- Abandonment: the desertion of an elderly person by an individual who has assumed responsibility for providing care for an elder
- Financial or Material Exploitation: the illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets
- Self-neglect: the behavior of an elderly person that threatens his/her own health or safety

## What are some signs and symptoms of elder abuse?

- Bruises, welts, black eyes, lacerations, and unhealed wounds
- The caregiver's refusal to allow the elder to be seen alone
- Being extremely withdrawn, noncommunicative, or unresponsive
- Being emotionally upset or agitated
- Hazardous or unsafe living conditions/ arrangements
- The desertion of an elder in a public shopping area, or nursing facility
- Abrupt changes in bank accounts, wills, or other financial documents
- The inclusion of additional signatures on financial documents
- Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of necessary medical aids

\*Please note that not all victims of elder abuse display these signs. Depending on the type of abuse, the symptoms will vary.

#### Is elder abuse a big problem?

- According to a recent study, about 10% of the elderly population experiences abuse
- A recent estimate also states that only about 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse is reported to authorities
- Unfortunately, as the population of elderly people expands, so does the risk for elder abuse
- Another disturbing trend in elder abuse is that about 90% of the abusers are family members of the victim

## What can family and friends do to help?

- Visit an elderly person often and make time to talk with them in private
- Familiarize oneself with the symptoms of elder abuse and helpful resources
- Be observant and speak up when something seems wrong
- Always report suspected abuse



# What can older adults do to protect themselves?

- Tell a trusted person about the abuse
- Refrain from giving away money, social security and credit card information
- Have a trusted person review documents before they are signed
- Seek medical help when needed and confide in the doctor if abuse is occurring