



Combating Abuse & Neglect

A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding, Identifying, and Combating Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities in Connecticut

Acknowledgments

This guide was developed in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Social Services, and the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut. We are grateful for their expertise, support, and shared commitment to combating elder abuse in our communities. Their contributions have been instrumental in creating a resource that prioritizes the safety, dignity, and rights of older adults and people with disabilities.

This collaboration reflects our collective dedication to preventing abuse and ensuring respectful, supportive care for Connecticut's older adults and people with disabilities.



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Introduction

Purpose of the Guide

Everyone has the right to live in safety. When issues of abuse or neglect do arise, there are steps that can be taken to ensure the protection of older adults and individuals with disabilities in Connecticut. For more specifics on who falls under the definition of an individual with disabilities, please refer to [ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada](https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada).*

This guide serves as a resource for individuals receiving long-term services and supports, families, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and all mandatory reporters in Connecticut. It is brought to you by a joint effort among the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP), the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS), and the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut (CEJC).

The primary goal of this guide is to make sure that everyone involved in the care of older adults and individuals with disabilities has the knowledge and tools they need to identify, report, and prevent abuse and neglect. This includes anyone working in nursing homes, residential care homes, managed residential communities, senior housing, and private residences.

*A person with a disability is someone who: has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a history or record of such an impairment (such as cancer that is in remission); or is perceived by others as having such an impairment (such as a person who has scars from a severe burn).

This Guide Serves as a Resource For:

- Older adults and individuals with disabilities
- Family and friends of older adults and individuals with disabilities
- Caregivers in various settings
- Healthcare professionals
- Mandatory reporters* such as social workers, nursing home staff, and law enforcement
- Community advocates and Ombudsmen

NOTE TO STAFF, HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, AND CAREGIVERS:

This information should serve as a general resource, however all mandated reporters should refer to the official statute and regulations for specific requirements.

*Those who work for licensed facilities or other agencies should follow the requirements specific to their entity. Please see specific mandatory reporting obligations on page 13.

Why Definitions Matter

Understanding definitions is important for finding and addressing abuse and neglect across all settings. Whether you are a caregiver in a nursing home or a family member caring for an older adult or individual with disabilities at home, these definitions provide the foundation for knowing when rights are being broken.

Introduction to Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect can occur anywhere, and there are different types to be aware of:

Physical Abuse



Purposely causing pain or injury, including hitting, slapping, burning, or holding down (restraining) an older adult or person with disabilities.

Psychological/ Emotional Abuse



Purposely causing mental suffering (anguish) through verbal or nonverbal acts, such as threats, bullying (intimidation), or embarrassment (humiliation).

Sexual Abuse



Any sexual contact that's not agreed to (non-consensual) with an older adult or person with disabilities, especially those who are incapable of giving consent (saying yes to the act).

Financial Abuse / Exploitation



The illegal or improper use of an older adult's or person with disabilities' funds, property, or assets for personal gain.

Passive Acts of Abuse



Using foul language, speaking negatively about their job, not listening when someone says "no" – these are all examples of passive acts of abuse that should be reported.

Neglect



The failure to provide necessary care, leading to harm or distress. This can be:

Active Neglect: Deliberate withholding of care, such as food, medicine, or help with daily activities.

Passive Neglect: Failure to provide care due to lack of ability, knowledge, or resources.

Key Takeaway

Using foul language in a care setting is a form of passive abuse.

Risk Factors

BY UNDERSTANDING THESE RISK FACTORS, FAMILIES, CAREGIVERS, AND PROFESSIONALS CAN TAKE STEPS TO LESSEN THEM, REGARDLESS OF THE CARE SETTING.



Older Adults & Individuals with Disabilities

Certain characteristics can raise the risk for an older adult or individual with a disability to experience abuse or neglect:

Cognitive
Impairment



Conditions like dementia or Alzheimer's can make older adults more at risk.

Physical
Dependency



Older adults and individuals with disabilities who depend on others for daily care are at higher risk.

Social Isolation



Lack of social connections and family support can increase the risk of abuse and neglect.

Caregiver-Related

Caregivers, too, may have factors that increase the risk of abuse or neglect:

- Stress and Burnout ➤ High levels of stress or burnout can lead to neglect or abusive behavior.
- Lack of Training ➤ Caregivers without proper training may harm older adults or individuals with disabilities through neglect.
- Substance Use Disorder ➤ Caregivers with substance use issues may neglect or profit from (exploit) the older adults and individuals with disabilities in their care.
- Hardships ➤ Struggling with hardships or addiction may impair a caregiver's judgment and decision-making, potentially leading to individuals getting taken advantage of financially, emotionally, or physically.

Environmental

The environment where care is provided also plays a role:

- Understaffing ➤ In facilities, less staffing than is needed can lead to neglect or abuse due to overworked caregivers.
- Poor Facility Management ➤ Facilities with poor oversight or management are more likely to have incidents of abuse or neglect.
- Inadequate Resources ➤ Lack of access to necessary resources, such as medical supplies or proper nutrition, can lead to neglect.

Key Takeaway

Understanding risk factors can help families, caregivers, and professionals take steps to lessen them.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse and Neglect

THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS BELOW CAN HAPPEN IN EVERY CARE SETTING. WHETHER IN A NURSING HOME, RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME, OR AT HOME, UNDERSTANDING THESE SIGNS WILL HELP YOU SPOT ABUSE AND NEGLECT EARLY AND TAKE ACTION.

Physical Signs

Physical signs of abuse and neglect can be different, depending on the type and how bad the mistreatment is. Key indicators or clues include:

- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, or other injuries
- Signs of restraint (being held down), such as marks on wrists or ankles
- Frequent hospital visits or changes in medical care providers
- Sudden weight loss, dehydration, or malnutrition

Behavioral Signs

Changes in behavior can also mean abuse or neglect is taking place. Look for:

- Withdrawal from social activities or engagement
- Sudden changes in mood or personality, including increased anxiety or depression
- Fearfulness, especially around certain people or environments
- Uncharacteristic aggression or anger

Take Note

Financial abuse can be harder to see, but is equally harmful. Look for sudden changes in financial status, missing items, and unpaid bills.

Signs of Financial Exploitation

Financial abuse can be harder to see, but is equally harmful. Watch for:

- Sudden changes in financial status, such as unexplained withdrawals or transfers of monies
- Missing personal items, like jewelry or important documents
- Unpaid bills despite having sufficient funds/money
- Sudden changes in wills, powers of attorney, or other financial documents

Signs of Passive Acts of Abuse

Passive abuse can be more subtle than other types of abuse, but can cause harm:

- Using foul language in front of an older adult or individual with disabilities
- Not listening when an older adult or individual with disabilities says “no”
- Speaking negatively about working with an older adult or individual with disabilities in front of them

Signs of Neglect

Neglect often shows itself in the older adult or individual with disabilities’ physical and emotional state. Be aware of:

- Poor hygiene, dirty clothing, or living conditions
- Bedsores, untreated medical conditions, or infections
- Lack of necessary medical aids, such as glasses, hearing aids, or walkers
- Signs of self-neglect, including hoarding, malnutrition, or failure to take prescribed medications
- Food insecurity
- Social isolation

Legal and Ethical Considerations

Residents' Rights in Nursing Homes

Nursing home residents have specific rights designed to protect them from abuse and neglect:

- Right to Dignity and Respect ➤ Residents must be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- Right to Privacy ➤ Residents have the right to privacy in their personal and medical care.
- Right to Be Free from Abuse ➤ This includes physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, as well as passive acts of abuse and neglect.
- Right to File Complaints ➤ Residents or their families can file complaints without fear of retaliation or someone trying to “get back” at them.

These are some of the rights that residents have, but there are additional rights as well. Read Connecticut General Statute 19a-550 for more details:

<https://law.justia.com/codes/connecticut/2011/title19a/chap368v/Sec19a-550.html>

Legal Obligations of Mandated Reporters

Staff in nursing homes and residential care homes, as well as anyone who works with a resident or individual receiving long-term supports, have legal commitments (obligations) to:

- Report Abuse ➤ Any suspicion of abuse or neglect must be reported immediately.
- Prevent Further Harm ➤ Staff must take steps to protect residents from further harm while investigations are happening.
- Follow Up ➤ Long-term care settings must make sure that all reported incidents are investigated and addressed.

Reporting Obligations and Procedures

Mandatory reporters have specific commitments (obligations), including:

- Immediate Reporting ➤ Any suspicion of abuse or neglect must be reported as soon as possible, typically within 24 hours.
- Proper Channels ➤ Reports must be made to the correct authorities, which change depending on the setting (e.g., DPH, Protective Services for the Elderly, local law enforcement).
- Documentation ➤ Accurate and thorough documentation of the incident and the steps taken that include measures to protect individuals while the investigation is conducted is a must.
- Safeguarding ➤ Taking appropriate measures to ensure the individual and others are safeguarded from potential or further abuse and/or neglect.

Relevant Laws and Regulations

There are laws and regulations in place to protect older adults and individuals with disabilities:

- Elder Justice Act ➤ A federal law that provides protection for older adults against abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Read more at rb.gy/pbuv9i.
- Connecticut State Laws ➤ State-specific regulations about mandatory reporting, the rights of older adults and individuals with disabilities, and the responsibilities of care providers.
- Nursing Home Reform Act ➤ Sets the federal quality standards for nursing homes and defines the legal rights of nursing home residents.

Prevention Strategies

Family and Community Involvement

Prevention starts with strong support systems. Encourage:

Regular Visits



Family, friends, and loved ones should visit frequently and be involved in the care planning process.

Community Engagement



Encourage the involvement of community organizations and volunteers to provide more oversight and support.

Effective Communication Strategies

Clear and open communication can help to identify or potentially prevent abuse and neglect:

With Residents



Have regular, private conversations with residents to check in on their well-being.

With Staff



Encourage open conversation between caregivers and staff to address concerns before they become worse.

With Authorities



Know when and how to communicate with authorities if abuse or neglect is suspected.

Training and Education

Regular Training Sessions



For individuals receiving long-term services and supports, family, friends, staff and administration should receive regular training on how to identify and report abuse or neglect, including fear of retaliation.

Mandated Reporters

In Connecticut, certain individuals are legally required to report suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment. They are called mandated reporters and they play an important role in protecting individuals from harm. This section includes a breakdown of who is mandated to report and where they need to report their concerns for individuals receiving long-term care services and supports:

Healthcare Professionals

- Physicians, nurses, and physician assistants
- Person paid for caring for a resident in a nursing home facility or residential care home, such as a PCA
- Person paid for caring for an individual by any institution, organization, agency, or facility
- Medical examiners and dentists
- Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and registered nurses (RNs)
- Pharmacists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists
- Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health professionals
- Social workers and licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs)

Long-Term Care Facility Employees

- Nursing home administrators and other staff members
- Direct care staff and any other employee of a skilled nursing facility

Other Mandated Reporters

- Police officers
- Clergy members (but not information protected by clergy-penitent privilege)
- Professionals who provide services to individuals aged 60 or older, including home health care workers, personal care assistants (PCAs) in facilities, case managers, and emergency medical services (EMS).

Key Takeaway

Mandated reporters play an important role in protecting individuals receiving long-term care services and supports.

Mandated Reporters (continued)

Mandated Reporters must report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate authorities that include:

Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)

The DPH is responsible for investigating complaints related to care and safety standards in nursing facilities, residential care homes, assisted living service agencies and home health agencies.

Phone: 860-509-7400 where reports can be made during regular business hours.

For nursing home complaints, fill out a FLIS Complaint Submission form at <https://dphflisevents.ct.gov/Complaints>. Reports can be made 24/7. Or email: dph.fliscomplaint@ct.gov

Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) - Long Term Care Investigations

The Social Work Division administers the Long Term Care Investigation Program, which investigates reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of residents of skilled nursing facilities, board and care facilities, and any other adult care home similar to a facility or nursing facility or board and care home.

Online: Complete an online referral: dss.service.ct.gov/referrals/s/submit-referral

By fax: Use this **PDF** form (W-410) and fax to: 860-424-5091

Residents and resident representatives should be asked if they want the Ombudsman's Office involved and notified.

Local Police Department

In cases where there is immediate danger or criminal activity, mandated reporters should contact local law enforcement directly (911). The police can respond to emergencies and begin criminal investigations.

Reporting Requirements

Timeframe:

Mandated reporters must report immediately upon suspecting or learning of the abuse, neglect, or exploitation to their supervisor; and within 24 hours to the appropriate state department.*

Content of the Report:

The report should include the name and address of the older adult or person with disabilities; the nature of the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation; and any other information that may be helpful in the investigation.

Failure to report as required by law can result in fines and other penalties for mandated reporters. The primary goal of these reporting requirements is to make sure the safety and well-being of residents in skilled nursing facilities is protected.

NOTE:

This section is to serve as a general resource, but please contact your employer for specific reporting time requirements.

Reporting and Response Procedures

If you have a suspicion that something might be off, there is no harm in making a report. This section provides instructions for reporting suspected abuse or neglect and exploitation to Connecticut State Agencies, and the various ways you can file the report. In all cases of immediate danger, please call 911 or your local law enforcement.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS AND THE PEOPLE THAT SUPPORT THEM:



Step-by-Step Reporting Guide: How to Report Abuse or Neglect

Persons Served: **Residents Age 60+ Living in a Licensed Long-Term Care Facility (ex. Nursing Home, Residential Care Home)**

Connecticut
Department of
Public Health (DPH),
Facility Licensing
and Investigation
Section (FLIS)

Online

Submit a complaint online: <https://dphflisevents.ct.gov/Complaints>

By Phone

DPH Healthcare Quality and Safety Branch: Call 860-509-7400 or (Home Health and Hospice) Toll-free 800-828-9769

Practitioner
Licensing and
Investigations
Section (PLIS)

By Form

Mail, email, or fax the printable form below.

Mail

Connecticut Department of Public Health Practitioner Investigations Unit, 410 Capitol Avenue, MS#12HSR P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Email

DPH.PLISComplaints@ct.gov

State of Connecticut

portal.ct.gov/dph/practitioner-licensing--investigations/plis/practitioner-licensing--investigations-section.

Connecticut
Department of
Social Services
(DSS) - Long Term
Care Investigations

Online

<https://dss.service.ct.gov/referrals/s/submit-referral>

By Form

Complete the Report Form (W-410) portal.ct.gov/-/media/departments-and-agencies/dss/social-work-services/w-410.pdf

Email form to: PSEReferrals.DSS@ct.gov

Fax form to: 860-424-5091

Mail form to: DSS/Social Work Services Division, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105

By Phone

Toll-free line: 888-385-4225

Staff are available to receive calls between 8:00am and 4:30pm Monday through Friday.

After business hours or on weekends or state holidays: Call the Infoline at 2-1-1.

Outside of Connecticut: Call the Infoline 24/7 at 800-203-1234.

Step-by-Step Reporting Guide: How to Report Abuse or Neglect

Persons Served: **Individuals Age 60+ Living in the Community (Senior Housing, Private Homes, etc.) Receiving Care by Non-Licensed Individuals (Family Members, Friends, and Loved Ones)**

**Protective Services
for the Elderly
(PSE)**

Online

<https://dss.service.ct.gov/referrals/s/submit-referral>

By Phone

Toll-free line: 888-385-4225

Staff are available to receive calls between 8:00am and 4:30pm
Monday through Friday.

After business hours or on weekends or state holidays: Call the Infoline
at 2-1-1.

Outside of Connecticut: Call the Infoline 24/7 at 800-203-1234.

By Form

Complete the Report Form (W-675) https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/departments-and-agencies/dss/social-work-services/w-675-referral-6_2023-1.pdf

Email form to:

PSEReferrals.DSS@ct.gov

Fax form to:

860-424-5091

Mail form to:

DSS/PSE, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105

Persons Served: **Individuals Age 60+ Living in the Community and Receiving Licensed Home Care Services (Home Health Aides etc.)**

**Connecticut
Department of
Public Health
(DPH), Facility
Licensing and
Investigation
Section (FLIS)**

Online

Submit a complaint online: <https://dphflisevents.ct.gov/Complaints>

By Phone

DPH Healthcare Quality and Safety Branch: Call 860-509-7400 during
business hours

Home Health Agencies and Hospice Agencies Toll-free: 800-828-9769

Step-by-Step Reporting Guide: How to Report Abuse or Neglect

Persons Served: **Individuals with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability**

The DDS Abuse
Investigation
Division (AID)

By Phone
844-878-8923

Persons Served: **Individuals Age 60+ with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability**

The DDS Abuse
Investigation
Division (AID)

By Phone
844-878-8923

**Protective
Services for the
Elderly (PSE)**

Online
<https://dss.service.ct.gov/referrals/s/submit-referral>

By Phone

Toll-free line: 888-385-4225

Staff are available to receive calls between 8:00am and 4:30pm
Monday through Friday.

After business hours or on weekends or state holidays: Call the Infoline
at 2-1-1.

Outside of Connecticut: Call the Infoline 24/7 at 800-203-1234.

By Form

Complete the Report Form (W-675)

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/departments-and-agencies/dss/social-work-services/w-675-referral-6_2023-1.pdf

Email form to:

PSEReferrals.DSS@ct.gov

Fax form to:

860-424-5091

Mail form to:

DSS/PSE, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105

Things to Keep in Mind When Reporting

Filing a Report: An individual report should be filed once and not through multiple means (i.e., online, phone, fax, mail)

Confidentiality: All information provided will be kept private (confidential) when reporting and only released in accordance with applicable laws and requirements (e.g., court order, etc.).

Support for Victims: Information on support services is available to the older adult or person with disabilities and their family. These types of resources can be found on page 24.

Follow Up: Make sure that your report is followed up on, and appropriate actions are taken.

Mandated Reporter Requirements: Reporting procedures for mandated reporters can be different. Please see the Mandated Reporters section on page 13 for more information.

Documenting Signs of Abuse & Neglect

Documentation plays an important role in reporting abuse and neglect, and finding justice for victims. By documenting incidents of abuse and neglect, you create a record of evidence that can help reporting be more effective.

Key information to collect:

Date and time: Record the date and time of each incident to establish a timeline of abuse and neglect.

Injuries: If possible, photograph any physical injuries, such as bruises, cuts, fractures, or bedsores.

Conversations: Document any conversations related to the abuse and neglect, including statements made by the resident, staff members, or witnesses.

Observations: Note any observations of abuse or neglect, such as witnessing a staff member mistreating a resident, or noticing signs of neglect or emotional abuse.

Medical records: Keep copies of medical records that document injuries or changes in the resident's health that may be related to abuse.

Financial discrepancies: Document any suspicious financial transactions or discrepancies that suggest financial abuse.

Tips for safely and effectively gathering evidence:

Prioritize safety: Ensure the resident's and your own safety when collecting evidence. Avoid putting anyone at risk of harm or retaliation.

Document incidents immediately: Record details of each incident as soon as possible to capture accurate information and prevent memory loss.

Collect physical evidence: Take photographs of injuries, unsafe conditions, or signs of neglect. Keep copies of medical records and other relevant documents.

Preserve electronic evidence: If there is any digital evidence, such as emails or text messages, take screenshots or print them out.

Role of the Ombudsman Program

In addition to the resources listed, you also have the right to contact the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program directly.

The Ombudsman Program plays an important role in speaking for individuals receiving long-term services and supports (LTSS), and ensuring their rights are upheld.

How to Contact the Ombudsman:

To contact the Ombudsman's office, call our statewide toll-free number: 866-388-1888 or 860-424-5200

Fax: 860-772-1704

Email: ltpop@ct.gov

Ombudsman Responsibilities:

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) works to improve the quality of life and quality of care of Connecticut individuals receiving LTSS in nursing homes, residential care homes, managed residential/assisted living communities, as well as the greater community. All Ombudsman activity is performed on behalf of, and at the direction of, the individual. All communication with the individual, their family members, or legal representative, is held in strict confidentiality (kept private).

The LTCOP responds to and investigates complaints from individuals receiving LTSS, family members, and/or other individuals acting on the individual's behalf. Ombudsmen monitor state and federal laws and regulations, and make recommendations (give advice) for improvement.

What Does the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Do for Long-Term Care Residents?

RECEIVES and looks into complaints, and helps individuals receiving LTSS in solving problems

EDUCATES about their rights

EMPOWERS and supports them and their families to talk about concerns with nursing home staff

PROVIDES information regarding LTSS

ADVOCATES improvements in state and federal laws and regulations

REPRESENTS individuals receiving LTSS interests before governmental agencies

IDENTIFIES and looks to solve for gaps in facility, government, or community services

RESPECTS the privacy and confidentiality of individuals receiving LTSS

LTCOP services are free and confidential.

Collaboration with Authorities:

The LTCOP works with other agencies and organizations to speak up for residents and improve long-term care:

State agencies: The LTCOP works with policymakers and legislators to improve systems and protections at the state level.

Advocacy organizations: The LTCOP works with advocacy organizations to bring forward the needs of individuals receiving LTSS.

Volunteer Resident Advocates: The LTCOP recruits, trains, and supervises Volunteer Resident Advocates who work with local agencies to improve programs.

Inclusive Communities Work Group: The LTCOP works with the LGBTQ+ Aging Advocacy Group to promote inclusivity in long-term care communities. The work group is made up of staff, volunteers, advocates, government agencies, and professionals.

Support Services for Victims and Families

The following types of services are available for both victims and their loved ones:

Counseling Services: Access to mental health support for victims of abuse

Legal Assistance: Information on legal resources for justice and compensation

Relocation Services: Support for moving victims to safer environments if necessary

Importance of Proper Reporting

Proper reporting is critical in preventing further abuse and neglect. Everyone has a responsibility to report suspected abuse and ensure that it is addressed appropriately.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) carries out the Protective Services for the Elderly (PSE) Program. PSE works to help adults aged 60 years or older to live with dignity and respect by investigating maltreatment claims of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation.

On July 1, 2022, Public Act No. 22-145 went into effect. This law lessens the timeframe when mandated professionals must report suspected maltreatment. The law requires that if a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any older person or person with disabilities has been abused, neglected, exploited, or abandoned, or is in a condition that is the result of such maltreatment, or needs protective services, they must report those concerns to the PSE Program within 24 hours.

When the Commissioner of Social Services receives a report that someone has been abused, neglected, exploited, or abandoned, or is in need of protective services, they order an evaluation of the situation and the condition of the person in question. A written evaluation includes recommended actions and a finding of whether protective services are needed. The person who reported the abuse will be notified of the findings, upon request.

When necessary, staff will get involved immediately to safeguard the older adult's or individual with disabilities' health and well-being.

Effective June 24, 2024, DSS launched a new online portal for submitting referrals to the program. This portal is designed to streamline the referral process, making it easier and more convenient to report concerns regarding older adults or individuals with disabilities who may need help.

Safeguarding of Reporters

Ensuring the safety and protection of those who report abuse is essential for encouraging individuals to come forward without fear of retaliation or harm. Here are ways to safeguard abuse and neglect reporters:

Key Takeaway

Everyone has a responsibility to report suspected abuse and ensure that it is addressed appropriately.

Anonymous Reporting Channels: If needed, there are anonymous reporting options, such as hotlines or online platforms, to allow reporters to disclose concerns without revealing their identity.

Confidentiality Assurances: The identity of those reporting abuse will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis (e.g., with investigators, law enforcement, or social services).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Common Questions from Families and Caregivers

What should I do if I suspect abuse?

Answer: Report your concerns immediately to the appropriate authorities and make sure the older adult or individual with disabilities is safe.

How can I tell if my loved one is being financially exploited?

Answer: Look for sudden changes in their financial situation, missing belongings, or changes in financial documents.

What are my rights as a family, friend, or representative member or caregiver?

Answer: With the consent of the individual receiving services, you have the right to participate in the care planning process, to visit regularly, and to report any concerns without fear of retaliation, or punishment.

Clarifications on Misconceptions about Mandated Reporting

Misconception: “Mandated reporters always report abuse.”

Clarification: While mandated reporters are required to report abuse, it doesn’t always happen. Families and other involved parties must also be on the lookout.

Misconception: “Only physical abuse is reportable.”

Clarification: All forms of abuse—physical, emotional, sexual, financial—and passive acts of abuse and neglect are reportable, should be taken seriously, and should be reported.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Summary of Key Points

This guide has provided an overview of abuse and neglect of older adults and individuals with disabilities, covering definitions, signs, risk factors, legal considerations, prevention strategies, reporting procedures, and FAQs. By understanding these concepts, you are better able to protect those in your care.

Importance of Vigilance and Advocacy

The safety and well-being of older adults and individuals with disabilities depends on the alertness of everyone involved in their care. Families, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and mandatory reporters all have a role to play in preventing and addressing abuse and neglect.

Encouragement to Report and Prevent Abuse

Reporting abuse and neglect is not just a legal obligation – it's a moral obligation. By taking action, you can make a significant difference in the lives of older adults and individuals with disabilities. We encourage you to stay informed, stay alert, and take action when necessary.

Contact Information for Further Assistance

Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program:
866-388-1888

Connecticut Department of Public Health:
860-509-7400 during business hours

Connecticut Protective Services for the Elderly:
888-385-4225

Local Law Enforcement: For the number to your local law enforcement, you can call 2-1-1, but in an emergency, always call 9-1-1.

Resources

Below is a list of the resources in Connecticut; there are several resources available for reporting abuse and neglect, and it depends on the setting in which you live. Please review the resources below to have a better understanding of where you should report your concerns.

Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)

The LTCOP speaks up for residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other long-term care settings. They investigate complaints related to care, treatment, and residents' rights.

Phone: 866-388-1888

Fax: 860-772-1704

Email: ltop@ct.gov

Website: [Long Term Care Ombudsman Program](#)

Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)

The DPH is responsible for investigating complaints related to care and safety standards in nursing facilities and home health agencies.

Phone: 860-509-7400 where reports can be made during regular business hours

FLIS Complaint Submission Page - Reports can be made 24/7

Email: dph.fliscomplaint@ct.gov

Key Takeaway

These resources are available to help protect individuals receiving long-term services and supports in Connecticut, and make sure that any instances of abuse or neglect are reported and addressed effectively.

Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

The DDS partners with individuals, their families, and support groups to help individuals with intellectual disabilities lead fulfilling lives within their communities.

Phone: 866-737-0330

Email: ddsct.co@ct.gov

Website: [CT Department of Developmental Service](#)

Connecticut Protective Services for the Elderly (PSE)

Department of Social Services (DSS), through the Protective Services for the Elderly and Long Term Care Investigations Program, receives reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and abandonment. Social workers investigate the reports to determine the condition of the elderly person and what action and services, if any, are required to promote their safety, independence, and well-being.

Phone: 888-385-4225 (Toll-Free)

Website: [Protective Services for the Elderly](#)

Connecticut Office of the Attorney General

The Attorney General's office can be involved in cases of abuse and neglect of older adults and individuals with disabilities, particularly those involving financial exploitation or system-wide issues in nursing facilities.

Phone: 860-808-5555 for the Elder Abuse Hotline

Website: [CT Attorney General's Office](#)

Local Police Department

In cases of immediate danger or criminal activity, call 9-1-1. Contacting the local police department is a must. They can provide immediate assistance and start criminal investigations if necessary.

Thank you for your
commitment to protecting
the rights and well-being
of Connecticut's older
adults and individuals
with disabilities.

**Together,
we can make a difference.**