

A Guide to Identifying Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse is defined as any abuse, exploitation, or neglect of anyone 70 years old or older. This guide is intended to assist mandatory reporters to know what questions to ask and what signs to look for when identifying suspected elder abuse. Speak up and call police if you suspect someone is being abused. You might save someone's life.

SPEAK UP

Many elders who are being abused are often embarrassed or afraid to say something. That is why it is critical to speak up, ask questions, and call to report suspicions of elder abuse.

Don't make assumptions. Ask questions.

- Tip 1: An abuser often accompanies the victim to various places and appointments. To ensure a safe environment for conversation, it is always a good idea to ask to talk to the elder alone.
- Tip 2: Aging skin is thin, but it doesn't always explain bruising or skin tears. Ask about the injury.
- Tip 3: Walking gingerly is not necessarily a sign of aging. Be sure to examine feet for sores and poor hygiene.
- Tip 4: Confusion about financial transactions is not always a sign of aging. Ask questions to make sure the confusion is not a symptom of financial exploitation.
- Tip 5: Confusion about or changes related to Wills or Power of Attorney documents may be a sign of financial abuse. Be sure to carefully review documents and ask questions to ensure the elder clearly understands and approves any changes that have been made.
- Tip 6: Wiring money or withdrawing an unusual amount of money is a possible sign of financial abuse. Ask questions aimed at making sure the person is not being pressured to make the transaction.

Questions to Ask

This list of questions may help you determine if abuse is happening. If an elder answers yes to any of these questions, a call to police may be necessary

Have you relied on anyone to help you bathe, shop, dress, bank or prepare meals? Are you comfortable with them doing so?	YES	NO
Has anyone prevented you from getting food, clothes, medication, or medical supplies?	YES	NO
Has anyone prevented you from being with other friends, family or going to church or social events?	YES	NO
Has anyone pressured you to sign papers or use your money against your will?	YES	NO
Has anyone made you feel afraid of being hurt or neglected?	YES	NO

Reporting Process

Step 1: Observe

If an individual is 70 years or older and you suspect any type of elder abuse whether physical or financial, the information **MUST** be reported to a law enforcement agency **within 24 hours** after the observation or discovery.

Step 2: Call

- 911 for 'In Progress' abuse
- 720-913-2000 for Non-Emergency law enforcement when you suspect abuse but the victim is not in imminent danger

Step 3: Report

Be prepared to provide the following information:

- Name, address, and contact information for the at-risk elder
- Your name, address, and contact information and what you observed
- Name of alleged perpetrator
- Nature and extent of suspected abuse

Your Rights: By law, mandated reporters have immunity if the report is made in good faith, as long as the reporter is not the perpetrator. Failure to report suspected elder abuse is a Class 3 Misdemeanor.

To Report Suspected Elder Abuse in Denver:

Denver Police | 720-913-2000 or 9-1-1

Additional Support Services:

Denver Adult Protection Services | 720-944-2994

Denver District Attorney's Office Fraud Hotline | 720-913-9179

