

ELDER ABUSE

What is it?

Elder abuse is violence or any other type of harm because of older age. It can be carried out by those who are close to older people, such as family and caregivers, or by social structures and institutions.

“My son persuaded me to sell my house to repay his debt...I agreed and now I’m left homeless.”
Woman, 70, Kyrgyzstan



1 in 6 older women and men worldwide experience abuse.

4%
reported

Despite this, elder abuse remains invisible. Only 4% of elder abuse is reported.

Types of elder abuse



Physical

Hitting, shoving, inappropriate use of drugs, restraints or confinement.



Emotional

Intimidation, humiliation, routine blaming, repeatedly ignoring the wishes of an older person or isolating them from friends or activities.



Sexual

Sexual harassment, sexual activity without informed consent, forcing an older person to watch sexual acts or to undress.



Neglect

Intentional or unintentional denial of food, water, shelter, clothing, assistance with daily living tasks and any other essential needs.



Financial

Using an older person's money or property, or making financial decisions, without their informed consent.

Elder abuse.
See it.
Expose it.

Find out what to do if you suspect elder abuse:
helpage.org/elder_abuse

HelpAge

International

ELDER ABUSE

How communities can help



Stay connected

Keep in touch with older people in your community. Make sure they know you are available to support if needed.



Listen and link

If an older person reaches out for help, listen to their problem but do not investigate the situation. It's important to let the older person make their own choices. You can link them to helplines and other support services available in your area *INSERT contact and opening hours:* _____



Help and inform

Help the older person recognise the signs of abuse and inform them about their right to live without fear. Give specific examples of abuse: they feel intimidated or ignored; they are isolated from friends or family; they are experiencing sexual contact they have not actively agreed to; they can't spend their money as they want; they are being denied food or medicines; or they are being hit by someone.



Report it

If you see an older person experiencing abuse, report the situation *INSERT contact and opening hours:* _____

If abuse is caused by a primary caregiver, such as a family member:

- Do not confront them yourself. This may put the older person in more danger, unless you have the older person's permission and are able to immediately move them to a safe environment.
- A trusted person in the older person's life may have the best chance of encouraging them to consider alternative care. Do not share information with anyone without permission from the older person.
- The safety of the older person is the number one priority.



Join community initiatives

Connect with groups or organisations who promote respect and dignity of older people in your community *INSERT contact and opening hours:* _____

“ I live with my son's family, since my wife died. My daughter-in-law insults me, does not give me sufficient food, does not want to launder my things.” Older man, Kyrgyzstan.

“ If an older woman has red eyes she would be expected to be a witch. I was afraid that it might happen to me.” Older woman, Tanzania