

Protect Against Elder Abuse

Preventing elder abuse and neglect

Preventing elder abuse means doing three things:

- Listening to seniors and their caregivers.
- Intervening when there is any suspicion of elder abuse.
- Educating others about how to recognize and report elder abuse.

What concerned friends or family members can do

- Watch for warning signs that might indicate elder abuse. If abuse is suspected, report it.
- Take a look at the elder's medications. Does the amount in the vial jive with the date of the prescription?
- Watch for possible financial abuse. Ask the elder for permission to scan bank accounts and credit card statements for unauthorized transactions.
- Call and visit often. Be a trusted confidante.
- Offer to stay with the elder so the caregiver can have a break — on a regular basis.
- NEVER let a caregiver have sole access to bank accounts, credit cards or cash that is not accounted for.
- Intervene if a privately hired caregiver seems to be overly "working" his or her way into the family.

How elders can protect themselves

- Make sure their financial and legal affairs are in order. If they aren't, enlist professional help to get them in order, with the assistance of a trusted friend or relative if necessary.
- Keep in touch with family and friends and avoid becoming isolated, which increases vulnerability to elder abuse.
- If elders are unhappy with the care they're receiving, whether it's in their own home or in a care facility, they should speak up.

What you can do as a family caregiver to prevent elder abuse

Be aware of the signs and stages of caregiver burnout...and seek help by contacting **Continuum** for respite care.

The three stages of caregiver burnout are:

1. Frustration—disappointment, exasperation, weariness
2. Depression—hopelessness, dejection, lack of energy
3. Despair—feeling helpless, ineffective, cynical, adrift

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