Elder Abuse Awareness
Presented by the Aging Division - Wyoming Department of Health

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Aging Division Website
Aging Division Facebook Page
Objectives

• Identify the signs of elder abuse.
• Understand the reporting process when abuse is suspected.
• Learn the steps you can take to prevent elder abuse from happening.
Providers are Mandated Reporters

Stay Alert – Improve Lives.
Statistics on Elder Abuse

• About 1 in 10 Americans age 60+ have experienced abuse.¹

• Elder abuse is underreported.
   The New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study found that for every 1 elder abuse case known to programs and agencies, 23.5 were unknown. In the same study, they examined different types of abuse and found for each case of financial exploitation that reached authorities, 44 cases went unreported. The national elder abuse incidence study estimated that only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse ever comes to the attention of authorities.⁴

• The impact of elder abuse is felt by people of all ages.
   The costs of elder abuse are high for the affected individuals and society alike. Elder abuse reduces older people’s participation in the life of our communities. It also creates health care and legal costs, which are often shouldered by public programs like Medicare and Medicaid.³

• Elder abuse costs victims billions of dollars each year.
   The annual financial loss by victims of elder financial exploitation was estimated to be $2.9 billion in 2009, a 12% increase from 2008.⁵

• Elder abuse is associated with increased rates of hospitalization in the community population.
   Older adults who experienced abuse or neglect were twice as likely to be hospitalized than other older people.²

Without accessible, quality health and public services, our population becomes more at risk for abuse as we age.
Signs of Elder Abuse

Emotional & Behavioral
- Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
- Fear or anxiety
- Isolated or not responsive
- Sadness
- Unable to answer for themselves
- Threats to family, friends and pets.
- Degrading remarks such as name-calling.

Physical
- Broken bones, bruises, and welts
- Cuts, sores or burns
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Sexually transmitted diseases without clear explanation
- Poor living conditions
- Dirtiness, poor nutrition or dehydration, resisting bathing
- Missing daily living aids (glasses, walker, and medications)
- Unnecessary use of restraints
- Sleep disturbances
- Untreated ulcers

Financial
- Fake signatures on Financial documents
- Unusual or quick changes in a will or other financial documents
- Unusual changes in bank account or money management
- Unpaid bills
- Scams
Any Sign May Be A Crime: Report It.
Remember the Signs

Remember the signs.

Every point of contact is a chance to look for signs.

If you see something, say something.

Small suspicions are enough.

Emotional and Behavioral

Financial

Physical

TAKE ACTION

Aging Division - Elder Abuse Awareness
How Should We Report It?

“How any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is being or has been abused, neglected, exploited, abandoned, intimidated or is committing self-neglect, shall report the information immediately to the Department of Family Services or a law enforcement agency, such as the police, sheriff’s department, highway patrol, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, or Department of Criminal Investigation. Anyone, who in good faith makes a report, is immune from civil liability for making the report.”

From the “Elder Abuse Information” brochure created by the Ombudsman department.
The Reporting Process:

- Reporter contacts the local Department of Family Services (DFS) office of the county where the concern is taking place. Local Law Enforcement can also be contacted to make a report.
- Reporter must have identifying information of the vulnerable adult, such as name and location (physical address), as well as the nature of the concern.
- DFS will then screen the report to see if it meets the statute and policy definitions of abuse/neglect/self-neglect of a vulnerable adult.
- A case is opened (depending on the above screening process) and the vulnerable adult will be contacted within 3 days of the report being made unless an immediate response is needed (if the vulnerable adult is in imminent danger).
- As a reporter you have the right to remain anonymous and you are exempt from civil or criminal liability in making a report on a vulnerable adult, unless it’s a false report.
- DFS cannot call a reporter back to let them know what occurred based on their report due to confidentiality restrictions per Wyoming state statutes.
- In all cases/reports/referrals, the vulnerable has the right to choose how they want to live and DFS does not have the authority to force the adult in question to make a different decision.
## What Can Providers Do?

### Report Elder Abuse by calling:

**Adult Protective Services Hotline:**  
(800) 457-3659

**Your Local Department of Family Services Office or be re-routed by:**  
(307) 777-7921

**Your local law enforcement non-emergency line.**

**Emergency:** 911

[dfs.wyo.gov/about/contact-us/](dfs.wyo.gov/about/contact-us/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DFS County Offices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albany County Office</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3817 Beech St., Suite 200</td>
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<tr>
<td>(307) 745-7324</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Converse County Office</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219 N. Russell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas, WY 82633</td>
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<tr>
<td>(307) 358-3138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goshen County Office</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618 E. “M” St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrington, Wyoming 82240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(307) 532-2191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lincoln County Office</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>631 Washington Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afton, Wyoming 83113</td>
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<tr>
<td>(307) 886-9232</td>
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### DFS County Offices (Cont)

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<tr>
<th>Park County Office</th>
<th>Platte County Office</th>
<th>Sheridan County Office</th>
<th>Sublette County Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1301 Rumsey</td>
<td>1556 Progress Court</td>
<td>247 Grinnell St. Suite 100</td>
<td>217 N. Sublette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cody, Wyoming 82414</td>
<td>Wheatland, WY 82201</td>
<td>Sheridan, Wyoming 82801</td>
<td>Pinedale, WY 82941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(307) 587-6246</td>
<td>(307) 322-3790</td>
<td>(307) 672-2404</td>
<td>(307) 367-4124</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sweetwater County Office</th>
<th>Teton County Office</th>
<th>Uinta County Office</th>
<th>Washakie County Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2451 Foothill Blvd, Suite 103</td>
<td>115 W. Snow King</td>
<td>350 City View Drive, Suite 302</td>
<td>1700 Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901</td>
<td>Jackson, Wyoming 83001</td>
<td>Evanston, Wyoming 82930</td>
<td>Worland, WY 82401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(307) 352-2500</td>
<td>(307) 733-7757</td>
<td>(307) 789-2756</td>
<td>(307) 347-6181</td>
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<th>Weston County Office</th>
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<tr>
<td>22922 Hwy 85, Suite 200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle, Wyoming 82701</td>
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<tr>
<td>(307) 746-4657</td>
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Donna’s Story
When he was finished with me, he put me back on the bed.
It got to a point where he was really strong-arming me, you know, like he'd take my arm and twist it
1. **Remember the signs** of elder abuse and neglect, especially how we can collectively solve the issue.

2. **Volunteer** to be a friendly visitor to a nursing home resident or to a homebound older person in our communities.

3. **Prevent isolation** by calling or visiting older adults and asking them how they are doing regularly.

4. **Send a letter** to a local paper, radio or TV station suggesting that they cover World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15) or Grandparents Day in September.

5. **Join Ageless Alliance**, an organization that connects people of all ages, nationwide, who stand united for the dignity of older people and for the elimination of elder abuse. Visit [agelessalliance.org](http://agelessalliance.org)
12 Things Everyone Can Do to Prevent Elder Abuse

6. Provide respite breaks for caregivers.

7. Encourage local bank managers to train tellers on how to detect elder financial abuse.

8. Educate doctors to ask all older patients about possible family violence in their lives.

9. Contact a local Adult Protective Services or Long-Term Care Ombudsman to learn how to support their work helping older people and adults with disabilities who may be more at-risk.

10. Organize an “Aging with Dignity” essay or poster contest in a local school.

11. Ask religious congregation leaders to give a talk about elder abuse at a service or to put a message about elder abuse in the bulletin.
12. **Talk to friends and family members** about how we can all age well and reduce abuse with programs and services like improved law enforcement, community centers, and public transportation.

*It is up to all of us to prevent and address elder abuse through our employees and family members.*
Any sign may be a crime: Report it.

Small suspicions are enough.
Every point of contact is a chance to look for signs.

- Learn the signs and reporting process
- Communicate regularly with participants to spot changes
- Respite Care for Caregivers and Participants
- Networking (Doctors, Banks, Volunteers, Ombudsman)
Knowledge Check

1. What are the signs of elder abuse?
Knowledge Check

2. Who do I report suspected abuse to?
Knowledge Check

3. Give examples of action you can take to prevent elder abuse from occurring?
References and Resources


*Special thanks goes to the National Center for Elder Abuse [ncea.acl.gov](http://ncea.acl.gov) for their resources and videos that were used in the creation of this presentation. WEAAD resources and trainings are also available from: [USC](http://weaad.org).*
In partnership with Wyoming Department of Family Services, State Ombudsman, and the Wyoming Department of Health – Aging Division.

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<th>DFS Program Analyst</th>
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jane.carlson@wyo.gov  
Tel: 307-331-0654 |
Thank you for joining this training on spotting and preventing elder abuse.

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<td><strong>Patricia Hall</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:patricia.hall1@wyo.gov">patricia.hall1@wyo.gov</a>&lt;br&gt;Tel: (307) 777-2885&lt;br&gt;Fax: (307) 777-5340</td>
<td><strong>Jane Carlson</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:jane.carlson@wyo.gov">jane.carlson@wyo.gov</a>&lt;br&gt;Tel: 307-331-0654</td>
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