Wyoming Department of Health

Wyoming Department of Family Services

Wyoming Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Building Strong Support for Elders

Elder Abuse Awareness Webinar

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Elder Abuse Prevention Website
Aging Division Facebook Page

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WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY
Building Strong Support for Elders

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**

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Everyone in Wyoming is a 'Mandated Reporter', regardless of who you are.

Stay Alert – Improve Lives.

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Statistics on Elder Abuse

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

Studies have found that at least one in 10 community-dwelling older adults experienced some form of abuse in the prior year.[27] [28] Global estimates from a recent meta-analysis reflect that one in six elders, or 15.7%, in the community experienced past year abuse.[29] **Around 5 Million per year.**

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 Particular}…* 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, some studies say 1 in 24.** [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] **By Feb 2021, this had risen to $36.5 Billion… a 1159% increase from 2009.**

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.

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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: Grandparent, Money Mules, Social Security, COVID Vaccine Scam.
- Online Scamming

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Any Sign May Be A Crime: Report It.

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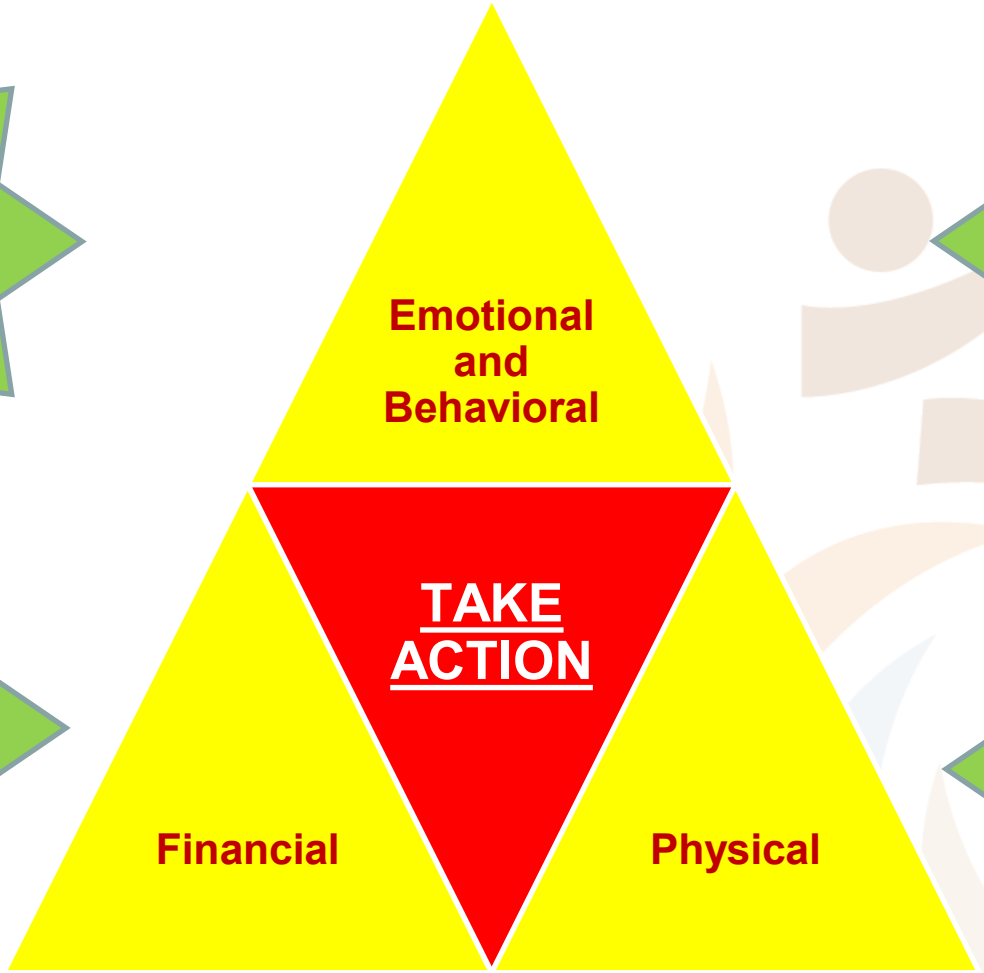
Remember the Signs

Remember the signs.

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



If you see something, say something.

Small suspicions *are* enough.

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How Should We Report It?

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"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.

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The Reporting Process:

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- 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.

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What Can Providers Do?

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Report Elder Abuse by calling:
Adult Protective Services: (307) 777-7564
Your local law enforcement non-emergency line
Emergency: 911

dfs.wyo.gov/about/contact-us/

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DFS County Offices

Wyoming Department of Family Services

Albany County Office	Big Horn County Office	Campbell County Office	Carbon County Office
3817 Beech St., Suite 200	616 2nd Ave. N.	551 Running W. Drive	215 W. Buffalo, Suite 359
Laramie, Wyoming 82070	Greybull, Wyoming 82426	Gillette, Wyoming 82718	Rawlins, Wyoming 82301
(307) 745-7324	(307) 765-9453	(307) 682-7277	(307) 328-0612
Converse County Office	Crook County Office	Eastern Shoshone Office	Fremont County Office
219 N. Russell	102 N. 5th	PO Box 945 or 104 Washakie St	201 N. 4th
Douglas, WY 82633	Sundance, WY 82729	Fort Washakie, WY 82514	Lander, WY 82520
(307) 358-3138	(307) 283-2014	(307) 332-6591	(307) 332-4038
Goshen County Office	Hot Springs County Office	Johnson County Office	Laramie County Office
1618 E. “M” St.	403 Big Horn	381 N. Main	1510 E. Pershing Blvd
Torrington, Wyoming 82240	Thermopolis, WY 82443	Buffalo, Wyoming 82834	Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 532-2191	(307) 864-2158	(307) 684-5513	(307) 777-7921
Lincoln County Office	Natrona County Office	Niobrara County Office	Northern Arapaho Office
631 Washington Street	851 Werner Court, Suite 200	905 S. Main	17 Great Plains Road
Afton, Wyoming 83113	Casper, Wyoming 82601	Lusk, Wyoming 82225	Arapahoe, WY 82510
(307) 886-9232	(307) 473-3900	(307) 334-2153	(307) 857-5728

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DFS County Offices (Cont)

Wyoming Department of Family Services

Park County Office
1501 Stampede Avenue Unit 9009
Cody, Wyoming 82414
(307) 587-6246

Platte County Office
1556 Progress Court
Wheatland, WY 82201
(307) 322-3790

Sheridan County Office
247 Grinnell St. Suite 100
Sheridan, Wyoming 82801
(307) 672-2404

Sublette County Office
217 N. Sublette
Pinedale, WY 82941
(307) 367-4124

Sweetwater County Office
2451 Foothill Blvd, Suite 103
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901
(307) 352-2500

Teton County Office
Physical: 120 W Pearl
Jackson, Wyoming 83001
(307) 733-7757

Uinta County Office
350 City View Drive, Suite 302
Evanston, Wyoming 82930
(307) 789-2756

Washakie County Office
1700 Robertson
Worland, WY 82401
(307) 347-6181

Weston County Office
22922 Hwy 85, Suite 200
Newcastle, Wyoming 82701
(307) 746-4657

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Donna's Story

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Linda's Story

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Tammy's Story

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12 Things Everyone Can Do to Prevent Elder Abuse

NCEA National Center on Elder Abuse

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

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12 Things Everyone Can Do to Prevent Elder Abuse

NCEA National Center on 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.

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12 Things Everyone Can Do to Prevent Elder Abuse

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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.

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Elder Abuse Awareness

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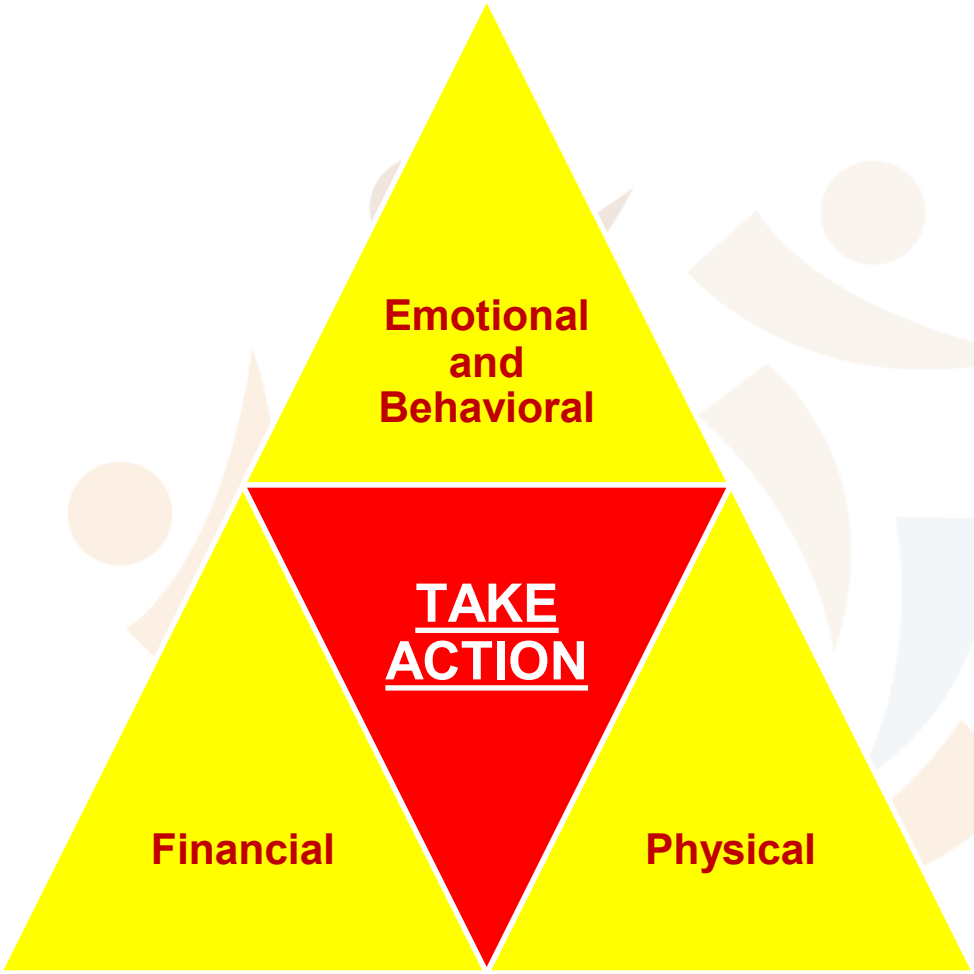
Any sign may be a crime: Report it.

Small suspicions *are* enough.



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Elder Abuse Awareness

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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)

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Knowledge Check

1. What are the signs of elder abuse?

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Knowledge Check

2. Who do I report suspected abuse to?

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Knowledge Check

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

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References and Resources

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2) Lachs, M.S., & Pillemer, K.A. (2015). Elder abuse. *New England Journal of Medicine, 373*(20), 1947-1956. doi:10.1056/NEJMra1404688
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4) Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Weill Cornell Medical College, & New York City Department for the Aging. (2011). *Under the radar: New York state elder abuse prevalence study, Self-reported prevalence and documented case surveys.* Rochester, NY: Authors. Retrieved from http://lifespan-roch.org/documents/UndertheRadar051211.pdf
5) National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Virginia Tech, & MetLife Mature Market Institute. (2011). *The MetLife study of elder financial abuse: Crimes of occasion, desperation and predation against America's elders.* New York, NY: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Retrieved from https://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/issues/mmi-elder-financial-abuse.pdf
6) https://www.ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-elder-abuse

Special thanks goes to the National Center for Elder Abuse 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.**

https://dfs.wyo.gov/about/contact-us/

https://health.wyo.gov/aging/communityliving/providerresources/elder-abuse-prevention/

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References and Resources

In partnership with Wyoming Department of Family Services, State Ombudsman, and the Wyoming Department of Health – Aging Division.

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Thank you for joining this training on spotting and preventing elder abuse.

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