

## What is Elder Abuse?

An older person can be a victim of physical, psychological, or emotional abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. Almost 90 % of abuse among the elderly is caused by a spouse, adult child or family member. Victims of these types of crimes may believe there is no help available and accept the abuse as a way of life. **VOICE** is available to help if you know someone in danger.

In Pennsylvania, one elderly person over the age of 60 is victimized by a crime every 4.2 minutes.

### **Senior crime victims may experience:**

- Sudden changes in behavior
- Bruises or broken bones
- Aggression
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Thoughts of suicide
- Compliance out of fear
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Fear of mistreatment
- Physical pain

Over half a million people in Pennsylvania 60 years and older experience violence and abuse each year.

### **Be Aware....**

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Try not to go out alone.
- Let someone know your plans.
- Trust your instincts, if something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.
- Do not open your door for strangers.
- Keep your doors locked.
- Learn the facts about abuse and violence.
- Tell someone if you are hurt or afraid.
- Call **VOICE** for information, support and building a safety plan.

### **Be Ready to Call....**

If you suspect mistreatment of an older person, report it to the local **Area Agency on Aging at 724-283-6955**. Steps will be taken to protect the victim, stop the abuse and try to prevent it from happening again.

If you or another senior person is in danger, **call 911 for police response** or use your medical panic button. Call **VOICE** for information and support.

### **Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Slaps, hits, punches, burns
- Throwing things, strangles
- Broken bones, cuts or bruises
- Pinching, pulling hair
- Restraining the victim

### **Signs of Psychological Abuse:**

- Plays mind games
- Makes fun of personal values
- Denies access to walker, glasses or dentures
- Isolates victim
- Ignores victim's needs and wants

### **Signs of Emotional Abuse:**

- Humiliates, demeans, insults
- Yells at victim, calls them names
- Blames the victim for things that aren't their fault
- Controls what victim does, whom they see or where they go
- Forces victim to keep secrets
- Afraid of caregiver

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse:**

- Roughness with intimate body parts during care giving
- Takes advantage of physical or mental illness to engage in sex
- Forces sex acts or uses sexual language that makes victim feel uncomfortable

### **Signs of Financial Exploitation:**

- Steals money, titles or possessions
- Abuses power of attorney
- Takes over financial accounts

### **Signs of Neglect:**

- Denies care, medication, food
- Does not report medical problems
- Dresses victim inappropriately
- Risks personal safety
- Dresses victim inappropriately