

**NO EXCUSE**  
FOR Elder Abuse

**1-855-444-3911**

# TOOLKIT

The *No Excuse for Elder Abuse* campaign is made possible through the collaboration of Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Neighborhood Legal Services/Elder Law and Advocacy Center, Lakeshore Legal Aid, Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County, and Oakland Family Services, and is supported with funding from the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. Neighborhood Legal Services/Elder Law and Advocacy Center grants permission to reproduce Toolkit materials for educational purposes only. 5/13/13

## **5 Things that Anyone Can Do to Prevent Elder Abuse**

- 1** Learn the signs of elder abuse and neglect
- 2** Call or visit an elderly loved one and ask how he or she is doing
- 3** Provide a respite break for a caregiver
- 4** Ask your bank manager to train tellers on how to detect elder financial abuse
- 5** Ask your doctor to ask you and all other senior patients about possible family violence in their lives





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Elder abuse is an increasing issue all across the country. No one knows the exact numbers. Unfortunately only 1 in 5 cases or fewer are reported. Research indicates that more than one in ten elders actually experience elder abuse. Here are some alarming statistics about elder abuse.

### **Elder Abuse Prevalence**

- Nearly 6 million cases of elder abuse were reported in 2012
- 100,000 cases were reported in Michigan
- Adults 60 and older comprise 15% of the population and account for nearly 30% of fraud victims
- 66% of perpetrators are family members

### **Demographics**

- 66.4% of elder abuse victims are white
- 18.7% of victims are black
- 10.4% of victims are Hispanic
- 77.9 is the median age of an elder abuse victim
- 67.3% of elder abuse victims are female

### **Perpetrators of Financial Exploitation**

- 47% of perpetrators are one of the victim's own children
- 24% are other relatives
- 19% are the spouse
- 5% are a friend or neighbor

### **Types of Abuse**

- 33% of victims suffer from caregiver neglect
- 24% from financial exploitation
- 17% from physical abuse
- 2% from sexual abuse



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## What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is any form of mistreatment that results in harm or loss to an older person. It is generally divided into the following categories:

- **Physical abuse** is physical force that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. It includes assault, battery, and inappropriate restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** is non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an older person.
- **Domestic violence** is an escalating pattern of violence by an intimate partner where the violence is used to exercise power and control.
- **Psychological abuse** is the willful infliction of mental or emotional anguish by threat, humiliation, or other verbal or nonverbal conduct.
- **Financial abuse** is the illegal or improper use of an older person's funds, property, or resources.
- **Neglect** is the failure of a caregiver to fulfill his or her care giving responsibilities.
- **Self-neglect** is failure to provide for one's own essential needs.

## Who is at risk?

Elder abuse can occur anywhere – in the home, in nursing homes, or other institutions. It affects seniors across all socioeconomic groups, cultures and races. Based on available information, women and “older” elders are more likely to be victimized.

## What are the warning signs?

### **Physical Abuse**

- Inadequately explained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores or burns
- Complaints of being physically assaulted
- Excessive repeat prescriptions or under-usage of medication
- Malnourishment or dehydration without an illness-related cause
- Evidence of inadequate care or poor standards of hygiene
- Person seeks medical attention from a variety of doctors or medical centers

## **Sexual Abuse**

- Complaints of being sexually assaulted
- Sexual behavior that is out of keeping with the older person's usual relationships and previous personality
- Frequent complaints of abdominal pain, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Recurrent genital infections, or bruises around the breasts or genital areas
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes

## **Psychological and Emotional Abuse**

- Change in eating pattern or sleep problems
- Fear, confusion or air of resignation
- Passivity, withdrawal or increasing depression
- Helplessness, hopelessness or anxiety
- Contradictory statements or other ambivalence not resulting from mental confusion
- Reluctance to talk openly
- Avoidance of physical, eye or verbal contact with caregiver

## **Financial Exploitation**

- Withdrawals of money that are erratic, or not typical of the older person
- Withdrawals of money that are inconsistent with the older person's means
- Changing a will or property title to leave house or assets to "new" friends or relatives
- Property is missing
- Older person "can't find" jewelry or personal belongings
- Suspicious activity on credit card accounts
- Lack of amenities, when the older person could afford them
- Untreated medical or mental health problems
- Level of care is not commensurate with the older person's income or assets

## **How can I report elder abuse?**

**If you suspect any kind of abuse of an elder,**

**call the statewide 24-hour hotline:**

**1-855-444-3911**



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## **Activities that Individuals and Coalitions Can Do:**

- Ask members to pledge to "Tell Two Friends" about elder abuse, and ask them to tell two friends, and so on...
- Write and submit letters to the editors of local print and online newspapers
- Create Speakers' Bureaus to take the message to local senior centers, civic and fraternal organizations, and houses of worship
- Include *No Excuse for Elder Abuse* information in the coalition's promotional materials
- Ask members to place the logo below their e-mail signature line
- Use the logo artwork and create buttons, stickers, magnets
- Ask local businesses to display the logo in support of elder abuse awareness
- Involve Meals on Wheels providers in sharing the hotline number
- Memorize the Michigan Protective Services hotline (855) 444-3911. Put it in your cell phone directory.
- Learn about elder abuse bills pending in the state legislature. The local Area Agency on Aging can assist.
- Send a letter or email or make a phone call to state legislators thanking them for their support to strengthen vulnerable adult laws - and ask them to support the remaining bills
- Grow coalition memberships by inviting representatives from law enforcement, health care, financial services, houses of worship, libraries, long-term care facilities, home care agencies, etc.....this is a community problem.
- Work with domestic violence organizations to integrate older adults into their services.
  
- **Watch out for older neighbors, friends, and family members who may be vulnerable.**
  
- Join Facebook and Twitter:



Like and Share - NoExcuseForElderAbuse



#NoExcuse4ElderAbuse



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## **30-second Public Service Announcements**

### **PSA #1**

Did you know that only one in 25 cases of financial elder abuse are reported for fear of sending a loved one to court? Like the woman in her 60's, married 35 years who is financially dependent on her abusive husband giving her no food, no money. If you know a senior or are a senior who is being abused physically or financially, call the anonymous hotline now 855-444-3911. That's 855-444-3911. There is no excuse for elder abuse.

### **PSA #2**

Did you know that only one in 25 cases of financial elder abuse are reported for fear of sending a loved one to court? Like the son who came to live with his mother, trading her food stamps for alcohol and who became violent when she asked for money? If you know a senior or are a senior who is being abused physically or financially, call the anonymous hotline now 855-444-3911. That's 855-444-3911. There is no excuse for elder abuse.

### **PSA #3**

Did you know that only one in 25 cases of financial elder abuse are reported for fear of sending a loved one to court? Like the 80-year-old man whose caregiver moved in with him using all his money. He almost lost everything, including his home. If you know a senior or are a senior who is being abused physically or financially, call the anonymous hotline now 855-444-3911. That's 855-444-3911. There is no excuse for elder abuse.

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(audio versions available upon request to [alangford@aaa1b.com](mailto:alangford@aaa1b.com))

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### **Descriptive Paragraph**

***No Excuse for Elder Abuse*** is a multi-media awareness campaign to tell older adults and the general public about the growing problem of elder abuse and financial exploitation. It is believed that 1 in 10 older adults suffer elder abuse, but most don't report it. Elder abuse is not just a "family matter"; it is a crime. If you know someone who you think may be being abused or taken advantage of, or if it's happening to you, help is available. Call Michigan's statewide Protective Services number (855) 444-3911. There are many forms of elder abuse, including a loved one taking money without permission or in an underhanded way, a caregiver withholding food or medications, hitting or physical violence, and even self-neglect.





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### **Sample Launch Event Agenda**

- 10:00 a.m. Participants arrive  
Sign-in table staffed
- 10:25 a.m. “Everyone take your seats”
- 10:30 a.m. Welcome and introductions by Moderator
- “It could happen to anybody”
  - Acknowledgement of organizations involved in campaign
  - Types of abuse
  - Introduction of guest speakers- representing different communities or service sectors
- 10:45 a.m. Guest Speakers remarks
- 11:15 a.m. Moderator
- What to expect in coming weeks/months – preview radio PSAs, mention Facebook page and hotline number
- 11:20 a.m. Mickey Rooney video
- 11:25 a.m. Moderator
- Thank guest speakers
  - Tell media guest speakers will be available for questions
  - Hotline number reminder
  - Remember, there is no excuse for elder abuse – ever
- 11:30 a.m. Adjourn



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## Links to Useful Information

- **Facebook** [www.facebook.com/noexcuseforelderabuse](http://www.facebook.com/noexcuseforelderabuse)
- **Year of Elder Abuse Prevention Toolkit**  
[http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/Elder\\_Rights/YEAP/index.aspx](http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/YEAP/index.aspx)
- **National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)** <http://ncea.aoa.gov/>
- **NCEA private listserv for professionals**  
<http://ncea.aoa.gov/About/StayInTouch/Listserve/index.aspx>
- **Actor Mickey Rooney testifies before Congress on suffering elder abuse**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ST\\_7kf7UCqw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ST_7kf7UCqw)
- **Twitter** <https://twitter.com/> #NoExcuse4ElderAbuse
- **Abuse of LGBT older adults**  
<http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/index.cfm?s=5>
- **American Society on Aging (ASA) *Generations* articles on elder abuse (Fall 2012)** <http://asaging.org/blog/elder-abuse-and-elder-justice-movement-america>
- **US Mail Fraud Schemes**  
<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/investigations/MailFraud/fraudschemes/FraudSchemes.aspx>
- **Ageing Alliance** - grassroots coalition connecting people of all ages who stand United Against Elder Abuse <http://www.agelessalliance.org/>