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Warning Signs of Elder Abuse

(No single or combination of these signs necessarily prove abuse.
But the presence of any ONE of them should raise concern and inquiry)

Emotional Abuse:

Elder withdraws from normal activities;
Changes in elder's alertness, thinking, and/or physical functioning;
Elder expresses hopelessness, powerlessness, or lack of control;
Someone speaks to the elder in a threatening, attacking,
demeaning, or belittling manner, or causes mental anguish or fear
in the elder.

Financial Abuse/Exploitation:

Elder does not have items s/he needs to live comfortably and could
afford given his/her assets;
Unexplained and sudden changes in elder's accounts and assets;
Changes in the names associated with accounts;
Requests for changes in wills, trusts, power of attorney assignment
especially if elder cannot comprehend or explain the changes;
Unusual account withdrawals, loans, or gifts given;
Elder pays others excessive amounts charged for resources or
services;
New "best friends" or boy/girlfriend relationships;
Home repairs, investment, mortgage, insurance offers with the
promise of an amazing benefit.
Service/repair contracts requiring a large downpayment with little
or no work completed.

Physical Abuse:

Red marks, bruising, burns, and blisters with unexplained origins;
Broken bones with unexplained origins;
Marks in the shape of a hand or fingers on the elders body;
Elder appears frightened or intimidated in the presence of someone, has an exaggerated startle response or looks to someone else to answer questions about injuries.

Sexual Abuse:

Bruises, abrasions, or trauma to the sexual areas of the elder's body;
Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases;
An elder who lacks the ability to consent to sexual activity;
Elder appears frightened or intimidated in the presence of someone, has an exaggerated startle response or looks to someone else to answer questions about injuries.

Neglect:

An elder who is kept in an isolated part of a home or confined to bed without care;
Lack of necessary medical aids for elder;
Lack of appropriate supervision for an elder with cognitive dysfunction;
Signs of lack of care- pressure sores, unexplained weight loss, poor nutrition, dehydration, lack of medical care or use of therapies as prescribed;
Conditions of filth, garbage, junk or functional disrepair and safety hazards to the elder in the home;
Caregiver who is alcoholic or drug user;
Lack of appropriate food in the home;
Caregiver who fails to pay bills and meet financial responsibilities assumed in caring for the elder;
Failure to attend to the elder's emotional needs for safety, security, self-worth.

Abandonment:

An elder who has relied on someone for some kind of care is suddenly deserted by the caregiver who provides no suitable alternative careprovider or options.

Elder's physical, mental, and/or social functioning decline because of the lack of proper care assistance.

Self-Neglect:

Independent living results in poor physical, mental, and/or social functioning;

Elder lacks the capacity to make decisions that allow for his/her well-being;

Elder demonstrates little or no awareness, insight, or concern about problems with the condition of his/her home and health;

Elder's home is filthy, cluttered to the extent of presenting a health hazard, inhabited by pests, or creates an environmental health hazard.

Elder refuses assistance offered by others.

