

# Elder Abuse Prevention: What College Students Should Know

## What is elder abuse?

**Elder abuse (EA)** is an intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult. Common types of elder mistreatment include physical, sexual, emotional/ psychological, or financial abuse, neglect, or self-neglect. Multiple forms of mistreatment can co-occur.

## Did you know?



**1 in 10** community-dwelling older adults experiences abuse every year.



**1 in 3** older adults with cognitive impairment experiences abuse.



Only **1 in 24** cases of elder abuse is reported.



Elder abuse has significant **medical, mental health, financial, and social impacts.**



Elder Abuse occurs across all **cultures, contexts, and communities.**



Older adults who are abused have a **3x higher risk of death** compared to those who have not been mistreated.

## What are signs of elder mistreatment?

### Emotional & Behavioral Signs



Increased fear or anxiety



Isolation from friends or family



Unusual changes in behavior or sleep



Withdrawal from normal activities

## Physical Signs



Dehydration  
or unusual  
weight loss



Missing daily  
living aids  
(glasses, walker,  
or medication)



Unexplained  
injuries, bruises,  
cuts, or sores



Torn, stained,  
or bloody  
underclothing



Unattended  
medical  
needs



Unexplained  
sexually  
transmitted  
diseases

## Financial Signs



Fraudulent signatures on  
financial documents



Unusual or sudden changes  
in spending patterns



Unpaid  
bills

## What are 6 things college students can do every day to prevent elder abuse?

1. Regularly engage with older adults.
2. Find and share common interests with older adults.
3. Foster social connections to support and empower community members across the lifespan.
4. Participate in or initiate intergenerational programs at school and in your community.
5. Educate others about the signs and impacts of abuse.
6. Report known or suspected abuse as soon as possible.

### Where can I report suspected abuse?

Programs such as Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are here to help. For reporting numbers, contact Eldercare Locator at **1-800-677-1116** or visit **[www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov)**.

In cases of urgent danger, call **911** or the local police or sheriff.



**Don't stand by, stand up to elder abuse. You can make a difference.**