

SELF DETERMINATION – OUR PHILOSOPHY

In Wisconsin, certain licensed professionals are mandated to report alleged abuse and neglect seen in the course of their professional duties. Reports from other concerned parties are also accepted.

Wisconsin's elder abuse laws state that competent adults have the right to decide where and how they live and whether or not they want intervention in their lives. Competent individuals may not refuse an investigation by an elder abuse worker but may refuse any help that is offered.

Any efforts to interfere with right to self-determine must be based on the belief that the adult's situation, problems, circumstances or actions are so hazardous or harmful to the adult or others that it overrides the usual right to be left alone.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT?

After an elder abuse report is received, the following types of responses are possible:

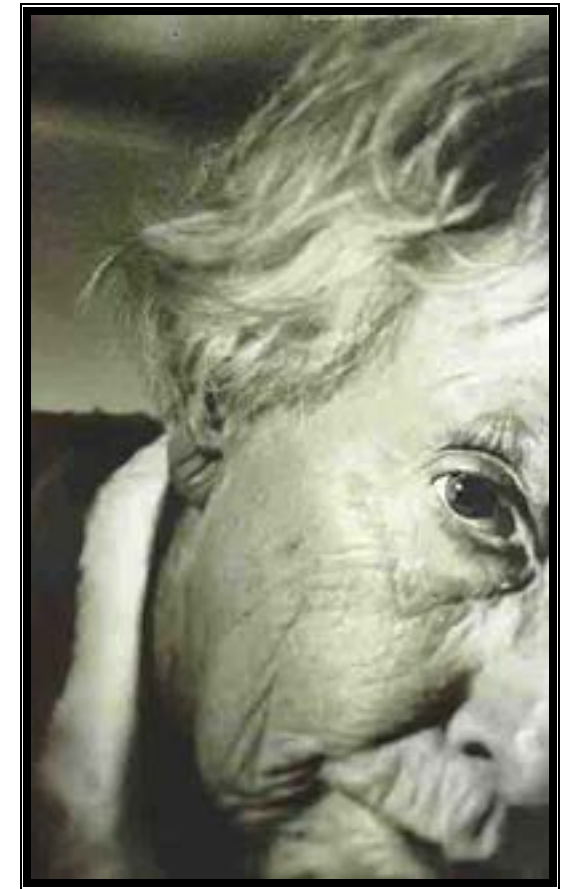
- ▶ Social worker investigation into the facts
- ▶ Emergency responses for protection, housing, food, and physical/mental health.
- ▶ Victim support and advocacy.
- ▶ Links with appropriate community resources such as case management, home health services, hospice, respite care, domestic violence shelter, financial counseling, public benefits, legal services, or law enforcement.
- ▶ Nutrition assessments and referrals to meal programs.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police, Fire, Emergencies	911
Dane County Suicide/Crisis Line	280-2600
Elder Abuse Helpline (daytime only)	261-9933
Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)	240-7400
Police Nonemergency	255-2345
Elder Care Locator (Help in Other Counties & States)	800-677-1116
Domestic Abuse Crisis Line	251-4445

LOCAL FOCAL POINTS FOR AGING SERVICES

Belleville Senior Center	424-6007
Colonial Club of Sun Prairie	837-4611
DeForest Senior Center	846-9469
East Msn/Monona Coalition	223-3100
Fitchburg Senior Center	270-4290
McFarland Outreach	838-7117
Middleton Senior Center	831-2373
North/Eastside Senior Coalition	243-5252
NW Dane Senior Services	798-6937
Oregon Area Senior Center	835-5801
South Madison Coalition	251-8405
SW Dane Senior Outreach	437-6902
Stoughton Area Senior Center	873-8585
Verona Senior Center	845-7471
Waunakee Senior Center	849-8385
Westside Coalition	238-7368



*Elder Abuse and
Neglect Services
In Dane County*

**Helpline:
608-261-9933**

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

There are several categories of elder abuse defined in Wisconsin law. When a person age 60 or older is subjected to any of the following, it is elder abuse. Abusers are often relatives of the victim although friends, neighbors, caregivers and strangers also commit elder abuse.

Physical and emotional abuse is the willful infliction of physical or emotional pain, injury, or unreasonable confinement. These include, but are not limited to beating, strangulation, burning, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, medication misuse, or tying/locking a person up.

Financial exploitation is the misuse of an elder's money or property. It includes deception, diverting income, mismanagement of funds, and taking money or possessions against a person's will.

Neglect occurs when a caregiver's failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, medical or dental care results in significant danger to the physical or mental health of an older person in their care.

Self-neglect means there is a significant danger to an older person's physical or mental health because they are unable or fail to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical or dental care.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF AN ELDER IS BEING ABUSED OR NEGLECTED?

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruising, welt marks.
- Abrasions, cuts, puncture wounds, bites.
- Burns, scalding, sprains, dislocations, fractures.
- Repeated hospital admissions.

Behavioral Indicators:

- Agitation, anxiety, withdrawal, isolation.
- Confusion, contradictory statements.
- Fear, depression, anger, resignation.
- Disorientation, wandering.
- Hesitation to talk openly or non-responsiveness.

Financial Indicators:

- Unusual activity in bank accounts.
- Change in power of attorney, house title, or wills when an elder is incapable of decisions.
- Forged signatures on checks & other documents.
- Numerous unpaid bills or rent when someone else is in charge of an elder's finances.
- Caregiver's promise of lifelong care in exchange for deeding of property or financial assets.
- Threats, enticement or other manipulation to gain influence.

Neglect and Self-Neglect Indicators:

- Dehydration or malnutrition, noticeable weight loss.
- Alcohol or chemical abuse or dependency.
- Poor hygiene, housekeeping or hoarding.
- Bizarre, inappropriate behavior.
- Incontinence that has not been assessed.
- Other serious unmet medical needs.

Reporting Elder Abuse – How to Help an Older Victim:

Concerned citizens should call the Elder Abuse Helpline to talk with a social worker about their concerns related to possible elder abuse or neglect.

Callers may ask to keep their name confidential from the older person who is the subject of the concern. State laws provide protection from liability for anyone who reports elder abuse in good faith.

Dane County Elder Abuse social workers assess and discuss the safety of the situation with the victim. Information is provided about response options and services.

When abuse occurs in a nursing home, community-based residential facility or by a licensed home health agency, you may call the Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services (266-7474). For informal intervention regarding quality of care issues, contact the Ombudsman Program at the Board on Aging and Long Term Care (246-7015 or 1-800-815-0015).

DCDHS

1202 Northport Dr.

Madison, WI 53704

608-242-6200 Fax: 608-242-6287

**Elder Abuse Helpline
261-9933**