

# HIGHWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT



## CRIME PREVENTION



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### ELDER ABUSE

THIS IS THE MISTREATMENT OF OLDER CITIZENS WITHIN THE HOME. ELDER ABUSE INCLUDES PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION AND SELF-NEGLECT.

ELDER ABUSE SPANS THE SPECTRUM FROM CONDUCT THAT MAY HAVE RELATEVELY MINOR IMPACT ON AN ELDERLY VICTIM, TO ACTIONS THAT THREATEN THE OLDER PERSON'S LIFE OR FINANCIAL SECURITY. ABUSE HAS A MUCH MORE SERIOUS IMPACT ON AN ELDERLY VICTIM THAN THEY WOULD ON A YOUNGER PERSON. MANY CASES OF ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT GO UNREPORTED BECAUSE VICTIMS ARE UNABLE TO ASK FOR HELP, AND ARE AFRAID OF RETALIATION OR INSTITUTIONALIZATION, OR ARE DEPENDENT UPON THEIR ABUSERS FOR CARE. SOME ARE ISOLATED AND HAVE NO ONE TO TELL. FOR THESE REASONS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO LEARN AND RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE.

### TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE

- PHYSICAL ABUSE: THIS INCLUDES ACTS OF VIOLENCE SUCH AS PUSHING, HITTING, OR PUNCHING, OR FORCE FEEDING. THE IMPROPER USE OF MEDICATION AND RESTRAINTS
- SIGNS INCLUDE CUTS LACERATIONS, PUNCTURE WOUNDS, BRUISES, WELTS, DISCOLORATION, UNEXPLAINED INJURY
- SEXUAL ABUSE
- PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE  
HESITATION TO TALK OPENLY, IMPLAUSIBLE STORIES, CONFUSION OR DISORIENTATION  
ANGER, FEAR, WITHDRAWAL, DEPRESSION, DENIAL, AGITATION OR HELPLESSNESS

## **INDICATORS OF FINANCIAL ABUSE**

- UNUSUAL BANK ACCOUNT ACTIVITY
- INCONSISTENT OR IMPLAUSIBLE CHECK SIGNATURES
- POWER OF ATTORNEY GIVEN OR RECENT CHANGES OR CREATION OF A WILL, WHEN THE PERSON IS INCAPABLE OF MAKING SUCH DECISIONS
- UNUSUAL CONCERN BY A CAREGIVER THAT AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF MONEY IS BEING EXPENDED ON THE CARE OF THE OLDER PERSON
- NUMEROUS UNPAID BILLS, OVERDUE RENT, WHEN SOMEONE IS SUPPOSED TO BE PAYING THE BILLS
- PLACEMENT IN A FACILITY WHICH IS NOT COMMENSURATE WITH THE ALLEGED SIZE OF THE ESTATE
- LACK OF AFFORDABLE AMENITIES SUCH AS TV, PERSONAL GROOMING ITEMS OR JEWELRY
- MISSING PERSONAL BELONGINGS SUCH AS AREA SILVERWARE OR JEWELRY

## **ACTIVE NEGLECT**

THE DENYING AN OLDER PERSON FOOD, HEALTH-RELATED SERVICES, OR OTHER ITEMS SUCH AS EYEGASSES, DENTURES OR WALKERS, BY A PERSON WHO HAS THE CARE CUSTODY OR CONTROL OF THE OLDER PERSON.

## **PASSIVE NEGLECT**

CAREGIVERS WHO MAY FAIL TO PROVIDE CARE BECAUSE THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE OLDER PERSON'S NEEDS OR HOW TO PROVIDE FOR THEM,

## **INDICATORS**

- RASHES, SORES, LICE, INADEQUATE CLOTHING, MALNOURISHMENT, DEHYDRATION OR AN UNTREATED MEDICAL CONDITION
- ATTITUDES OF INDIFFERENCE OR ANGER TOWARD THE OLDER PERSON OR THE OBVIOUS ABSENCE OF ASSISTANCE
- AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR BY THE CAREGIVER TOWARD THE ELDER

## **SELF NEGLECT**

- THE RESULT OF AN OLDER ADULTS INABILITY OR REFUSAL TO PERFORM ESSENTIAL SELF-CARE TASKS, INCLUDING EATING, BATHING, OR SECURING FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER OR MEDICAL CARE. THE OLDER PERSON MAY ALSO NEGLECT HIS OR HER FINANCES OR PHYSICAL SECURITY.

## **INDICATORS**

- INABILITY TO MANAGE PERSONAL FINANCES: HOARDING, SQUANDERING, GIVING MONEY AWAY
- INABILITY TO MANAGE ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING, INCLUDING MEAL PREPARATION, HOUSEWORK ETC.
- SUICIDAL ACTS, WANDERINGS, REFUSING MEDICAL ATTENTION, ISOLATION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE.
- CONFUSION, INAPPROPRIATE OR NO RESPONSE, DISORIENTATION, MEMORY FAILURE, INCOHERENCE, ETC.
- NOT KEEPING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS

## **CONCLUSION**

**RESEARCHERS GENERALLY AGREE THAT OVER 1.5 MILLION SENIORS OR ABOUT 5% OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION, ARE ABUSED ANNUALLY**

THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IS TO PROTECT VICTIMS, PREVENT AND STOP ABUSE, AND EXPLOITATION, ENFORCE THE LAW ARREST OFFENDERS, AND PROVIDE REFERRALS TO OTHER AGENCIES/RESOURCES THAT CAN ADDRESS NON POLICE RELATED NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET.

WE NEED YOUR HELP. PLEASE CALL THE HIGHWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT AT 847-604-8992 IF YOU SUSPECT ELDER ABUSE.