



INFORMATION AND RESOURCE GUIDE

CAPE COD ELDER ABUSE COALITION

Cape Cod Elder Abuse Coalition's Information and Resource Guide

For concerned Family, Primary Care Physicians,
First responders and Banking Professionals
to reduce risk for your family member, patient, client or neighbor

The Cape Cod Elder Abuse Coalition is comprised of community partners that include Barnstable County Sheriff's Office, Bayada Home Health Care Agency, Elder Protective Services, Independence House, Yarmouth Police Department and Yarmouth Senior Center.

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WHERE DO I REPORT SUSPECTED FINANCIAL, PHYSICAL, SEXUAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE?



- **Elder Services**
ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE - 24 hour, toll free 800-922-2275
- **Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands** (*Protective Unit*) 68 Route 134 South Dennis, MA 02660 Offices also on Oak Bluffs and Nantucket (60+ years of age) 508-394-4630 800-244-4630
www.escci.org Email: info@escci.org
- **Disabled Persons Protection Commission** State agency for investigation/remediation of abuse/neglect of individuals with a disability, who suffer significant physical or emotional injuries, (18-59 years of age), by a caregiver, 800-462-5540 or TTY 888-822-0350
www.mass.gov/dppc/
- **Department of Public Health 800-462-5540** to report abuse within a long term care facility/nursing home, rehabilitation facility, or hospital.
- **Call 911 for emergency or life threatening conditions. In addition, the following are local police staff who specialize in domestic and sexual violence:**



Jessica Jay – Victim Services Specialist Barnstable Police Dept. jayj@barnstablepolice.com, 508-778-3821



Tara Carline – Victim/Witness Advocate, Mashpee Police Dept. tcarline@mashpeema.gov, 508-539-1480 x7253



Kathy Pedini – Victim Services Coordinator, Dennis Police Dept. kpedini@town.dennis.ma.us, 774-352-1472



Carmen Espinoza – Domestic Violence Specialist, Falmouth Police Dept. dvspecialst@falmouthpolice.us, 774-255-4527 x4550



Annie Catalano - Victim Services Specialist/Advocate, Yarmouth Police Dept. acatalano@yarmouth.ma.us, 508-775-0445 x2181

WHERE CAN I FIND A CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY OR LEGAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION LOCAL TO CAPE COD?

Experts in Elder law prepare advance medical care directives and estate planning. Individuals seeking to access, influence or gain control of an elder's home and finances often attempt to influence by persuading, coercing, or striking up a dependent or romantic relationship with the elder. Establishing a relationship with an attorney increases protection and acts as a layer of guidance and watchful eyes. Most Senior Centers have Elder Law attorneys who come and speak to provide basic information and monthly consults. For more information:

- **National Elder Law Foundation:** A list of Certified Law Attorneys in Massachusetts.
 - 520-881-1076
 - www.nelf.org/find-a-cela/massachusetts
- **National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (MA chapter):** Members of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) are experienced and trained in working with the legal problems of aging Americans and individuals of all ages with disabilities.
 - PO box 67137 Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
 - <https://www.naela.org/>
- **Lawyer of the Day:** Private attorneys volunteer at the Barnstable County Probate Court, providing basic legal advice, for family law only, on a walk-in or call basis, to those who qualify. This is not for ongoing legal representation/in depth situations.
 - 508-362-2511
- **Barnstable County Bar Association:** Referral service to private attorneys.
 - 508-362-2121
- **Massachusetts Bar Association:** Referral service to private attorneys (reduced fees available).
 - 617-654-0400 or 800-392-6164
 - www.bostonbar.org/lrs
 - Their website provides basic legal information www.massbar.org
- **Dial-A-Lawyer:** Massachusetts Bar Association provides assistance program by volunteers, for those who do not qualify for free legal aid and/or cannot afford the cost of legal advice. Inquiries for basic legal questions may be answered between 5:30PM-7:30PM the first Wednesday of each month.
 - 617-409-0727

- **Legal Advocacy and Resource Center:** Referral to legal service agencies & information.
 - 800-342-5297
- **MassLegalHelp:** Legal Aid Information.
 - www.masslegalhelp.org
- **Tel-Law:** 24 hour automated system of pre-recorded general/basic informational messages. Long distance charges may apply.
 - 617-338-0669
- **South Coastal Counties Legal Services:** Free (civil, not criminal law) services to elders and low income. Areas of concentration include Elder, consumer, Social Security benefit law, family and housing law.
 - 460 West main Street Hyannis, MA 02601
 - 508-775-7020 800-244-9023
 - www.sccls.org/
- **Masshealthdecisions.org**
 - Online information regarding Health Care Proxy (HCP).



INFORMATION FOR CAREGIVERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Caregiving demands may tax the most patient and loving individuals, over time, beyond their ability to cope. Under certain circumstances, caregivers may become sleep deprived, stressed, or lack much needed assistance caring for their spouse, parent or family member. At times this can lead to lashing out resulting in verbal, physical or emotional abuse or neglect. Where can an overburdened caregiver seek further help and planning before the situation declines or becomes an emergency?

- **National Family Caregiver Support Program**
 - 1-202-619-0724
 - www.aoa.gov/AoA_programs
- **National Institute on Aging Information Center**
 - 1-800-222-2225
 - 1-800-222-4225
 - www.nia.nih.gov
- **Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs:** Promotes independence, empowerment, and well-being of older people, individuals with disabilities, and their families. We ensure access to the resources you need to live healthy in every community in the Commonwealth.
 - www.mass.gov/elders
- **Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** For concerns of nursing home care for resident family members. If issues involving abuse or serious neglect by staff are identified, further reporting to appropriate agencies will be initiated. Contact Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands for further information.
 - National Resource Center 202-332-2275.
 - www.ltcomgudsman.org
- **National Center for Elder Abuse:** The NCEA provides the latest information regarding research, training, best practices, news and resources on elder abuse, neglect and exploitation to professionals and the public.
 - 302-831-3525
 - www.ncea.gov
- **Eldercare Locator:** Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, connects you to services for older adults and their families.
 - 1-800-677-1116
 - www.eldercare.gov

- **Independence House:** Providing information on crisis intervention, emergency shelter and support, court advocacy, sexual assault and domestic violence crisis programs, counseling and support groups, housing stabilization services, information and referrals, community outreach, education and prevention, and child witness to violence services for children and teens.
 - 24 hour Hotline: 800-439-6507
 - Main business line: 508-771-6507
 - TTY 508-771-6782
 - www.independencehouse.org
 - E-mail: indhous@indhous.net
- **Alzheimer's Family Support Center of Cape Cod:** The Alzheimer's Family Support Center's mission is to identify and provide free personalized care planning and pragmatic counseling to the 10,000 families, individuals and caregivers on Cape Cod living with Alzheimer's and other Dementia-related illnesses to help them navigate the complexities and the challenges they face across the span of these diseases, while providing a research-based family and community-centered social model.
 - 2095 Main Street, Brewster, MA 02631
 - 508-896-5170
 - www.alzheimerscapecod.org



HOME HEALTH SERVICES

VNA of Cape Cod – Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
255 Independence Dr., Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 957-7400

Cape Cod Visiting Nurse Associates - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
255 Independence Dr., Hyannis, MA 02601

BAYADA Home Health - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
750 Attucks Ln., Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 778-8100

Cape Cod Home Helpers - Yarmouth

Home Health Care Service
411 MA-6A, Yarmouth Port, MA 02675
(508) 375-9801

Medicaid Consultants Cape Cod - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
933 Falmouth Rd., Hyannis, MA 02601
(508)429-0011

Healthcare Advocate of Cape Cod - Yarmouth

Home Health Care Service
(774) 836-6916

Amedisys Home Health Care – Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
68 Center St # 3, Hyannis, MA 02601
(508)732-9124

Comfort Keepers – Centerville

Home Health Care Service
586 Strawberry Hill Rd #3, Centerville, MA 02632
(508) 746-4800

Heartful Home Care Services – Yarmouth

Home Health Care Service
44 Homers Dock Rd., Yarmouth, MA 02675
(508) 362-6219

VNA of Cape Cod - Falmouth

Home Health Care Service
67 Ter Heun Dr., Falmouth, MA 02540
(508) 495-5716

Brookdale Cape Cod - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
790 Falmouth Rd., Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 790-7666

Home To Stay LLC – Yarmouth Port

Home Health Care Service
477 Main St., Yarmouth Port, MA 02675
(508) 362-3300

Home Instead Senior Care – Sandwich

Home Health Care Service
125 MA-6A, Sandwich, MA 02563
(508) 778-8613

Greater Boston Home Health – West Yarmouth

Home Health Care Service
299 MA-28, West Yarmouth, MA 02673
(508) 771-4499

Med Prefill Cape Cod – Sandwich

Home Health Care Service
2 Holly Ridge Dr., Sandwich, MA 02563
(508) 648-1322

HopeHealth - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
765 Attucks Ln., Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 957-0200

Home Care Assistance - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
540 Main St #14, Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 790-4663

VNA of Cape Cod - Martha's Vineyard

Home Health Care Service
49 State Rd., Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
(508) 957-7400

Cape Cod Home Infusion Services - Falmouth

Home Health Care Service
200 Main St., Falmouth, MA 02540
(508) 564-6288

West Gate Home Medical Equipment - Hyannis

Home Health Care Service
209 W Main St., Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 775-3339

TELL ME ABOUT RESPITE SERVICES...

Respite provides for short term care of an elder or an individual with a disability, allowing relief of the caregiver to take a needed break, attend family functions, emergencies or personal/health matters. Care may be obtained, either on an intermittent or urgent basis, either in-home, at a residential facility, or skilled nursing center.

To find out more about respite care services contact:

- **Alzheimer's Family Support Center of Cape Cod:** The Alzheimer's Family Support Center's mission is to identify and provide free personalized care planning and pragmatic counseling to the 10,000 families, individuals and caregivers on Cape Cod living with Alzheimer's and other Dementia-related illnesses to help them navigate the complexities and the challenges they face across the span of these diseases, while providing a research-based family and community-centered social model.
 - 2095 Main Street, Brewster, MA 02631
 - 508-896-5170
 - www.alzheimerscapecod.org
- **Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands:** Inquire about the Family Caregiver Support Program.
 - 508-394-4630 800-244-4630 www.escci.org
 - Email: infor@escci.org
- **Council on Aging/Senior Center**
 - Adult Day Programs offer care, social activities, dining and exercise to frail or individuals with memory loss 2-5 days per week. Transportation may be available. Rates may be based upon financial need.
- **Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services:** Information on Services including: Type of Disability, Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Disability Community Advocacy.
 - www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services



BEING PROACTIVE: HOW TO LIMIT POTENTIAL FOR ELDER FRAUD

What is fraud?

Individuals who seek to gain the trust of an elder, via persuasion into sending or giving away money, valuable personal property, personal or financial documents or private information, by misrepresenting themselves as an employee of a business, law enforcement, charity, government official or inserting themselves over time into the elder's life as a friend, companion, romantic interest or caregiver.

Types of fraud/scams

Advance fee: offers include prizes, free products/services or investments, inheritances, lotteries.

Be alert for: request or pressure to pay a portion of the value or fee up front.

Charity: requests for contributions related to sympathetic causes.

Be alert for: use of pressure or guilt, pressure for quick donation or payment, charities or organizations that decline to forward written financial statements how contributions are allocated.

Friend, caregiver or romantic interest: An individual gradually inserts themselves into the elder's life, as a friend, companion, romantic interest or caregiver gaining trust and affection. The elder may offer money, jewelry or other tokens of affection or desire to "help" with perceived hardship. In exchange the elder is often grateful for the company and assistance of this new friend, caregiver or romantic interest and may become increasingly reliant on this new person.

Be alert for: Increasing isolation from the elder's friends and family. Subtle efforts to alienate or create distrust of the elder towards their adult children/family members. Efforts to gradually gain access to checking and savings accounts, increased control of finances, vehicles or moving into the elder's home. Unusual activity or increased charge amounts to credit cards or withdrawing larger cash sums from their accounts. Change of beneficiaries to financial accounts. Changes for health and estate related documents such as the health care proxy agent, power of attorney or will. Increased interest in attending medical appointments and/or statements to health care professionals, the elder is more forgetful, confused or not making good decisions.

Foreclosure or credit rescue: letters or calls from individuals or "companies" offering to help repair damaged credit or save the home from foreclosure.

Be alert for: Unsolicited efforts by a third party to help repair credit or save a home from foreclosure by requesting bank account, social security or other personal information. The elder is asked to sign forms, pay fees, transfer of deeds and/or forward mortgage payments to a new company only to discover they may have transferred ownership to another individual or no efforts were made to alleviate credit concerns.

Identity theft: use of another individual's name, address, social security number, banking or credit card information to commit fraud or some other crime.

Be alert for: collection agency letters/calls for unfamiliar charges or debts, missing mail, credit statements or checks, unauthorized credit charges or withdrawals from accounts, unexpected denial of financing, due to outstanding debt the elder did not incur.

Inheritance Fraud: elder receives a call, email or letter advising they may be entitled to an unclaimed inheritance.

Be alert for: request for a fee to obtain the inheritance or provide information on how to obtain it.

Mail Fraud: sweepstakes, lottery, or offers from foreign countries, charitable donation requests.

Be alert for: contact from foreign countries, unsolicited offers for lottery, winnings or prizes where a fee is requested up front, requests for personal/credit information.

Medical Fraud: using someone's name or other personal/health insurance information in order to access medical care.

Be alert for: Requests by another for the elders Medicare number in exchange for free health products or medications. Information in the medical record that contains substantially incorrect information about medical history, personal details, surgeries, or prescriptions. Incorrect insurance statement, bills or summaries.

Telemarketing Fraud: selling non-existent products, services or prizes by phone.

Be alert for: pressure tactics to buy now or the deal will be retracted, caller declines to send written information about their service, charity, prize or organization, charges incurred for a free prize, requests for personal banking or credit information to provide the gift, prize or service.

Who can help me? Who else might I consult or inform?

1. **Elder Services Protective unit** www.escci.org; left column "Programs/Services" scroll down to "Protective Services" .
2. **Police**
3. **Council on Aging/Senior Center**
4. **Family attorney**
5. **Primary Care Physician or Emergency Room Physician/Nurse or Social Worker**
6. **Home Care agency Nurse or Social Worker**
7. **Public Health/Town Nurse**
8. **Bank/financial institution** (fraud department or manager)
9. **Consumer Reporting Agencies** (ask about placing a credit freeze related to your accounts)
 - Equifax www.equifax.com 800-685-1111
 - Experian www.experian.com 888-397-3742
 - Transunion www.transunion.com 800-999-4213
 - Request a Credit Report www.annualcreditreport.com 877-322-8228
 - National Center on Elder Abuse 855-500-3537 www.ncea.acl.gov

- U.S. Postal Inspection Service 877-876-2455
<https://postalinspectors.upsis.gov> (mail fraud/financial exploitation)
10. Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office – for Elder Abuse call (508) 362-8113 or 1-800-344-CPAC

The following information is provided for your use or to relay to patients...

If there is concern for "someone is calling me" from an unknown number and indicates knowledge of the last four social security number and/or their providers or other personal information and there is concern for fraud... something just doesn't feel right....consider the following courses of action:

1. **Ask the caller for their name and contact information/website address; indicate you'll call them back** (*if it's fraud, they often will avoid this and hang up*).
2. **Ask the caller to mail the information they wish to speak about, before proceeding with relaying information.** (Fraudulent inquiries will often not send written information or the information if sent, may contain errors). In normal reputable business interactions, most requested contact for needed information is forwarded in written form and not over the phone.
3. **Contact the local police or attorney general's office to inquire if there is a current scam where the mode of operation/approach is similar.**
4. **Is there a mail away and local pharmacy?** Contact all of the pharmacies used to determine if they have initiated calls to this effect. This may be part of an internal cost saving measure initiated by insurance or other service associates. If the pharmacy claims not to know, proceed with other steps...
5. **The patient should contact his health insurance company representative to determine if they have initiated this course of action for cost saving measures/other reasons?** Inquire how the health insurance company monitors for risk of medical fraud to protect their consumers' insurance information and/or identify fraudulent claims.
6. **Contact the 3 major credit reporting agencies, and request a copy of your credit report (one free copy, per agency is allowed per year)** and review those entries to make sure there is no fraudulent activity. This should be done at least once a year as a matter of good practice, and/or consider use of a credit monitoring service, like Life Lock or others.
7. **If paying for a credit monitoring service is not within financial ability,** inquire if the credit reporting agency is a credit freeze or fraud alert agency that should be initiated depending on what he/she finds on the credit report, since credit and medical fraud may be linked if personal information has been sold.

A credit freeze through the credit reporting agencies, or a fraud alert through store credit cards are a good pre-emptive step to lowering the risk of theft and/or the amount of damage that can be done. No new lines of credit for a home, car, or credit card can be opened without approval and steps initiated to lift the freeze through a pass code or pin #.

Placing a freeze on credit takes less than 15 minutes over the phone with each company through automated prompts. The fee to place a freeze is generally from \$5-\$15 per credit agency. And there may be a similar fee to **“lift the freeze”** for a period of time if a new loan, or other need arises. The cost and headaches, including endless hours of work, is far less than the time and expense associated with correcting and cleaning up the damage associated with identity theft.

Fraud/freeze inquiries...For more information about what they are/how the work and to put them in place go online or call:

Experian 1-888-397-3742
Transunion 1-800-680-7289
Equifax 1-800-349-9960

*****For MILITARY: INQUIRE ABOUT PLACING AN “ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY ALERT”**

For more information, education and resources

www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-attorney-general
www.identitytheft.gov
www.annualcreditreport.com



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

From the website: <https://ncea.acl.gov/faq/index.html>

1. What is elder abuse?

Federal definitions of elder abuse first appeared in the 1987 Amendments to the Older Americans Act, however, these definitions are guidelines. Each state defines elder abuse according to its unique statutes and regulations, and definitions vary from state to state. Researchers also use varying definitions to describe and study the problem.

Domestic elder abuse generally refers to any of the following types of mistreatment that are committed by someone with whom the elder has a special relationship (for example, a spouse, sibling, child, friend, or caregiver).

Institutional abuse generally refers to any of the following types of mistreatment occurring in residential facilities (such as a nursing home, assisted living facility, group home, board and care facility, foster home, etc.) and is usually perpetrated by someone with a legal or contractual obligation to provide some element of care or protection.

Elder abuse can affect people of all ethnic backgrounds and social status and can affect both men and women. The following types of abuse are commonly accepted as the major categories of elder mistreatment:

- **Physical Abuse**—Inflicting, or threatening to inflict, physical pain or injury on a vulnerable elder, or depriving them of a basic need
- **Emotional Abuse**—Inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder person through verbal or nonverbal acts
- **Sexual Abuse**—Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind, coercing an elder to witness sexual behaviors
- **Exploitation**—Illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of a vulnerable elder
- **Neglect**—Refusal or failure by those responsible to provide food, shelter, health care or protection for a vulnerable elder
- **Abandonment**—The desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person

Although there are distinct types of abuse defined, it is not uncommon for an elder to experience more than one type of mistreatment at the same or different times. For example, a person financially exploiting an elder may also be neglecting to provide appropriate care, food, medication, etc.

2. What are the warning signs of elder abuse?

While one sign does not necessarily indicate abuse, some indicators that there could be a problem are:

- Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, and burns may be an indication of physical abuse, neglect, or mistreatment
- Bruises around the breasts or genital area can occur from sexual abuse
- Sudden change in alertness and unusual depression may be indicators of emotional abuse
- Sudden changes in financial situations may be the result of exploitation
- Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, and unusual weight loss are indicators of possible neglect
- Behavior such as belittling, threats, and other uses of power and control by spouses or those who should be in a position of trust are indicators of verbal or emotional abuse
- Strained or tense relationships, frequent arguments between the caregiver and elderly person are also signs. Check out the “Families and Caregivers” section on NCEA Publications (<https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/publications.html>) for more information about how caregivers can prevent elder abuse.
- It’s important to remain alert. The suffering is often in silence. If you notice changes in personality, behavior, or physical condition, you should start to question what is going on.

3. What is self-neglect and what are the signs?

Tragically, sometimes elders neglect their own care, which can lead to illness or injury. Self-neglect can include behaviors such as:

- Hoarding of objects, newspapers/magazines, mail/paperwork, etc., and/or animal hoarding to the extent that the safety of the individual and/or other household or community members is threatened or compromised
- Failure to provide adequate food and nutrition for oneself
- Failure to take essential medications or refusal to seek medical treatment for serious illness
- Leaving a burning stove unattended
- Poor hygiene
- Not wearing suitable clothing for the weather
- Confusion
- Inability to attend to housekeeping
- Dehydration

Self-neglect is one of the most frequently reported concerns brought to adult protective services. Oftentimes, the problem is paired with declining health, isolation, Alzheimer's disease or dementia, or drug and alcohol dependency.

In some of these cases, elders will be connected to supports in the community that can allow them to continue living on their own. Some conditions like depression and malnutrition may be successfully treated through medical intervention. If the problems are severe enough, a guardian may be appointed.

4. What makes an older adult vulnerable to abuse?

Elder abuse, like other types of domestic violence, is extremely complex. Generally a combination of psychological, social, and economic factors, along with the mental and physical conditions of the victim and the perpetrator, contribute to the occurrence of elder maltreatment.

Although the factors listed below cannot explain all types of elder maltreatment, because it is likely that different types (as well as each single incident) involve different casual factors, they are some of the risk factors that seem to be related to elder abuse.

Dementia and Cognitive Impairment

Elders with dementia are thought to be at greater risk of abuse and neglect than those of the general elderly population. Risk factors for this population include the caregivers heightened perception of burden and depressive symptoms, as well as, the care recipient's psychological aggression and physical assault behaviors.

Domestic Violence Grown Old

It is important to acknowledge that spouses make up a large percentage of elder abusers, and that a substantial proportion of these cases are domestic violence grown old: partnerships in which one member of a couple has traditionally tried to exert power and control over the other through emotional abuse, physical violence and threats, isolation, and other tactics.

Personal Problems of Abusers

Particularly in the case of adult children, abusers often are dependent on their victims for financial assistance, housing, and other forms of support. Oftentimes they need this support because of personal problems, such as mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, or other dysfunctional personality characteristics. The risk of elder abuse seems to be particularly high when these adult children live with the elder.

Living with Others and Social Isolation

Both living with someone else and being socially isolated have been associated with higher elder abuse rates. These seemingly contradictory findings may turn out to be related in that abusers who live with the elder have more opportunity to abuse and, yet maybe isolated from the larger community themselves or may seek to isolate the elders from others so that the abuse is not discovered. Further research needs to be done to explore the relationship between these factors.

5. Who abuses older people?

Although more research is needed, most cases of elder abuse are perpetrated by known and trusted others, particularly family members (including adult children, spouses, and others). Abusers can be men or women, of any age, race, or socio-economic status. Elder mistreatment is perpetrated by family members, friends, service providers, peers, and strangers.

6. Are there criminal penalties for the abusers?

Although laws vary from state to state, in most states there are several laws that address criminal penalties for various types of elder abuse. Some states have increased penalties for those who victimize older adults. Increasingly, across the country, law enforcement officers and prosecutors are trained on elder abuse and how to use criminal and civil laws to bring abusers to justice. Read about state elder abuse laws, important legal issues, and how to access the laws, visit the Policy page. (<https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/policy/index.html>)

7. How many people are suffering from elder abuse?

Visit our Statistics/Data section (<https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/research/statistics.html>) for information about incidence and prevalence of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

8. Who do I call if I suspect elder abuse?

Cape Cod and the Islands Elder Services, Office of Protective Services
ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE - 24 hour, toll free 800-922-2275

9. What can I do if I'm concerned about possible abuse or neglect in a nursing home?

If you suspect abuse or neglect of someone living in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or board and care home, contact a local Long-Term Care Ombudsman for more information. For a directory of state reporting numbers and resources, visit the State Resource Page.

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care: (<http://theconsumervoice.org/>) website provides information and resources to help residents understand your rights and advocate for quality care, as well as, for family members and friends.

- Empowers and educates consumers and families.
- Trains and supports individuals and groups to advocate for and empower consumers.
- Promotes the critical role of direct-care workers and best practices in quality-care delivery.
- Advocates for public policies that support quality care and life.

10. What should I expect if I call someone for help?

When you call Adult Protective Services, 800-922-2275, the person on the phone will ask you some questions about the incident. Anyone can call and report abuse. You do not have to leave your name. You do have to give the name of the victim and an address. If you have questions about whether you should call or not, make the call and the person answering the phone will assist you.

11. What should I look for in a good nursing home or assisted living facility?

A Long-Term Care Ombudsman (http://theconsumervoice.org/get_help) can help you understand and compare local options.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) supports Nursing Home Compare, (<https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html>) a federal website that allows you to find Medicare- and Medicaid- certified nursing homes in your area and learn how they rate by various quality measures. CMS also provides information on Alternatives to Nursing Home Care. (<https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/Resources/Nursing-Home-Alternatives.html>)

12. How can I protect against frauds and scams?

Unscrupulous people target seniors and will abuse or take advantage of them. Consider doing the following:

- Learn about the types of elder abuse and neglect and associated warning signs
- Get on the National Do Not Call Registry to reduce telemarketing calls by visiting www.DoNotCall.gov or Call 888-382-1222 to register your phone number
- If you are offered a “prize,” “loan,” “investment,” etc. that sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true
- Consult with someone you trust before making a large purchase or investment and don’t be pressured or intimidated into immediate decisions

- Don't sign any documents that you don't completely understand without first consulting an attorney, family member, or close friend that you trust
- Do not provide personal information (social security number, credit card number, etc.) over the phone unless **you** initiated the call and **you know** with whom you are speaking
- Tear up or shred credit card receipts, bank statements, and financial records before disposing of them in the trash
- If you hire someone for personal assistance services, in home care services, etc. ensure that they have been properly screened with criminal background checks completed

Find out what to do if you have already been scammed through our awareness materials (<https://ncea.acl.gov/makeadifference/raiseawareness-material.html>) including fact sheet and poster!

- 1- <https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/docs/PostCard-NCEA-2015.pdf>
- 2- https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/docs/GrandparentScam_English-2015.pdf
- 3- <https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/docs/12-Things-Prevent-EA.pdf>
- 4- <https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/docs/Protect-Yourself-From-Abuse.pdf>
- 5- <https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/docs/Red-Flags-Elder-Abuse-NCEA-2015.pdf>
- 6- <https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/docs/Scammed-Now-what-Fact-Sheet-2015.pdf>
- 7- <https://www.youtube.com/user/NCEAatUCI>

13. How can elder abuse be prevented?

Educating seniors, professionals, caregivers, and the public on abuse is critical to prevention. On an individual level, some simple, but vital steps to reduce the risk:

- Take care of your health.
- Seek professional help for drug, alcohol, and depression concerns, and urge family members to get help for these problems.
- Attend support groups for spouses and learn about domestic violence services
- Plan for your own future. With a limited power of attorney or a living will, health care decisions can be addressed to avoid confusion and family problems, should you become incapacitated. Seek independent advice from someone you trust before signing any documents.
- Stay active in the community and connected with friends and family. This will decrease social isolation, which has been connected to elder abuse.

- Know your rights. If you engage the services of a paid or family caregiver, you have the right to voice your preferences and concerns. If you live in a nursing home or board and care home, call your Long Term Care Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is your advocate and has the power to intervene.

All states have adult protective and long-term care ombudsman programs, family care supports, and home and community care services that can help older adults with activities of daily living. Call the Eldercare Locator (<http://eldercare.gov>) at **800-677-1116** for information and referrals on services in your area.

Visit our Get Involved section (<https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/education/getinvolved.html>) to learn how concerned citizens of all ages can become involved in prevention.

14. Why Should I Care About Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse can truly happen to anyone. Research indicates that one in ten American elders is affected by abuse. Unfortunately, elder abuse can happen in all types of relationships as a result of family dynamics, care giver interactions, or targeted scams that prey on vulnerability. Only through YOU can we make progress in changing the statistics and addressing the abuse that is occurring.

15. What are the signs to look for when visiting an elderly relative?

Please read Home for the Holidays (PDF) (<https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/home-for-holidays.pdf>) to be aware of the signs of self-neglect, neglect, and abuse by others to your elderly relatives.

16. How can financial exploitation be prevented in Nursing Homes or Assisted Living Facilities?

Financial exploitation happens when someone illegally or improperly uses an older adult's money or belongings for their personal use. Financial exploitation is the fastest growing form of elder abuse. It is a crime and is often not reported. Learn how to protect yourself or your loved one through our fact sheets below:

Nursing Homes:

Protect Yourself - <https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Protect-Yourself-From-Abuse.pdf>

Protect your Loved one https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Protect-NH-Fin_Exploit.pdf

Assisted Living:

Protect Yourself - https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Protect-AALF_Fin-Exploit.pdf

Protect Your Loved One https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Protect-NH-Fin_Exploit.pdf

Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands www.escci.org

Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc. (ESCCI) is a private, not-for-profit community-based organization dedicated to serving older adults in the twenty-two towns of Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket counties. We are the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the state designated Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) as well as the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) for our three county area. We are a central source of information and services enabling elders to enhance their quality of life and maintain their independence.

Our programs address the interests and changing needs of older adults. Whether you are recently retired and seeking a volunteer opportunity or a senior needing nursing home care, Elder Services will provide the access, service and advocacy to assist you.

