SIGNS OF ELDER ABUSE

**Physical Abuse**
Abrasions, lacerations, bruises, fractures, use of restraints, burns, pain, depression, delirium with or without worsening of dementia, or dementia-related behavioral problems.

**Emotional/Psychological Abuse**
Direct observation of verbal abuse (verbal attacks, belittling, bullying, talk to an elder as though s/he were a young child even though the elder has full mental capacity) refusing to talk with an elder, isolating an elder from others, stalking unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, unusual depression, strained or tense relationships, frequent arguments between the caregiver and older adult, subtle signs of intimidation, evidence of isolation of victim from both previously trusted friends and family members, depression and/or anxiety.

**Sexual Abuse**
Bruising, abrasions, lacerations in the anogenital area or abdomen, newly acquired STDs (especially in nursing home residents with cluster outbreaks), and/or urinary tract infection.

**Financial Exploitation**
Sudden changes in financial situations, inability to pay for medications, healthcare, food, rent, or other basic needs, loss of utility services, initiation of eviction, inability to keep medical appointments, unexplained worsening of chronic medical problems that were previously controlled, nonadherence to medication regimen or other treatment, malnutrition, weight loss, poor financial decision making, firing of home care or other service providers by abuser.

**Neglect and Abandonment**
Failing to provide food or water, failing to take the elder for medical care, failing to take the elder to the toilet, failing to keep the elder well-groomed and the home safe and clean, failing to help the elder to dress, failing to assist in paying bills, and/or leaving the elder alone for long periods of time.

**Elder Abuse Impacts All of Us**
- Elder abuse reduces the ability for older members of our community to participate in society
- Healthcare and Legal costs end up being taken up by public programs, like Medicare and Medicaid, hospitals and social service agencies
- Without access to quality healthcare and social services, people become more at risk for abuse as they age

**We can All Address and Prevent Elder Abuse**
- If you witness elder abuse, speak up and report the incident!
- Are you an elder, or do you know of an elder, who you suspect is being abused?
- Are you a caregiver finding yourself in a stressful situation and could use help from our social worker and in need of home health care services for a loved one or friend?
- Interested in having your senior center, social service agency, or community group learn more about elder abuse?

Contact Peter Jacob, MSW, LSW, pjacob@jfscentralnj.org, 908-352-8375 if your organization or community is interested in a presentation on elder abuse, or, if you are interested in supportive services.

Project CEASSE (Combatting Elder Abuse through Supportive Services and Education) is a program of Jewish Family Service of Central NJ and is open to the entire community. Project CEASSE is funded by the Healthcare Foundation of NJ, the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ, and the Iris Teen Tzedaka Program.
WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

Any knowing, intentional or negligent act by a caregiver, or any person who causes harm, or serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult.

MAJOR FORMS OF ELDER ABUSE

Physical Abuse
Inflicting or threatening to physically hurt or injure a vulnerable elder.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse
Inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder through verbal or non-verbal act.

Sexual Abuse
Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind, even without physical touching.

Financial Exploitation
Illegal taking, misuse, withholding 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.

Self-Neglect
An elder who threatens his/her health or safety and generally fails to provide for him/herself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medication (when capable), and safety precautions.

Abandonment
Desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.

Quick Facts

- 1 in 10 Americans 60+ have experienced some form of abuse
- Only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse are reported
- Older women are more likely than men to be victims of abuse
- 60% of elder abuse is committed by a family member
- Abuse of elder residents by other residents in long-term care facilities is more common than physical abuse by staff
- Abused and neglected older adults are twice as likely to be hospitalized and die at a rate of 3 times faster than other elders who haven’t experienced abuse.
- Elder financial exploitation is estimated to up to $37 billion in losses annually.

What Older Adult May Tell You

- “No one talks to me.”
- “My children make decisions without telling me.”
- “People call me names.”
- “And then s/he hit me.”
- “I am scared.”
- “I don’t like my aide/nurse/caregiver.”
- “I don’t know/understand what happened to my money.”