

What is elder abuse?

Under Wisconsin law, Chapter 46.90 (1)a, an “elder adult at risk” is a person age 60 or older who has experienced, is currently experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, financial exploitation, neglect or self-neglect. Within the Oneida Reservation the elder abuse lead agency accepts elder abuse reports for those Oneida Tribal members who are 55 years of age and older. Reports that are received for Oneida Tribal members residing outside of reservation boundaries are referred to their county of residence.

(1) Abuse has five sub-categories:

- “Physical abuse” is the “intentional or reckless infliction of bodily harm.”
- “Emotional abuse” is “language or behavior that serves no legitimate purpose and is intended to be intimidating, humiliating, threatening, frightening, or otherwise harassing, and does or reasonably could intimidate, humiliate, threaten, frighten, or otherwise harass the individual to whom the conduct or language is directed.”
- “Sexual abuse” is a violation of Wisconsin’s criminal sexual assault law.
- “Unreasonable confinement or restraint” includes intentional and unreasonable confinement in a locked room, involuntary separation from his or her living area, use of a physical restraining device or the administration of unnecessary or excessive

- medication to an individual, unless the methods or devices are used in Wisconsin-regulated entities in compliance with state or federal law.
- “Treatment without consent” is the administration of medication or certain mental health surgeries or research without proper informed consent or lawful authority.
- (2) Financial exploitation: is obtaining an elder’s money or property by deceiving or enticing the individual, or by forcing, compelling, or coercing the individual to give, sell at less than fair market value, or in other ways convey money or property against his or her will without his or her informed consent.
- (3) Neglect: is the failure of a caregiver to secure or maintain adequate care, services, or supervision for an elder, including food, clothing, shelter, or physical or mental health care, and creating significant risk or danger to the elder’s physical or mental health.
- (4) Self-neglect: is a significant danger to an individual’s physical or mental health because the individual is responsible for his or her own care but fails to obtain adequate care, including food, shelter, clothing, or medical or dental care.

Elder abuse warning signs:

- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, welts, burns or scars, especially if they appear symmetrically on two sides of the body
- Injury has not been properly cared for
- Broken bones, sprains, or dislocations
- Pain when touched
- Poor skin color
- Sunken eyes or cheeks
- Malnourished
- Soiled bedding or clothing
- Report of drug overdose or apparent failure to take medication regularly (a prescription has more remaining than it should)
- Broken eyeglasses or frames
- Signs of being restrained, such as rope marks on wrists
- Forced isolation or forced babysitting
- Caregiver’s refusal to allow you to see the elder alone

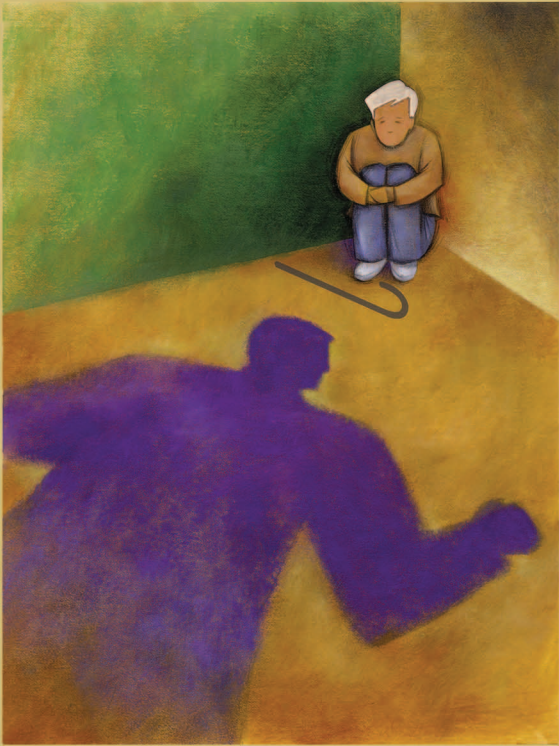
Oneida Elderly Services 24 hr.
1-800-867-1551

Or call: Monday-Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
(920) 869-2448

Ask for the Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinator.
All Reports Are Kept Confidential
And Anonymous. Reports Are Accepted.



Abuse Hurts
at Any Age.
Report It.



1-800-867-1551
Oneida Elderly Services
24 Hour Help Line

Victim behavioral signs:

- Fear
- Isolation
- Disorientation
- Anger
- Depression or anxiety
- Hesitation to speak openly
- Paranoia

Environmental signs:

- Inadequate shelter
- Drug paraphernalia
- Vermin infestation (rats or mice)
- Offensive odors
- Spoiled food or no food

Financial signs:

- Credit cards or checks missing
- Numerous unpaid bills – lights, gas or water
- Signing over deeds to property
- Elder is broke with no explanation
- Unusual activity in bank accounts
- Valuables are missing

In addition to the signs above, indications of emotional elder abuse include:

- Threatening, belittling, or controlling caregiver behavior that you witness
- Behavior from the elder that mimics dementia, such as rocking, sucking, or mumbling to oneself

Sexual abuse:

- Bruises around breasts or genitals
- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Torn, stained, or bleeding underclothing

Neglect by caregivers or self-neglect:

- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration
- Untreated physical problems, such as bedsores
- Unsanitary living conditions; dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes
- Being left dirty or unbathed
- Unsuitable clothing or covering for the weather
- Unsafe living conditions (no heat or running water; faulty electrical wiring, other fire hazards)
- Desertion of the elder at a public place

We should all do our part in reporting elder abuse. In 2007, 4,766 cases of suspected abuse, neglect or financial exploitation involving older adults were reported in Wisconsin. Tragically, 19 incidents were related to a death, and a total of 303 incidents were considered life-threatening. Your report will help to break the silence that encircles elder abuse.

Your reports do make a difference. When you make a report of elder abuse or suspected elder abuse victim has the opportunity to receive the help they need to stop the abuse. The potential of being abused in the future is also diminished.

Is there anything else I should know?

It is not our cultural way to abuse our elders. That may be so but unfortunately it is a phenomena that is happening at an alarming rate in our society. It does not pick and choose to occur by social status,

gender or ethnic background. The victim could be your friend, neighbor or family member. And it is estimated that only one in every five cases is reported.

Facts regarding Wisconsin’s Elder at Risk reports:

- 2,496 of all calls received or 51.4% involved self-neglect
- 1,022 or 21% involved financial exploitation
- It is estimated that only one in every five cases is ever reported
- There were 57 reports in 2007 involving elders who died
- There were 303 reports involving life threatening injuries
- 2,950 of the alleged victims were females, and 1,810 were males
- 581 or 23.3% of alleged abusers were sons of the victim
- 487 or 19.5% of alleged abusers were daughters of the victim
- 360 or 14.4% of alleged abusers were spouses
- 976 or 20.5% of alleged victims were offered services but they were not accepted

What can I do if I suspect elder abuse? Report it.

Voluntary reporters. Anyone can voluntarily report. By law, anyone making a report in good faith has civil and criminal immunity from liability and professional disciplinary action.

Mandated reporters. Certain professionals are required by law to report suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation of person’s age 60 years and over who reside in the community and because of dysfunction are unable to report for themselves. Among those required to report suspected abuse are: doctors, nurses, psychologists, dentists, social service workers and law enforcement personnel.

The identity of the reporter is **not** released without written permission by the reporter or court subpoena.

How do I make an elder abuse report?

Each county has established a county lead elder abuse agency. For those elders residing with the Oneida Reservation boundaries the report would be made to the Oneida Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinator at Oneida Elderly Services. If possible the reporter should be prepared to report what happened, when, where it happened, and who the abuser might be. For those cases where physical abuse is being heard or witnessed and an elder’s safety is in immediate danger, a call should immediately be made to the local police department.

Right to refuse services. Under Wisconsin law, a competent elder may refuse services that are offered.