

# What Is Elder Abuse?

More than **1,500** cases of elder abuse are reported each year in Erie County — but many cases are never reported. Abusers can include family members, spouses, intimate partners, ex-partners, friends, neighbors, or caretakers. The most common types of abuse are:

**Physical Abuse:** hitting, kicking, pushing, beating, slapping, choking, punching, burning, restraining.

**Sexual Abuse:** forcing the victim to perform unwanted sexual activities, degrading treatment.

**Emotional Abuse:** making humiliating remarks, name-calling, yelling, mocking, blaming, swearing, interrupting, threatening, harming pets, withholding affection, not respecting the victim's feelings, rights and opinions.

**Financial Abuse:** stealing money or property as a way to maintain control.

**Neglect:** withholding or failing to provide food, water, assistive devices, shelter, clothing, medical treatment or personal care. Could be self-imposed.

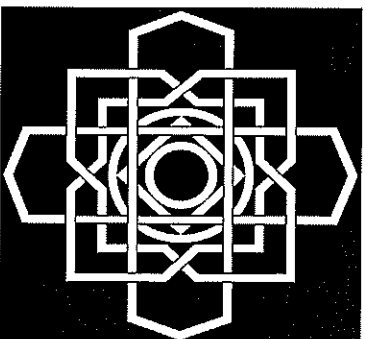
If you need help, call...

Erie County  
Protective Services  
for Adults

**716-858-6877**

Crisis Services  
Advocate Program  
24 Hour Hotline

**716-834-3131**



To Schedule a SAFE Presentation,  
contact Kathleen Collins at:

Council on Elder Abuse  
C/O Erie County Dept. of Senior Services  
95 Franklin Street, Room 1304  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
Email: [collinsk@erie.gov](mailto:collinsk@erie.gov)  
716-858-6877

**S.A.F.E.**  
Safety  
Awareness  
For the  
Elderly



**Council on Elder Abuse**

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# SAFETY TIPS

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- Take care of your health: see doctor regularly, exercise, eat healthy, and follow doctor's orders
- Seek professional help if you have any concerns
- Plan for your future with someone you trust (power of attorney, health care proxy, etc.)
- Stay active in the community-  
Avoid social isolation
- Know your rights
- Watch for signs of abuse in yourself and others
- Watch out for scams– if you are scammed get mad, not embarrassed and seek help
- Check and verify identification of any person who arrives at your home
- Use the “Do Not Call” registry to stop solicitations  
1-800-382-1222  
TTY: 1-866-290-4236



## ◆ ◆ ◆ Signs and Symptoms of Abuse ◆ ◆ ◆



### **Behavioral Signs**

- Fear, hesitation to talk openly
- Anxiety, agitation
- Anger
- Isolation, withdrawal by choice or forced
- Change in normal activities
- Non-responsiveness
- Confusion, disorientation, wandering
- Contradictory statements

### **Environmental Signs**

- Lack of heat, water, electric (shut-off)
- Extreme filth and clutter
- Strong odors
- No food and/or spoiled food
- Unsafe living space
- Accumulated mail and/or newspapers
- Lack of personal necessities (hygiene items, personal care, soap, clean linens, etc.)

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### **Physical Signs**

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries/pain
- Cuts, puncture wounds, burns, bruises, welts
- Dehydration or malnutrition
- Poor color, sunken eyes or cheeks
- Change in appearance
- Misuse of medication by self or others
- Poor hygiene, soiled clothing
- Frequent use of hospital/health care
- Frequent changes in doctors

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### **Financial Signs**

- Missing money or possessions
- Misuse of credit cards, debit cards, bank accounts, or checks
- Being pressured into signing documents or contracts
- Abuse of guardianship or power of attorney
- Forged signatures
- Being asked to share personal information over the phone or internet