



Understanding the signs of abuse and neglect can help save a life. While the following information provides examples of abuse and neglect, it's important that you follow your instincts. If you've witnessed concerning behavior or have seen signs of harm, please submit a report online or call one of the phone numbers listed below. Deaf or Hard of Hearing callers, please use Video Relay Service (VRS) or MassRelay at 711.

## **DISABLED PERSONS PROTECTION COMMISSION (DPPC)**

For suspected abuse against adults with disabilities ages 18-59  
24-hour Hotline: 1-800-426-9009

## **EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF AGING & INDEPENDENCE (AGE)**

For suspected abuse against adults ages 60+  
1-800-922-2275

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH)**

For suspected abuse against all people in long-term care facilities  
1-800-462-5540

## **DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)**

For suspected abuse against children ages 0-17  
1-800-792-5200

# **INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- Bruising, including bilateral, patterned, multiple, object-shaped (eg: hand), any stage of healing
- Burns that are object-shaped, blistered
- Sprains
- Unexplained internal injuries
- Fractures
- Injuries to mouth: Chipped teeth, ulcers, tears, swelling
- Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds
- Bite marks

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Damaged, torn, stained clothing and bedding
- Difficulty moving, walking, and/or sitting
- Bleeding vaginally and/or rectally
- Bruising
- Infections of private areas
- STDs, HIV, AIDS
- Genital itching, swelling, pain
- Changes in behavior
- Pregnancy
- Incontinence

## **EMOTIONAL/VERBAL ABUSE**

- Screaming, yelling, shouting, cursing
- Intimidating posture, gestures or words
- Ridiculing culture or heritage
- General/Sexual Harassment
- Threatening violence or withdrawal of necessities
- Negative remarks, such as name-calling, belittling, discrimination, mimicking, cruel teasing, lying, or cruel labeling

## **NEGLECT**

- Lacking necessities: Hygienic care, medical care, supervision, safety, adaptive aides such as eyeglasses, walker, wheelchair
- Mismanagement of medication: Receiving expired medication, unmarked medication, or being overmedicated
- Skin irritation, such as bed-sores, lice, rashes
- Exposed to toxic chemicals
- Restraining devices evident
- Patient-on-patient abuse
- Dehydration/malnutrition

# ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE

## FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Forged signatures
- Cashing checks for personal use by caregiver
- Misusing patient bank books
- Lying about an individual's living expenses
- Withholding funds
- Missing furniture, jewelry, credit cards or other items

## MISTREATMENT

The use of medications or treatments, isolation or physical/chemical restraints which harms or creates a substantial likelihood of harm

## SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Distrust
- Outbursts
- Worry or obsession about their own performance
- Loss of appetite
- Resistant to taking medication, bathing, eating, accepting care
- Incontinence, malodor
- Refusing assistance
- Physical deterioration
- Substance abuse
- Sexual promiscuity
- Self-injurious behaviors
- Emotionally withdrawn
- Isolation
- Adopts behaviors of caregiver
- Destruction
- Stunted growth
- Developmental delays
- Attention/learning disorders
- Feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem/confidence, suicidal ideation, aggression, self-hate, self-blame, guilt
- Fear of caregiver, rejection, abandonment, retaliation, touch, intimacy, being alone, darkness, people, places
- Stress-related illness
- Trouble sleeping
- Nightmares
- Desire to leave caregiver
- Crying easily/frequently



**Disabled Persons Protection Commission**  
**300 Granite Street, Suite 404, Braintree, MA 02184**  
**Website: DPPCMass.Gov | Phone: 617-727-6465**  
**24-Hour Abuse Reporting Hotline: 1-800-426-9009**

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