



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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