

Some ways to prevent abuse

- Visit your older loved ones often
- Provide breaks for caregivers
- Look for physical changes, and ask for an explanation of anything unusual
- Pay attention to emotional changes
- Carefully research caregivers and facilities
- Encourage your loved ones to stay social
- Get to know their friends and caregivers
- Look for signs of sexual assault
- Watch for psychological abuse
- Be vigilant of your loved one's surroundings and notice any changes
- If you suspect something, report it immediately



How you can help

If you suspect an older adult or an adult with disabilities is being abused, call our Connection Center at 216-420-6700, or report it online at hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/dsas.

For more information

Adult Protective Services
Cuyahoga County
Division of Senior and Adult Services
216-420-6700
hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/dsas

Physical, Emotional & Sexual Abuse

Dignity is a right, not a privilege.



Cuyahoga County
Division of Senior and Adult Services
Adult Protective Services



Division of Senior and Adult Services
Adult Protective Services
13815 Kinsman Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44120
216-420-6700
hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/dsas

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What is Abuse?

In general, elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or “trusted” individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of an older adult age 60 or over. Cuyahoga County’s Adult Protective Services (APS) unit is responsible for investigating allegations of elder abuse. Adults with disabilities ages 18-59 qualify for the same protections.



Definition

The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) defines abuse as “the infliction upon an adult by self or others injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting physical harm, pain or mental anguish.”

Types of Abuse

- **Physical abuse:** may include slapping, hitting, beating, bruising or causing someone physical pain, injury or suffering. This also could include confining an adult against his/her will, such as locking someone in a room or tying him/her to furniture.
- **Emotional abuse:** involves creating emotional pain, distress or anguish through the use of threats, intimidation or humiliation. This includes insults, yelling or threats of harm and/or isolation, or non-verbal actions such as throwing objects or glaring to project fear and/or intimidation.
- **Sexual abuse:** includes physical force, threats or coercion to facilitate non-consensual touching, fondling, intercourse or other sexual activities. This is particularly true with vulnerable adults who are unable to give consent or comprehend the nature of these actions.

Signs and Symptoms

- Bruising or welts on the skin, especially those appearing on the face or arms
- Fingerprints or handprints visible on the face, neck, arms or wrists
- Burns from scalding, cigarettes, or in the shape of an object such as an iron
- Cuts, lacerations or puncture wounds
- Sprains, fractures or dislocations
- Internal injuries or vomiting
- Genital injuries
- Testing positive for STDs
- Withdrawal from family and activities
- Exhibiting a sad or depressed mood

“Dignity is a right, not a privilege.”
No one has the right to touch another’s body in a harmful way. Preventing abuse of older adults and those with disabilities in Cuyahoga County is everyone’s business. Do you know someone who is being abused? Please call Adult Protective Services at 216-420-6700.