



# WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK

NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE

## Elder Abuse: What You Need to Know

Elder abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that cause harm or a risk of harm to an older adult. This can occur in various settings, including the elder's home, a family member's house, an assisted living facility, or a nursing home.

### Types of Elder Abuse

**Physical Abuse** Use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment.

**Signs:** Bruises, broken bones, abrasions, and burns.

**Emotional or Psychological Abuse** Inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress through verbal or nonverbal acts.

**Signs:** Withdrawal, depression, agitation, or unusual behavior.

**Sexual Abuse** Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.

**Signs:** Bruising around the breasts or genitals, unexplained venereal disease, or torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.

**Neglect** Failure to provide necessary care, assistance, or attention to the elder's needs.

**Signs:** Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated health problems, poor personal hygiene, or unsafe living conditions.

**Financial Abuse or Exploitation** Illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets.

**Signs:** Sudden changes in financial situations, unauthorized withdrawals from accounts, or missing personal belongings.

**Abandonment** Desertion of an elderly person by someone who has assumed responsibility for their care.

**Signs:** The elder being left alone in unsafe conditions.

### Who is at Risk?

Elder abuse can happen to any older adult, but certain factors increase the risk:

- **Physical or cognitive impairments**
- **Social isolation**
- **History of domestic violence**
- **Dependence on the caregiver for daily needs**
- **Substance abuse by the elder or caregiver**

### How to Prevent Elder Abuse

**Stay Connected:** Maintain regular contact with older adults through visits, phone calls, or social activities.

**Be Informed:** Educate yourself and others about the signs of elder abuse and the resources available for assistance.

**Plan Ahead:** Encourage older adults to plan for their future through legal documents like wills, powers of attorney, and health directives.

**Support Caregivers:** Offer help and respite to those providing care to alleviate stress and prevent burnout.

## ALWAYS REPORT SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE

**Adult Protective Services (APS)**  
Marathon, Lincoln & Langlade Counties

715.841.5160 OR 855.487.3338 (toll free)

For additional awareness information & resources visit [NORCEN.ORG/ElderAbuse](https://NORCEN.ORG/ElderAbuse)





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NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE

## Elder Abuse: Statistics & Key Insights

Elder abuse is a serious and widespread issue that affects many older adults. Understanding its prevalence and the types of abuse that occur is crucial for prevention and intervention. The following statistics from the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) provide a comprehensive overview.

### Abuse in the Community & Institutions

Elder abuse happens more often than we might think. Studies show that nearly one in six older adults living in their own homes, with family or in institutions have experienced some form of abuse in the past year. This abuse can take many forms, but most commonly present as:

1. **Psychological Abuse:** Causing emotional pain or distress through verbal or nonverbal actions.
2. **Physical Abuse:** Causing physical harm through hitting, pushing, or other forms of physical force.
3. **Financial Abuse:** Illegally or improperly using an elder's money, property, or assets.
4. **Neglect:** When a caregiver fails to provide necessary care, leading to harm or distress.
5. **Sexual Abuse:** Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.

### Underreporting of Abuse

Studies recognize that projections of abuse likely underestimate the actual prevalence. **For every incident of abuse reported to authorities, nearly 24 additional cases remain undetected.** Underreporting may be caused by a number of factors, including:

- Fear of retaliation by the offender
- Reluctance to disclose due to shame or embarrassment
- Concern about being institutionalized
- Dependency on the offender
- Physical limitations or cognitive impairments preventing reporting



**ONE IN SIX** older women  
experience abuse annually.

**70,000 PEOPLE**  
Reported Financial Abuse last year.

Median reported loss:

**\$4,400**

**ONE IN TEN**

community-dwelling older adults  
experience elder abuse annually

Most often identified  
perpetrators of elder abuse:

**FAMILY**

Understanding these statistics and resources can help raise awareness and encourage action to protect our older adults from abuse. If you suspect elder abuse, don't hesitate to report it—your intervention could make a crucial difference. **Contact the Tri-County APS at 715.841.5160.**

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NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE

## Understanding Adult Protective Services (APS) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in Marathon, Lincoln, & Lantana County

Adult Protective Services (APS) plays a vital role in safeguarding vulnerable adults and elders, promoting their well-being. Operating within the tri-county area of Marathon, Lincoln, and Lantana County, North Central Health Care's APS is dedicated to ensuring the safety and protection of adults and elders who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

### What is APS & Why is it Important?

APS is a social services program that responds to reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults and elders who are unable to protect themselves due to physical or mental impairments. These individuals may include older adults, people with disabilities, and those experiencing mental health challenges. APS serves as a lifeline for vulnerable adults who may be experiencing mistreatment or living in unsafe conditions.

### Key Functions of APS:

- **Investigating Reports:** APS conducts thorough investigations into reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to determine the validity of the claims and take appropriate action.
- **Providing Support:** APS offers support and assistance to adults in need, connecting them with essential services such as medical care, housing assistance, and legal protection.
- **Preventing Further Harm:** By intervening in abusive situations and providing necessary interventions, APS works to prevent further harm to vulnerable adults and elders and ensure their safety.
- **Empowering Individuals:** APS empowers vulnerable adults and elders by advocating for their rights, helping them regain control over their lives, and promoting self-sufficiency whenever possible.

### 2025 Adult Protective Service Impact in the Tri-County Area



**Contact your local APS at 715.841.5160**

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# WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK

## NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE

## Protecting Elders Against Scams & Exploitation

### Stay Alert, Stay Protected

In our digital age, elder abuse and scams targeting older adults, including those involving celebrities, have become increasingly prevalent. Additionally, there are many other common scams specifically designed to exploit seniors. It's crucial for seniors and their caregivers to understand these risks and take proactive measures to safeguard against them.

#### Celebrity Scams: How They Target Elders

Celebrity scams capitalize on the trust and admiration many seniors have for well-known figures. Scammers use various tactics to deceive older adults and exploit their vulnerability:

**Online Impersonation:** Fraudsters create fake social media profiles or send deceptive emails posing as celebrities, aiming to extract personal information or financial details from unsuspecting elders.

**Charity Frauds:** Scammers set up fake charities using a celebrity's name to solicit donations from older adults. Seniors may be drawn in by the promise of supporting a cause endorsed by their favorite celebrity, unaware that their contributions are lining the scammer's pockets.

**False Endorsements:** Scammers fabricate celebrity endorsements to promote fraudulent products or services, deceiving seniors into making purchases based on the perceived endorsement of their idols.

#### Other Common Scams to Watch For

**Grandparent Scams:** In this scam, a fraudster poses as a grandchild in distress, claiming they need money for an emergency. They prey on the elder's emotions to convince them to wire money urgently.

**Lottery or Prize Scams:** Victims receive notifications claiming they've won a lottery or prize, but must pay a fee or taxes to claim their winnings. These scams trick elders into sending money for non-existent prizes.

**Tech Support Scams:** Scammers pose as tech support representatives from well-known companies, claiming the elder's computer is infected with a virus. They trick the senior into paying for unnecessary repairs or gaining remote access to their computer to steal personal information.

**Medicare Scams:** Scammers pose as Medicare representatives to steal personal information. They may claim to offer free medical equipment or services, then use the elder's information for fraudulent billing.

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## How to Protect Loved Ones

**Stay Informed:** Educate your elderly loved ones about common scams targeting older adults, including those involving celebrities. Help them recognize red flags and understand the importance of verifying the authenticity of online communications.

**Report Suspected Scams:** If you suspect elder abuse or encounter fraudulent activity targeting your loved ones, report it to local authorities or elder protective services. Prompt action can prevent further harm and protect vulnerable seniors from exploitation.

**Monitor Online Activity:** Keep an eye on your elders' online interactions and help them identify potential scams or suspicious messages. Encourage them to avoid sharing personal information with unknown individuals or responding to unsolicited offers.

**Seek Support:** Provide emotional support and reassurance to elders who may feel embarrassed or ashamed after falling victim to a scam. Offer assistance in reporting the incident and accessing resources for recovery and prevention.

Find more info on identifying and preventing scams at [NORCEN.ORG/ElderAbuse](https://NORCEN.ORG/ElderAbuse)





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## NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE

## Caregiver Support & Resources

### Essential Information for Maintaining Health and Well-being for Caregivers

Caring for an adult can be both rewarding and challenging. As a caregiver, it's crucial to recognize the importance of your role and seek the necessary support and resources to maintain your health and well-being. This info sheet provides essential information on why caregiver support is vital, the resources available to caregivers, tips for maintaining health, and strategies for balancing caregiving with other responsibilities.

Being a caregiver for an elderly loved one can be physically, emotionally, and mentally demanding. Without adequate support, caregivers can experience high levels of stress, burnout, and health issues.

Balancing caregiving with other responsibilities requires careful planning and effective communication. Start by creating a flexible daily and weekly schedule that includes caregiving duties, personal time, and other commitments. Discuss your caregiving role with employers, family, and friends to request necessary adjustments or assistance. Utilize community resources like meal delivery, transportation assistance, and home health aides to support your efforts. Prepare for emergencies by having a backup plan and identifying people or services that can step in temporarily. Finally, ensure personal fulfillment by regularly engaging in hobbies and social activities. These strategies help caregivers manage their responsibilities while maintaining their well-being.

#### SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS HELPS TO:

**Provide Better Care:** With proper support, caregivers can deliver higher quality care to their loved ones.

**Maintain Health:** Access to resources and breaks prevents physical and mental exhaustion.

**Reduce Stress:** Support groups and respite care offer emotional relief and reduce feelings of isolation.

**Ensure Longevity in the Role:** Sustained support helps caregivers manage their responsibilities over the long term without compromising their own well-being.

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## RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

### Respite Care:

- **Respite Care:** Temporary relief by professional caregivers during short-term stays in assisted living/nursing homes or who come to the home.
- **Adult Day Care Centers:** Facilities where seniors can spend the day engaging in activities while caregivers get a break.

### Online Resources:

- **National Institute on Aging:** Offers extensive research-based info and resources on healthy aging, caregiving tips, and managing age-related diseases.
- **Alzheimer's.gov:** Provides comprehensive resources and support for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's, including care strategies, treatment options, and local support services.
- **Eldercare Locator:** A public service that connects caregivers to local services and resources such as transportation, home care, and respite services.
- **Wisconsin's Family Caregiver Support Program:** Delivers support services including respite care, counseling, training, and financial assistance to family caregivers in WI.

### Local Resources:

- **North Central Health Care:** Provides a range of services including mental health support, skilled nursing care, and rehabilitation programs tailored to meet the needs of elders and their caregivers.
- **ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center):** Offers information, assistance, and access to a variety of services such as nutrition programs, caregiving support, and health resources for seniors and disabled individuals.
- **Women's Community:** Support services including counseling, advocacy, and shelter for elderly women experiencing abuse or in need of assistance.
- **Community Partner Campus:** Facilitates access to community resources and services for elders and caregivers, including health services, social activities, and support programs.

### Counseling & Therapy:

- **Individual Counseling:** Professional support to address personal stress and emotional challenges.
- **Family Therapy:** Helps families navigate dynamics and improve communication related to caregiving.



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## Supporting the Emotional and Psychological Well-being of Seniors

As individuals age, prioritizing emotional and psychological health becomes increasingly vital. For seniors, maintaining a positive mental outlook is essential not only for their quality of life but also for their ability to remain active and engaged in their communities. Emotional support plays a crucial role in helping older adults navigate life changes such as retirement, loss of loved ones, and declining physical health. By addressing mental health needs, caregivers and communities can contribute to seniors' overall well-being and happiness.

Recognizing signs of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness is key to providing timely support and intervention. Depression may manifest as persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, and feelings of worthlessness. Similarly, anxiety may present as excessive worrying, restlessness, irritability, and avoidance of social situations. Loneliness, often prevalent among seniors, can lead to social withdrawal, decreased participation in activities, and feelings of isolation. Recognizing and addressing these signs promptly can help seniors receive the support they need to maintain their mental health.

Fortunately, numerous resources are available to support the mental and emotional well-being of seniors. Local mental health clinics and senior centers offer counseling services and support groups tailored to older adults' needs. Teletherapy options provide convenient access to counseling from the comfort of home, while online resources and hotlines offer immediate support and information. Primary care physicians and



*"Recognizing signs of mental health issues in seniors & providing timely support can significantly improve quality of life & overall well-being."*

geriatric psychiatrists play crucial roles in screening for mental health issues and providing referrals to specialists when needed. Additionally, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, and community organizations offer a range of support services and social activities for seniors.

In conclusion, prioritizing the emotional and psychological well-being of seniors is essential for promoting their overall health and happiness. By recognizing signs of mental health issues, accessing available resources, and fostering a supportive environment, caregivers and communities can help seniors maintain their mental health and live fulfilling lives as they age. Supporting the emotional needs of older adults is not only a compassionate act but also a crucial step towards ensuring their well-being and quality of life.

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