

Elder Abuse and Financial Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse is the physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse of a senior. Elder abuse contains two key parts: a senior suffers injury, deprivation, or unnecessary danger; and a specific individual (or individuals) causes or fails to prevent the harm. Elder abuse affects seniors in all cultural, social and income groups. In California, it is estimated that only one in five cases of elder abuse is reported to authorities. Nationally, it is estimated that one of every 20 seniors will be abused in their lifetime.

Financial Elder Abuse

Financial Elder Abuse is when a senior is **financially** exploited. Financial elder abuse often occurs without the victim's knowledge. An exploiter might be a family member, caregiver, friend, financial advisor, attorney, or even worse, the person already trusted with financial power of attorney by the senior. Like other forms of elder abuse, financial elder abuse is an under-reported crime.

Financial Elder Abuse Includes:

- Wrongful use of financial power of attorney
- Ill-advised investments and purchases, significant transfers of assets, substantial loans or gifts to others
- Forging a senior's signature or deceiving a senior into signing any legal and financial document, especially when the senior seems unable to comprehend
- Revising a senior's will or other documents, especially when the new beneficiary is a caregiver or a previously uninvolved person now claiming a right to a senior's property
- Diverting money meant to pay the senior's rent, utilities, or taxes
- Unauthorized use of credit cards, ATM cards, or checkbooks
- Promises of "lifelong care" in exchange for deeding property to caregiver

Signs of Financial Elder Abuse Include:

- Disappearing valuables or assets
- Unkempt appearance of senior

- Suspicious activities/people at a senior's home
- Substandard care despite adequate finances, or senior complains she/he used to have money, but doesn't now
- Unusual bank account activity—withdrawals (especially when the senior withdraws large sums while accompanied by another person) and unexplained changes of bank accounts from one branch to another

Adult Protective Services

If you experience, witness, or suspect these activities, IMMEDIATELY contact **Adult Protective Services** in the California county where the senior resides. See listing in the white pages of the appropriate telephone directory under “**County Government.**”