



CATHI

Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are invited to e-mail individual questions caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Dear CATHI,

Question: I have been concerned that someone I care for may become the victim of abuse or exploitation. How can I know and what can I do?

Answer: Elder abuse can happen when an older person is vulnerable. Everyone deserves to be safe. You can know what to look for and what to do about elder abuse

Who might abuse an elder? Older adults can become victims of abuse by someone close to them, by a paid or unpaid caregiver, or even by a family member or friend. Sometimes the abuser is a complete stranger.

Who is at risk of elder abuse? Abuse can happen to anyone. Older adults who are dependent on others for basic care are at a greater risk of being abused.

Abuse can take many forms. It may be physical, sexual, or verbal. It could also be neglect, financial abuse or even self-neglect. Self-neglect can be a problem. Sometimes an older person neglects his or her own well-being or safety. He or she may live alone and eat poorly or live in unsafe or unclean conditions. The person may not seek the medical care he or she needs or may not know where to get help.

Signs of Elder Abuse. There are things you can look for to indicate elder abuse. There may be unexplained cuts, bruises, burns or other injuries. You might also notice a change in a person's behavior or emotional well-being. There could be signs such as extreme weight loss, bed sores or poor hygiene. A different kind of abuse is financial abuse or exploitation. This could be presented by changes in a person's financial situation, missing checks, unexplained withdrawals from their account or credit card charges or even property transfers.

Watch for Financial Scams. Scammers may try to get credit card, Social Security or bank account numbers. They may promise money, rewards, free trips, home repairs or other services. They may send fake bills or charity requests. They might use mail, phone calls, email, door-to-door sales or TV ads. People may be scammed by someone he or she knows or by a stranger. Everyone should be careful about giving out personal information.

If You Suspect Abuse...Don't confront the suspected abuser yourself, it may not help and it could make the older person more vulnerable. **Do** contact Adult Protective Services or another local social services agency. You can also speak to a professional such as a doctor, nurse, police officer or social worker.

If You Are the Victim of Abuse...Talk to someone you trust such as your doctor, religious leader or close friend. Physicians have a legal obligation to report abuse and to help an elder find safety. If you are in immediate danger, you should always call 911.

Note: This is for informational purposes only.
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For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 333-6981 in Greensboro and Guilford Co., in High Point/Jamestown (336) 884-6981 or the Caregiver Support Specialist, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
Completing the Care