

People Living with Dementia are at Risk for Abuse

Older adults who live alone, are socially isolated, or who are in fragile health may be more susceptible to experiencing abuse. A person living with dementia can be especially vulnerable to someone who takes advantage of them. Members of older adult communities, staff, and volunteers can help by being alert to indicators of abuse or neglect (listed below):

Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

- Physical injury, such as bruises, burns, skin tears, or broken bones
- Appearance of being malnourished or dehydrated, or unusual weight loss
- Poor hygiene
- Symptoms of anxiety, depression, or confusion
- Care partner shows anger, indifference, or aggressive behavior toward the person with dementia
- Hesitation to talk openly in the presence of a care partner
- Conflicting explanations of incidents by the family or caregivers
- Clothing that is inappropriate for the weather, dirty/torn, or ill-fitting
- Care partner makes criticizing, mocking, or demeaning remarks
- Unexplained withdrawal from activities

How to Help

Older adult communities can help those living with dementia by implementing dementia-friendly practices and by reporting suspected elder or dependent abuse to **Adult Protective Services (APS)**.

APS is a program administered by Aging & Independence Services (AIS), a division of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency.

APS serves older adults age 60 and older, as well as dependent adults age 18-59, who are being harmed, or threatened with harm, to ensure their right to safety and dignity.

Contact APS (**see below**) if you observe, suspect, or have knowledge of physical abuse, financial abuse, abduction, isolation, abandonment, neglect by others, or self-neglect. Anyone can report suspected abuse, not just legally mandated reporters.

Make a Report

Call AIS at (800) 339-4661

Any person can make a report through the 24-hour reporting line for suspected elder/dependent adult abuse. You can call anonymously, or your identity can be held in confidence.

To learn more, visit:

- **Aging & Independence Services** (www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov)
- **National Center on Elder Abuse** (www.ncea.acl.gov)

AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES



Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Older Adult Communities

For more resources and information on programs for older adults, visit www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov or call (800) 339-4661.



*In a dementia-friendly community, people with dementia are **included, engaged, and have a high quality of life.** Older adult communities, including senior centers and residential facilities, can help people with dementia live meaningful lives and reach their full potential.*



Making Your Community Dementia-Friendly

- Encourage the use of name tags.
- Promote participation in a range of social and leisure activities that are accessible and inclusive.
- Challenge stigma and build understanding across generations by organizing activities that include younger people.
- Provide an environment that is safe and accessible with quiet places to sit and relax, well-lit hallways, uncluttered spaces, and pictures and signs that identify areas, such as restrooms.
- Know about and direct people with dementia and their care partners to services.
- Offer support (e.g., chore services) that allows people with dementia to remain independent for as long as possible.
- Encourage dementia-friendly practices among the businesses and programs with which you work.

Older Adult Scams

Older adults are often targets of scams. Those living with dementia are particularly at risk as they have difficulty evaluating information. Share the following tips with those in your community to help keep older adults safe from scams:

- Never give your credit card, banking, Social Security, Medicare, or other personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call.
- Appoint someone you trust, or hire a professional, if you are having difficulty keeping track of your finances.
- To reduce unwanted telemarketing calls and mail solicitations, sign up for the "Do Not Call" list at 1-888-382-1222 and the "Opt Out Mailing" list at 1-888-567-8688.

For more information:

Email HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov to schedule a presentation on scam prevention for your organization. You may also request an electronic or print copy of the "Don't Get Hooked" scam prevention booklet.



10 Warning Signs & Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Difficulty planning or solving problems
3. Forgetting how to do familiar tasks
4. Confusion with dates, time, or place
5. Trouble with spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing objects and the inability to retrace steps
8. Altered decision making and poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social situations
10. Mood swings and changes in personality