

保護長者

免受疏忽照顧及遺棄

Protecting Elders Against Neglect and Abandonment



What are acts of neglect and abandonment of elders?

• Neglect

- Neglect is a severe or persistent lack of attention to an elder's basic needs (such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment, nursing care) that endangers or impairs the elder's health or safety.
- Neglect also includes the lack of provision of medicine and auxiliary equipment according to medical advice, which causes physical harm to the elder.
- If a formal service provider (e.g. Residential Care Homes for the Elderly, Integrated Home Care Services Teams, hospitals) fails to perform its caring responsibility and causes harm to the elder, the case can also be considered as neglect.

• Abandonment

- Abandonment is the act of abandoning an elder without justifiable reasons committed by a carer or guardian, which endangers or impairs the elder physically or psychologically. For example, a family member gives a wrong residential address to the hospital upon admission of the elder and makes it impossible for the hospital to contact him/her to discuss the medical and welfare issues of the elder.

What are the indicators of an elder being neglected or abandoned?

The following signs are shown on the part of the elder:

• Neglect

- serious loss of weight/severely underweight; dehydration or malnutrition
- suffering from persistent bed sores
- lacking necessary medication
- being dirty frequently
- wandering around alone frequently or for a prolonged period of time

• Abandonment

- staying alone on streets, in parks or malls for a prolonged period
- being dirty frequently

The behaviours or signs listed above are not necessarily evidence of elder abuse. However, if these indicators appear, we should be alerted and pay more attention to the elders.

Where necessary, assistance of professionals (e.g. social workers, medical personnel) should be sought as soon as possible.

What kind of support is available for carers of elders?

- Assistance should be sought if a carer is under great pressure or does not possess the skills of caring or health care knowledge.
- Carer support service is provided in District Elderly Community Centres, Neighbourhood Elderly Centres, Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly, the Integrated Home Care Services Teams and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services Teams. Through the provision of information, resources and training for carers, it helps raise the carers' ability in taking care of the elders and ease their pressure, also with an aim of preventing the problem of elder abuse.
- Government-subsidized Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and Day Care Centres for the Elderly also offer respite services for the elders, providing short-term residential or day care services to elders in need, so that their carers may get some rest.
- Frail elders with care needs and whose family members are unable to take care of them may apply for long term care services through Family Service Centres/Integrated Family Service Centres, Medical Social Services Units and various elderly services units. Scope of the long term care services include both community care and residential care services. Arrangements will be made for elder applicants to undergo a standardised care need assessment to ascertain their impairment level and service need, after which they will then be waitlisted for and allocated to the required services according to the assessment results.
- If there is a change of temperament for the elder, becoming short-tempered and suspicious, his/her family members should bring the elder to consult a doctor as soon as possible. The change is possibly an initial symptom of dementia rather than an intentional act to pick on his/her family. If family members can accept the difficulty of the elder, arrange the necessary medical care for him/her and change the ways they get along with the elders, the pressure of taking care of the elders could be relieved.

How to seek assistance?

- Persons in need of assistance may approach District Elderly Community Centres, Family Services Centres/Integrated Family Service Centres and in respective districts. Telephone numbers for enquiries and addresses of these centres are available on the Social Welfare Department website at <http://www.info.gov.hk/swd>.
- If the abused elder is receiving other social services, he/she may seek assistance from the social workers of the service unit concerned, who may arrange referrals where necessary.
- **Social Welfare Department Hotline: 2343 2255**
- **Caritas Family Crisis Support Centre Hotline: 18288**

何謂疏忽照顧及遺棄長者？

• 疏忽照顧

- 疏忽照顧是指嚴重或長期忽視長者生活上的基本需要（例如沒有為長者提供足夠飲食、衣服、住宿、醫療、護理等），以致危害長者的健康或生命安全。
- 疏忽照顧亦包括沒有根據醫生的指示給予長者其所需的藥物或輔助器具，使長者身體受到損害。
- 如果正規服務提供者（例如安老院舍、綜合家居照顧服務隊、醫院等）因沒有遵行照顧長者的責任而引致長者受到傷害，亦可以被視作疏忽照顧。

• 遺棄長者

- 遺棄長者是指在欠缺合理原因下，長者被負責提供照顧或監護者離棄，而對長者身體或心理造成傷害，例如家人將長者送入醫院時虛報地址，以致醫院無法聯絡照顧或監護者，商討有關長者的醫療及福利事宜。

怎樣可留意到長者遭受疏忽照顧或遺棄？

長者出現下列情況：

• 疏忽照顧

- 體重暴跌/極低、脫水或營養不良
- 長期長出褥瘡

- 欠缺所需的藥物治療
- 經常骯髒
- 經常或長時間在無人陪伴下到處遊蕩

• 遺棄

- 長期單獨逗留在街上/公園/商場等
- 長期骯髒
- 在醫院沒有親人探望

以上所列的行為或跡象，並非一定是虐待長者的證據，但當這些表徵出現時，大家應提高警覺，多關注長者的情況，如有需要，盡快尋求專業人士（例如社工、醫護人員）協助。

在照顧長者方面可以有甚麼支援？

- 如果照顧者感到壓力太大，或者不懂得照顧的技巧或護理的知識，應尋求協助。
- 長者地區中心、長者鄰舍中心、長者日間護理中心/單位、綜合家居照顧服務隊，和改善家居及社區照顧服務隊，都有提供護老者支援服務，透過提供資訊、資源和訓練予護老者，提升他們照顧長者的能力，和紓緩他們照顧的壓力，也藉此預防長者受虐的問題。
- 政府資助的安老院舍及長者日間護理中心，均提供「長者暫託服務」，為有需要的長者提供短暫的住宿或日間照顧服務，好讓護老者得到歇息的機會。

- 若體弱的長者有護理需要而家庭成員又無能力照顧，可向各長者服務單位、家庭服務中心/綜合家庭服務中心、醫務社會服務部為長者申請長期護理服務。服務範圍包括社區照顧及住宿照顧服務。長者會被安排接受統一評估以確定他們的身體缺損程度及服務需要，並按評估結果的建議獲輪候及編配所需服務。
- 如果長者脾氣轉變，甚至變得暴躁，以及多疑，家人便應盡早陪同長者看醫生，因為這可能是痴呆症初期的病徵，而並非長者存心針對家人。家人如能接納長者的困難，安排長者接受所需的醫療照顧，改變大家相處的模式，便能減輕照顧長者壓力。

如何求助？

- 可聯絡各區長者地區中心及家庭服務中心/綜合家庭服務中心，各中心的查詢電話及地址可參考社會福利署網頁：<http://www.info.gov.hk/swd>
- 如被虐長者正接受其他社會服務，可向該服務單位求助。如有需要，該服務單位社工可安排轉介。
- **社會福利署熱線：2343 2255**
- **明愛向晴熱線：18288**