

保護長者

免受精神虐待

Protecting Elders Against Psychological Abuse

What is psychological abuse?

- **Psychological abuse is the pattern of behaviour and/or attitudes towards an elder that endangers or impairs the elder's psychological health, including acts of insult, scolding, isolation, causing constant fear to the elder for a long duration, intrusion into the elder's privacy and unnecessary restriction of the elder's freedom of access and movement.**
- Examples include:
 - An elder being subject to constant cynical remarks, scolding, neglect, intimidation, nitpicking or loathing.
 - An elder being subject to frequent isolation and not allowed to contact his/her family members, grandchildren and friends.
 - An elder being forced to leave home or stay only in his/her room during daytime and forbidden to use the facilities and common area of the house.
- Psychological abuse often co-exists with other types of abuse, and may also worsen gradually and turn into physical abuse.

What are the indicators of psychological abuse of an elder?

- **The following signs are shown with regard to the elder's emotional state and behaviour:**
 - extremely passive
 - scared and nervous
 - afraid of the carer
 - distrust of others
 - depression
 - emotionally unstable
 - attempts suicide

The indicators and signs listed above are not necessarily evidence of elder abuse. However, if they appear, we should be alerted and pay more attention to the elders. Early assistance of professionals (e.g. social workers and medical personnel) should be sought where necessary.

How to prevent elders from being abused?

- **Instilling the concept of respecting the elders in the younger generation:** Parents should set a good example by respecting the elders in order to educate their children from a young age on respecting and caring the elders.
- **Settling a family dispute as early as possible:** Family disputes will worsen and become difficult to resolve over a period of time. Therefore, family members should have mutual understanding and enhance communication with each other. Problems should be settled as soon as possible and professional assistance should be sought where necessary.
- **Coping with stress:** When faced with stressful situation, family members should cope with it positively as soon as possible without restraining themselves or venting the frustration on the elders.
- **Carers support:** Family members taking care of the elders should acquire more knowledge and skills in this respect. They may exchange and share their experience with other carers and make use of the support services available in the community to help take care of frail elders at home.
- **Empowerment of elders:** Elders may participate in community activities more frequently to lead a life of enriched ageing. They should also learn how to protect themselves and seek early assistance if they are being abused.

How to seek assistance?

- Persons in need of assistance may approach District Elderly Community Centres, Family Services Centres/Integrated Family Service Centres 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**



身心
健康

何謂精神虐待？

- **精神虐待是指危害或損害長者心理健康的行為及/或態度，包括羞辱、喝罵、孤立、令長者長期陷於恐懼中、侵犯長者私隱，及在不必要的情況下限制長者的活動範圍或活動自由等。**
- 例如：
 - 長者經常被「單打」、喝罵、不理睬、恐嚇、挑剔或嫌棄。
 - 長者經常被隔離，不能與家人、孫兒、朋友等接觸。
 - 長者日間被逼離家或留在房間，不准使用家中的設施或共用的地方等。
- 精神虐待通常與其他形式的虐待行為同時出現，也可能會逐漸惡化而演變成身體虐待。

怎樣可留意到長者受精神虐待？

- **長者情緒及行為出現下列情況：**
 - 非常被動
 - 顯得恐懼、緊張
 - 害怕照顧者
 - 不信任別人
 - 情緒抑鬱

- 情緒波動
- 企圖自殺

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。

怎樣預防長者被虐？

- **向年輕一輩灌輸尊敬長者的觀念：**父母要作好榜樣，尊敬長者，讓子女自小有敬老愛老的意識。
- **及早處理家庭糾紛：**家庭糾紛日積月累會變得嚴重和難以處理，因此家庭成員要互相體諒，多溝通，有問題時及早處理，有需要時請專業人員協助。
- **處理壓力：**家庭成員遇到壓力時要盡早以正面的方式處理，不要抑壓或發洩在長者身上。
- **照顧者支援：**照顧長者的家庭成員應多學習照顧長者的知識和技巧，同時可與其他照顧者交流和分享經驗，並利用社區上的支援服務，協助照顧家中體弱的長者。
- **長者自強：**長者可多參加社區上的活動，充實自己的晚年生活，並學習保護自己，遇到被虐事件應及早求助。

被虐長者可如何求助？

- 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，可向該服務單位社工求助。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**