

Protecting Elderly Persons Against Abuse

What is elder abuse?

- Generally speaking, elder abuse refers to the commission or omission of any act that endangers the welfare or safety of an elderly person.
- Usually the elderly person being abused and the abuser are known to each other, or the abusers are responsible for the care of the elderly person being abused, such as family members living together or staff of the organisation providing services for the elderly person.

Physical abuse

- Physical abuse is physical injury or suffering inflicted on an elderly person non-accidentally or due to the absence of any preventive measures.

Psychological abuse

- Psychological abuse is the pattern of behaviour and/ or attitudes towards an elderly person that endangers or impairs the elderly person's psychological health, such as acts of insult, scolding, isolation, causing fear to the elderly person for a long duration, intrusion into the elderly person's privacy and unnecessary restriction of the elderly person's freedom of access and movement.

Financial abuse

- Financial abuse is any act which involves depriving an elderly person of his/ her wealth, or not acting in an elderly person's interests, such as taking away an elderly person's possessions, money or transferring his/ her assets without consent.

Neglect and Abandonment

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

- Abandonment is the act of abandoning an elderly person without justifiable reasons committed by a carer or guardian, which endangers or impairs the elderly person physically or psychologically. For example, upon the elderly person's hospitalisation, a family member gives a wrong correspondence address/ phone number, resists/ avoids contact repeatedly, or refuses to provide correspondence address/ phone number to the hospital which makes it impossible for the hospital to contact the carer or guardian to discuss the medical and welfare issues of the elderly person.

Sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse is the act of sexual assault on an elderly person such as exposure of sexual organ to an elderly person, indecent assault and rape, etc.

How can we help the elderly persons being abused?

- Elderly persons being abused or those who know them should seek assistance of relevant professionals (such as social workers, healthcare personnel and police officers, etc.) as early as possible so as to remedy the situation.
- Professionals of various disciplines will offer assistance to elderly persons being abused. Whenever necessary, they will join hands to formulate follow-up plans for the elderly persons and their family members through discussions or case conferences.
- Professionals will respect the views of the elderly persons as far as possible and provide them with protection and assistance in the most appropriate manner.
- Bearing in mind that the safety of the elderly persons is the prime concern, professionals will also help abusers solve their personal or family problems and, where possible, will try their best to help the elderly persons improve their relationship with their family members, including the abusers.

How to seek assistance?

- Persons in need of assistance may approach District Elderly Community Centres or Integrated Family Service Centres/ Integrated Services Centres in respective districts. Telephone numbers for enquiries and addresses of these centres are available on the Social Welfare Department website at <http://www.swd.gov.hk/>
- If the elderly person being abused is receiving other social services, he/ she may seek assistance from the social worker of the service unit concerned, who may arrange referrals where necessary.
- **Social Welfare Department Hotline : 2343 2255**
- **Family Crisis Support Centre (24-hour hotline) : 18288**
- **CEASE Crisis Centre 24-hour Hotline : 18281**



保護長者
免受虐待

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保護長者 – 免受虐待

何謂虐待長者？

- 一般而言，虐待長者是指傷害長者福祉或安全的行為，或不作出某些行為以致長者的福祉或安全受到傷害。
- 通常施虐者與受虐長者是互相認識的，或施虐者是負責照顧受虐長者，例如同住的家人，甚至是提供服務給長者的機構員工。

身體虐待

- 身體虐待是指對長者造成身體傷害或痛苦，而這些傷害乃非意外或由於沒有提供任何預防措施所引致的。

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，例如羞辱、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。

侵吞財產

- 侵吞財產是指任何涉及剝奪長者財富或妄顧長者利益的行為，例如在未經長者同意下取用長者的財物、金錢或轉移長者的資產。

疏忽照顧及遺棄

- 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、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通訊地址／聯絡電話，或多次抗拒／逃避接觸，或拒絕提供通訊地址／聯絡電話，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。

性侵犯

- 性侵犯是指性侵犯長者，例如施虐者向長者展示自己的性器官、非禮或強迫進行性行為等。

如何幫助受虐長者？

- 受虐長者或認識這些長者的人，應盡快向有關專業人士（例如社工、醫護人員、警方等）尋求協助，使情況得以改善。
- 各專業人士會為受虐長者提供援助，並會按需要，透過商討或會議，協力為長者及他／她們的家人制訂跟進計劃。
- 專業人員會盡量尊重長者的意見，用最適切的方法保護及幫助他／她們。
- 在保障長者安全的前提下，專業人員更會幫助施虐者解決其個人或家庭的問題，並在情況許可下，盡力協助長者與家人，包括與施虐者改善關係。

如何求助？

- 可聯絡各區長者地區中心或綜合家庭服務中心／綜合服務中心，各中心的查詢電話及地址可參考社會福利署網頁：
<http://www.swd.gov.hk/>
- 如受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
- 向晴熱線（24小時）：18288
- 芷若園24小時危機熱線：18281