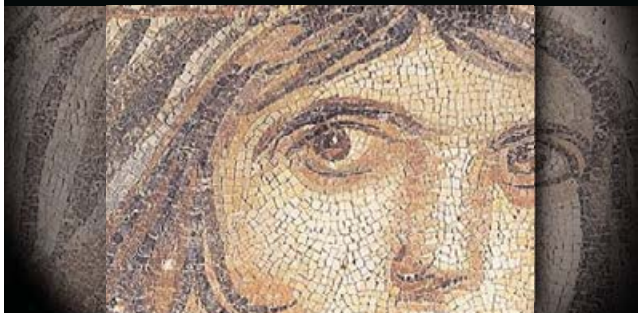


BRING LIFE BACK IN



ADULT  
PROTECTIVE  
SERVICES

FACTS

WHY OKDHS

PREVENTION

TERMINOLOGY

WARNING SIGNS



<http://www.okdhs.org/aps>

## FACTS

### **Elder Abuse**

Each year thousands of adult Oklahomans suffer abuse, neglect and exploitation by family members and other caregivers. Many victims are elderly, frail and vulnerable, cannot help themselves and depend on others to meet their basic needs.

Physical, behavioral, and environmental signs, or signs of financial abuse are not necessarily proof of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. They may be clues that a problem exists, however.

### **Authority**

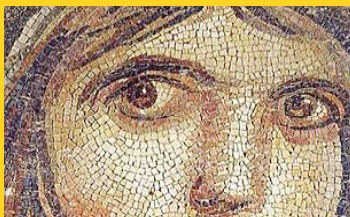
The Adult Protective Services program is authorized in Title 43A of the Oklahoma Statutes, sections 10-101 through 10-111.

The law states that any person who has reasonable cause to believe a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect or exploitation shall report the situation to authorities as soon as the person is aware of the situation. Reports can be made to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services APS program, or the local police or sheriff's department. Reporting is the individual responsibility of the person who believes the situation to be one that should be reported.

Although the reporting requirement applies to everyone, certain professionals are specifically required by law to report situations:

- Physicians
- Operators of emergency response vehicles
- Other medical professionals
- Social workers and mental health professionals
- Law enforcement officials
- Staff of domestic violence programs
- Long term care facility personnel
- Other health care professionals

# BRING LIFE BACK IN



## WHY OKDHS

### **Adult Protective Services**

According to the law, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services administers the Adult Protective Services (APS) program. When someone is concerned about the well-being of an elderly friend, neighbor or relative, adult protective services specialists listen and respond. APS specialists visit the elderly person and determine whether the person is a vulnerable adult and if maltreatment has occurred. The program helps the vulnerable adult find and obtain services.

Each year, APS receives and investigates more than 15,000 referrals.

### **OKDHS Helps Oklahomans**

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), the state's largest public agency, assists Oklahomans in need. Each month, OKDHS helps more than 600,000 children, people with disabilities, and elderly lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO REPORT ADULT MALTREATMENT

**contact your local OKDHS office**

To report maltreatment  
after regular business hours:

**OK ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-522-3511**

## PREVENTION

### **For Others . . .**

- Be aware of vulnerable adults with whom you have contact — relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, employees of stores where you shop
- Don't allow friends, relatives, or neighbors to isolate themselves
- Encourage older relatives and friends to make plans for financial management and care should they become unable to take care of themselves
- Don't volunteer to provide care or services you're not sure you can handle
- Learn to recognize the warning signs of possible adult maltreatment, including self neglect, and report suspicious situations to the police or Adult Protective Services as soon as you're aware of them

### **For Yourself . . .**

- Maintain social contacts and cultivate friendships
- Take care of your health through regular medical and dental checkups, and be honest with your medical advisers about any problems you experience
- Stay active, both physically and mentally
- Learn about the changes that are part of the normal aging process
- Be thoroughly familiar with your financial status, and have a plan in place for someone you trust to handle your finances should you become unable to do so, making sure your income and assets will be available to meet your needs
- Make your health care wishes known through an Advance Directive—make sure your doctor and lawyer have a copy, as well as family members
- If you need help, ask for it from someone you trust to help — a family member, doctor, lawyer, clergy, other helping professionals or a friend or neighbor
- Remember that life's circumstances can change in an instant, and be prepared to change with them

## TERMINOLOGY

*Adult maltreatment can happen to any vulnerable adult. It reaches across all ethnic and economic groups.*

### **What is Adult Maltreatment?**

Adult maltreatment can take any of the specific forms defined in section 10-103 of Title 43A of the Oklahoma Statutes.

**ABUSE** is causing or allowing infliction of physical pain, injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, unreasonable restraint or confinement, or mental anguish OR deprivation of nutrition, clothing shelter, health care or other care or services without which serious physical or mental injury is likely to occur by a caretaker or other person responsible for providing services to a vulnerable adult.

**NEGLECT** is failure to provide protection, failure to provide adequate shelter, nutrition, health care or clothing, or causing or permitting harm or risk of harm through the action, inaction or lack of supervision by someone providing direct services to a vulnerable adult.

**SELF NEGLECT** is the action or inaction of a vulnerable adult that causes the adult to fail to meet essential requirements for his or her own physical and mental health and safety due to the adult's lack of awareness or lack of ability.

**EXPLOITATION** is improper use of a vulnerable adult's financial, real or personal resources for the benefit of another person through the use of undue influence, coercion, harassment, duress, deception, false representation or false pretense.

**VERBAL ABUSE** is the use of words, sounds, gestures, actions, behaviors or other communication by a person responsible for providing services to a vulnerable adult that is likely to cause a reasonable person to experience humiliation, intimidation, fear, shame or degradation.

**SEXUAL EXPLOITATION** is a caretaker causing, allowing or encouraging a vulnerable adult to engage in prostitution or lewd, obscene, or pornographic photographing, filming or depiction of the vulnerable adult.

## WARNING SIGNS

Each year thousands of adult Oklahomans suffer abuse, neglect and exploitation by family.

### **Behavioral Signs**

#### **1. VULNERABLE ADULT**

- Fear
- Anxiety, agitation
- Anger
- Isolation, withdrawal
- Depression
- Non-responsiveness, resignation, ambivalence
- Contradictory statements, implausible stories
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Confusion or disorientation

#### **2. CAREGIVER**

- Prevents vulnerable adult from speaking to or seeing visitors
- Anger, indifference, aggressive behavior toward vulnerable adult
- History of substance abuse, mental illness, criminal behavior, or family violence
- Lack of affection toward vulnerable adult
- Flirtation or coyness as possible indicator of inappropriate sexual relationship
- Conflicting accounts of incidents
- Speaks of vulnerable adult as a burden
- Believes vulnerable adult could do more self care than actually capable of

### **Environmental Signs**

- Accumulations, hoarding
- Inadequate shelter
- Drug paraphernalia
- Inadequate or spoiled food
- Offensive odors
- Multiple prescription bottles from multiple doctors or pharmacies
- Inadequate sanitation for pets
- Vermin infestation

*There is no guarantee that you or someone you love will never experience maltreatment. You can lessen the likelihood of maltreatment, however.*

### **Financial Signs**

- Frequent expensive gifts from vulnerable adult to caregiver
- Vulnerable adult's personal belongings, papers, credit cards missing
- Numerous unpaid bills
- A recent will when vulnerable adult seems incapable of writing will
- Signing over deeds to property
- Caregiver's name added to bank account
- Vulnerable adult unaware of monthly income
- Vulnerable adult signs on loan
- Frequent checks made out to "cash"
- Unusual activity in bank account
- Irregularities on tax return
- Vulnerable adult unaware of reason for appointment with banker or attorney
- Caregiver's refusal to spend money on vulnerable adult
- Signatures on checks or legal documents that do not resemble vulnerable adult's

### **Physical Signs**

- Injury that has not been cared for properly
- Injury that is inconsistent with the explanation for its cause
- Pain when touched
- Cuts, puncture wounds, burns, bruises, welts
- Dehydration or malnutrition without illness-related cause
- Poor skin color
- Sunken eyes or cheeks
- Inappropriate administration of medication
- Soiled clothing or bed
- Lack of necessities such as food, water, or utilities
- Lack of personal effects, pleasant living environment, personal items
- Forced isolation



### **Reporting is an individual responsibility.**

- ❑ Anyone who reports a situation in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability.
- ❑ Anyone who intentionally fails to report a situation can be found guilty of a misdemeanor upon conviction.
- ❑ Anyone who willfully or recklessly makes a false report can be civilly liable for both actual and punitive damages.
- ❑ The law prohibits an employer from retaliating against an employee for reporting situations or suspected adult maltreatment.



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