

DISCLAIMER

The following form is provided by FindLaw, a business unit of West Group, for informational purposes only and is intended to be used as a guide prior to consultation with an attorney familiar with your specific legal situation. FindLaw and West Group are not engaged in rendering legal or other professional advice, and this form is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney. If you require legal advice, you should seek the services of an attorney by linking to FindLaw.com. © 2001 West Group. All rights reserved.

Caring For Your Elderly Relatives—Applications

Checklist: Recognizing The Signs Of Elder Abuse

Abuse of an elderly person can be physical, mental, or financial and takes a variety of forms. If you observe any blatant signs of abuse, such as name-calling, threats, intimate contact, unreasonable restraints, withholding of food or medication, etc., you should take immediate steps to stop it. Elder abuse, however, is rarely that obvious.

Many of the conditions and events listed below may be caused by occurrences unrelated to abuse, but then, maybe your relative is being abused. Use this checklist to quantify possible signs. If you notice the following occurrences or conditions, it is important to carefully monitor your relative's care or alert the authorities.

• **Physical or mental abuse may be causing the following conditions:**

- Recurring or unexplained injuries
- A combination of new and old injuries
- Injuries without underlying diseases, or incompatible with medical history, including cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, bruises, welts, or discoloration
- Any injury that looks like it may have been caused by cigarettes, caustics, acids, friction from ropes or chains, or contact with other objects
- Poorly treated or untreated injuries
- Injuries in areas usually covered by clothing
- Poor skin condition, poor skin hygiene, or lice
- Absence of hair and/or hemorrhaging below the scalp
- Dehydration or malnutrition that is unrelated to illness
- Loss of weight
- Soiled clothing or bedding

- ___ An environment that is excessively dirty or smells of feces or urine
- ___ Inadequate clothing
- ___ Depression or withdrawal
- ___ Hesitation to talk openly
- ___ Fearfulness of caregivers
- ___ Confusing or contradictory statements by an otherwise competent senior
- ___ Resignation or denial
- ___ Implausible explanations of injuries or conditions
- ___ Unexplained agitation
- ___ Denial of an injured state

- **Financial abuse may be causing the following conditions:**

- ___ A sudden lack of knowledge about financial matters
- ___ A sudden refusal to make financial decisions or pay bills without consulting another person
- ___ Unusual or inappropriate banking activity
- ___ Signatures on checks or other financial documents other than your relative's, particularly when your relative can no longer write
- ___ The creation of a power of attorney or will, when your relative is incapacitated
- ___ Numerous unpaid bills and overdue rent when someone is supposed to be handling your relative's finances
- ___ Lost valuables

- **Caregiver behavior that should raise suspicion of abuse includes**

- ___ The caregiver does not allow your relative to speak for herself.

- ___ The caregiver does not allow your relative to visit with others out of the caregiver's presence.
- ___ The caregiver expresses anger or ambivalence towards your relative.
- ___ The caregiver suggests that your relative's injuries or undesirable behavior is deliberate or self-inflicted.
- ___ The caregiver has a history of abusing others.
- ___ The caregiver has problems with alcohol or drugs.
- ___ The caregiver is inappropriately affectionate or sexual.
- ___ The caregiver restricts the activity of or isolates your relative.
- ___ The caregiver's explanation of an injury or incident conflicts with your relative's account.
- ___ The caregiver is unwilling or reluctant to comply with instructions from other care providers.
- ___ The caregiver is inappropriately defensive when asked to explain an injury or occurrence.
- ___ The caregiver has unjustified control of your relative's finances.
- ___ The caregiver refuses services that your relative needs.
- ___ The caregiver is unusually concerned about the amount of money being expended on your relative's care.