



Adult Protective Services

What is physical or sexual abuse?

Physical abuse is an intentional act that may include slapping, hitting, beating, bruising, or causing someone physical pain, injury, or suffering. This also could include the inappropriate use of drugs or confining an adult against their will, such as locking someone in a room or tying them to furniture. Sexual abuse includes physical force, threats, or coercion that leads to non-consensual touching, fondling, intercourse or other sexual activities. This is particularly true with vulnerable adults who are unable to give consent or comprehend the nature of these actions.



What are the signs of physical or sexual abuse?

- ✓ Bruising, wounds, fractures, burns, or bed sores
- ✓ Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases or genital infections
- ✓ Torn, stained, or bloody underwear
- ✓ Protection of the genital area when assisted with intimate care, particularly if the alleged abuser is present
- ✓ Indications of fearfulness or hyper-vigilance when a particular person is present
- ✓ Signs that the individual is over- or under-medicated
- ✓ Clothing that is not appropriate to the weather (for example, the victim wears long sleeves when it's hot)
- ✓ Indications that someone is controlling access to the individual or restricting their movements
- ✓ Broken eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other devices
- ✓ Signs that someone is limiting the individual's access to communication or mobility aids (for example, battery packs removed from wheelchairs)
- ✓ Frequent use of the emergency room or hospital care
- ✓ Changing doctors frequently, also known as "doctor hopping," so that no one has an accurate or complete record of injuries

What are some risk factors of physical or sexual abuse? *

- ✓ Family crisis or family members who are suffering from stress
- ✓ Domestic issues causing violence or conflict in the home
- ✓ Mental illness and/or substance use by the caregiver or individual
- ✓ Social isolation and loneliness

*The presence of risk factors doesn't necessarily mean that the adult is being abused.

What if I'm not sure?

Do you have a "feeling" about a situation but aren't sure of the details? APS professionals are trained to assess each situation and offer services and support to promote safety, independence, and quality of life.



CONTACT APS

Reach out to your local APS agency if you notice signs of physical or sexual abuse.

If the suspected abuse is an emergency—a life-threatening situation or one involving immediate danger—call the police or 911 immediately.

- ✓ [To report abuse of an adult at risk](#) (age 18 to 59), call your county or tribal helpline.
- ✓ [To report abuse of an elder adult at risk](#) (age 60+), call your county or tribal helpline or the Elder Abuse Hotline at 833-586-0107.



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