

DELAWARE  
**APS**

Adult Protective Services

Hope

Prevention

Support

Safety

Advocate



**DELAWARE HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR AGING  
AND ADULTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**



# The Adult Protective Services Program

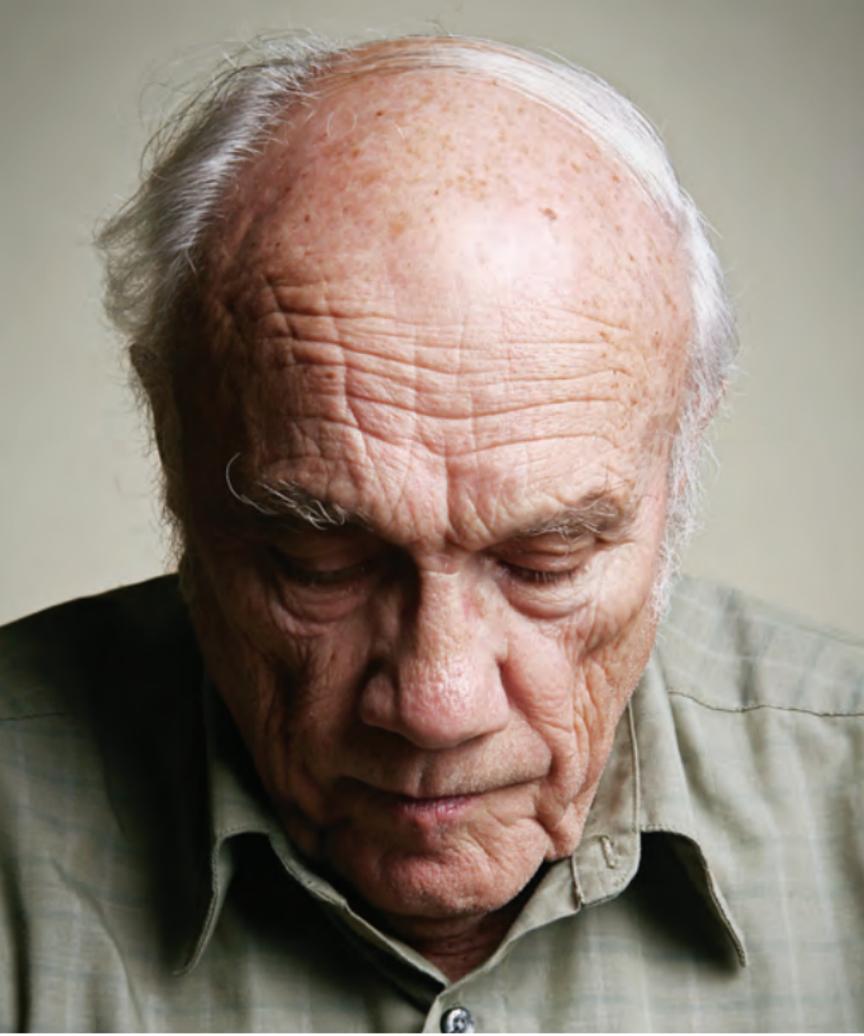
The Adult Protective Service Program was created in 1982 under Title 31 Chapter 39 of the Delaware Code. It is a mandated program within DHSS Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities. Adult Protective Services provides social services intervention for physically or mentally impaired adults, age eighteen and over, who are living in the community and who are subject to abuse, neglect or exploitation.



# Adult Protective Services

- Receive reports of adult abuse (including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, neglect, and self-neglect.)
- Investigate these reports
- Assess victim's risk
- Assess victim's capacity to understand his/her risk and ability to give informed consent
- Develop a case plan
- Arrange for emergency shelter, medical care, legal assistance, and supportive services
- Service monitoring
- Evaluation

WHAT DOES ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES DO?



Elder abuse is one of the most underreported social problems in our society today. It is estimated that at least 5 million seniors are victimized yearly. Sadly, nearly 84% of these incidents go unreported.

Impaired adults are often not able to protect themselves against incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Many do not know where to turn for assistance. Others are incapable of seeking help because they are physically dependent, unable to leave their home, or use a telephone. Many are simply too embarrassed or frightened to ask for help. They may be reluctant to press charges against the abuser, especially if the abuser is a family member. We must bring an end to their silent suffering.

# Definition of Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse can be defined as the mistreatment of an elderly or disabled person who is dependent on someone else for basic needs.

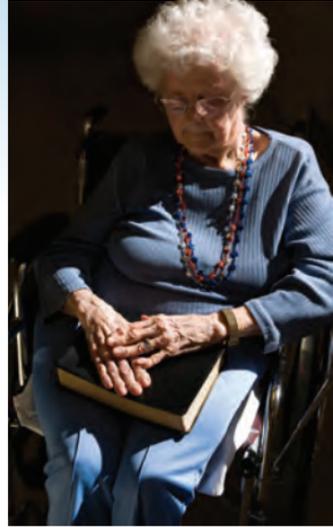
## Elder Abuse may include:

- Pushing, slapping, pinching, rough handling
- Making derogative or threatening statements
- Misuse of financial resources
- Any non-consensual sexual contact
- Ignoring or leaving a vulnerable person alone for a long period of time
- Deprivation of food, shelter, or healthcare
- Inappropriate use of medications
- Isolation from friends, family or activities
- Name calling, excessive criticizing, or humiliation

**WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?**

# Why does Elder Abuse happen?

- Discord in family created by the elder person's presence.
- History and pattern of violent interactions within the family.
- Social isolation or stresses on one or more family members who care for the older adult.
- Lack of knowledge of the aging process and caregiver skills.
- Financial burdens related to an aging parent.
- Financial dependency on older adult by caregiver.
- Emotional and psychological problems of the caregiver.



More commonly, the abuse is related to changes in living situations and relationships brought about by the older person's growing frailty and dependence on others for companionship and for meeting basic needs.

## **Domestic Violence Grown Old**

Spouses make up a large percentage of elder abusers, and a substantial proportion of these cases are domestic violence grown old.



- Unexplained or untreated injuries or bruises
- Sudden changes in mood, attitude or behavior
- Evidence of unreasonable confinement
- Unexplained or sudden depletion of financial resources
- Missing money, jewelry, checkbook, credit cards, etc.
- Hesitation of the elder to talk openly about any problems
- Inadequate and unsafe living conditions
- Wearing soiled clothing for several days
- Legal documents or contracts signed by a person who lacks capacity to understand

**WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF ELDER ABUSE?**

# Duty to Report

Any person having reasonable cause to believe that an adult person is infirm or incapacitated and is in need of protective services shall report such information to the Department of Health and Social Services.



Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report shall have immunity from any liability.

Reports can be made anonymously if the individual desires. Confidentiality will be strictly observed.

# What will happen when you call?



- Your call will be confidential.
- A social worker or nurse will investigate the situation.
- Adult Protective Services will work with the victim as well as the abuser to resolve the problem.

## Report suspected Elder Abuse to Adult Protective Services

Tell:

- What happened
- Who it happened to
- Where and when it happened

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STOP ELDER ABUSE?**

# DHSS Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

## New Castle County

University Office Plaza  
256 Chapman Road • Suite 200  
Newark, DE 19702  
(302) 453-3820  
(800) 223-9074  
Fax (302) 453-3836

## Kent/Sussex Counties

Milford State Service Center  
18 North Walnut Street 1st Floor  
Milford, DE 19963  
(302) 424-7310  
(800) 223-9074  
Fax (302) 422-1346

## TDD Statewide

(302) 453-3837 New Castle  
(302) 422-1415 Kent/Sussex

Visit our website for  
information about our statewide services and programs  
[dhss.delaware.gov/dsaapd](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dsaapd)



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**HOW DO YOU CONTACT ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES?**