Adult Protective Services believes that all adults should be safe, valued, heard and treated with dignity.

Do You Suspect Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation?

Contact Us:
Adult Protective Services Online Reporting:
https://reportadultabuse.dhs.tn.gov

Adult Protective Services Call Center:
1-888-APS-TENN (277-8366)
TTY: 1-800-270-1349

Identified abusers may be placed on a state abuse registry. To learn if someone is listed on the registry, visit:
https://apps.health.tn.gov/abuseregistry/

Tennessee Area Agencies on Aging and Disability can be a resource for assistance.
1-866-TENNOPT (836-6678)

TN Department of Human Services

https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/adults/adult-protective-services.html

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) policy, Adult Protective Services is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write HHS, Director, Office for Civil Rights, Room 506-F, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201 or call (202) 619-0403 (Voice) or (202) 619-3257 (TTY).
HHS is an equal opportunity provider and employer. You may also write Tennessee Department of Human Services, Office of General Counsel, James K. Polk Building, 505 Deaderick Street, Nashville, TN 37243, (615) 313-4700.

Tennessee Department of Human Services, Authorization No. 345943, March 2024, 5,000 copies. This public document was promulgated at a cost of $0.22 per copy.

TN Department of Human Services | Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services

Stopping abuse of the elderly and vulnerable adults may start with you.

What is Adult Protective Services?

Adult Protective Services (APS) is mandated by Tennessee state law to investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial abuse/exploitation of vulnerable adults (18 and older) who are at risk and unable to protect themselves due to physical or cognitive impairment, including diminished capacity. Examples include being unable to:

- Manage their own resources,
- Carry out activities of daily living,
- Protect themselves from neglect and/or
- Avoid hazardous or abusive situations without assistance from others

How Can APS Help?

When service needs are identified and available, APS staff will discuss those services with the vulnerable adult. While the law mandates that the investigation is **not** voluntary for the vulnerable adult, the acceptance of services **is**. Adults have the right to self-determination and may decline the offer of services. If the vulnerable adult refuses services and does not appear to have mental capacity to make such a decision, legal intervention may be considered after all other alternatives have been explored.

Know The Signs

Physical abuse

- Unexplained bruising or broken bones
- Frequent injuries, with the excuse of "accidents"
- Signs of being restrained, such as rope marks on wrists

Emotional abuse

- Isolation of the vulnerable adult and/or the caregiver refuses to allow visits with the vulnerable adult alone
- Caregiver doesn't allow vulnerable adults to make or receive phone calls
- Threatening, belittling, or controlling behavior by the caregiver
- Withdrawn, anxious, or fearful

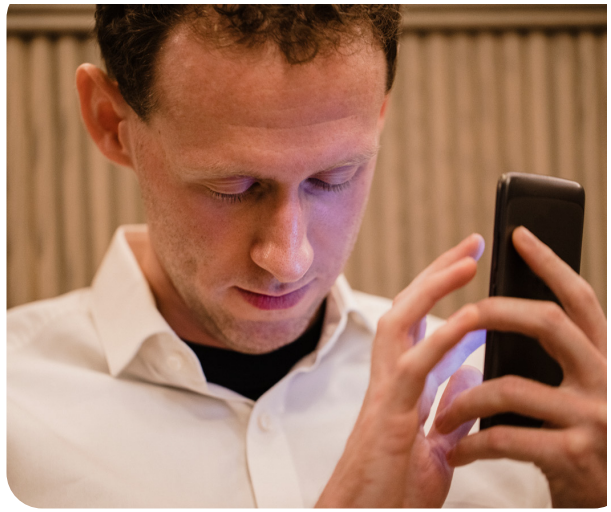
Sexual abuse

- Frequent genital or urinary tract irritation and infections
- Bruising to genitals, upper torso, or upper thighs
- Vulnerable adult indicates discomfort with caregiver while bathing, dressing, or toileting
- Little to no privacy provided for bathing or dressing

Neglect (including self-neglect)

- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration
- Untreated physical problems, such as bed sores
- Poor personal hygiene
- Unsuitable clothing for the weather
- Unsafe living conditions - no heat or running water, faulty electrical wiring, other fire hazards; presence of dirt, bugs, or soiled bedding/clothing
- Failure to seek needed medical treatment or refuses to allow caregivers to provide needed care

Financial exploitation

- Sudden changes in the vulnerable adult's financial condition
- Financial activity the vulnerable adult couldn't have done, such as an ATM withdrawal when the account holder is bedridden
- No food in the home, disconnected utilities, etc and the home is not maintained

If you suspect a vulnerable adult is a victim of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, it is your legal obligation to notify APS at:
1-888-APS-TENN (277-8366)