

Do you know an older adult who is being abused, neglected, or cheated? You can help by reporting suspected cases of abuse.

Abuse can happen to older adults of any age. Abuse can happen even if they have money and good health. While elder abuse can occur at any age or sex, women over the age of 75 who have mental or physical illness are at higher risk.

This abuse is often inflicted by the person who takes care of them. Sometimes strangers also hurt or attempt to cheat senior citizens.

How are older adults abused, neglected or cheated?

Abuse is:

- Physically hurting them
- Forcing sexual contact
- Making them feel bad about themselves
- Locking them up
- Being mean to them

Neglect is when a senior citizen does not have:

- The care they need
- Adequate food and water
- A safe and clean place to live

Cheating an older adult means:

- Taking their money or property
- Selling them something that is not worth the money
- Tricking them into giving up their money or property

What are the signs an older adult is being abused, neglected or cheated?

An older adult *may* be abused if he or she:

- Seems frightened or confused
- Is uneasy talking or answering questions
- Seems thin, tired, or pale
- Has bruises, swelling, or other signs of injury
- Is never seen outside the house
- Is cared for by someone sick, mentally disabled, or using drugs or alcohol
- Is cared for by someone who needs their money
- Lives in an unsafe house
- Lives with more pets than they can clean up after
- Stops paying rent or water, gas and light bills
- Stops buying food or medicine

It may also be abuse if you hear unusual sounds from the home.

Most older adults don't reveal that they are being abused. They may be ashamed or too sick to tell someone. Some are too afraid of their abuser to tell anyone. This is why it is **important for other people to report abuse.**



What if you suspect an older adult is being abused, neglected, or cheated?

You should report it immediately to:

Tennessee Dept. of Human Services
Adult Protective Services at
1-888-277-8366. It's a free call.

You do not have to give your name when you call. You do not have to prove there is abuse.

Adult Protective Services will check to see if there is abuse, neglect or cheating. They will call the police if there is abuse. They help any adult age 18 or older.

Any relative having personal knowledge that an older adult has been subject to or threatened with willful abuse, neglect or exploitation may seek an order of protection on behalf of the adult.

IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO KNOW ABOUT ELDER ABUSE AND NOT REPORT IT.

Older adults can also get help from Legal Aid by calling 1-800-821-1312. It is a free call. An agency or someone who knows the senior can also call for them.

How does Legal Aid help?

- We will call or meet with the older adult
- We will see if he or she wants our help
- We will help them find the care or services they need

What if the older adult does not want our help?

They have the right to say no. The only time a senior has to get help is if a judge says so.

LEGAL AID OF EAST TENNESSEE

MISSION STATEMENT

Legal Aid of East Tennessee's mission is strengthening communities and changing lives through high-quality legal services. Our vision is an East Tennessee where justice is a community value and no one faces a legal problem alone. LAET works respectfully with individual clients and the client community to identify and meet their needs for legal representation and empowerment.

** This brochure has information about adult abuse laws in Tennessee. The laws on adult abuse are different in each state. This brochure does not take the place of advice from an attorney. Each case is different and requires individual attention.

OFFICE HOURS AND LOCATIONS
Legal Aid of East Tennessee offices are open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Executive Director—Sheri Fox
(423) 402-4756

311 W. Walnut Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
(423) 928-8311
(800) 821-1312
Fax (423) 928-9488

Linea Gratis en Español (866) 408-6573

No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

This pamphlet is intended for general information only. The circumstances of every case are different and need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. This is not a substitute for the advice of a lawyer. Also, the law may change and may be different from county to county.

Updated June 2019



Brought to you by the First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability with funds from Title VII of the Older Americans Act.

3211 N. Roan Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
Phone: 1-800-836-6678 (toll-free)
ftaad.org

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ELDER ABUSE



www.laet.org

Serving Bledsoe, Bradley, Blount, Carter, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington Counties.