



Elder Abuse & Fraud

Elder abuse is a growing problem. While we don't know all of the details about why abuse occurs or how to stop its spread, we do know that help is available for victims. Concerned citizens can spot the warning signs of possible problems, and make a call for help if an elder is in need of assistance. For additional information concerning elder affairs, visit the Florida Department of Elder Affairs at www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us, or by calling the Department of Elder Affairs' Elder helpline at 1-800-963-5337. Locally, contact the Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, Inc., at:

Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, Inc.

Funded partly by the Department of Elder Affairs

2285 First Street, Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Telephone: 239-332-4233/**FAX:** 239-332-3596

TDD: 239-332-7353 **Toll Free:** 800-398-4233 (in the State of Florida)

Electronic mail: General Information: info@aaaswfl.org Website: www.aaaswfl.org.

The Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida, Inc., provides informative pamphlets and resources concerning Elder Abuse. Visit their website for free flyers on Elder Abuse and other resources.

www.aaaswfl.org/flyers/ElderAbuse_HurtsUsAll.pdf

Reporting Elder Abuse via the Department of Elder Affairs' Florida Abuse Hotline:

Reporting Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation To The *Florida Abuse Hotline*

BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE:

- Victim name, address or location, approximate age, race and sex;
- Physical, mental or behavioral indications that the person is infirm or disabled;
- Signs or indications of harm or injury, including a physical description if possible; Relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the victim, if possible. If the relationship is unknown, a report will still be taken if other reporting criteria are met.

THREE WAYS TO MAKE A REPORT:

- **TELEPHONE:** 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)
- **TDD (Telephone Device for the Deaf):** 1-800-453-5145
- **FAX:** 1 (800) 914-0004
- **VOICE MAIL MESSAGE:** 1 (800) 770-0953 When lines are busy and you are unable to wait, you may leave the report information in the voice mailbox. It is extremely difficult for hotline counselors to attempt call-backs so **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY AND LEAVE COMPLETE INFORMATION AS REQUESTED ABOVE OR A REPORT MAY NOT BE TAKEN.** You have five minutes to leave the information.
1-800-770-0953

NOTIFICATION OF REPORT:

- Telephone reporters will always be told prior to concluding your conversation, whether the information provided has been accepted as a report.
- For faxed information, notification will be provided only when additional information is needed to accept a report, or when the report does not fall within the jurisdiction of Children & Families. Your fax number must be clearly indicated on your report. Although you may request confirmation, you can assume that your report was accepted if you provided your fax number and receive no response from the Hotline.
- • Voice mail messages will not be confirmed unless you leave a fax number for a response as indicated above. The Hotline cannot provide telephone confirmations.

Exploitation of the Elderly:

A large segment of Lee County population is comprised of senior citizens. Unfortunately all too often senior citizens become victim to exploitation. According to the Florida State Statutes, Exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult means:

“Knowingly, by deception or intimidation obtaining or using, or endeavoring to obtain or use, an elderly person’s (or disabled adult’s) funds, assets, or property with the intention to temporarily or permanently deprive the elderly person or disabled adult of the use, benefit, or possession of the funds, assets, or property, or to benefit someone other than the elderly person, by a person who:

1. Stands in a position of trust and confidence with the elderly person or disabled adult; or
2. Has a business relationship with the elderly person or disabled adult; or

Obtaining or using, endeavoring to obtain or use, or conspiring with another to obtain or use an elderly person or disabled adult’s assets, funds, or property with the intent to temporarily or permanently deprive the elderly person or disabled adult of the use, benefit, or possession of the funds, assets, or property, or to benefit someone other than the elderly person or disabled adult, by a person who knows, or reasonably should know that the elderly person lacks the capacity to consent.”

Basically, exploitation is the misuse of a vulnerable adult’s income or other financial resources. The person’s age is not the only factor to take into consideration. The elderly person **MUST** also show some lack of ability to consent, for reasons such as short-term memory loss, Alzheimer’s disease, or some other infirmity of aging.

It is important for family members, friends and caretakers to try and maintain contact with their elderly relatives and friends. A good resource to obtain assistance for the elderly is the Florida Department of Elder Affairs website located at www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us

An invaluable resource made available to seniors by the Florida Attorney General’s Office for Fraud Prevention is available at the AGO website, www.myfloridalegal.com or available for download at www.myfloridalegal.com/seniors_brochure.pdf.

Additional information on Communities Against Senior Exploitation can be located under the Crime Prevention tab of the Lee County Sheriff’s Office website, or by clicking this tab to go to the Crime Prevention pages.



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