

# Education Update

**Trinitas Regional Medical Center  
Department of Education, Training  
and Development**

## Elder Abuse

- Elder abuse is any deliberate physical, sexual or psychological attack on a vulnerable adult, unreasonable confinement, or the deliberate withholding of services that are necessary to maintain a person's physical and mental health.
- Elder abuse can be:
  - physical or sexual (unexplained or unusual injuries, cuts, burns or bruises; isolation, threats)
  - psychological (isolation, threats, refusal on the part of caregivers to allow travel, visits by other family/friends, or attendance at church)
  - Exploitation/financial (misuse of the elderly adults' income or financial resources, overdue rent and utility bills, missing checks)
  - medical (withholding or improper administration of medications or medical treatments)
  - self-neglect (malnutrition, lack of heat, electricity or water, unclean living arrangement).
- It is important not to view the signs and symptoms listed above as single indicators of abuse or neglect. A total assessment must be made of the patient, using the above indicators as guidelines.

***If you have any questions or concerns about a particular patient, please talk to your immediate supervisor or contact the Social Work Department.***

### **Individuals who are at high risk may include:**

- Ages 75 or older
- Women (more women than men are abused)
- Dependent (the victim relies on the abuser for basic needs)
- Elders with mental or physical impairment

### **Reasons for Elder Abuse May Include:**

- Resentment
- Longer life spans
- Life crises
- Lack of financial resources
- Caretaker impairment
- Lack of support for the caregiver of an elder

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## How Can You Help?

- Be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect.
- Document accurately.
  - Size, pattern, age, description and location of all injuries.
  - Emotional status, as well as physical appearance.
  - Non-bodily evidence of abuse, for example, torn clothing.
  - Patient/caregiver interaction.
  - Any inconsistencies noted in the statement of the origin of the injuries which are suggestive of abuse.
- Know your reporting responsibilities. Be aware of the various agencies that can provide support for the victims.