



People Living with Dementia are at Risk for Abuse

Older adults who live alone, are socially isolated, or who are in fragile health may be more susceptible to experiencing abuse. A person living with dementia can be especially vulnerable to someone who takes advantage of them. Food service workers can help by being alert to indicators of abuse or neglect:

- Physical injury, such as bruises, burns, skin tears, or broken bones
- Appearance of being malnourished or dehydrated, or unusual weight loss
- Poor hygiene
- Signs of anxiety, depression, or confusion
- Care partner shows anger or indifference toward the person with dementia
- Hesitation or fear to talk openly in the presence of a care partner
- Clothing that is inappropriate for the weather, dirty/torn, or ill-fitting
- Strained or tense relationships or frequent arguments between the care partner and person with dementia
- Sudden withdrawal from library activities
- Frequently asks for assistance with faxing, scanning, or printing legal or financial forms

How to Help

Library staff and volunteers can help those living with dementia by implementing dementia-friendly practices and by reporting suspected elder or dependent abuse to **Adult Protective Services (APS)**. APS is a program administered by Aging & Independence Services (AIS), a department of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency.

APS serves older adults age 60 and older, as well as dependent adults age 18-59, who are being harmed, or threatened with harm, to ensure their right to safety and dignity.

Contact APS (see below) if you observe, suspect, or have knowledge of physical abuse, financial abuse, abduction, isolation, abandonment, neglect by others, or self-neglect. Anyone can report suspected abuse, not just legally mandated reporters.

Make a Report

Call AIS at (800) 339-4661

Members of the public can make an anonymous report through this 24-hour reporting line for suspected elder or dependent adult abuse.

Those considered mandated reporters, are required to file a report by phone or online at **www.sandiego.leapsportal.net/LEAPSIntake**

To learn more, visit:

- **National Center on Elder Abuse**
www.ncea.acl.gov



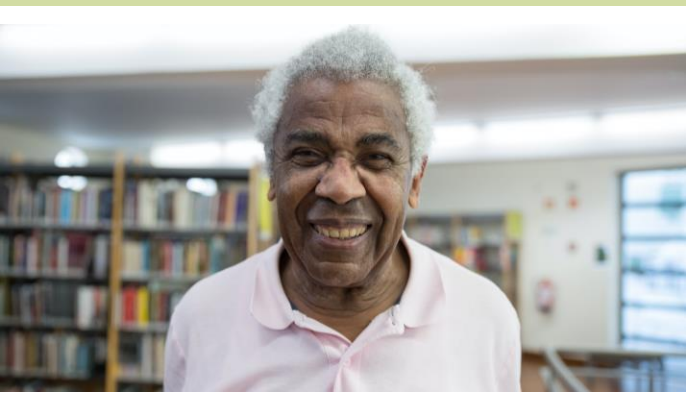
Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for

Libraries

For more resources and information for older adults, call (800) 339-4661 or visit **www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov**



In dementia-friendly communities, more people understand dementia, there is less fear and avoidance of those with dementia, and people living with dementia are included and feel supported to live independently for longer. Libraries can be a key part to creating a dementia-friendly community because they are respected public institutions that facilitate access to resources for people with dementia and their families.



10 Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with dates, time, or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words
7. Misplacing objects; unable to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood or personality

To learn more, visit [alz.org/10signs](https://www.alz.org/10signs) for a detailed overview of the signs and symptoms.



Dementia-Friendly Communication Skills

Approach gently and from the front: Say who you are and greet the person warmly.

Use positive body language: Smile, make eye contact, and stay at their level.

Speak clearly and calmly: Use a warm, steady tone of voice.

Keep it simple: Ask one question or give one idea at a time.

Slow down: Give them time to hear, process, and respond.

Be patient and kind: Show that you're listening and that what they say matters.

Connect emotionally: Stay with their feelings, even if the topic changes.

Offer to guide them: Walk them to the section or area they are looking for.

Be understanding of expressions: This may include talking, calling out, or repeating questions.

Making Your Library Dementia-Friendly

Environment & Accessibility

- Make entrances easy to see and clearly mark glass doors.
- Use bold, high-contrast signs.
- Provide sufficient lighting and natural light.
- Keep spaces clutter-free.
- Offer a family/unisex restroom to allow a person with dementia to be assisted by their care partner.

Community Engagement

- Coordinate space for dementia education, support groups, and brain health seminars.
- Start a book club or provide a book club kit that includes a book on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, as well as a flyer listing community resources (refer to www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov for resource information).
- Display books and materials about dementia, caregiving, and brain health awareness during themed months.
- Host a Memory Café where people with dementia and their care partners can gather in a comfortable, supportive space (refer to www.memorycafedirectory.com for more information).

Education & Resources

- Request a free *Dementia Friends* session for your staff or community to learn practical ways to support individuals living with dementia and their care partners:

☎ (858) 495-5500

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