



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. Members of older adult communities, staff, and volunteers 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
- Unexplained withdrawal from activities
- Confusion about finances or mention of losing money, checks or credit cards
- Strained or tense relationships or frequent arguments between the care partner and person with dementia

How to Help

Older adult communities 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.

Mandated reporters, including staff at senior centers and assisted living facilities, 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 Older Adult Communities

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



In a dementia-friendly community, people with dementia are included, engaged, and have a high quality of life. Older adult communities, including senior centers, residential communities, and adult day care centers, can help people with dementia live meaningful lives and reach their full potential.



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 for a detailed overview of the signs and symptoms.



Older Adult Scams

Older adults are often targets of scams. Those living with dementia are particularly at risk as they may have difficulty evaluating information. Share the following tips with those in your community to help keep older adults safe from scams:

- Never give your credit card, banking account, or social security numbers or other personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call.
- Appoint someone you trust, or hire a professional, if you are having difficulty keeping track of your finances.
- To reduce unwanted telemarketing calls and mail solicitations, sign up for the "Do Not Call" list at 1-888-382-1222 and the "Opt Out Mailing" list at 1-888-567-8688.
- Visit the *AARP Fraud Watch Network* (www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork) for free resources and scam alerts. You can also call their helpline **(1-877-908-3360)** to report scams or seek guidance.

To schedule a presentation on scam and fraud prevention, or to request an electronic or print copy of the *"Don't Get Hooked"* scam and fraud prevention booklet, please email HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Making Your Older Adult Community Dementia-Friendly

Inclusion Strategies

- Encourage the use of name tags among staff, residents, and clients.
- Promote participation in a range of social and leisure activities.
- Challenge stigma and build understanding across generations by organizing activities that include younger people.

The Environment

- Ensure spaces are safe, calm, and accessible to all.
- Have designated quiet areas and ensure hallways are well-lit and free of clutter.
- Use words and images on signs for places like restrooms, exits, and activity areas.
- Place comfortable seating throughout the space for rest and conversation.
- Use contrasting colors on floors, furniture and doorways and avoid patterns.

Community Connection

- Refer clients and care partners to resources and support services; have flyers accessible for staff and visitors.
- Encourage peer support networks.

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**

✉ AISAlzheimer.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov