

PROTECTIONS

PERSONAL SAFETY AND FREEDOM FROM ABUSE, NEGLIGENT AND EXPLOITATION



AGING TEXAS WELL MEANS THAT TEXANS PREPARE FOR AGING IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE AND THAT STATE AND LOCAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITATES AGING WELL THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN.

TRENDS

- According to the best national estimates, almost 500,000 people 60+ experience abuse and/or neglect in a domestic setting and only 16 percent are reported.
- Mistreatment of the elderly may be physical, psychological, or financial and can be categorized under three general headings:
 - *Domestic—Abuse inflicted by someone who has a relationship with the older adult (e.g., spouse, family, friend, caregiver)*
 - *Institutional—Abuse in residential facilities (e.g., nursing homes, group homes, or assisted living)*
 - *Neglect—Refusal or failure to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties*
- Ongoing attention and research can help service providers identify elder abuse risk factors and develop intervention strategies.
- Training initiatives that increase attention to the realistic impact of nursing home workloads may reduce institutional abuse.
- 60 percent of reported abuse cases in Texas involved people over 60.

Self-neglect is the most common form of elder abuse and occurs when people are unable to meet their own basic needs due to poverty and/or mental impairment.

POLICIES, PROGRAMS & SERVICES

All 50 states have some form of legislation that authorizes them to protect and serve vulnerable, incapacitated or disabled adults.

- The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services', Division of Adult Protective Services (APS), is responsible for investigation/intervention on reports of abuse of older adults living in private homes.
- Long-term care ombudsmen work through local area agencies on aging and serve as advocates for facility residents to help them exercise their rights, secure benefits to which they are entitled, and protect them from abuse and neglect.
- The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services is responsible for investigating abuse in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other residential settings that the agency licenses and certifies.
- The Elder Justice Act, considered by the 107th Congress, is the first-ever comprehensive federal effort to address crimes and abuse against seniors and guarantee protections for every older American.

GET INVOLVED!

- Recruit additional staff to reduce the number of caseloads per worker, giving them more time to build rapport with residents.
- Educate professionals and citizens to recognize the signs of elder abuse.
- Create awareness of community supports available when elder abuse is suspected.

Elder abuse cases are unique and should be treated differently than other forms of abuse.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROTECTIONS

Contact your local **area agency on aging** at: **800.252.9240** for Aging Texas Well resources and services in your community. Or, visit DADS at www.dads.state.tx.us for this and other Aging Texas Well publications.