

## **To Report Abuse of an Elderly Person or Vulnerable Adult:**

**Abuse Hotline: (DHS)**

**1-800-522-3511**

**Archdiocesan Hotline:**

**1-405-720-9878**

**www.archokc.org**

**NOTE: Suspicion of abuse must ALWAYS be reported to the DHS hotline. In addition, the Archdiocesan Hotline is used when the suspected abuse involves an individual who works for or volunteers for the Church.**

***“A population that does not take care of the elderly and of children and the young has no future, because it abuses both its memory and its promise.”***

***(Pope Francis)***

## **Warning Signs of Abuse:**

### **Physical Signs:**

- \*fractures      \*bruising      \*marks
- \*burns          \*pain
- \*not wanting to be touched

### **Psychological Abuse:**

- \*being withdrawn
- \*too eager to do everything they are asked
- \*showing compulsive behavior
- \*not being able to do things they used to
- \*not being able to concentrate or focus

### **Financial or Material Abuse:**

- \*having unusual difficulty with finances
- \*not having enough money
- \*being too protective of money and things they own
- \*not paying bills
- \*not having normal home comforts

### **Sexual Abuse:**

- \*using bad language
- \*not wanting to be touched
- \*behaving in a sexually inappropriate way
- \*genital itching, soreness, or disease

### **Neglect or Acts of Omission:**

- \*having pain or discomfort
- \*being very hungry, thirsty or untidy
- \*failing health

### **Institutional Abuse:**

- \*no personal clothing or possessions
- \*there is no care plan for them
- \*he or she is **often** admitted to the hospital
- \*there are instances of professionals having treated them badly or unsatisfactorily or acting in a way that causes harm to the person.

## **Abuse of the Elderly or Other Vulnerable Adults**

***“We Christians, together with all people of good will, are called to patiently build a more diverse, more welcoming, more humane, more inclusive society, that does not need to discard the weak in body and mind. On the contrary we need a society which measures its success on how the weak are cared for.” (Pope Francis)***



**Go Make Disciples**

**Archdiocese of Oklahoma City**

**Office of Safe Environment  
405-709-2750**

***Promise to Protect; Pledge to Heal***



### **Who is a Vulnerable Adult?**

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over, who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because they have a mental health problem a disability, visual or hearing problems, are old and frail or have some form of illness.

### **Different Types of Abuse:**

**Physical Abuse:** this is non-accidental use of force against an elderly person that results in physical pain, injury, or impairment. Such abuse includes not only physical assaults such as hitting or shoving but the inappropriate use of drugs, restraints, or confinement

**Emotional Abuse:** in emotional or psychological abuse, people speak to or treat elderly persons in ways that cause emotional pain or distress. Verbal forms of emotional elder abuse include such things as intimidation through yelling or threats, humiliation and ridicule, habitual blaming or

scapegoating. Nonverbal elder abuse can take the form of ignoring the elderly person, isolating an elder from friends or activities, terrorizing or menacing the elderly person.

**Sexual Abuse:** sexual abuse is contact with an elderly person without the elder's consent. Such contact can involve physical sex acts, but activities as showing an elderly person pornographic material, forcing the person to watch sex acts, or forcing the elder to undress are also considered sexual elder abuse.

**Neglect or Abandonment by Caregivers:** this may involve unsafe living conditions such as no heat or running water, faulty electrical wiring or other fire hazards; desertion of the elder at a public place.

**Financial Exploitation:** this includes stealing from the person, cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on them about will, property, inheritance of financial transactions, misusing or stealing their property, possessions or benefits

### **How Might You Become Aware:**

- \*you may see or hear something;
- \*a vulnerable adult may tell you about abuse;
- \*a friend, family member or somebody else may tell you something that causes you concern;
- \*you may notice either the victim or abuser behaving in a way that alerts you that something may be wrong.

### **What Should I Do?**

**State and federal law** mandates that anyone in Oklahoma who receives a report of abuse or neglect, has reasonable suspicion of, or has observed abuse or neglect should report it immediately to Adult Protective Services, the facility administrator, the State Department of Health, and/or law enforcement. **Adult Protective Services** can be contacted at: **800-522-3511** or through the Department of Human Service website.

In addition, our **Archdiocesan Code of Conduct** states, "If you have reason to believe, or if you have personally observed, that any minor (under the age of 18 years), **an elderly person or any other vulnerable person** has been subjected to abuse, neglect, or exploitation for sexual gratification, you have the duty personally to report the neglect or abuse directly to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS), by calling the **DHS Statewide Abuse Hotline: 1-800-522-3511**

