

***Contact your local Council on Aging
for additional resources:***

Acushnet	508-998-0280
Attleboro	508-223-2235
Berkley	508-821-3105
Dartmouth	508-999-4717
Dighton	508-823-0095
Easton	508-230-0544
Fairhaven	508-979-4029
Fall River	508-324-2401
Freetown	508-763-9557
Mansfield	508-261-7368
New Bedford	508-991-6250
North Attleboro	508-699-0131
Norton	508-285-0218
Raynham	508-824-2740
Rehoboth	508-252-3372
Seekonk	508-336-8772
Somerset	508-646-2833
Swansea	508-676-1831
Taunton	508-821-1425
Westport	508-636-1026

OFFICE OF THE BRISTOL COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
THOMAS M. QUINN III

ELDER ABUSE
PREVENTION

"Information is the best defense against elder abuse."



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Bristol County District Attorney

Thomas M. Quinn III



Elder abuse is a pervasive and growing issue. Thousands of seniors presently suffer from abuse or neglect, while others are at constant risk for exploitation and harm. These acts are intolerable, therefore both prevention and prosecution will be priorities of my administration.

It is my goal to educate the community on elder abuse whenever possible. Information is critical for prevention. However, when a report is made and abuse does occur, my office will fully investigate and prosecute these cases, while also ensuring that the affected elder is referred to appropriate resources for care.

Together, we can reduce elder abuse. By becoming educated and working together, law enforcement, service providers and caretakers can reduce the harm that the seniors in our community suffer. By learning about elder abuse themselves, seniors can also identify warning signs and seek help for themselves as needed. Our elders deserve to be treated with dignity and respect—not suffer from neglect or abuse. I hope to work with everyone in the community to prevent cases of elder abuse in Bristol County.

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is an act or omission which results in physical or emotional injury or financial exploitation to an elder.

Who abuses elders?

Elders can be abused by caregivers, family, friends, professionals or strangers. Most often the perpetrators are relatives or someone that the elder knows.

What are some types of abuse?

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is doing or failing to do something that results in harm or risk of harm.

- Examples include confinement, unreasonable physical constraint, hitting, pushing, shoving, shaking or kicking of an elder, throwing objects at an elder, and/or the inappropriate use of medication.
- Some signs may be black eyes, broken bones, bruises, burns, welts, emotional withdrawal, weight loss, general withdrawal from conversation or depression.



2. Psychological Abuse

Psychological Abuse is the willful infliction of mental or emotional anguish to an elder with threats.

- Examples include threats, belittling remarks, yelling, isolation and/or humiliation of an elder.
- Some signs may be significant unrelated weight loss or gain, stress-related conditions, an elder cowering in the presence of the abuser, emotional withdrawal, general withdrawal from conversation or depression.

3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when there is sexual contact without the elder's consent.

- Examples include rape, showing of pornography, inappropriate touching or exposure.
- Some signs may be bruises around breasts and/or genitals, unexplained venereal disease or genital infections, bleeding, emotional withdrawal, general withdrawal from conversation, shame, fear or depression.

4. Neglect

Neglect is the failure of caregivers to fulfill his/her responsibilities or provide needed care.

- Examples include not helping an elder to the bathroom and/or to bathe, surrounding clutter, and lack of food, water, and medications.
- Some signs may be bedsores, dehydration and malnutrition, unkempt hair and nails, inadequate clothing, urine or feces odor.

5. Financial Abuse

Financial abuse is the taking of money or property from an elder or the use/possession of property without the elder's permission that is contrary to the elder's needs or best interest.

- Financial abuse may occur in the forms of theft, identity theft, telemarketing, vacation or sweepstakes scams, charity fraud, phony lotteries, tech support or home improvement scams.

Some signs of financial abuse may include:

- Numerous bank withdrawals
- Increased or unusual credit card activity
- Changes in a will or Power of Attorney when elder is mentally or physically unable to make such changes
- Missing financial documents (checks, bills, stocks & bonds)
- Caretaker obsessed or focused solely on an elder's finances
- Strangers who befriend elders and offer to manage or assist with the elder's finances and/or assets

Coastline Elderly Services' Money Management Program

The Money Management Program connects older adults with a volunteer who helps them budget their money each month and pay their bills to ensure they avoid debt and other financial hardships. The volunteer will come to your home and help you sort through your mail and bills each month, making sure you don't bounce any checks or forget to pay any bills. Volunteers in this program are thoroughly screened via a criminal background check by Coastline.

Eligibility: Age 60 and older; income guidelines must be met
Contact: Money Management Program at 508-742-9113

How to protect yourself

- Take care of your health and stay active
- Avoid isolation and stay social
- Check caregiver and professional references
- Shred bills and important documents before throwing them away
- Protect your Social Security Number and passwords
- Sign credit cards immediately
- Don't give out personal information unless you initiated the contact or have verified who it is
- Don't send cash by wire transfer or pre-paid cards
- Review bank and credit card statements every month
- Don't let anyone pressure you into a quick decision
- Don't be afraid to hang up on solicitor calls
- Call [National Do Not Call](#) to have your number removed from the telemarketer list **1-888-382-1222**
- The Do Not Call list often doesn't deter scammers so you may want to check with your mobile or landline carrier for more solutions to block unwanted calls
- Never click on links in unsolicited emails
- Get a free annual credit report. You are entitled to a free annual credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus: **Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion**. To order your reports call **877-322-8228** or go to **www.annualcreditreport.com**

Where to report elder abuse

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Elder Abuse Hotline
1-800-922-2275**

**Your local police department
or dial **911** for an emergency**

Your local Council on Aging

Bristol Elder Services, Inc. is designated by the state as the agency responsible for investigating and providing protective and crisis services in the communities of the greater Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton areas. Bristol is the local resource for seniors who are abused, neglected, exploited or self-neglecting. A report should be filed by calling the Statewide Elder Abuse Hotline whenever a person has cause to believe that abuse is occurring or has occurred. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and if you call this number first they will refer your report to the most appropriate agency, like Bristol Elder Services or another such agency based on where you live in the state.