

What is elder abuse and what are types of abuse? The CT State Department of Social Services, Protective Service Division, defines abuse as “will infliction of physical pain or mental anguish or willful deprivation by a caretaker of services which are necessary to maintain physical and mental health”. Note the focus on pain, anguish and deprivation which seniors may see as limiting or not applicable to their situation. However, the following provides some clarification:

Neglect is a situation in which a senior is **unable to take care of him or her needs** or is being **neglected** by a caretaker responsible for providing services to maintain basic physical or mental health. (We can see evidence of self or purposeful caretaker neglect by looking at living environments, noting extreme hoarding or other unsanitary conditions, hearing seniors talk about not eating or taking prescription drugs. We view one critical self neglect indicator as seniors who state life is not worth living or stating a death wish).

Exploitation means **taking advantage** of a senior for money or other personal gain. It may also be emotional or psychological. (We can see evidence of decreasing funds to pay bills, hear seniors voicing fears about finances and/or not being able to talk to legally liable relatives (LLR) about funds, inability to pay for prescription drugs. Most important are situations involving inadequate available food).

Abandonment may be desertion of a senior by a caretaker or **neglect** of duties (neglect of a person or duties such as allowed through Conservatorship or Power of Attorney). (We can see evidence of bills not paid, hear telephone messages about unpaid bills or hear seniors speak about not having money at the end of a month).

Physical abuse is intentional physical harm and includes sexual abuse. (We may see evidence of this, hear direct complaints and/or notice personality changes that affect daily life).