

Understanding Elder Abuse

Abuse and neglect can take many forms from physical to emotional. It may involve exploitation of a victim's finances. Physical abuse ranges from assaults resulting in bruising to serious fractures and sexual abuse. Neglect can include a caregiver failing to provide an older individual with basic necessities, such as medication or meals. Elder abuse can frequently be undetected or unnoticed. Many older individuals try to shield an abusive caretaker since they depend upon family members and others for assistance with daily needs and financial planning. Living alone, a victim of elder abuse may be isolated and unable to call authorities for help. In other instances, the abuser may be an adult child who a parent seeks to protect. Our trained prosecutors understand these dynamics and work to protect seniors while holding offenders accountable.

Detecting Neglect and Abuse

Signs of abuse may not be obvious. It could include the onset of depression, confusion, disorientation or agitation. Physical caretakers, doctors, dentists, nurses and other health aides are in a unique position to recognize these signs and take appropriate measures to identify and report abuse. Neighbors and friends may also recognize changes in behavior or physical appearance. Reluctance by a caregiver to leave an elder alone may be a warning sign. Fear of a caregiver should give you pause.

Finding Help

In cases of emergency, always contact 911 and the local police. At other times, the Elder Abuse Bureau remains available to aid and assist you if you are a victim or to answer questions if you suspect that someone you know is being abused. The Westchester District Attorney's office has joined forces with the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale to address serious issues of abuse. The Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home for the Aged houses a shelter that services seniors who are the victims of abuse. The Westchester Department of Senior Programs and Services, and Adult Protective Services can also provide services and referrals.

According to the best available estimates, between 1 and 2 million Americans age 65 or older have been injured, exploited, or otherwise mistreated by someone on whom they depended for care or protection.

2003 Study by the National Center on Elder Abuse

Estimates indicate that for every one case of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, or self neglect reported to authorities, about five go unreported.

In 2003 there were 35.9 million people age 65 or over in the United States. 2050 this population is expected to reach 86.7 million.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2005

Where to Call for Help

In cases of emergency, call 911 or your local police department.

**Westchester County
District Attorney's Office
Special Prosecutions Division
Elder Abuse Bureau**
(914) 995-3000

**Westchester County
Department of Social Services
Adult Protective Services**
(914) 995-5411

**Westchester County Department
of Senior Programs and Services**
(914) 813-6300

**Westchester County's
Safe Center for Seniors**
(914) 683-7530

**Victims Assistance Services
of Westchester, Inc.**
(914) 345-3113

**ElderServe-The Hebrew Home
for the Aged at Riverdale**
1 (800) 567-3646



Message from District Attorney Janet DiFiore

Here in Westchester County, older individuals comprise the fastest growing segment of our population. Within the next fifteen years adults over 60 will comprise 37% of Westchester's population. With this change in demographics, the District Attorney's office has seen a greater need for specialized prosecution of elder abuse cases.

At the District Attorney's office, our elder abuse bureau prosecutes these cases with the concern and compassion that is needed to protect seniors and bring justice. We know that the criminal justice system can be overwhelming for victims, and we provide a wide array of services that assist older individuals in simplifying the process and accessing needed resources.

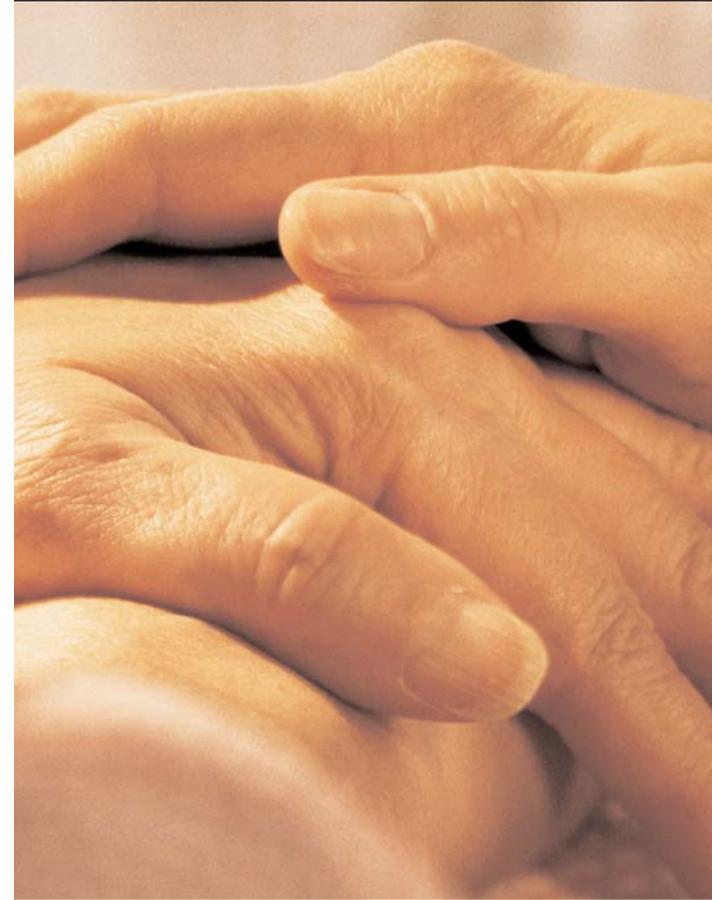
If you or a friend or neighbor needs the help of the Elder Abuse Bureau, we can be reached at (914) 995-3000 or visit our website at www.westchesterda.net

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet DiFiore".



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Elder Abuse



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