

Recognizing and Reporting Abuse of Older LGBTQIA2S+ Adults



Everyone should be able to grow older with respect, stay safe, and get the support they need. Yet many older adults experience abuse, including physical and emotional harm, financial exploitation, isolation, sexual abuse, and neglect. Older LGBTQIA2S+ adults, people living with HIV, people of color, individuals with lower incomes and those who are socially isolated may be at higher risk of potential harm.

It is even more likely for older adults (over the age of 65) who are LGBTQIA2S+ and/or people living with HIV. A statewide study reinforced that older LGBTQIA2S+ adults who have experienced some form of abuse often don't report it. The risk of getting abused is even higher for older LGBTQIA2S+ adults who are people of color, living with lower incomes and/or living with HIV.

Types of adult abuse

Abuse can come from partners, family, caregivers or strangers. It includes but is not limited to:

Physical abuse: Hurting someone's body, causing pain or injury.

Neglect: Lack of food, basic care or safety.

Financial exploitation: Theft or misuse of funds, property, and/or medications.

Verbal or emotional abuse: Threats, humiliation or manipulation.

Involuntary seclusion: Forced or unwanted isolation.

Wrongful restraint: Restricting movement through force or medications.

Sexual abuse: Unwanted or offensive sexual acts or words.

Abandonment by a caregiver: Leaving a person alone when they rely upon others for help.

Self-neglect: Inability to care for or protect oneself.

Signs of abuse: Abuse may go unreported due to fear, embarrassment or cognitive decline. Watch for:

Physical: Unexplained injuries or physical signs of punishment or restraint.

Emotional: Anxiety, depression, or behavior changes

Neglect: Poor hygiene, bedsores, weight loss or unsafe living conditions.

Abandonment: A dependent person left alone.

Sexual: Withdrawal, distress or physical symptoms.

Financial: Unexplained bank transactions, late bill payments or missing assets.

How to report abuse: Anyone can report suspected abuse. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911. Otherwise:

Visit oregon.gov/respect for resources.

Call the Oregon SAFeline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233). You may need to leave a message, and someone will call you back.

What happens after reporting? Anyone can report suspected abuse. Adult Protective Services will:

Review the report and determine next steps.

Provide help and referrals.

Assign an investigator if the report meets the criteria for possible abuse.

Provide information about the investigation outcome upon request.

If a possible crime has occurred, it will be reported to law enforcement.

Privacy and protection: In reporting abuse, it is important to note:

You are not required to disclose LGBTQIA2S+ identity.

Your information is confidential unless legally required to be shared.

You can report anonymously.

Mandatory reporters: Certain professionals must report abuse, including but not limited to doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, emergency responders, lawyers, police, clergy, in-home care providers, guardians and some public employees. Mandatory reporters are legally protected when reporting in good faith.