



# BREAK THE SILENCE

Upstate Elder Abuse Center *at Lifespan*

## ELDER JUSTICE ADVOCATE PROGRAM

Improving criminal justice outcomes  
for older adults in New York State

**ELDER ABUSE:** A single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

### TYPES OF ABUSE

- Emotional/Psychological abuse
- Financial Exploitation
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

For more in-depth information about elder abuse,  
go to [www.nyselderabuse.org](http://www.nyselderabuse.org)

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### FINDING HELP

Adult Services Helpline (for contact information for your local APS office):	844-697-3505
NY Connects:	800-342-9871
New York State Domestic Violence 24-hour Hotline:	800-942-6906
The Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan:	585-244-8400

To locate an Elder Justice Advocate near you, call  
**585-244-8400**

Tracey Siebert-Konopko or CaTyra Polland

## RED FLAGS

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**Financial Abuse/Exploitation:** Sudden change in finances and accounts, altered wills and trusts, unusual bank withdrawals, checks written as “loans” or “gifts,” loss of property, improper use of power of attorney.

**Emotional or Psychological:** Withdrawal from normal activities, unexplained changes in alertness, or other unusual behavioral changes. Caregiver exhibits aggressive or controlling behaviors.

**Neglect:** Lack of basic hygiene, lack of medical aids (glasses, walker, hearing aid, medications, etc.), hoarding, incapacitated person left without care, pressure ulcers, malnutrition, dehydration.

**Physical or Sexual:** Slap marks, unexplained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores, burns or sexually transmitted infections. Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.

## WHEN IN DIALOGUE WITH A SURVIVOR OF ELDER ABUSE:

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- Speak clearly and directly.
  - Explain your role and ask how the older adult would like to be addressed.
  - Allow time for the older adult to answer your questions and make decisions.
  - Create safe and private surroundings.
  - Create a timeline of events by asking what a typical day looks like for the older adult.
  - Identify realistic goals in collaboration with the survivor.
  - Be mindful that the following conditions can mimic dementia: trauma, traumatic brain injury, depression, medical delirium.
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Advocates serve as a support to older survivors of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The role consists of assisting and educating older adults, connecting them to resources, and being a trustworthy champion who will advocate appropriately and honestly for older adults as they interact with the criminal justice system.



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