

## What can I do?

Report it! For every dependent adult who is abused, *someone knows* or is suspicious that something is wrong. Unfortunately for the adult, people do not report suspected abuse because they don't want to get involved or simply don't want to believe it is happening.

If you are aware of a dependent adult who is possibly being abused, do not ignore the situation. Contact the Department of Human Services.

You can call toll-free, anytime, day or night:

**1-800-362-2178**

If the abuse you are reporting happened in a nursing home or other care facility, please call 515-281-4234, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**If you know of abuse, report it!**

## Policy on Nondiscrimination

The Iowa Department of Human Services affirms that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, religion, political affiliation, and physical or mental disability, in applying for, or in the receipt of benefits or services by the Iowa Department of Human Services, its vendors, providers, or contractors.

If you feel you have been discriminated against for any of the above reasons, please write or call:

*Office of Equal Opportunity  
Department of Human Services  
Hoover State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0114*



*Printed on  
Recycled Paper*

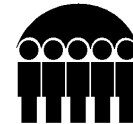
Comm. 82 (Rev. 4/98)

## Don't ignore the facts!

**DEPENDENT  
ADULT ABUSE**

## It happens.

## It could happen to YOU!



Iowa  
Department  
of Human Services

## Who are dependent adults?

Anyone who is unable to protect or provide for their own interests and needs. This does not refer just to the elderly. It includes anyone 18 years of age or older who requires assistance from another. The person's dependency may be the result of diminished physical, mental or emotional capacity. (Iowa Code 235B)

**FACT: Many abused dependent adults are female, over age 75, physically and/or mentally impaired, and live with the abuser.**

## What is dependent adult abuse?

Type of abuse range from mild forms of negligence to extreme forms resulting in serious risk to the dependent adult.

- ◆ **Physical abuse:** Inflicting physical injury.
- ◆ **Sexual abuse:** Committing a sexual offense against a dependent adult.
- ◆ **Exploitation:** Taking advantage of a dependent adult's financial resources for one's own profit.
- ◆ **Denial of basic needs:** Food, shelter, clothing, and/or health care are not supplied by the caregiver or by the dependent adult him or herself.

## What are some signs of abuse?

- ◆ Repeated injuries
- ◆ Injury incompatible with explanation
- ◆ Lack of personal or medical care
- ◆ Malnourishment and dehydration
- ◆ Increasing depression or anxiety
- ◆ Withdrawn/timid
- ◆ Unresponsive
- ◆ Hostile
- ◆ Confused
- ◆ New poverty

There are other signs, and not all of those listed by themselves indicate abuse. But if any seem to increase, it may indicate trouble. By watching for some of these signs and symptoms, you may be able to help prevent the situation from getting worse. Don't ignore the situation!

**FACT: Many dependent adults don't know services are available or won't acknowledge their need for help!**

**FACT: Most reported cases of dependent adult abuse involve people who neglect themselves.**

## What can be done?

The Department of Human Services can do an evaluation, provide counseling and make referrals to a variety of community services.

- ◆ Mobile meals
- ◆ Homemakers
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Visiting nurse
- ◆ Emergency medical care

All adults have a right to self-determination. This means the dependent adult can refuse services unless the court determines the adult is not competent to make decisions or is threatening his or her own life or that of others.

The Department of Human Services can do an evaluation only when the abuser is a caregiver or the dependent adult him or herself.