



The theme for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) 2020:
The Impact of COVID-19 on Violence, Abuse and Neglect of Older Persons.

June 15 2020



"Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by older persons are exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic and aggravate their vulnerabilities."
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)



Our response to COVID-19 must respect the rights and dignity of older people.

- First, no person, young or old, is expendable. Older people have the same rights to life and health as everyone else.
- Second, while physical distancing is crucial, let's not forget we are one community and we all belong to each other.
- Third, all social, economic and humanitarian responses must take the needs of older people fully into account, from universal health coverage to social protection, decent work and pensions.
- And fourth, let's not treat older people as invisible or powerless.

- António Guterres, The UN Secretary-General,

Video message to launch policy brief on older persons New York, 1 May 2020



Elderly Abuse Cases in Nepal

Elderly abuse cases have increased by 3 times during the lockdown

Pre-Lockdown-18	Lockdown- 52
• Physical Abuse = 11	• Physical Abuse = 12
• Sexual Abuse = 2	• Sexual Abuse = 1
• Psychological Abuse = 0	• Psychological Abuse = 0
• Financial Abuse = 0	• Financial Abuse = 2
• Neglect = 5	• Neglect = 37

Source: Ageing Nepal

*Neglect = unattended dead body found of 60+ age persons.

*Pre COVID-19 period three months before pandemic started (Dec 2019, Jan and Feb. 2020)

COVID-19 pandemic period (March, April and May 2020)



Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Neglect



Physical Abuse

Types

- Physical assault
- Unreasonable physical constraint
- Prolonged deprivation of food or water
- Inappropriate use of a physical or chemical restraint or psychotropic medication

Signs

- Bruise/scars
- Burns
- Foul smelling
- Bald Patches
- Scratches, blisters, lacerations or pinch marks
- Any untreated medical condition
- Big injuries or made disabled
- Injuries that are incompatible with explanations



Sexual Abuse

Types

- Having non-consensual sex with an elder
- Any type of sexual contact with someone who is unable to provide consent
- Unwanted touching, sexual assault, coerced nudity, sodomy, intercourse or taking pictures of the individual when they are nude

Signs

- Unexplained sexually transmitted disease or STD
- Unexplained genital infections
- Bruises on the breasts or genitals
- Bleeding from the anus or genitals
- Underwear that is stained, bloody or torn
- A report by the elder that s/he is being abused
- Sustaining an injury
- Irritation or pain of the anus or genitals
- Panic attacks & Symptoms of agitation
- Signs of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Social or emotional withdrawal from others



Psychological Abuse

Types

- Verbal assaults, threats or intimidation
- Subjecting an individual to fear, isolation or serious emotional distress
- Withholding of emotional support
- Confinement

Signs

- Hesitant to interact or no interaction
- Anxious or nervous
- Violent, angry and helpless
- Frightened
- Secretive
- Distressed
- Withdrawn



Financial Abuse

Types

- Theft or embezzlement of money or any other property from an elder
- Taking money from a wallet or manipulating a victim into turning over property to an abuser

Signs

- Bank transactions
- Financially dependent on others
- Lack of personal amenities
- Cheques or other documents signed when the elder cannot write or understand what s/he is signing
- Numerous unpaid bills by the designated person/s



Neglect

Types

- Failure to assist in personal hygiene
- Failure to provide clothing or shelter
- Failure to care medically
- Failure to protect from health and safety hazards
- Failure to prevent malnutrition or dehydration
- Self-neglect



Signs

- Allowing the individual to live in unsanitary living conditions or with hazardous conditions
- Untreated bed sores
- Malnutrition
- Dehydration
- Failing to treat health problems
- A report by the elderly person of mistreatment



Precautions to Avoid Abuse

Risks of Abuse increases when one is:

- Dependent on others for "Activities of daily living" (ADL)
- Troubled in terms of background and behavior
- Financially dependent
- Living alone
- Chronically ill or mentally ill
- Anti Social or inactive

Precautions

- Remain active
- Make friends, stay connected
- If you are abused, raise your voice against it
- Keep yourself updated with knowledge regarding your Rights and Types of Abuse
- Get involved or join organisations working for senior citizens as a member
- Plan for your old age



Prevention

- Formulate new policies for protection and care for the elderly
- There is urgent need to establish a National Center for Prevention of Elder Abuse that would maintain time series information on elder abuse cases in Nepal
- It is high time that a national program be implemented to build awareness on elder abuse focusing on media personnel, police, and the judiciaries.
- Improvement and provisions in health care system exclusively for the elders (separate units/room/things)
- Advocacy, lobbying, campaigning to sensitise the issue of elderly people
- Detail surveys should be made to generate sufficient information that could provide a reliable basis for understanding general characteristics and magnitude of elder abuse in Nepal



Key Facts

- Around 1 in 6 older people experience some form of abuse, a figure higher than previously estimated and predicted to rise as populations age worldwide
- Rates of abuse may be higher for older people living in institutions than in the community
- Elder abuse can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences
- Elder abuse is predicted to increase as many countries are experiencing rapidly ageing populations
- The global population of people aged 60 years and older will more than double, from 900 million in 2015 to about 2 billion in 2050

<https://www.un.org/en/events/elderabuse/>





RESPECT THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF OLDER PEOPLE.



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