

Loved one in a nursing home? Learn about signs of emotional, sexual and financial abuse and neglect.



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Welcome back to the Leone Law, LLC e-newsletter. Our firm provides legal solutions for individuals and businesses throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We focus on dispute resolution in civil matters.

We represent people who have suffered serious personal injuries. Increasingly, individuals and families who have been victims of nursing home abuse and neglect are asking for our help. Whether it be a car, truck, or motorcycle crash, a doctor's or hospital's negligence, or in any other case where you or a loved one has been harmed through no fault of your own, Leone Law, LLC can help.

In each newsletter, we will address a legal topic and provide important safety information for consumers. If you would like to submit a topic for a future newsletter, please [contact us](#) with your request.



NURSING HOME ABUSE & NEGLECT: WARNING SIGNS

In this issue, we will continue looking at signs of elder abuse and neglect in nursing homes. Nursing homes should be a place for the aging population to live the remainder of their lives or rehabilitate from illness or injury with as much comfort and care as possible. A good nursing home makes its residents feel safe, ensures a healthy diet and lifestyle, and provides treatment customized to each resident's medical conditions and situation. Throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and across the country, these facilities should provide a better quality of life while bringing happiness and comfort to the elderly, one of our most vulnerable populations.

There are several forms of nursing home abuse and neglect including: physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and financial exploitation. In this issue, we look at sexual, emotional and psychological abuse as well as financial exploitation.

Sexual Abuse in Nursing Homes

Sexual abuse is defined as non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person. Sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent is also considered sexual abuse. It includes, but is not limited to, unwanted touching, all types of sexual assault or battery, such as rape, sodomy, coerced nudity, and sexually explicit photographing.

Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse include but are not limited to:

- bruises around the breasts or genital area
- unexplained venereal disease or genital infections;
- unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding;
- torn, stained, or bloody underclothing; and
- an elder's report of being sexually assaulted or raped

Emotional or Psychological Abuse in Nursing Homes

Emotional or psychological abuse is defined as the infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or nonverbal acts. Emotional/psychological abuse includes but is not limited to verbal assaults, insults, threats, intimidation, humiliation, and harassment. In addition, treating an older person like an infant; isolating an elderly person from his/her family, friends, or regular activities; giving an older person the "silent treatment;" and enforced social isolation are examples of emotional/psychological abuse.

Signs and symptoms of emotional/psychological abuse include but are not limited to:

- being emotionally upset or agitated;
- being extremely withdrawn and non communicative or non responsive;
- unusual behavior usually attributed to dementia (e.g., sucking, biting, rocking); and
- an elder's report of being verbally or emotionally mistreated.

Financial or Material Exploitation in Nursing Homes

Financial or material exploitation is defined as the illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets. Examples include, but are not limited to, cashing an elderly person's checks without authorization or permission; forging an older person's signature; misusing or stealing an older person's money or possessions; and coercing or deceiving an older person into signing any document (e.g., contracts or a will).

Signs and symptoms of financial or material exploitation include but are not limited to:

- unauthorized withdrawal of the elder's funds using the elder's ATM card;
- abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents;
- unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions;
- discovery of an elder's signature being forged for financial transactions or for the titles of his/her possessions;
- unexplained sudden transfer of assets to someone outside the family; and
- an elder's report of financial exploitation.

WHAT IF I SUSPECT ABUSE, NEGLECT OR EXPLOITATION?

If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police for immediate help. If the danger is not immediate, but you suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring, please tell someone. To report elder abuse, contact the Adult Protective Services (APS) agency in the state where the person resides. You can find the APS reporting number for each state by visiting:

The State Resources section of the [National Center on Elder Abuse website](#)
[The Eldercare Locator website](#) or calling 1-800-677-1116.

Contact Information Specific to Rhode Island

Rhode Island Adult Protective Services: [\(401\) 462-0555](tel:4014620555)

For suspected elder mistreatment in the home

Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman: [\(401\) 785-3340](tel:4017853340)

For suspected elder mistreatment in LTC facilities

Rhode Island Attorney General Elder Abuse Unit: [\(401\) 274-4400](tel:4012744400) x 2269

To report medicare fraud or patient abuse and neglect

Rhode Island Department of Health Assisted Living Services: [\(401\) 222-2566](tel:4012222566)

If you or someone you know has been the victim of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, you are not alone. Many people care and can help. Please tell your doctor, a friend, or a family member you trust, or call the Eldercare Locator help line immediately.

[Source: National Center on Elder Abuse - Administration on Aging](#)

LOOKING FOR A GUEST SPEAKER?

Could your civic or community organization, business or school benefit from a speaker on public safety and legal issues? If so, Anthony would be happy to speak to your group. He has spoken to groups about or taught classes on the following subjects.

1. Choosing a Safe Nursing Home
2. Distracted Driving
3. Bicycle Helmet Safety
4. Small Business & the Law
5. Constitutional Law Issues

It is Anthony's honor to help educate his community in order to help keep them safe. [Contact Anthony](#) to set up a presentation at your location.



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

If you have questions about the treatment of a loved one in a nursing home or would like more information about nursing home abuse and neglect, please feel free to contact us or [visit our website](#).

Leone Law, LLC
1345 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886
Office: [401-921-6684](tel:4019216684)
Fax: [401-921-6686](tel:4019216686)
info@leonelawllc.com



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