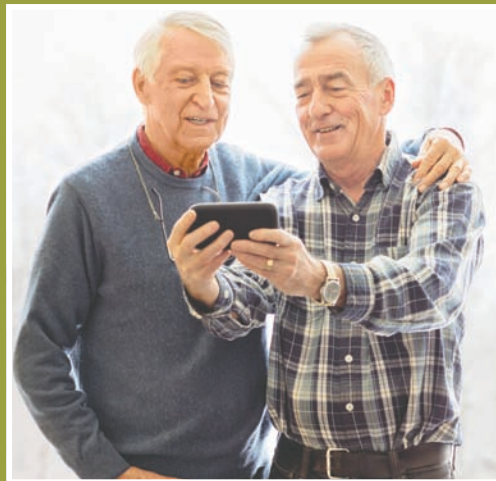
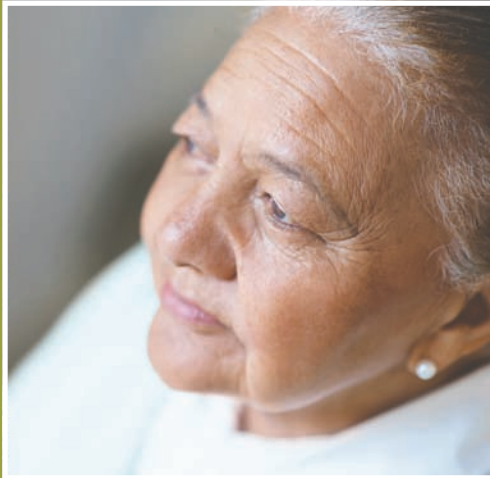


In Sonoma County, preventing elder abuse means

Caring for Self, Caring for Family, Caring for Community



Inside:

How Many Reports in Your Community?
What You Can Do to Stop Elder Abuse
Where to Report Concerns About a Senior
Find Services to Enrich Older Adults' Lives



Human Services Department

Caring for Self, Family and Community



by **Jerry Dunn**
Director, Human Services Department

This is a call to community. Each of us can contribute to the well-being of Sonoma County elders and prevent self-neglect, neglect by a caregiver, and physical, emotional or financial abuse.

First, we can take care of ourselves as we age.

Second, we can support and care for senior family members and loved ones.

Third, each of us can take action to ensure older adults' health and safety in our neighborhoods.

Take a look at these specific tips on how to care for yourself, your family and your community. Then, connect with the many local resources and services that can help keep seniors healthy and safe.

The Area Agency on Aging has an excellent, free Senior Resource Guide that you can get by mail or online. Sonoma County 2-1-1 can also help you find food, housing, health care, senior services, child care, legal aid and more.

To volunteer with senior support programs, contact the Volunteer Center at volunteernow.org. or call 573-3399

**Keep seniors safe and healthy.
Help us stop elder abuse.**

Preventing Elder Abuse

Yourself

- **Protect your finances:** Educate yourself about money management. Get help with financial decisions from a trusted friend, family member or certified financial planner.
- **Exercise:** Enjoy a walk. Join an exercise group or gym, or a fall prevention class.
- **Mind your health:** Use a pill organizer to manage medications. Take a written list of your questions to your next doctor's appointment. Seek medical treatment as needed.
- **Eat well:** Eat fresh vegetables and fruit. Sign-up for CalFresh or Meals On Wheels, if you are low income.
- **Socialize regularly:** Stay engaged with friends and family. Attend events at your local senior center, community center or place of worship.

Your Family

- **Connect with other caregivers:** Sign up for a caregiver support program. Learn strategies and resources to help your sense of well-being.
- **Seek professional care coordination services:** An elder care manager can help you and your family plan and organize needed support services.
- **Arrange for home care:** Enroll your loved one in an Adult Day Program. Add caregiving services through In-Home Support Services for low-income seniors, or a reputable home care agency.
- **Complete an advanced care directive:** Help family members document their medical treatment and end-of-life wishes to ensure that their wishes will be honored.

Your Community

Contact the Volunteer Center to:

- Become an Ombudsman to advocate for older adults living in care facilities.
- Volunteer to drive older adults to appointments, shopping and errands, or bring them nutritious meals.
- Be a positive senior role model for youth through the Schools of Hope program.

Call Adult and Aging Services to:

- Request a presentation for your club or organization to build awareness about elder abuse prevention.
- Report suspected elder abuse or neglect to get help for yourself, family or community members. Call (707) 565-5940 or (800) 667-0404.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Flags Community Reports

On June 15, displays of purple flags at senior centers mark the number elder abuse reports in Sonoma County communities last year. Each flag represents one report in that town or community.

Visit the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day display near you. Pick up your purple awareness

ribbon and information about preventing abuse online, visit socoelderprotect.org for information about how to keep seniors safe and where you can volunteer in your community.

Visit displays at these senior centers:

- Cloverdale Senior Multi-Purpose Center, 894-4826
- Healdsburg Senior Center, 431-3324
- Petaluma Senior Center, 778-4399
- Rohnert Park Senior Recreation Center, 585-6780
- Russian River Resource Center, 869-0618
- Santa Rosa Multi-Purpose Senior Center, 545-8608
- Sebastopol Area Senior Center, 829-2440
- Vintage House Senior Center, Sonoma, 996-0311
- Windsor Senior Center, 838-1250



Photo: Dean Brittingham

How Many Reports in Your Neighborhood?

Caring Neighbors, Services Keep Seniors at Home

The following story illustrates some common issues faced by seniors at risk of harm, and the improvement in their quality of life with the support of the Human Services Department's Adult Protective Services and its many community partners.

At 94, Elena lives alone in her home of 25 years. She has no family and gets by on a low income. She walks with a cane and has fallen a few times on her way to the corner food market.

Her neighbor, Sara, notices that Elena isn't paying attention to her appearance as she always had. She sees her limping. Sara asks Adult Protective Services to check on her.

The social worker and public health nurse find that Elena is having trouble cleaning her house and that home repairs are needed, and they offer help. She agrees to have an In-Home Support Services caregiver help her with personal care, shopping and housekeeping. She accepts home repair help, and signs up for Meals On Wheels. She and the nurse set up a system to ensure she's taking her medications properly. Knowing she can access transportation assistance, Elena schedules an appointment with her doctor about her leg pain.

With ongoing services arranged by Adult Protective Services and its community partners, and her neighbor's friendship, Elena stays in her home safely and independently for many more years.



Sonoma County
Reports in 2014:
More than 4300

Cloverdale | 138

Healdsburg | 146

Windsor | 204

Santa Rosa | 2198

Russian River Area | 189

Rohnert Park / Cotati | 342

Sebastopol Area | 257

Sonoma Valley | 295

Petaluma | 672

In just the past five years, reports of suspected elder abuse have increased 70%.

Elder abuse reports concern self-neglect, neglect by caregivers, financial abuse, or physical and emotional abuse of seniors.

In 2014, there were more than 4300 reports in Sonoma County to Adult Protective Services and the Ombudsman Program.

However, studies estimate that only 1 in 23 cases of abuse are actually reported, so the number of seniors who are suffering could be even higher.

Look at the number of elder abuse reports where you live, then ask yourself: What can I do to keep seniors safe in my hometown?

Who do I call if I have concerns about a senior?

Seniors living at home:
Adult Protective Services
565-5940 • (800) 667-0404
socoelderprotect.org

Seniors in a residential care facility:
Long-Term Care Ombudsman
526-4108 • (800) 231-4024
senioradvocacyservices.org

24 hours a day/7 days a week

Area Agency on Aging

Ombudsman Helps Seniors in Care Facilities



Find support with:

- Elder Abuse Prevention
- Senior Resource Guide (English and Spanish)
- Senior Housing Guide
- Fall Prevention Classes, 565-5936
- CalFresh and Food Assistance
- In-home Supportive Services, 565-5900
- Veteran's Services, 565-5960

socoaaa.org
565-5950 • (800) 510-2020

If you're concerned about the care of a senior living in assisted living, a nursing home or residential care, call the Ombudsman Program. The staff and state-certified Ombudsman volunteers advocate to ensure that residents' rights are protected, that they are treated with dignity and receive quality care. Investigators take action only with the written permission of the resident or their family.

Ombudsmen work with senior care facilities to resolve concerns that residents and families are unable to address alone. They visit unannounced to monitor conditions and care, provide a voice for residents, including those unable to speak for themselves, and investigate reports of elder abuse. The Ombudsman then works with the facility to resolve the care issues.

These are signs that may indicate senior neglect or abuse:

- A weight gain/loss of more than five pounds
- Strong odors of any sort
- Fingernails and/or toenails left too long
- Changes in mood or behavior, appearing withdrawn or nervous
- Unwillingness to engage in conversation
- Unexplained bruises or broken bones
- Being dirty or unwashed
- Lethargy

Contact the Ombudsman Program at
Senior Advocacy Services,
526-4108 or (800) 231-4024,
or senioradvocacyservices.org



Free Senior Resource Guide

Get this free Sonoma County directory of services, agencies and programs that can improve the quality of life for seniors, people with disabilities and their caregivers.



Download the guide:
sonoma-county.org/human/adult_aging.htm
or call 565-5900 for a copy by mail.



"Empower, Support, Protect"

Human Services Department

