


## Resource List for Elder Abuse Service Providers in Westchester County- May 2015

1. ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE- 1-800-342-9871 
2. Adult Protective Services (APS)
  - a. Protect and provide services to "vulnerable, incapacitated or disabled adults"
  - b. Call APS to report a situation and ask for help
  - c. Contact (800) 342-9871 to locate an office in your area
  - d. Intake number (914) 995-2259
3. NYC Department for Aging, Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center
  - a. Primarily bilingual caseworkers provide counseling services to abuse and neglect victims and other help or information to victims
  - b. Calls are confidential and callers can talk anonymously
  - c. Contact (212) 442-3103
  - d. [www.nycgainstrape.org/resource\\_26.html](http://www.nycgainstrape.org/resource_26.html)
4. Pace Women's Justice Center- Elder Justice Unit
  - a. Elder Justice Unit assists seniors 60 and over who are victims of abuse- physical, financial, verbal, self- neglect, etc. with a myriad of legal services and assistance
  - b. Contact Legal Helpline at (914) 287-0739 to receive call back from an attorney
  - c. Main Office number (914) 422-4069
5. Westchester Department of Senior Programs and Services
  - a. Call to report elder abuse and for referrals
  - b. Contact (914) 995-3414
6. Westchester District Attorney's Office- Elder Abuse Unit
  - a. Call to report elder abuse and for referrals
  - b. Contact (914) 995- 3414
7. Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at The Hebrew Home at Riverdale
  - a. Comprehensive regional elder abuse shelter serving seniors 60+
  - b. Referrals 1-800-56-SENIOR
8. Link to Elder Law Q & A
  - a. [http://www.law.pace.edu/sites/default/files/wjc/Elder\\_Law\\_Q\\_and\\_A.pdf](http://www.law.pace.edu/sites/default/files/wjc/Elder_Law_Q_and_A.pdf)



# Where can I report elder abuse?

**\*In any emergency dial 911 or call your local police department\***

## In Westchester County call:

*to report*

- Adult Protective Services .....(914) 995-5411
- Westchester County Dept. of Senior Programs and Services.....(914) 813-6436
- Victims Assistance Services .....(914) 345-9111 or (914) 345-3113
- Westchester County District Attorney's Office (Elder Abuse Unit).....(914) 995-3414
- Pace Women's Justice Center (Elder Justice Unit) .....(914) 287-0739
- Westchester County Office for Women Helpline .....(914) 995-5972

## If the abuse takes place in a nursing home:

- New York State Dept. of Health Nursing Home, 24/7 Complaint Hotline .....(888) 201-4563
- Westchester County Long Term Care Ombudsman.....(914) 345-5900 Ext. 7522

## Additional Resources:

### National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

*A comprehensive website for information about elder abuse, including how to report abuse, what services are available to stop abuse, and how to find those services in your community.*

**Web:** [www.preventelderabuse.org](http://www.preventelderabuse.org) **Phone:** (202) 682-4140

### United States Administration on Aging (AOA)

*This Health & Human Services Department supports a range of activities to raise awareness about elder abuse.*

**Web:** [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov) **Phone:** (202) 619-0724

### Adult Protective Services (APS)

*State laws give local APS agencies the responsibility to protect and provide services to "vulnerable, incapacitated, or disabled adults." Older individuals being abused fall into this category. You can call APS to report your own situation and ask for help.*

**To locate the APS office in your area, call: (800) 342-9871 In New York City, call: 311**

### New York City Department for the Aging, Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center

*The Center's caseworkers provide counseling services to abuse and neglect victims, and other assistance to victims.*

**Web:** [www.nycagainstrape.org/resource\\_26.html](http://www.nycagainstrape.org/resource_26.html) **Phone:** (212) 422-3103 or (212) 442-1000



*The Pace Women's Justice Center (PWJC)* is a legal services organization within Pace University School of Law, under the 501(c)(3) nonprofit status of Pace University. Founded in 1991, **PWJC's mission is to end abuse by providing innovative legal programs including direct legal representation for victims and survivors of domestic violence and elder abuse, training, community education and outreach, service coordination, legal information and referrals.** With a staff of 25 full-time and part-time employees and over 8,000 hours contributed annually by pro bono attorneys, volunteers, and law students, **PWJC provides legal services to over 2,800 victims and survivors of domestic violence and elder abuse, and conducts over 100 training and outreach events each year.**

## **PWJC PROGRAMS**

**Family Court Legal Program ("FCLP")** operates on-site, walk-in offices at the Family Courts in White Plains and Yonkers and offers free legal assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence. For those needing immediate help and protection, our attorneys, assisted by pro bono attorneys and law students, represent clients in family offense proceedings for emergency orders of protection, as well as petitions for custody and child support.

**Legal Assistance to Victims: "Bridge the Gap"** is a collaborative partnership with community-based agencies that provides holistic direct civil legal and social services to domestic violence victims in both Westchester and Putnam counties. PWJC attorneys provide free legal services to low-income clients with a myriad of legal issues, including protective orders, custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, divorce, housing, immigration, and other issues, while our community partners provide emergency domestic violence shelter, counseling, court services, intervention, safety planning, support groups and other free social services.

**Elder Justice Program** provides free direct civil legal services to victims of abuse aged 60 and over who are Westchester residents, as well as extensive training and outreach on elder law and elder abuse issues. In addition, PWJC has a partnership with the Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale to provide legal services and training at the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention, the first long-term elder abuse prevention and intervention program in the country.

**Legal Helpline & Moderate Means** PWJC staff and pro bono attorneys provide free legal information and referrals through our telephone Legal Helpline, staffed at all times during business hours. PWJC also recruits and trains a "Moderate Means" panel of private attorneys who have agreed to assist clients at a reduced fee.

**Pro Bono Program** In order to leverage our limited funds and serve as many clients as possible, PWJC has an extensive program to recruit, train and supervise volunteers. This includes pro bono attorneys and paralegals, other professionals, law students, college students and high school students.

**Resource and Information** PWJC is recognized as a legal resource and information center for other legal and social services providers, community organizations, police departments, schools and government entities. We make legal information and resources available to the general public, and distribute user-friendly publications, including bilingual materials.

**Community Outreach and Training** PWJC actively sponsors and conducts lectures, seminars, trainings and free legal walk-in clinics on various issues including domestic violence, divorce, custody, child support, teen dating violence, elder law, elder abuse, and other issues. PWJC's outreach and training programs are conducted throughout Westchester, the NYC metropolitan area and in rural areas of New York State.

78 North Broadway, White Plains, New York, 10603  
Tel: 914.422.4069 · Helpline: 914.287.0739 · Fax: 914.422.4102  
[www.law.pace.edu/wjc](http://www.law.pace.edu/wjc)

# Pace Women's Pursuing **Justice** for Victims of Abuse Center

*Free legal services in Family Law & Elder Law*

Does your partner make  
you feel unsafe?

Do you have questions  
about child custody,  
child support, or  
divorce?



Are you over 60 years of  
age and have  
experienced financial  
exploitation, physical  
abuse, housing  
problems, or consumer  
issues?

**If the answer to any of these questions is yes,  
you should speak with a PWJC lawyer!**

**Talk to us about:**

## Free Legal Representation

Order of Protection · Child Custody/Child Visitation · Child Support  
Paternity Petition · Spousal Support · Divorce · Name Change Application · Will  
NYS Crime Victims Compensation Program · Power of Attorney · Health Care Proxy & Living Will  
Housing Issues (60+ years old) · Consumer Issues (60+ years old) · Public Benefits (60+ years old)

## Free Legal Helpline

**914.287.0739**

Call the Legal Helpline and leave a brief message  
and a phone number at which it is safe to call you.  
An attorney will get back to you shortly.  
All calls confidential!

## Free Resources

**[www.law.pace.edu/wjc](http://www.law.pace.edu/wjc)**

Divorce Q&A · Preguntas Frecuentes Del Divorcio ·  
Elder Law Q&A · Derecho para la tercera edad:  
Preguntas y respuestas · Growing Older...Who do  
you trust?

**Family Court Legal Program—White Plains** · 111 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd, White Plains, NY— 2nd Floor · 914.995.7400  
**Family Court Legal Program—Yonkers** · 53 S Broadway, Yonkers, NY— 2nd Floor · 914.231.2886

### **What is an appropriate way to speak to an older adult who I suspect is being abused?**

It is critical that you speak to a suspected victim of abuse alone, without any third parties present, to create an environment safe for disclosure. Make sure the older adult has the assistive devices necessary to participate in the conversation fully, such as glasses or hearing aids. Start with simple questions about the older person's daily activities. Try not to use the word "abuse." Instead, ask if the older person is properly respected or if the older person is afraid of anyone they know. Never promise to keep abuse a secret. Instead, educate the older adult about available options and create a safety plan together. Always leave the older adult with information about available resources.

### **What is the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale?**

Victims of elder abuse are often unsafe in their homes and in need of emergency shelter. However, homeless and domestic violence shelters are often ill equipped to accommodate the medical, cognitive and cultural needs of older adults. The Weinberg Center, the nation's first emergency elder abuse shelter, was founded to address this critical gap in services. Located within the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, a long-term care community, the Weinberg Center provides each client with a holistic care plan including medical, therapeutic, legal and social services. The shelter is a short-term solution, and our team of professionals works with victims to create appropriate discharge plans. The Weinberg Center is grant funded, and takes in clients regardless of ability to pay. For more information about elder abuse and our programs, visit [www.weinberg-center.org](http://www.weinberg-center.org).

**Hebrew Home at Riverdale**



*The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg*

CENTER FOR ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION  
AT THE HEBREW HOME AT RIVERDALE

## **Elder Abuse: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is elder abuse?**

There is no single generally accepted or legal definition of elder abuse. Rather, elder abuse is a broad term used to describe harmful acts against an older adult. According to the New York City Elder Abuse Center, elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate actions, which causes harm, risk of harm, or distress to an individual 60 years or older and occurs: a) within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust; or b) when the targeted act is directed towards an elder person by virtue of age or disabilities. Elder abuse can be intentional or unintentional, can take various forms, and includes but is not limited to physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment, and financial exploitation.

### **How prevalent is elder abuse?**

Elder abuse happens frequently. The federal government's Elder Justice Roadmap Project Report indicates that one out of every ten people ages 60 and older who lives at home suffers abuse, neglect or exploitation. Financial abuse is particularly rampant, with nearly 3 billion dollars taken from older adults annually nationwide. Moreover, the growing number of older adults in our country means that the incidence of elder abuse is likely to increase.

### **Who are the victims of elder abuse?**

Elder abuse impacts older adults of all races, backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. Older adults who are cognitively impaired, physically frail, or socially isolated are at particularly high risk for abuse. Victims of elder abuse are four times more likely to be admitted to a nursing home, three times more likely to be admitted to a hospital and three times more likely to die than counterparts who have not experienced abuse. Elder abuse also hurts victims' families and exacts tremendous societal costs. Abuse causes victims to be more dependent



on caregivers. As a result, caregivers experience declines in their own physical and mental health and their financial security suffers. Financial exploitation causes large economic losses that extend beyond the individual victim to families, businesses, and government programs, and increases reliance on federal health care programs such as Medicaid. The annual direct medical costs associated with violent injuries to older adults in the United States are estimated at \$5.3 billion.

### **Who are the perpetrators of elder abuse?**

According to the National Elder Abuse Incidence Study, family members, most frequently adult children or grandchildren, perpetrate 90% of elder abuse incidents. These abusers often have mental health or substance abuse issues and may reside in the home of the older adult victim. It is important to remember, however, that elder abuse is certainly not a result of a mental health diagnosis or substance abuse problem.

Informal, paid or court-appointed caregivers can also perpetrate abuse, though elder abuse is not a product of caregiver stress. Additionally, many professional con artists will specifically target older adults.

### **Why are so many older adults targeted by financial scams?**

Older adults may have access to significant assets, and they often receive a regular monthly income. This, coupled with isolation and fears about dwindling assets, makes older adults more vulnerable to financial scams. Additionally, current neurological research shows that the areas of the brain that allow us to distinguish between true and false advertising, and to identify trustworthy faces, experience significant degradation with age. As a result, older adults can be more vulnerable to financial abuse. For more information about specific scams and how to prevent them, visit [consumerfinance.gov/older-americans](http://consumerfinance.gov/older-americans) or [ftc.gov/passiton](http://ftc.gov/passiton).

### **If elder abuse is so prevalent, why aren't more people talking about it?**

Elder abuse is vastly underreported. According to New York State's Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, only one in 24 elder abuse cases are reported to law enforcement or social service agencies. Older adults may be reluctant

to report abuse for many reasons. Some of these are: shame, denial, self-blame, fear of the abuse getting worse, fear of repercussions for the abuser, fear of being forced to leave home or losing independence, and distrust of law enforcement and other government agencies. Additionally, many older adults may be unable to report abuse due to physical or cognitive impairments.

### **What are some red flags that indicate an older adult may be at risk for elder abuse?**

Since older adults are statistically unlikely to disclose abuse directly, it is critical to be vigilant in identifying red flags that may indicate an older adult is at risk for abuse. Some common red flags include:

- changes in an older adult's regular patterns of activity or behavior;
- sudden loss of financial independence or confusion about finances;
- unexplained physical injuries;
- increased social or physical isolation;
- older adult appears fearful of caregiver;
- older adult appears unkempt, inappropriately dressed, or malnourished;
- older adult appears unusually reluctant to respond when spoken to;
- caregiver appears rough, rude, or negligent.

### **What can I do if I suspect an older adult is a victim of abuse?**

In New York State, no one is a mandated reporter of elder abuse. Therefore, the safety of older adults depends on watchful professionals and caring community members like you. If you believe that the situation is an emergency, do not hesitate to call 911. If the situation is concerning, call 311 to make an anonymous report of elder abuse to either Adult Protective Services (APS) or the Department for the Aging (DFTA). Both agencies can send a trained caseworker to meet the victim and assess the situation. Depending on your relationship with the older adult, it may be appropriate to speak with them directly about their situation.