BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL ABUSE

Listed below are possible behavioral indicators of abuse by potential victims and abusers. Most or all of the forms need NOT be present for abuse to be occurring. One or two indicators may warrant further questioning and investigation.

POTENTIAL VICTIM may exhibit some of the behaviors listed below.

- Has repeated “accidental injuries.”
- Appears isolated.
- Says or hints at being afraid.
- Considers or attempts suicide.
- Has history of alcohol or drug abuse (including prescription drugs).
- Presents as a “difficult” client.
- Has vague, chronic, or non-specific complaints.
- Is unable to follow through on treatment plan or medical care.
- May miss appointments.
- Delay seeking medical help.
- Exhibits depression (mild or severe).
- Evidence of effects of stress and trauma such as chronic pain and other illnesses.

POTENTIAL ABUSER may do some of the things listed below.

- Is verbally abusive to workers or charming and friendly to worker.
- Says things like “he’s difficult,” “she’s stubborn,” “he’s so stupid,” or “she’s clumsy.”
- Attempts to convince others that the person is incompetent or crazy.
- Is overly attentive to the victim.
- Controls the older person’s activities and outside contacts.
- Refuses to let an interview take place without being present.
- Talks about the family member as if he/she is not there or not a person (dehumanizes).
- Physically assaults or threatens violence against victim or worker.
- Threats of suicide or homicide or both.
- Threats of harassment.
- Stalking.
- Cancels elder’s appointments.
- Sabotages older person’s efforts to attend appointments by refusing to provide transportation or some other excuse.
- Takes elder to different doctors, hospitals and pharmacies to cover up abuse.
- Uses the legal system to harass the older person (e.g., mutual protective orders, making false charges).