

**What PROFESSIONALS Need to Know About the Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons**

**CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT, INFORMATION, AND GUIDANCE**

**FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS**

**OF MISTREATED, OLDER NEW YORK STATE RESIDENTS**

**Helpline Call Center: 844-746-6905**

The **Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons** of the **New York City Elder Abuse Center at Weill Cornell Medicine** provides confidential and free support, information, guidance, and referrals to the family, friends, and neighbors of mistreated older adults, 60 and over, who live in New York State. Concerned Persons live anywhere in the world.

The Helpline is made possible with funding from the **New York State Office of Victim Services**, Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and in partnership with the **Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan**, sub-contractor on this grant.

The Helpline assists Concerned Persons who are themselves distressed and affected by the elder abuse situation, perhaps fearful and unsure of what to do. The Helpline works to decrease the Concerned Person's own anxiety and distress, while providing support, information, guidance, and referrals without expectation or judgment. It is staffed by experienced professionals in elder abuse prevention and intervention. The Helpline is a non-emergency service. In emergencies, Concerned Persons call 911.

**Research**

- Concerned Persons are often invisible, like so many elder abuse victims.
- Concerned Persons may be targeted by abusers, to better isolate the older adult. Research shows that these non-professionals who step in to help experience high levels of distress - 8 on a scale of 0-10(1), affecting their family life and personal physical and emotional health.
- Elder mistreatment remains a hidden problem in society. A New York State prevalence study found that one in 24 cases goes unreported, not known to any service system, law enforcement, or the criminal justice system. Research consistently shows that elder abuse victims are unlikely to receive help in the formal support system(2).

- Research conducted by the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, and Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, Weill Cornell Medical College, NY, NY, showed that “elder abuse victims who had a concerned person in their personal life were significantly more likely to use formal EA support services than victims without a concerned person.”(3)

## **Eligibility**

Concerned Persons, 18 years of age and older, are eligible for Helpline services. Concerned Persons live anywhere in the world. The older adult victims they are concerned about live in New York State.

## **Hours**

Operators at the Helpline Call Center take information from a Concerned Person from Sunday-Saturday, any time of the day or night. Experienced Helpline professionals then contact and assist the Concerned Person within one business day, Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm (ET).

## **Contacts for Professionals:**

Downstate New York State Counties: Peg Horan, LMSW, Clinical Program Manager, Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons [mmh2010@med.cornell.edu](mailto:mmh2010@med.cornell.edu)

Upstate New York State Counties: Tracey Siebert, LMSW, Assistant Director, Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan [tsiebert@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:tsiebert@lifespan-roch.org)

The Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons was launched in New York City in 2017 by the New York City Elder Abuse Center (NYCEAC), Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, Weill Cornell Medicine. Grant funding was awarded to NYCEAC by the New York State Office of Victim Services, Grant No. 2018-VA-GX-0047, Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. This material does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the funder. In September 2021, the Helpline expanded to all of New York State in partnership with the Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan, Rochester, N.Y., sub-contractor on this grant.

- (1) Breckman, R, Burnes, D, Ross, S, Marshall, P.C., Suitor, J, Lachs, M.S., Pillemer, K (2017). When Helping Hurts: Non-abusing family, friends and neighbors in the lives of elder mistreatment victims. *The Gerontologist*, 2018 Jul 13;58(4):719-723. doi: 10.1093/geront/gnw257.
- (2) Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc., Weill Cornell Medical Center of Cornell University, and NYC Department for the Aging. (2011) Under the Radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study. New York.
- (3) Burnes, D, Breckman, R, Henderson, Chuck, Lachs, M, Pillemer, K. Utilization of formal support services for elder abuse: Do informal supporters make a difference? (2018) *The Gerontologist*, gny074, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny074>