

# #ENGAGE 2 CHANGE

Recognize and Report Abuse of Older Adults  
and Persons with Disabilities

[www2.illinois.gov/aging/Engage](http://www2.illinois.gov/aging/Engage)



**State of Illinois, Department on Aging**  
One Natural Resources Way, #100  
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

**Alternatives for the Older Adult**  
(8:00am - 4:00pm, Monday - Friday):  
**800-798-0988**

**Senior HelpLine** (8:30am – 5:00pm, Monday – Friday):  
**1-800-252-8966**, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

**Adult Protective Services Hotline (24-Hour):**  
**1-866-800-1409**, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in compliance with appropriate State and federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department on Aging



## SELF-NEGLECT

Engage to learn, recognize, and  
help those who may self-neglect

*A Program of the Adult Protective  
Services of Illinois*

# #ENGAGE 2 CHANGE

# ILLINOIS ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

The Illinois Adult Protective Services Act (Public Act 98-0049) was enacted into law to address the problem of the abuse of adults with disabilities between the ages of 18-59 or persons age 60 or older who live in their own home. Under the authority of the Act, the Illinois Department on Aging administers a statewide Adult Protective Services (APS) intervention program to respond to reports of alleged abuse, neglect and financial exploitation (ANE), and to work with the adult to develop and implement a case plan to stabilize the situation and resolve the abusive circumstances.

The APS Program also accepts reports of Self-Neglect to help eligible adults who are unable or refuse to perform essential self-care for themselves. Many vulnerable adults live in our communities. They could be your friend, neighbor, family member or even yourself.

This brochure is intended to help you understand what Self-Neglect means and how it fits into APS.

## **Self-Neglect:**

Self-Neglect is defined as a condition that results from an individual's inability to perform essential self-care tasks that substantially threaten his or her own health, and includes:

- Providing essential food, clothing or shelter and health care for themselves; and
- Obtaining goods and services needed to maintain physical health, mental health, emotional well-being and general safety.
- Hoarding can fall under the self-neglect category only when the hoarding behavior and situation meets the threshold in which the person is endangered.

## **What if the individual doesn't want any help?**

The APS program is based on the adult's right to self-determination; no decisions are made about the adult without the adult's involvement and consent. Every effort is made to keep the person in his or her own

home. This is true for Self-Neglect as well. Anyone who is suspected of self-neglect has the right to decline services.

When a report is received, a trained caseworker responds within a specified time period depending on the severity of the case: within 24 hours for life threatening situations or within 72 hours for most neglect and non-threatening physical abuse situations.

## **Do I have to know for sure that someone is self-neglecting if I make a report?**

No. Like other types of abuse APS handles, you should call if you suspect. The program can professionally and confidentially determine whether the situation meets the necessary criteria levels.

## **Could a case be both Self-Neglect and ANE?**

Yes. A person may be neglecting themselves and also be abused, neglected or exploited by another.

## **What are some examples of Self-Neglect?**

The APS program examines many indicators to determine self-neglect. For example, many of the individuals who self-neglect refused medical care, refused to take medications or otherwise engaged in behavior detrimental to their health care. Others did not have proper utilities, shelter, food or clothing. It should be noted that problems such as homelessness, alcoholism, substance abuse or hoarding do not in and of themselves rise to the danger levels that would allow for APS to intervene. A trained caseworker will analyze the person's mental and physical condition and the situation at hand to make the proper determination.

## **How common is Self-Neglect?**

Self-Neglect is very common; in fact, the first year APS formally accepted reports of self-neglect, nearly 5,000 reports were received. That constitutes 21 percent of all reports received by the program.

## **How can APS help someone who is Self-Neglecting?**

Interventions assist the individual in obtaining items essential for them, such as food, clothing, shelter and health care, and obtaining goods and services necessary to maintain physical and mental health.

**REPORT IF YOU SUSPECT  
SELF-NEGLECT**

**1-866-800-1409**  
24-HOUR HOTLINE NUMBER // ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.