



BE WISE.

PROTECT
YOURSELF
FROM
FINANCIAL
EXPLOITATION

WWW.BEWISEONLINE.ORG

**IT CAN
HAPPEN
TO YOU.**



PAY ATTENTION

Experts say elder financial abuse will be the “crime of the 21st century” as the growing senior population becomes a target. Regrettably, many seniors are victimized by their own relatives or caregivers — people they generally trust.

Financial exploitation takes many forms. Some seniors are “befriended” by con artists who make their living preying on others. Some are deceived by bogus sweepstakes, lotteries and telemarketers whose products are worthless, overpriced or non-existent. Others are pressured into giving “gifts.” Seniors may risk losing their homes through unfair or misleading home equity agreements or fall prey to unscrupulous home repair contractors, trust mills, or sales of inappropriate financial products and services.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Exploiters and abusers are often very skilled. They can be charming and forceful in their effort to convince you to give up control of your finances. Don't be fooled. Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, it may not be right. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

TAKE CHARGE

You can take steps to protect yourself from financial exploitation and abuse:

- You have the right not to be threatened or intimidated. If someone close to you is trying to take control of your finances, speak to someone you trust or call your local Adult Protective Services.
- Plan ahead to protect your assets and to ensure that your wishes are followed. Talk to someone at your financial institution, an attorney or financial advisor about the best options for you.
- Never give personal information to anyone *who phones you.*
- Never pay a fee or taxes to collect sweepstakes or lottery “winnings.”
- Never rush into a financial decision. Ask for details in writing and get a second opinion.
- Consult with a financial advisor or attorney before signing any document you don't understand.
- Get to know your banker and build a relationship with the people who handle your finances. They can look out for any suspicious activity related to your account.
- Check references and credentials before hiring anyone. Do not allow workers to have access to information about your finances.
- Pay with checks and credit cards instead of cash to keep a paper trail.
- Feel free to say “no.” After all, it's your money.

FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION CAN
HAPPEN TO ANYONE. ABUSERS
CHARM. THEY PRESSURE. THEY
MAY EVEN SAY THEY'RE DOING
YOU A FAVOR.

**DON'T BE
FOOLED.**

BEWARE.

BE WISE.

ASK FOR HELP.

Wise people know when they need assistance. If you are unsure about a document or deal, ask questions. Contact your financial institution, an attorney or financial advisor. Their advice could help you avoid a financial disaster.

If you or someone you know has been financially exploited, contact your county's Adult Protective Services office today. In California, call the elder abuse hotline at 1-888-436-3600. The identity of the reporter is kept strictly confidential.



This brochure was produced by the Elder Financial Protection Network, a coalition of financial institutions, public and private agencies committed to fighting elder financial abuse. To learn more about EFPN, call 415-897-9555 or visit us online at www.bewiseonline.org

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