

Maryland Judiciary
How to Prevent Abuse & Neglect

In this video, we'll talk about preventing abuse and neglect. You may not see the person under your care every day, but there are still things that need to be done. We'll go over what to look for when you visit, and talk about how to keep track of any changes in their behavior and take note of the people they interact with.

First, let's talk about what you can do during your visits with the person under guardianship to make sure they are being properly cared for. Do they tell you they are not receiving proper care? Is the money paid to caregivers or service providers being used as it should be? Are the person's clothing, housing, and food needs being met? Take note of whether they have been to the hospital or doctor's office for frequent or unexplained injuries, or if there are conflicting explanations about what caused those injuries.

Another way to avoid abuse is to keep track of changes in the person's behavior, physical appearance, or surroundings. Do they report being harmed or feeling unsafe? Do they seem depressed, scared, agitated, or withdrawn? Is their clothing weather-appropriate and clean? Is their personal hygiene good? Is their living space clean and safe?

You may also want to keep track of the other people that spend time with the person under guardianship. Do they tell you they are being harmed by or afraid of someone? Are new people influencing them? Are they reluctant or unwilling to see certain family members or service providers? Is anyone interfering with your ability to speak with them alone, or with their relationships with trusted family, friends, or service providers? Is anyone acting aggressively toward the person?

Remember, preventing abuse and neglect requires an efficient use of the time you spend with a person under guardianship. Keep records of your visits to track any changes in the person's behaviors and living conditions, and take note of the other people in their life. Those records may be the key to preventing problems.