



Susan's Story

Susan Bivins moved to Anaconda to be closer to her son and her sweet granddaughter. She lived in a beautiful Victorian home, enjoyed traveling often, and ran her quilting business from a nearby shop.

But in May 2022, Susan was the target of a sophisticated financial exploitation operation—one that cost her \$240,000; her life savings, her retirement money, everything. She was forced to sell her home and put her travel plans on hold.

My life really turned upside down, she said.

Yet Susan is determined to use her story to help others.

"I went from victim, to survivor, to advocate, Susan said. "If I can help one person be more aware of what's going on with these scams, it's worth it.

APS of Montana is working with Susan to help her share her story. **Learn more about signs of financial exploitation at dphhs.mt.gov**

YOU THINK IT CAN'T
HAPPEN TO YOU,
BUT IT CAN.

-SUSAN BIVINS "

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES OF MONTANA
SENIOR AND LONG TERM CARE DIVISION
P.O. BOX 4210
HELENA, MT 59604



Protect the Vulnerable

LEARN THE SIGNS OF
ABUSE, NEGLECT & EXPLOITATION

PROVIDED BY THE MONTANA DPHHS AND APS OF MONTANA

THE STRENGTH OF A COMMUNITY IS BUILT ON THE RESPECT IT SHOWS TO ITS ELDER.

- ANONYMOUS ”

Elder abuse is on the rise.

The Department of Justice reports that **1 in 10 people** aged 60 years and older experience at least one type of abuse each year. What's more, only **1 in 23 cases** are reported.

You can help change this.

Consider this your guide to learning and understanding the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Together, we can work to protect those who are vulnerable in our Montana communities.

What is APS?

Adult Protective Services of Montana is a program provided to individuals who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This includes persons 60 years or older, and adults 18 years or older who have physical or mental impairment that substantially limits or restricts the person's ability to provide for their own care or protection; or who have a developmental disability.

How to spot signs of abuse

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE BY THE CAREGIVER OR FAMILY MEMBER:

- The dependent is not allowed to speak for themselves or see others alone.
- The dependent's activities are restricted and they are often socially isolated.
- The suspected abuser has an attitude of indifference or anger toward the dependent person.
- The suspected abuser demonstrates aggressive behavior (threats, insults, harassment) toward the dependent person.
- The suspected abuser has a problem with alcohol or drugs.
- The suspected abuser shows inappropriate displays of affection, flirtation, coyness, etc., all possible indicators of an inappropriate sexual relationship.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- The dependent has cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, bruises, welts, or discoloration of the skin, as well as any injury that is unexplained or has not been properly cared for. Injuries are sometimes on areas of the body normally hidden by clothing.
- The dependent is being force-fed and/or over or under-medicated.
- The dependent is dehydrated and/or malnourished without a related illness.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT:

- Soiled clothing and linens, foul odors, or other health and safety hazards in the dependent's living environment.
- The dependent has rashes, sores, lice, or an untreated medical condition.
- The dependent isn't going to the doctor, lacks assistive devices (e.g. hearing aids, glasses, walker), abandonment, or failure to provide needed supervision and/or care.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION:

- The dependent has signed property transfers (power of attorney, new will, etc.) when unable to comprehend the transaction.
- The dependent "voluntarily" gives inappropriate financial reimbursement for needed care and companionship.
- The suspected abuser has control of the dependent's money but is failing to provide for the dependent's needs.

These are only some of the possible indicators of abuse and do not cover all indicators of abuse. If you have a suspicion, talk to someone by calling 1-844-277 9300.

Where do I report suspected abuse?

You can file a report online at any time at aps.mt.gov. You will be connected with someone who can help.

You can also make a report by calling 1-844-277 9300. Note, this is not a 24/7 number but is active Monday through Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Mountain Time.

If the dependent is in imminent danger, the incident should be reported immediately to local law enforcement by dialing 9 1-1.

STATEWIDE REPORTING:
1-844-277 9300
Mon-Fri | 8 AM - 5 PM

24/7 ONLINE REPORTING:
aps.mt.gov