

## Red Flag Report Card

### A Checklist for Spotting Signs of Neglect in Nursing Homes

Nursing home neglect isn't always obvious. Sometimes it shows up in subtle ways: a forgotten glass of water, a lingering odor, or a loved one who seems quieter than usual. Families often ignore their instincts, unsure whether what they're seeing is truly serious.

This Red Flag Report Card was created to help you trust what you observe and take action. It includes thirty key signs of possible neglect across four categories: physical, emotional, environmental, and facility-level indicators. You can use this checklist during visits, phone calls, or virtual check-ins to track changes over time and raise concerns early.

If you check off multiple red flags-or you see any of them repeatedly-it may be time to speak with staff, report your concerns, or consider moving your loved one to a safer environment.

### How to Use This Checklist

- Bring this form with you each visit, or keep a digital copy for regular updates.
- Use one form per resident, and label each page with the date and time.
- Write short notes beside each checkmark for additional context.
- Trust your instincts-if something feels wrong, take it seriously.

### Resident Information

Resident Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_  
Observer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Physical Signs

- ☐ **Bedsore or pressure ulcer**
- ☐ **Unexplained bruises or fractures**
- ☐ **Frequent falls or fall-related injuries**
- ☐ **Noticeable weight loss**
- ☐ **Signs of dehydration (dry lips, confusion)**
- ☐ **Poor personal hygiene (unclean clothes, body odor)**
- ☐ **Soiled clothing or unchanged incontinence briefs**
- ☐ **Recurring urinary tract infections**
- ☐ **Odors of urine or feces in room**
- ☐ **Untreated or worsening wounds/infections**

### Emotional and Behavioral Signs

- ☐ **Sudden withdrawal from activities**
- ☐ **Fearful behavior around staff**

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- ☐ New or worsening depression or anxiety
- ☐ Comments like "Don't tell them I said that"
- ☐ Sleep disturbances, nightmares
- ☐ Refusing to eat or drink without a medical cause
- ☐ Hopeless statements ("I'm a burden," etc.)
- ☐ Over-attachment during visits
- ☐ Cognitive decline without a medical explanation
- ☐ Flinching or startling easily around staff

### Environmental and Facility Red Flags

- ☐ Call bells frequently unanswered
- ☐ Staff seem evasive or avoid answering questions
- ☐ High staff turnover or constantly new caregivers
- ☐ Dirty or unsanitary common areas
- ☐ Other residents calling out for help with no reply
- ☐ Delayed medical attention or no visible RN on duty
- ☐ Resident belongings frequently go missing
- ☐ Incomplete or outdated care plan
- ☐ Poor communication (no updates about incidents)
- ☐ Staff discourage visitation without good cause

### Notes and Observations

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### What to Do Next

If multiple red flags are checked-or if any one of them causes serious concern-consider taking the following steps:

1. Document dates, names, and details of each concern.
2. Speak with the facility administrator or Director of Nursing.
3. Submit a formal complaint in writing and request a written plan of correction.
4. Contact your local Long-Term Care Ombudsman or Adult Protective Services.
5. Consult an elder law attorney if you suspect harm or neglect.

*You are your loved one's best advocate.*

*A safe, dignified life in long-term care isn't a luxury-it's a right.*