

## Quick reference

# DETECTING FINANCIAL MISTREATMENT

### Financial mistreatment

Financial mistreatment is often committed by a person a client trusts or relies on to take care of them or their finances.

There is financial mistreatment where:

- A person pressures a client to withdraw money from the client's accounts or to add the person as a joint holder on an account.
- A mandatary isn't managing a client's finances in the client's interests or is using the power of attorney given by the client for personal purposes.

**1**

### Detecting signs of financial mistreatment

There are several observable signs that a client may be a victim of financial mistreatment. Watching for those signs can lead to such situations being detected earlier.



Note down any signs in the client's file as and when you observe them. Examples are provided on the other side of this sheet.

**2**

### Validating signs of financial mistreatment with clients

Clients who are experiencing mistreatment are more likely to be open to talking about it when there is a climate of trust that encourages discussion. Express your concerns and listen to them, go at their pace, ask open-ended questions, and remain available to discuss the situation with them again or to answer their questions.

**3**

### Offering help to clients

The AMF has published [Protecting vulnerable clients – A practical guide for the financial services industry](#), which proposes a variety of ways in which one can help clients get the assistance they need to put a stop to a situation of financial mistreatment and protect themselves from the often serious consequences that such a situation may have for their physical or psychological health or financial well-being.

**1-877-525-0337**

[autorite.qc.ca](http://autorite.qc.ca)

## SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

### Recognize the signs that clients are vulnerable:

- Have difficulty understanding explanations or communicating their needs owing, among other things, to:
  - cognitive impairments
  - poor knowledge of their own finances or no interest in managing their finances
  - poor knowledge of French or English
- Are showing mental health issues or physical limitations
- Live alone and are isolated
- Are going through a major change in their personal or professional life

### Observe changes in clients' behaviour

- Avoid making eye contact or seem afraid, suspicious or anxious
- Become aggressive when asked about their finances
- Seem incapable of or uncomfortable with answering questions
- Refuse to meet alone with their representative
- Place excessive trust in a friend or family member or rely on them to answer questions
- Refer their representative to another person to obtain answers to questions
- Minimize or excuse the behaviour of the person who is mistreating them
- Are not allowed by the person accompanying them to act or answer questions in that person's place

### Pay attention to changes in the way clients' finances are managed

- Withdrawals requested by clients or their mandatary:
  - seem unusual in their frequency, number or amount
  - seem to go against the client's financial interests or objectives
  - are suddenly urgent
- Sudden changes to the client's investor profile or financial objectives
- Unexplained transfer of funds to a friend or family member
- Request from the mandatary to change financial institutions
- Signature that doesn't look like the client's signature

