ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life
“Abuse, neglect, abandonment, or financial exploitation of an older individual by another person or entity who has a trust-based relationship with the older adult or, any harm that occurs because an older person is targeted by a stranger based on their age or disability” (DOJ, 2013).
Why Address Elder Abuse

Disclaimer: Persons depicted in this presentation are models and are used for illustrative purposes only.

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1 in 10 community-residing older adults reported experiencing elder abuse in the past year.

Elder Abuse is Mostly Hidden

For every 1 case of elder abuse that comes to light...
For every 1 case of financial exploitation that comes to light, 44 do not.

For every 1 case of neglect that comes to light, 57 do not.

Under the Radar  NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study.
Studies have consistently shown that the majority of elder abuse cases involve female victims with spouses as perpetrators.

Lane et al., (2013).
In the community, older victims of sexual abuse were violated most often by spouses/partners. (Acierno, et al., 2010).

In facilities, employees responsible for care (43%) or other residents (41%) were most likely offenders. (Ramsey-Klawsnik, H., Teaster, P. B., Mendiondo, M. S., Marcum, J. L., & Abner, E. L. 2008).
Often financial exploitation co-occurs with other forms of abuse.

Family, friends, caregivers and trusted others may be the offenders.
Nearly 80% of household wealth in the US is held by individuals age 50 and over.

http://erickson.umbc.edu/files/2015/05/2016_Longevity_Economy_AARP.pdf
Older adults lose approximately $36 billion/year.

On average, victims lose $120,300.

Nearly 1 in 5 older adults has been the victim of financial abuse.

Investor Protection Trust
Victims Are Often Vulnerable

Nearly half of all victims have a physical impairment.

About one-third of victims have mental impairment or dementia.

Elders who experienced abuse, even modest abuse, had a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been abused.
Lois, Miss Mary, Sam, Anne and Pat
Recognize and Respond to Elder Abuse
Recognize Potential Signs of Abuse

- ** Victim:
  - *Story does not match injuries*
  - Shows unexplained or sudden changes in behavior
  - Is afraid to speak in the presence of the offender
  - Is isolated
  - Shows signs of being restrained
  - Has infections, pain, or bleeding in genital areas

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Recognize Potential Signs of Abuse #2

- Potential Person Causing Harm
  - Provides conflicting explanations about the older adult’s injuries
  - Isolates older adult
  - Controls and dominates the older adult
  - Portrays self as victim or the only caring person in older adult’s life
  - May be charming and helpful toward professionals
Recognize Potential Signs of Neglect

- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Over- or under-medication
- Extreme weight loss
- Decayed teeth
- Overgrown nails
- Matted, infested hair
- Repeated falls
- Lack of assistive devices (e.g., hearing aids, glasses, dentures, mobility aids)
- Pressure ulcers

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Recognize Potential Signs of Exploitation

- Important possessions, documents, or credit cards are missing
- Older adult does not have basic needs met, but perpetrator has lavish expenses
- Forged signature on documents
- Use of ATM card or credit cards on items that are not for older adult
- “Gifts” or “loans” out of character for older adult
- Misuse of powers of attorney or guardianships

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What Can You Do If You Suspect Elder Abuse?

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Understand the Victim’s Potential Reluctance to Report

- Shame and embarrassment
- Fear
- Autonomy
- Family values and commitments – love person harming them
- Health
- Economic

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If Concerned About an Older Adult

- Initiate conversations
- Listen – be present
- Gently ask questions
- Compassionate messages - not alone/help available
- Focus on strengths and resiliency
- Refer to hotline or DV/SA program or other services
- Report if mandated

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Reporting Abuse

- **Local Law Enforcement**: Call the police or 9-1-1
- **Adult Protective Services**
- **Long-term Care Ombudsman**: (long-term care facilities)

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Studies have shown that social support can reduce the effects of abuse, particularly in terms of depression and generalized symptoms of anxiety and poor health.

NCALL Online

NCALL website: www.ncall.us

NCALL eNews Update

NCALL on Facebook and Twitter

NCALL YouTube
“None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”

Mother Teresa
Thank You

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