



What Hotline Workers Need To Know About Elder Abuse

JANUARY 12, 2018

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
ElderJustice
INITIATIVE



OVCTTAC
OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME Training and Technical Assistance Center



TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

- ▶ If you are experiencing any technical issues with the audio for this session, please let us know in the feedback box.
- ▶ If you have technical difficulties during the webinar, contact Kaila Hough, who is providing technical support for this webinar. Her email address is khough@ovcttac.org.
- ▶ Today's session will be recorded and made available on the training website.
- ▶ If you have questions, type them in the feedback box. We will address as many as possible throughout the webinar.

ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE

The **mission** is to support and coordinate the Department of Justice's enforcement and programmatic efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud and scams that target older adults.

The Initiative does so by—

- Promoting justice for older adults.
- Helping older victims and their families.
- Enhancing state and local efforts through training and resources.
- Supporting research to improve elder abuse policy and practice.



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Elder Justice Initiative
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ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE (EJI)

REPORT ABUSE OR FIND HELP

New on ElderJustice.gov

EJI launches the MDT Toolkit and Guide for elder abuse case review MDTs



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Elder abuse is a complex issue that intersects with many disciplines.

Elder abuse can happen to anyone. It affects people of every ethnic background, gender, and financial status.

PRESENTERS

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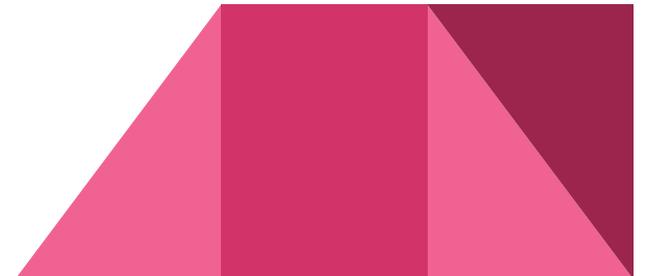
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Overview

- ❖ Poll
- ❖ Types of Elder Abuse
- ❖ Ageism
- ❖ Mandatory Reporting
- ❖ Special Considerations
- ❖ Safety Planning
- ❖ Identifying Older Callers
- ❖ Tips
- ❖ Case Studies
- ❖ Resources and Referrals



Poll Questions

Have you had calls from older adults in the past?

Have you had training on elder abuse?



Types of Elder Abuse

- ❖ Physical
- ❖ Sexual
- ❖ Emotional/
Psychological
- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Neglect/
Abandonment

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OLDER ADULTS, FAMILIES, AND CAREGIVERS

[FIND HELP OR REPORT ABUSE](#)

It's not always easy to recognize abuse when it happens to you or someone you care for. Learn about the types of abuse and what you can do by clicking the topics below.



Physical Abuse
An act, rough treatment or punishment that may result in injury, pain or impairment



Psychological Abuse
Psychological, verbal or emotional abuse causing suffering, emotional pain, or distress



Financial Exploitation
Illegal or improper use of an older person's money or property



Neglect & Abandonment
Intentional or unintentional failure or refusal to provide care or help to an older adult - an extreme form of neglect



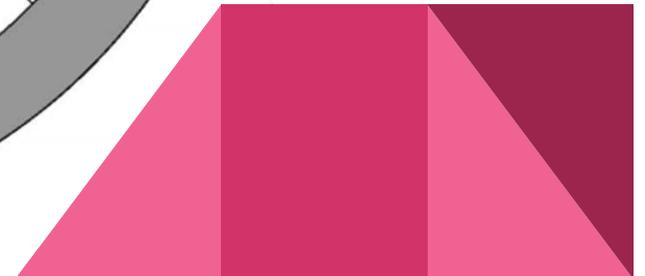
Find Help Near You
If you or someone you know is a victim of elder abuse, help is available. Find resources to assist you, and prevent or report elder abuse.



Sexual Abuse
Sexual contact or non-contact of any kind with an older person without agreement from that person

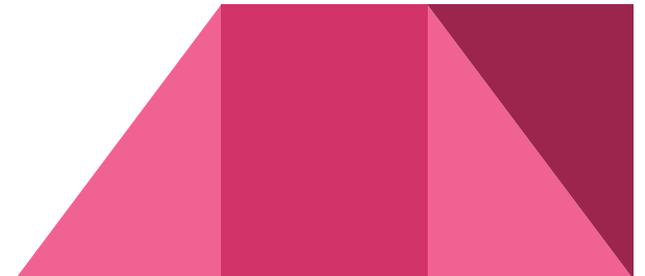
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Abuse in Later Life



Ageism

- ❖ Everyone ages differently
- ❖ Be aware of your own internal biases
- ❖ Pay attention to what the caller is asking for
- ❖ Listen for internalized ageism
- ❖ Be cognizant of cultural stereotypes of older adults



Mandatory Reporting

- ❖ Varies from state to state
- ❖ Does your agency have a protocol?
- ❖ Check with your supervisor/licensing board
- ❖ Anonymous vs. identifiable hotlines



Special Considerations

- ❖ Generational differences
- ❖ ACES/prior abuse
- ❖ Cultural diversity
- ❖ Aging process can lead to higher risk of abuse



Key LGBT+ Concerns



- ❖ Less likely to be partnered
- ❖ 2x as likely to live alone
- ❖ 4x as likely to not have children
- ❖ Reluctant to seek supportive services due to history of victimization and discrimination
- ❖ Abuser may threaten to “out” victim if they speak up



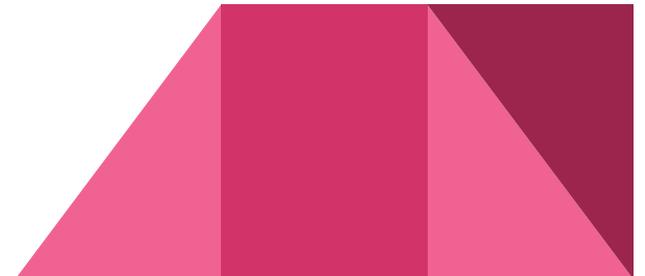
Rural

- ❖ 20 percent of those age 65+ live in rural settings in the United States
- ❖ High levels of poverty and isolation
- ❖ Low access to resources
- ❖ Increased usage of opioids by offenders



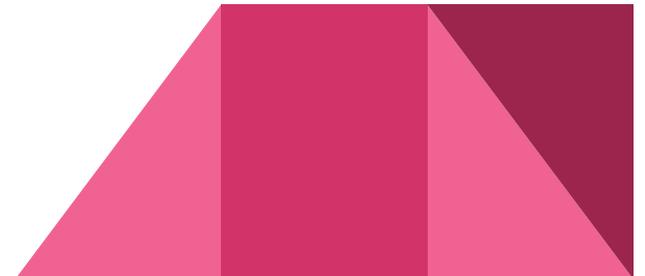
Safety Planning

- ❖ Be prepared to make a referral
- ❖ Victim-centered but created jointly
- ❖ Not necessarily physical safety
- ❖ Include an exit plan
- ❖ Have a word that signals danger
- ❖ Keep a cell phone or alert system ready
- ❖ Include resources/services



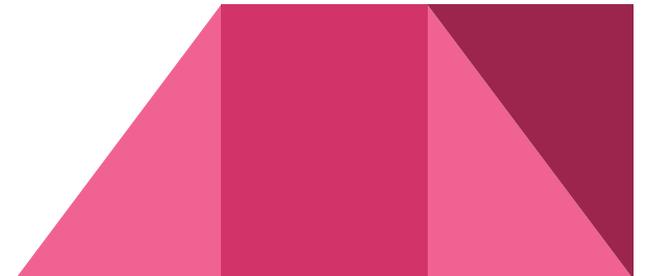
Identifying Older Callers

- ❖ Older callers may tell you immediately
- ❖ Make a note if age is important
- ❖ Listen for context clues and terminology
- ❖ Explain why you are asking for age



Tips

- ❖ Be patient and respectful
- ❖ Ask if it is safe to talk and have an exit plan
- ❖ Assure confidentiality of the hotline caller
- ❖ Use the terminology they use
- ❖ Use gender-neutral language
- ❖ Ask how the caller wishes to be addressed
- ❖ Lower the pitch of your voice
- ❖ Check for comprehension
- ❖ Offer options and resources



Case Studies

Jane, age 60, and Bob, age 65, have been married for 35 years. Jane has endured many years of domestic violence with Bob. It usually starts after they were drinking, with an argument about money or infidelity. Bob retired last year and is drinking daily. He has been verbally abusing Jane regularly and pushing her around. Things are heating up. He grabbed her yesterday and threw her down.

Jane is afraid. She had a heart attack 2 months ago and is weak and unable to cope with the abuse any longer. She decides to make a call to a domestic violence hotline that she found on a flier in her doctor's office.

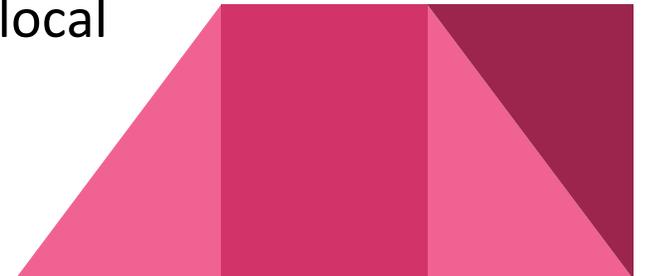


Case Studies

Mary is concerned about her neighbor, Jim, age 80. They used to play cards every Wednesday, but he has not been available since his new caregiver moved in. When she calls Jim, the caregiver always answers and says he is busy. She used to see Jim regularly at church on Sundays, but he is no longer attending.

When Mary saw Jim outside with the caregiver recently, she hurried out to see him. As she approached Jim, she could see that he was crying and his clothes were dirty. The caregiver told him to be quiet in a gruff voice. When the caregiver saw Mary, he was all smiles.

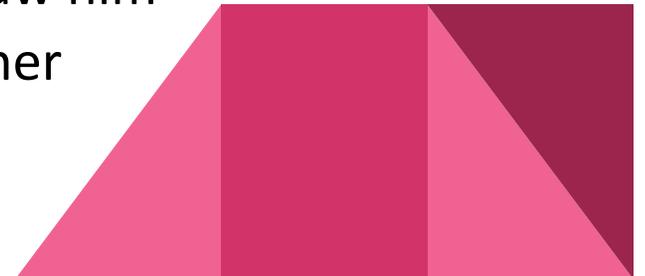
Mary is worried and decides to make a call to the local crisis line in her phonebook.



Case Studies

Cynthia, 82, was born into a wealthy family. She never married but worked for years and was able to put away some money. Recently, her great nephew, 30, moved in with her. She used to spoil him when he was little. Because she needs help and her nephew is out of a job, it seemed perfect to have him move in to help her.

Recently, though, Cynthia's nephew has become controlling. He is also using crude language, and she walked in on him watching pornographic movies on her TV in her bedroom. He made sexual remarks to Cynthia that made her very uncomfortable. She told him she does not want pornography or crude language in her home. She wants him to leave but does not know what to do. The other night, she saw him walking around naked in the hallway, pausing by her door and masturbating. Cynthia is afraid and reaches out to a legal hotline for help.

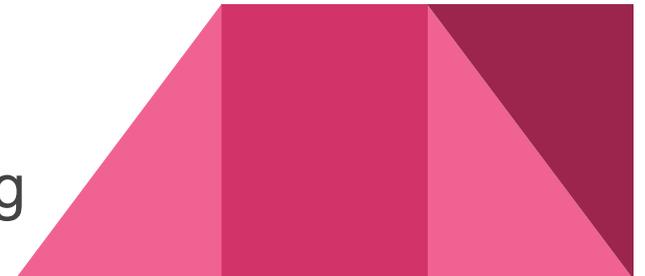


Case Studies

Steven, 75, lives alone. Occasionally, he receives phone calls from his grandson, Nick, to check in. One day, Steven received a phone call from a man named Louis who claimed to be Nick's lawyer. He said Nick was arrested and needed \$10,000 immediately or he would spend the night in jail. He repeatedly told Steven how important this was and that without his help his grandson would be stuck in jail alone. Steven was skeptical and wanted proof that Nick was in trouble, when he heard a man's voice in the background say, "Grandpa! Please help me!" Steven was convinced and immediately asked how he could send the money. Louis told Steven he could wire him the money through Western Union, but that he has had problems with wire transfers in the past so he may have to try sending it a few times. You receive a call from Steven a week later, when his grandson called him and explained that he had no idea who Louis was. Steven checked his bank account and realized he is now missing \$30,000, which was his entire life savings.

Resources and Referrals

- ❖ Elder Justice Initiative: elderjustice.gov
- ❖ VictimConnect: victimconnect.org (1-855-484-2846)
- ❖ n4a: n4a.org
- ❖ SAGE: sageusa.org & sageusa.care
- ❖ National Resource Center on LGBT Aging:
lgbtagingcenter.org
- ❖ National Adult Protective Services Association:
napsa-now.org
- ❖ National Association of Senior Legal Hotlines:
naslh.org
- ❖ National Consumer Voice for Quality
Long-Term Care: theconsumervoice.org





www.elderjustice.gov

QUESTIONS & SUGGESTIONS

can be emailed to

elder.justice@usdoj.gov