

Elder Abuse, Exploitation, and Identity Theft

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Pre-Test



Anchoring Questions

- Have any of you have attended an elder abuse training?
- If asked, could you identify at least 3 forms of elder abuse?
- What are some cultural considerations in responding to elder abuse?
- If asked, could you identify at least 2 health effects on an abused elder?
- What community services frequently interact with elders?

Introduction

Gerald, 60, suffered a stroke. His stroke left him physically disabled and with a speech impairment. His daughter said she would take care of him but quickly became frustrated with her father's constant needs. Gerald's public health nurse reported to her supervisor that he had several bruises and was suffering from bed sores. Gerald was also confined to a room with no heat and outlets to connect his medical devices. He struggled to tell the public health nurse that he was okay and there was no need to report anything wrong. Gerald's body was later discovered by a family friend. He had been dead for 2 days.

Workshop Objectives

- Participants will identify the dynamics of elder abuse.
- Participants will analyze and discuss current elder abuse definitions.
- Participants will analyze and discuss the reasons abused elders do not report abuse.
- Participants will review the signs and symptoms of elder abuse.
- Participants will review 4 elements of prevention, intervention, and postvention services.

Elder Abuse

“Abuse” is the intentional or reckless behavior toward an Elder or Vulnerable Adult which places that person’s life, physical, mental, or emotional health or welfare in jeopardy or which is likely to result in impairment of health. Abusive acts includes but is not limited to physical abuse; sexual abuse; mental abuse; unreasonable confinement; unreasonable restraint; or deprivation of essential.

Elder Exploitation

“Exploitation” is illegal or improper use of an Elder or Vulnerable Adult or that person’s income or resources, including trust funds, for another person’s profit or advantage. This includes but is not limited to intentionally or recklessly using income, funds, or property of an Elder or Vulnerable Adult to their detriment or acquiring an interest in property or funds of an Elder or Vulnerable Adult by using undue influence, harassment, duress, or fraud.

Identity Theft (and Identity Fraud)

Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crime in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in some way that involves fraud or deception, typically for economic gain (US Department of Justice, 2017).

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

- Discrepancies between a person's standard of living and his/her financial assets
- Depletion of assets without adequate explanation
- Money or personal items such as eyeglasses, jewelry, hearing aids, or dentures are missing without explanation
- Malnourishment and inadequate physical care, including dehydration or lack of food, poor hygiene, urine sores, or bed sores, or over-sedation
- Evidence of sexual assault

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse (Cont.)

- Physical injuries, such as bruises, burn marks, welts, tufts of hair missing, broken bones, none of which can be adequately explained.
- Withdrawn, apathetic, fearful, or anxious behavior, particularly around certain persons
- The victim may suddenly and without explanation express a desire not to visit or receive visits from family or friends.
- Medical needs are not met, appointments missed
- Sudden, unexplained changes in the victim's living arrangements

Why don't they ask for help?

- Shame
- Guilt
- They may not think of it as abuse
- Feel 'protective love' towards the abuser
- They may want to help their abuser
- Afraid of getting their abuser into trouble
- Fear of being forced to leave their home
- They may feel that being forced into care will cause them to lose their cultural and support networks

Video: “Elder Abuse on a Veteran”

- Watch video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovmreayEe9c>
- What is your reaction to the video?

Health Effects of Elder Abuse

- Increased Mortality (Lachs et al. 1998, Dong et al. 2009)
- Poorer physical outcomes (probable) (American Medical Association 1990; Anetzberger 2004; Lindbloom et al. 2007)
 - Increased pain
 - Exacerbation of existing conditions
 - Welts, wounds, injuries
 - Increased susceptibility to infection

Financial Effects of Elder Abuse

- Restitution often not forthcoming or too late
- No time to rebuild assets
- Loss of choices for older adult; loss of independence
- Reliance on others for financial support
- More quickly spending down to Medicaid

Common Abuser Characteristics

- People with inadequately treated mental health and/or substance abuse problems are more likely to be abusive
- People who feel stressed, burdened, resentful are more likely to be abusive
- Providing care for an older adult who is physically combative and/or verbally abusive

Well-Trained Staff

- Staff members should be sensitive, competent, and have received sufficient training, support, and supervision.
- Staff members should receive formalized training to deliver services.
- Trainings should allow staff to practice delivering providing the intervention, and allow them to get their questions answered.
- Staff longevity provides continuity of services that allows them to establish trusting relationships with the clients.

Well-Trained Staff (Cont.)

- Challenges of retaining staff and achieving longevity can still result in turnover.
- Staff turnover can be a result of many things including:
 - Low moral
 - Lack of buy-in
 - Pay
 - Job demands
 - Management issues

Elder Abuse Screening Index

Within the past 12 months:

1. Have you relied on people for any of the following: bathing, dressing, shopping, banking, or meals?	Yes	No	Did not get answer
2. Has anyone prevented you from getting food, clothes, medication, glasses, hearing aids, or medical care, or from being with people you wanted to be with?	Yes	No	Did not get answer
3. Have you been upset because someone talked to you in a way that made you feel shamed or threatened?	Yes	No	Did not get answer
4. Has anyone tried to force you to sign papers or to use your money against your will?	Yes	No	Did not get answer
5. Has anyone made you afraid, touched you in ways that you did not want, or hurt you physically?	Yes	No	Did not get answer
6. Physician: Elder abuse may be associated with findings such as poor eye contact, withdrawn nature, malnourishment, hygiene issues, cuts, bruises, inappropriate clothing, or medication compliance issues. Did you notice any of these today or in the past 12 months?	Yes	No	Not sure

NOTE: The EASI was developed to raise a physician's suspicion about elder abuse to a level at which it might be reasonable to propose a referral for further evaluation by social services, Adult Protective Services, or the equivalent. Although all six questions should be asked, a response of "yes" on one or more of questions 2 through 6 may establish concern. The EASI was validated for family physicians to administer to older persons with a Mini-Mental State Examination score of 24 or greater who are seen in ambulatory settings.

Cultural Considerations

- Elders are thought of in 'high esteem'
- Elders are the carriers of culture, wisdom, and strength.
- Elders assist in raising children
- Elders teach languages, customs, and ceremonies
- Elders often have leadership roles and work with spiritual leaders and healers.
- Elder status is often based on life experience, wisdom, and respect from the community



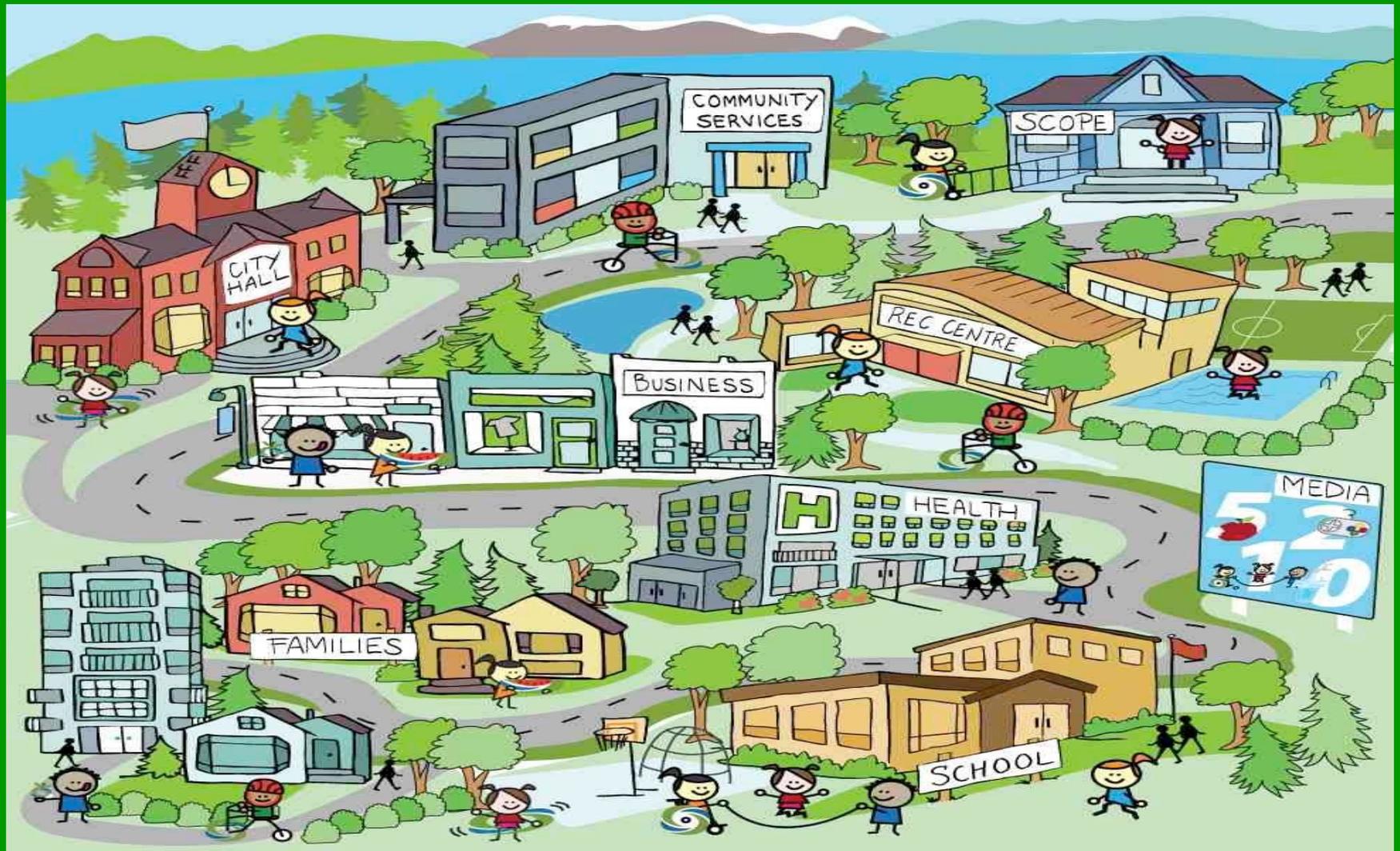
Data Collection

- Reports with completed investigated in the reporting year
- Sources for reports
- Substantiated reports
- Number of persons associated with the substantiated reports
- Age distribution
- Race distribution
- Sex distribution
- Functional capacity of these persons
- Living arrangement of these persons

Data Collection (Cont.)

- Number of these persons who received ongoing services
Number of persons who needed to be placed under guardianship due to abuse
- Number of persons who needed to change their living arrangement due to mistreatment
- Relationship of perpetrator(s) to these persons
- Number of perpetrators referred to law enforcement
- Number of uniquely counted persons who had received prior services

Community Mapping



Activity: Develop a Draft Assessment

- Gather into groups.
- As a group, write some questions down on chart paper that would be most helpful for you to ask in a universal assessment.
- Next to each question, write down the purpose of the question and whose responsibility it is to address that question.
- Consider how the question may help you as a provider.
- Consider whether the question aligns with your tribal code regarding *Elder Abuse*.
- Be prepared to share your results.

Preventive/Intervention/Postvention Services

- Culturally Relevant
- Safety Plan
- Family Conferencing
- Community Awareness

Cultural Relevance

- What is cultural relevance?
- Why is it important?
 - Programs should be tailored to fit within cultural beliefs and practices
 - Western-based interventions can be difficult to implement
 - Superficial demonstrations of cultural relevance through images and language is not enough
 - One-size fits all and/or best practices do not always respond to the unique needs of the community

Safety Planning

- Ask neighbors to be alert for any signs of a problem
- Establish a code to signal neighbors or friends that they need to call for help
- Keep a list of up-to-date telephone numbers
- Get a mobile phone, (perhaps a user-friendly, easy-read model)
- Establish a network of providers that can cross-check, such as home care services
- Consider talking to the police about the person's safety and applying for a Protection Order
- Identify a Guardian Ad Litem or other resource

Family Conferencing

- What is the purpose of family conferencing?
 - Provide an opportunity for victim participation and their voice to be heard
 - Increasing the offender's awareness of the impact of his/her behavior
 - Provide the offender an opportunity to take full responsibility for their behavior
 - Engage the offender's support system
 - Allow both offender and victim to reconnect to key community support systems

Community Awareness

- Develop resources such as brochures and leaflets
- Use social media to get the word out
- Work with other agencies responsible for elder safety
- Have a walk, candlelight vigil, moment of silence
- Invite a local spokesperson, leadership, or respected elder to speak with others about your cause
- Gather data to share with the community
- Write a newspaper article
- Host community events and/or presentations
- Target all age groups with your message (age appropriate)

Case Study

An elder woman's daughter-in-law is her in-home caregiver. She cooks the elder's meals and does some light housekeeping. In recent weeks, other family members have noticed signs of neglect and possible physical abuse of the elder. She has bruises on her arms and she seems to be losing weight. However, the elder says that everything is fine. Today, the elder's son found out that the daughter-in-law caregiver has been forging the elder's signature and has cashed checks to her for about six thousand dollars. Other family members want to file charges against the daughter-in-law, but the elder refuses.

Case Study Questions

- What are the first steps you would take in this situation, per your position?
- What problems do you think you would encounter when addressing this case, and how would you solve them?
- What are the cultural considerations to keep in mind when dealing with this situation?
- How can you provide support, now and in future, to this elder and her family members?

Questions



Conclusion

Elder abuse is everyone's business. Cultural teachings tell us about the value of elders and the wisdom they carry. It is not enough to have an elder protection program and a law and order code. Elder protection involves constant contact with the community and resources in order to create a safety net of services that includes well-trained staff, culturally relevant responses to elder abuse, and knowing when to report abuse, to name a few. Remember that elders are the key to our past that eventually open up the doors to our future.

Reflection



Post-Test



Unified Solutions Training Resources

- To access this Power Point and other resources from today's training please visit: <http://www.unified-solutions.org/unified-solutions-training-resources/>