


Elder Mistreatment and Emerging Social Issues


Lifespan
Rochester, NY

Art Mason, LMSW



Lifespan Elder Abuse Prevention Program

- o Established in 1986
- o Serves community residing adults 60+
- o Serves 10 counties
- o Difference in roles between Adult Protective Services and Lifespan's elder abuse prevention program



Why Should I Care About Elder Abuse?

- o Population changes
- o Socio-economic factors
- o Hidden problem (iceberg theory)
- o Caregiver demographics

New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study

- o Dr. Mark Lach's presentation at the New York State Summit, held in Albany in November, 2010
- o Data analysis is ongoing

Mandatory Reporting

- o New York State is one of only two states, Colorado being the other one, that do not require mandatory reporting of elder abuse at this time. (APS & EISEP?)
- o NYS relies on *voluntary* reporting by professionals and the public.
- o Strong opinions, funding and implementation issues all influence this decision process.

Elder Abuse Awareness Quiz

- APS cannot remove a person who wants to stay in an abusive situation.
- o Most common form of abuse is neglect with emotional abuse second, financial third.
 - o Ninety percent is perpetrated by family, two thirds by adult children.
 - o Financial exploitation is the fastest growing type of abuse.
 - o True. Older women with physical/cognitive impairments are abused at a higher rate.

Elder Abuse Awareness Quiz

- o False. Medicaid clients *are* more reported, but only because they are involved in *systems*.
- o False. There are laws in place making elder abuse a crime—not just a social service issue.
- o True. Those over 80 are 2-3 times more likely to be a victim of some form of abuse.
- o Self referrals average about 4-5%.
- o Caregiver stress is the context but NOT the cause. There is no "excuse for abuse!"

Family Types

- o Stressed Caregiver
- o Pathology – mental health and substance abuse
- o Domestic violence grown old
- o Cycle of violence

What we learn from the "Church Lady"

- o Stressed caregiver or perpetrator?
- o Appearances may be deceiving
- o Utilization of caregiver resources

Signs of Caregiver Burnout

- Increased anxiety
- Feelings of exhaustion
- Lack of concentration
- Disrupted sleep
- Increased use of negative coping mechanisms – smoking, alcohol, drugs, food
- Impatience/Irritability
- Increased health problems or somatic symptoms

Signs of Caregiver Burnout

- Overreacting to criticism of daily events
- Expressions of anger toward family and/or care recipient
- Loss of compassion
- Resenting the care recipient
- Feeling trapped, wanting a way out
- Wishing the caregiver role would end
- Feeling hopeless, depressed or suicidal
- Denial

Caregiver Risk Factors

Caregiver

- Care receiver has Alzheimer's/dementia
- Care receiver has greater ADL/IADL needs
- Caregiver experiencing high level of "burden"
- Feel they have "no choice"
- Lives with care receiver
- Depressed or experiencing other mental health issues, including substance abuse.
- Has health problems and/or cognitive impairments
- Lack of support systems

Care Receiver Risk Factors

- o Cognitively impaired
- o Exhibits behavior that caregiver finds difficult or unacceptable
- o Needs assistance with ADLs/IADLs
- o Lives with caregiver, especially spouse
- o History of conflict with caregiver
- o Mental health or substance abuse issues
- o Lack of involved family, friends or supports

Behaviors that increase risk

- o Verbal aggression
- o Refusal to participate in or allow care
- o Criticism of caregiver
- o Disruptive behavior, noisiness, vocalization
- o Physical aggression
- o Embarrassing public displays

Interventions

- o Increase awareness of health care providers
- o Functional/medical evaluation of caregiver and/or care receiver
- o Skills training for caregivers, modification of environment
- o Behavior management training
- o Respite (in-home, adult day programs, etc.)
- o Support groups, individual and family counseling
- o Enlistment of support from other family members

What would YOU do????????????????

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Action Steps

o If you suspect abuse

o Social Services Law 473-b.

- Protects good faith referral sources from prosecution when they refer suspected endangered adults to their local social services district office or other appropriate entity for investigation/intervention.

o Call APS - Onondaga DSS (315) 435-2985 www.ongov.net/DSS/, www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/localdss.asp#0

o Document, document, document!

o Ask victims what they want

o Present options
