



FRAUD AND FINANCIAL ABUSE PREVENTION



FRAUD & FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Mainly an issue for the elderly
- Occurs due to client's dependence on others for ADL's; and possible mental impairment
- Occurs when someone takes money that should have been spent for the elderly person.
- Occurs when someone helps himself/herself to elderly person's finances, belongings and/or property
- Report and document all changes.



IMPORTANCE OF YOUR ROLE

- ***As a home care employee:***
 - You are a neutral party;
 - You spend considerable time with the elderly client;
 - You are able to notice major changes in client's environment;
 - You may be more aware of changes in client's mood;
 - You become a “safe listening ear” for client;
 - If you suspect that fraud or financial abuse has or is occurring, your intervention can often save the assets, health, dignity or even the life of your elderly client.



SENIORS MOST AT RISK

- ***Seniors with the following conditions or factors are most at risk:***
 - Physical or mental disabilities
 - Lack of familiarity with financial matters
 - Living in isolation
 - Feeling lonely
 - Having family members who are unemployed and/or have substance abuse problems.



TYPES OF FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Taking money or property.
- Forging older person's signature.
- Misusing credit cards, ATM cards or joint bank accounts.
- Cashing checks without authorization.
- Appropriation or theft of benefit or pension checks.
- Getting older person to sign a deed, will or power of attorney through deception or coercion.



TYPES OF FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Using older person's property or possessions without permission.
- Promising lifelong care in exchange for money or property and not following through.
- In-home care providers:
 - charging for services not provided
 - keeping change from errands
 - paying bills that don't belong to the client
 - asking client to sign falsified timesheets
 - spending work time on the phone and ignoring their job responsibilities.



THOSE COMMONLY RESPONSIBLE

Family members, including children, grandchildren and even spouses.

- May have substance abuse, gambling or financial problems.
- Stand to inherit and feel justified in taking what they feel is “rightfully” theirs.
- Fear that their inheritance will be spent providing care for an elderly family member.
- Have negative feelings toward other family members and want to prevent them from inheriting elderly person’s assets.



THOSE COMMONLY RESPONSIBLE

Other predatory individuals who may exploit older persons:

- Unscrupulous professionals/business persons:
 - Overcharge for services or products
 - Use deceptive or unfair business practices
 - Use their position of trust or respect to gain older person's compliance.
- Profess to love older person (“sweetheart scams”)
- Seek employment as personal care attendants or counselors.
- Transient “scammers” who move from community to community to avoid apprehension.



COMMON FRAUDS / SCAMS

Telemarketing and Mail Fraud

- Unsolicited offers from fast-talking telemarketers or through the mail.
- **If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!**

Stranger Scams

- Lottery and sweepstakes scams
- Home repair con men
- Grandparent Scams (grandchild in trouble)
- Charity scams
- Fake utility workers who gain access to home for purpose of stealing cash or property

COMMON FRAUDS / SCAMS, cont'd

Predatory Lending

- Unscrupulous lenders who pressure elderly homeowners into high interest loans they may be unable to repay.
- Persuading an elderly person to borrow money through home equity loans for home repairs, debt consolidation or to pay health care costs that they eventually can't afford to pay off, and then possibly lose their home.



MEDICARE/MEDICAID FRAUD

- Need to check Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) to make certain all billed services were provided.
- Need to check if provider billed for what was actually provided and not for a more expensive, complicated procedure.
- If question exists, call the Medicare contractor's phone # on bottom of the notice, or contact the State Health Information Assistance program.



SIGNS OF FRAUD/ABUSE

- Abrupt changes in elderly person's lifestyle
- Eviction notices or utility shut-off notices
- Bank statements with cash withdrawals, frequent transfers between accounts, or ATM withdrawals of which elder is unaware
- Belongings or property missing
- Suspicious signatures on checks or other documents.



REPORTING FRAUD / ABUSE

- If suspecting that client may be victim of fraud or financial abuse, report it to your supervisor.
- **When in doubt, always err on the side of caution and report the abuse;** otherwise, it can continue and even escalate.
- If such abuse occurs outside the workplace, report to the local county Adult Protective Services agency or to local law enforcement.
- **Person reporting abuse is protected from both criminal and civil liability.**



QUESTIONS?