

**How Service Coordinators Can Detect and Help Prevent Elder Abuse**

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Retirement Housing Foundation

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**National Center on Elder Abuse**

The NCEA strives to improve the national response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

- Practice
- Education
- Research
- Policy

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**RHF's Mission Statement and Service Coordination**




**Retirement Housing Foundation**

One of the nation's largest non-profit providers of Housing and Services

**Our Mission** is to provide Affordable Housing and Service Coordination for persons with limited incomes in an inclusive environment that enhances their quality of life physically, mentally, and spiritually.

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## Learning Objectives

- Describe the signs and risk factors of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation
- Consider questions to ask, when and how to make a report, appropriate referrals, and safety precautions
- Identify opportunities to partner with residents, property management team members, local agencies, and others to address and prevent elder mistreatment

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## Gameplan

- What is Elder Mistreatment?
- What is Elder Mistreatment's impact in housing?
- Identifying EM during Annual Assessments
- How to report and document EM
- Interventions
- Collaboration for Prevention



*Descriptions of abuse and self-harm may be upsetting or traumatizing.  
Please practice self-care!*

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## The Older Adult Population



- In 2019, there were over 54.1 million older people in the US
- By 2050, the population aged 65 and over is projected increase to 90 million
- By 2050, the percentage of people aged 65+ will represent over 21.6% of the population in the US

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## Elder Mistreatment: Prevalence



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## Nondisclosure and Underreports

- Shame and embarrassment
- Fear of retaliation
- Dependence on perpetrator
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Inability to report due to cognitive impairment
- Reluctance to report loved ones



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## Elder Mistreatment - Definition

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, "Elder abuse is an **intentional act or failure to act** that **causes or creates a risk of harm** to an older adult. An older adult is **someone age 60 or older**. The abuse occurs at the hands of a caregiver or a person the elder trusts."



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## Socio-Cultural Perceptions of Mistreatment

Conceptual understandings may vary based on cultural and social norms among communities, resulting in different definitions, perceptions of, and responses to, mistreatment.



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## Definitions by State

ARIZONA	CALIFORNIA	NEVADA
<p><b>"Vulnerable Adult"</b> an individual who is 18 years of age or older and who is unable to protect himself from abuse, neglect or exploitation by others because of a physical or mental impairment.</p> <p>Vulnerable adult includes any person who is impaired by reason of mental illness, mental deficiency, mental disorder, physical illness or disability, chronic use of drugs, chronic intoxication or other cause, except minority, to the extent that he lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions concerning his person.</p>	<p><b>"Older Person"</b> age 60+</p> <p><b>"Dependent Adult"</b> a person, regardless of whether the person lives independently, between the ages of 18 and 64 years who resides in this state and who has physical or mental limitations that restrict his or her ability to carry out normal activities or to protect his or her rights, including, but not limited to, persons who have physical or developmental disabilities, or whose physical or mental abilities have diminished because of age.</p>	<p><b>"Older Person"</b> age 60+</p> <p><b>"Vulnerable Person"</b> age 18+ with physical or mental limitations that restrict their ability to perform activities of daily living</p>

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## Types of Elder Mistreatment

Elder Abuse can happen anywhere. It can take many forms, including:



Physical



Psychological



Sexual



Financial



Neglect



Self-Neglect

Multiple forms of abuse can co-occur

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### Signs of Abuse

**Physical Signs**

- Defecation or unusual weight loss
- Missing pills, glasses, walker or medication
- Unexplained injuries, bruises, cuts, or sores
- Limbs, slumped or slumped understanding
- Unattended needs or needs
- Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases

**Emotional & Behavioral Signs**

- Increased fear or anxiety
- Isolation from friends or family
- Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
- Withdrawal from normal activities

**Financial Signs**

- Fraudulent signatures on financial documents
- Unusual or sudden changes in spending patterns
- Unpaid bills

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### Risk Factors of Abuse

**The Abuse Intervention/Prevention Model**

Practical framework for identifying sources of risk related to elder mistreatment

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### Risk Factors

**Older Adult**

- Chronic medical conditions
- Cognitive impairment
- Functional deficits
- Frailty
- Social isolation
- Stress and poor coping mechanisms

**Trusted Other**

- Economic dependency
- Emotional dependency
- Substance abuse

**Context**

- Social connectedness
- Cultural norms
- Relationship

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## Impacts

- Medical and mental health consequences
- Increased cognitive decline
- Social isolation and disconnection
- Poverty and homelessness
- 3x higher mortality rate
- Billions of dollars in losses



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## Service Coordinator in Affordable Housing



- Educators
- Resources
- Advocate
- Facilitator
- Motivator
- Monitors
- Advisor
- Referral Agents
- Community Partners



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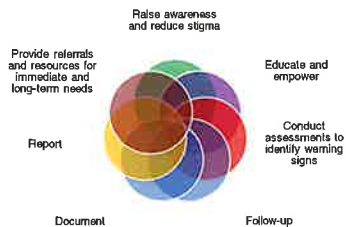
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## Role of Service Coordinator in Elder Mistreatment



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## Service Coordinator Confidentiality Exceptions

### Exceptions to Right of Confidentiality

Federal and/or state law or federal housing regulations may require the service coordinator to disclose the following information:

- Adult Protective Services referrals: It may be necessary to report residents who are endangered or exploited.
- It may be necessary to disclose information pursuant to a proper court order.
- It may be necessary to report any information related to suspected fraudulent activity or other violations of federal, state and/or local housing law, regulations or other lease violations on the part of the resident.
- It may be necessary for federal staff from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or Quality Assurance staff of the housing organization to review randomly selected files solely for the purpose of assuring that the service coordinator is complying with all federal laws and regulations and is providing quality service coordination services.



[Service Coordinator Program Form Samples - American Association of Service Coordinators](#)



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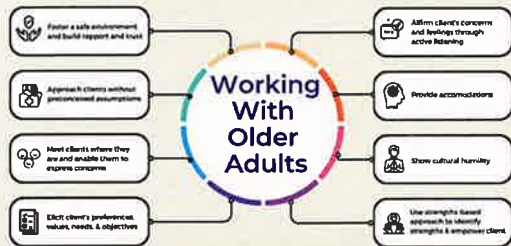
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## Approaches to Working With Older Adults who are Experiencing Abuse



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## Elder Mistreatment Case Study #1

During a recent check-in with a 76-year-old male resident, a Social Service Coordinator noticed that the resident is very forgetful and is not his usual self. The resident became a widow 2 years ago and has disclosed to the Service Coordinator that he sometimes doesn't eat, and he feels very lonely. Upon further conversation and utilization of the Falls Risks Assessment Tool, the PHQ-9 and Social Determinants of Health, the Service Coordinator discovers that the resident recently fell in the shower but did not go to the doctor as he states, "he doesn't see the point".



### Analysis

- What information is needed?
- Is there reasonable suspicion of EM?
- What is the plan of action?



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## How to Identify EM during Annual Assessments

Annual assessments and intakes are key to assessing:

- Resident needs including Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and IADLs
- Provide referrals
- Follow up with the resident as needed
- Identify signs of abuse or self-neglect

Based on observations, conversations, and in-person interactions with:

- Resident
- Staff members
- Family, caregivers, and other providers
- Note changes in behavior, finances, emotional wellness, cognition, physical appearance, and hygiene.



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## Types of Social Service Resident Assessments

Non-Clinical

Observational

Conversational  
Based

Resident Intake



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## How to Report and Document Suspected EM

Research  
process in your  
county  
beforehand

Familiarize  
yourself with  
the forms

Gather  
information  
based on facts

Complete  
incident reports

Complete  
online  
documentation

Document  
report number  
for follow-up

Follow your  
organization's  
policy for APS  
reporting

Inform  
necessary staff  
or management

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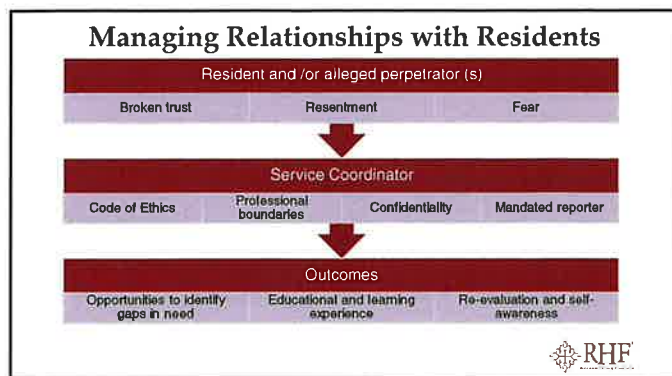
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### Mandatory Reporters

ARIZONA	CALIFORNIA	NEVADA
A health professional, emergency medical technician, home health provider, hospital intern or resident, speech, physical or occupational therapist, long-term care provider, social worker, peace officer, medical examiner, guardian, conservator, fire protection personnel, developmental disabilities provider, employee of the department of economic security or other person who has responsibility for the care of a vulnerable adult	A person who has assumed full or intermittent responsibility for the care or custody of an elder or dependent adult, whether or not they receive compensation, including administrators, supervisors, and any licensed staff of a public or private facility that provides care or services for elder or dependent adults, or any elder or dependent adult care custodian, health practitioner, clergy member, or employee of a county adult protective services agency or a local law enforcement agency	Medical professionals Employees of hospitals and home health agencies Social workers Coroners Law enforcement employees Adult or juvenile probation officers Department of Health and Human Services' employees Mortuary or funeral home employees Employees of the facilities providing care for vulnerable adults Music therapists
Report "Immediately by phone or online" Arizona Dept. of Economic Security	Verbal report immediately or within 2 hours, Written report within 24 hours CA Department of Social Services	As soon as reasonably practicable, within 24 hours NV Dept. of Health & Human Services

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## Assessment and Reports



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## Interventions

- Adult Protective Services
- Financial Exploitation Reporting and Resources
- Legal Aid
- Aging and Disability Services
- Education and awareness



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## What APS Does



### If APS investigates

- Initial contact within 10 days
- Interviewed in private
- Witnesses interviewed

### Primary goal of APS

- Safety plan
- Determine findings
- Assist with interventions

**Remember**  
APS is a VOLUNTARY program

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### What APS Does Not Do

Click each item below to learn what APS does not do

- Disclose information to reporting parties
- Cannot make someone change their lifestyle
- Remove someone from their home against their will



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### Within Independent Affordable Housing

**Service Coordinators must take into account and abide by:**

- Protect confidentiality
- Fair Housing Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Violence Against Women Act
- Reasonable Accommodations



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### Elder Financial Exploitation

[National Elder Fraud Hotline | Office for Victims of Crime](#)  
833-FRAUD-11 (833-372-8311)

[Identity Theft Resource Center](#) 888-400-5530

[AARP Fraud Watch and Call Center](#) - 888-687-2277 Education, peer counseling, and referrals

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## Elder Mistreatment Case Study #2

An 80-year-old female resident is sitting in the community room, and other residents are complaining about her bad hygiene. The Property Manager informs the Service Coordinator that the resident is late with rent and did not pass the current unit inspection. They conduct a wellness check and see that there is no food in the fridge, the unit is cluttered, and pests are visible throughout the apartment. The resident has a caregiver, but only shows up sporadically. The resident states she visited the bank with her caregiver recently but does not want us to question the caregiver as she may get upset and stop visiting her.



Photo by iStockphoto.com, altered under CC BY-SA 4.0

### Analysis

- What information is needed?
- Is there reasonable suspicion of EM?
- What is the plan of action?



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## Community-based Services

### Connecting victims with aid

- family/friend/faith/community engagement
- transportation
- food delivery
- assistive devices
- in-home care/supportive services
- long-term care

### Financial management

- bill pay services
- financial oversight services

### Supported/substitute decision-making

- family/friend
- geriatric care manager



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## Working with members of the Property Management Team

### Collect facts

### Unit inspections

### Notices

### Late rent payments

### Lease violations

### Maintenance issues

### Maintain confidentiality



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### Elder Mistreatment Prevention and the Community



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### Prevention through Education and Training

- [FDIC Money Smart](#) financial education program to teach yourself and others - [Older Adults Program](#) available
- **Family Caregiver** trainings and resources [Caregiver Resources](#)
- State and local **Elder Justice** coalitions and networks [Elder Justice Initiative \(EJI\)](#) | [Elder Justice Network Locator Map](#)
- **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** - participate in local events, or host your own! [elderjustice.usc.edu/weaad](http://elderjustice.usc.edu/weaad)



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### Connect with Us

National Center on Elder Abuse

1-855-500-3537 (ELDR)

[ncea-info@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ncea-info@acl.hhs.gov)

USC Center on Elder Justice  
<http://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/>



Retirement Housing Foundation

562-257-5174

[michelle.ornelas@rhf.org](mailto:michelle.ornelas@rhf.org)



[www.rhf.org](http://www.rhf.org)



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