

What You Need to Know About Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse



**SAN MATEO
COUNTY HEALTH**
All together better.

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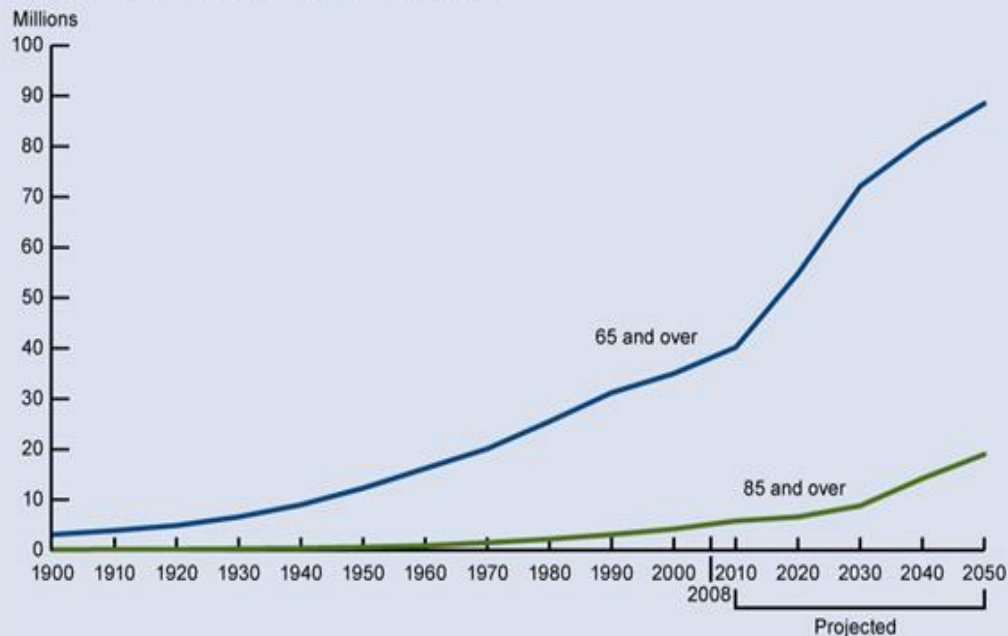
Definitions

- ❖ **Elder:** Any person residing in the state of California over the age of 65 (Cal. Pen. Code § 368)
- ❖ **Dependent adult:** “Someone between 18 and 64 that has certain mental or physical disabilities that keep him or her from being able to do normal activities or protect himself or herself” (Sections 1250, 1250.2, and 1250.3 of the Health and Safety Code)
- ❖ **Abuse of an elder or dependent adult:** Includes physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other treatment with resulting physical harm or pain or mental suffering; the deprivation by a care custodian of goods or services that are necessary to avoid physical harm or mental suffering (Cal. Pen. Code § 15610.07)
- ❖ **Caretaker:** Any person who has the care, custody, or control of, or who stands in a position of trust with, an elder or a dependent adult (Cal. Pen. Code § 368)

[National Institutes of Health]

The Silver Tsunami

Population age 65 and over and age 85 and over, selected years 1900–2008 and projected 2010–2050



NOTE: Data for 2010–2050 are projections of the population.
Reference population: These data refer to the resident population.
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Population Estimates and Projections.

- ❖ The National Center on Elder Abuse estimates that currently 40.1 million Americans are over the age of 65, **comprising 13% of the population.** As the Baby Boomer generation ages, the proportion of older adults will continue to increase.

[Source: National Center on Elder Abuse]

Population of Dependent Adults

- ❖ According to the 2010 Census, nearly 1 in 5 Americans has a disability.
- ❖ There are over 7 million people living with intellectual disabilities in the United States. (National Disability Navigator Resource Center)
- ❖ Dependent adults often have a relative, friend or other caregiver handle or assist with their affairs. Some reside at home, and some in board and care facilities, nursing homes, or other institutional settings.

Abuse of Older and Dependent Adults



Discussion Point

- ❖ What comes to mind when you think of this phrase?



Do You Recognize Him?



[Source: Parade via Pinterest]



KNOW ABUSE **REPORT ABUSE**

ELDER AND DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

DON'T MISS THE SIGNS



NEGLECT / SELF-NEGLECT

- Lack of adequate food and water
- Dirty clothing and changes in personal hygiene
- Unusually messy home
- Lack of medical aids or medication



FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Basic needs not being met
- Bills not paid
- New credit cards and increased cash withdrawals
- Unusual purchases by caregiver



PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Bruises, black eyes, welts
- Broken bones, cuts, sprains
- Sudden change in behavior
- Caregiver refusal to leave elder or dependent adult alone



MENTAL ABUSE

- Threatening significant physical harm
- Derogatory or inappropriate names, insults, profanity, or ridicule
- Harassment, coercion, intimidation, humiliation



SEXUAL ABUSE

- Unusual bruising on thighs and chest
- Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases
- Unusual stains on clothing or sheets
- Withdrawn from social interactions / panic attacks

[Source: CA Association of Areas on Aging]

Who are Common Abusers?

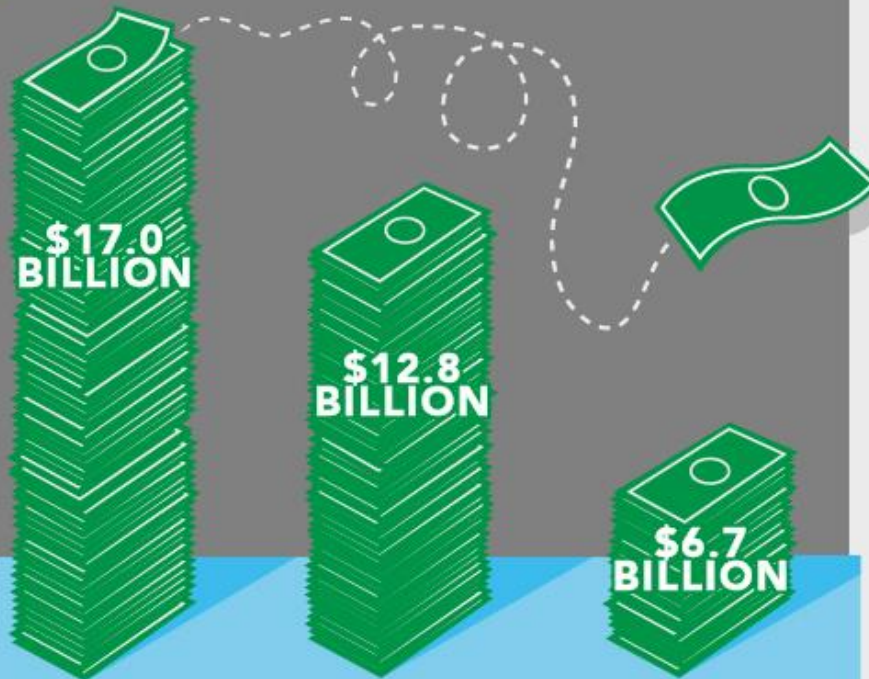
- ❖ Family members
- ❖ Caregivers
- ❖ Scammers and thieves
- ❖ Financial industry representatives

90% of all
abusers!

[NCEA and National Institute of Justice]

WHAT IS THE COST?

\$36.5 BILLION



EXPLOITATION

When businesses, individuals, or charities use pressure tactics or misleading language to lead seniors into financial mistakes.



FRAUD

When criminals commit identity theft or con seniors into sending money or sharing personal information.



TRUST ABUSE

When family, friends, or paid helpers take advantage of a trusting relationship to get money from the senior.



[Source: TrueLink Financial]

What Are Some Consequences of Abuse?

- ❖ Decreased socialization
- ❖ Depression or self-neglect
- ❖ Guilt
- ❖ Low self-esteem
- ❖ Physical injury
- ❖ Death

The Problem



❖ “Elder abuse, including neglect and exploitation, is experienced by

... 1 out of every 10 people, ages 60 and older, who live at home.”

[Source: CDC]

Discussion Point

❖ Prevalence:

For every 1 case of elder abuse reported to
authorities,
...another 24 go unreported.



[Source: New York Elder Abuse Prevalence Study]

Older Adults as Victims: Barriers to Reporting

- ❖ Embarrassment
- ❖ Fear of losing their independence
- ❖ Suspect is someone they love
- ❖ Fear of retaliation from abuser
- ❖ Lack of mental capacity
- ❖ Denial
- ❖ Consider abuse “normal behavior”
- ❖ Inability to communicate abuse
- ❖ “Keeping things behind closed doors”

Older Adults as Victims: Cultural Barriers to Reporting for Minority Communities

- ❖ Language barriers/lack of interpretation services
- ❖ Isolation
- ❖ Immigration status
- ❖ Fear of law enforcement
- ❖ Unfamiliar with US Court System, APS, government
- ❖ Community pressure to remain with abusers
- ❖ History of trauma (flashbacks, PTSD, fear, sleeping disorders, social anxiety and loneliness)

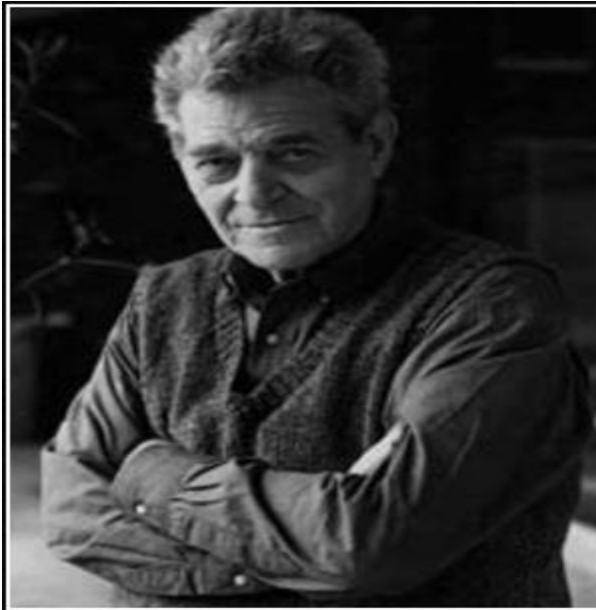
[OHSU, "A Cross-Cultural Approach to Elder Abuse and Neglect"]

Reasons Why Elders Are Vulnerable to Abuse

- ❖ Judgment may be compromised
- ❖ Aging brains change
- ❖ Loneliness and depression
- ❖ Financial capacity is first to diminish
 - ❖ Seniors with diminished financial capacity can seem “fine”

Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

❖ Family Stressors



I've always despised old people. I got angry at my father when he began to show signs of age.

— *William Steig* —

AZ QUOTES

[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]

Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

- ❖ Family Stressors
 - ❖ History of violence
 - ❖ Domestic violence
 - ❖ Marital violence

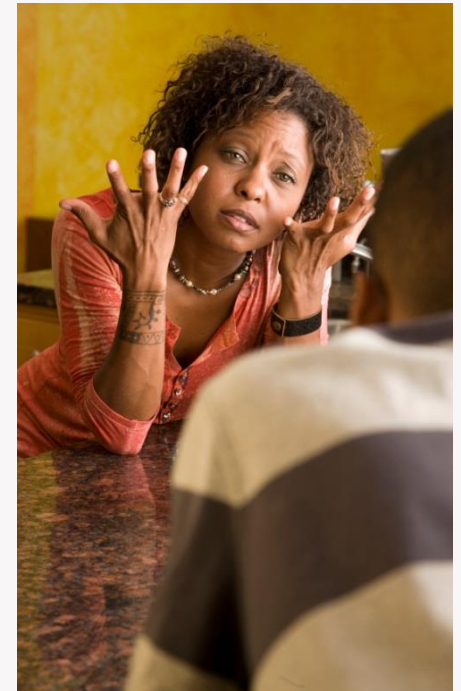


[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]

Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

- ❖ Family Stressors
 - ❖ Intergenerational Violence
 - ❖ “Turning the tables”

[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]



Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

- ❖ Family Stressors
 - ❖ Lifestyle Accommodations
 - ❖ Living in close quarters
 - ❖ Financial stress from caregiving



[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]

Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

- ❖ Caregiving Stress
 - ❖ Caregiver Personal Problems
 - ❖ Mental health conditions
 - ❖ Addictions, including substance abuse, gambling
 - ❖ Reliance on older person for money or shelter
 - ❖ Tendency towards violence

[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]

Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

- ❖ Caregiving Stress
 - ❖ Caregiver Personal Problems
 - ❖ Lacking training to provide care
 - ❖ No respite from caregiving responsibilities
 - ❖ “Dutiful child” syndrome

[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]

Reasons Why Abuse Occurs

- ❖ Cultural Issues
 - ❖ “What happens behind closed doors stays behind closed doors”
 - ❖ Undervaluing the role of elders
 - ❖ Undervaluing the role of women



[Source: American Psychological Association's Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions]

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Older Adult Clients

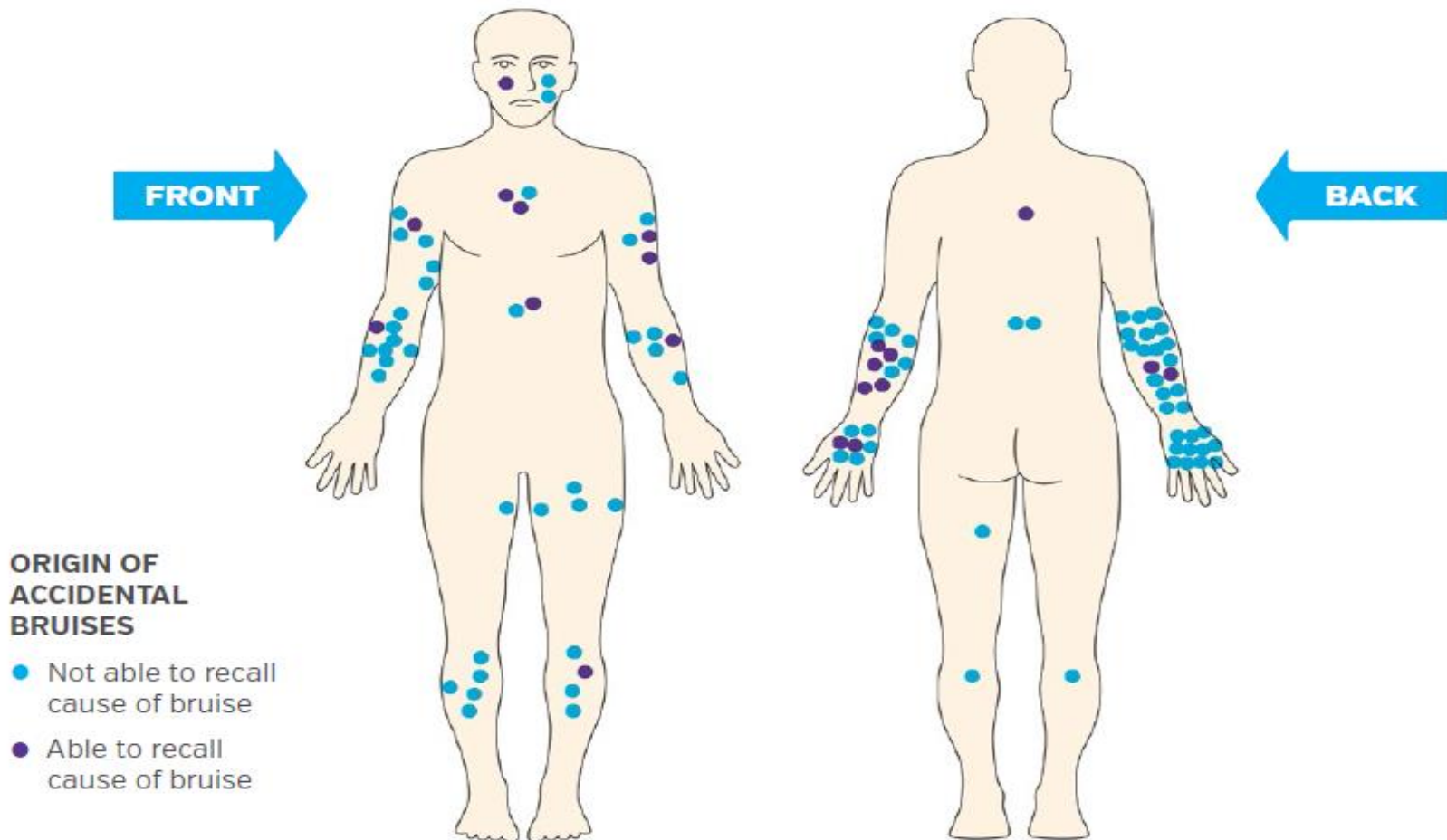
- ❖ Appears uncared for and has poor personal hygiene
- ❖ Has unexplained bruises, sores, burns

[Source of images on following slides: National Center on Elder Abuse]

PART I: ACCIDENTAL BRUISING IN OLDER ADULTS

Key findings from a study of **accidental bruising in older adults**:

- > **Color of a bruise did not indicate its age.** A bruise could have any color from day one.
- > **90% of accidental bruises were on the extremities** rather than the trunk, neck or head.
- > **Less than a quarter of older adults with accidental bruises remembered** how they got them.
- > **Older adults taking medications** that interfere with coagulation pathways were more likely to have **multiple bruises**, but the bruises **did not last any longer** than the bruises of those who didn't take these medications.



PART II:

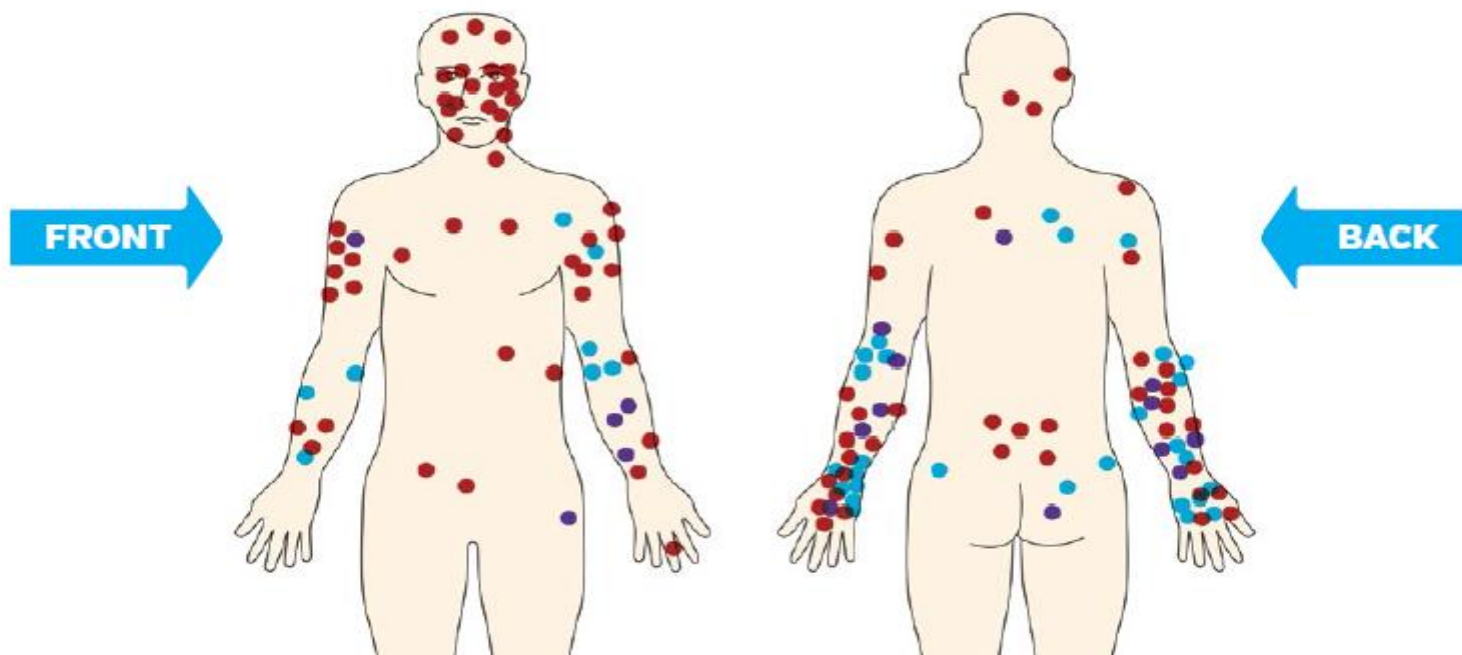
BRUISING IN OLDER ADULTS AS REPORTED BY ABUSED ELDERS

Key findings from a study of **bruising in older adults who have been physically abused** were:

1. Bruises were large. More than half of older adults with bruises who had been physically abused had at least one bruise **5 cm (about 2 inches) in diameter or larger**.
2. Could be anywhere, but note **especially if they are on face, lateral (same side as the thumb) or anterior (same side as the palm of the hand) surface of the arm, or on the back**. Older adults with bruises who had been abused had more bruises in these areas than older adults whose bruises were accidental.

And please,

3. Ask the older adult about bruises – gently and in private. 90% of older adults with bruises who have been physically abused **can tell you how they got their bruises**, and this **includes many older adults with memory problems and dementia**.



Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Older Adult Clients

- ❖ Is depressed, confused, afraid, agitated
- ❖ Shows fear or anxiety around certain household members or caregivers
- ❖ Has a child or caregiver that is obviously dependent on the senior for shelter and money
- ❖ Has changes in appetite or a dramatic weight gain or loss

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Older Adult Clients

- ❖ Is unable to do basic things such as make meals, shop or get around
- ❖ Has unusual activity in bank accounts, gives money away, has unpaid bills or cannot buy food, and the sudden inability afford basic necessities
- ❖ Is isolated and has restricted visits or phone calls
- ❖ Has untreated chronic illness

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Older Adult Clients

- ❖ Relatives, friends or professionals “coming out of the woodwork” who
 - ❖ ...may initiate suspicious or quiet conversations about finances
 - ❖ ...will often warn the client not to discuss these matters with anyone else

Frequency of Abuse in Populations with Disabilities

- ❖ From the 2012 National Survey on Abuse of People with Disabilities...
- ❖ Over 70% of people with disabilities surveyed reported they had been victims of abuse.
- ❖ More than 63% of parents and immediate family members reported that their loved ones with a disabilities had experienced abuse.

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Intellectually Disabled Clients (Physical)

- ❖ Bruises (old and new, clustered on one part of body, or on both upper arms)
- ❖ Burns
- ❖ Cuts or scars
- ❖ Marks left by a gag (or some form of restraint)
- ❖ Imprint injuries (eg., marks shaped like fingers, thumbs, hands, belts or sticks)
- ❖ Missing teeth

[FL Agency for Persons with Disabilities]

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Intellectually Disabled Clients (Physical)

- ❖ Spotty balding (from pulled hair)
- ❖ Eye injuries (black eyes or detached retinas)
- ❖ Broken bones
- ❖ Sprains
- ❖ Abrasions or scrapes
- ❖ Vaginal or rectal pain
- ❖ Bleeding from the ears, nose or mouth
- ❖ Frequent urinary tract infections or yeast infections

[FL Agency for Persons with Disabilities]

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Intellectually Disabled Clients (Physical)

- ❖ Painful urination
- ❖ Abrasions, bleeding, or bruising in the genital area
- ❖ Incontinence in someone who was previously toilet-trained
- ❖ Frequent sore throats
- ❖ Sudden onset of psychosomatic complaints (males most frequently complain of stomach aches while females most frequently report headaches)
- ❖ Sudden difficulty walking or sitting

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Intellectually Disabled Clients (Behavioral)

- ❖ Changes in the way affection is shown, especially if unusual or inappropriate
- ❖ Suddenly fears being touched
- ❖ Sudden onset of nightmares
- ❖ Changes in sleep patterns; difficulty sleeping
- ❖ Sudden regression to childlike behaviors (i.e., bed-wetting, thumb-sucking)

[FL Agency for Persons with Disabilities]

Potential Indicators of Abuse to Look For in Intellectually Disabled Clients (Behavioral)

- ❖ Sudden unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters (including excessive masturbation)
- ❖ Cruelty to animals
- ❖ Sudden fear of bathing or toileting
- ❖ Sudden fear of a person or place
- ❖ Depression, withdrawal, or mood swings

[FL Agency for Persons with Disabilities]

Protect Yourself!

- ❖ Investigate any financial offers that come your way.
- ❖ There is no such thing as a free lunch
- ❖ Don't explore alone – take a trusted friend or family member
- ❖ Don't give out important numbers over the phone
- ❖ Don't believe anybody who says they are calling from a gov't agency

Protect Yourself!

- ❖ Hire in-home caregivers through a reputable agency that provides oversight.
- ❖ Don't pick up the phone unless you recognize the caller
- ❖ Don't answer the door to someone you don't know
 - ❖ Unless it's the Girl Scouts selling cookies, you don't need what they are selling

Reporting Abuse Allegations



California



Who Investigates?...

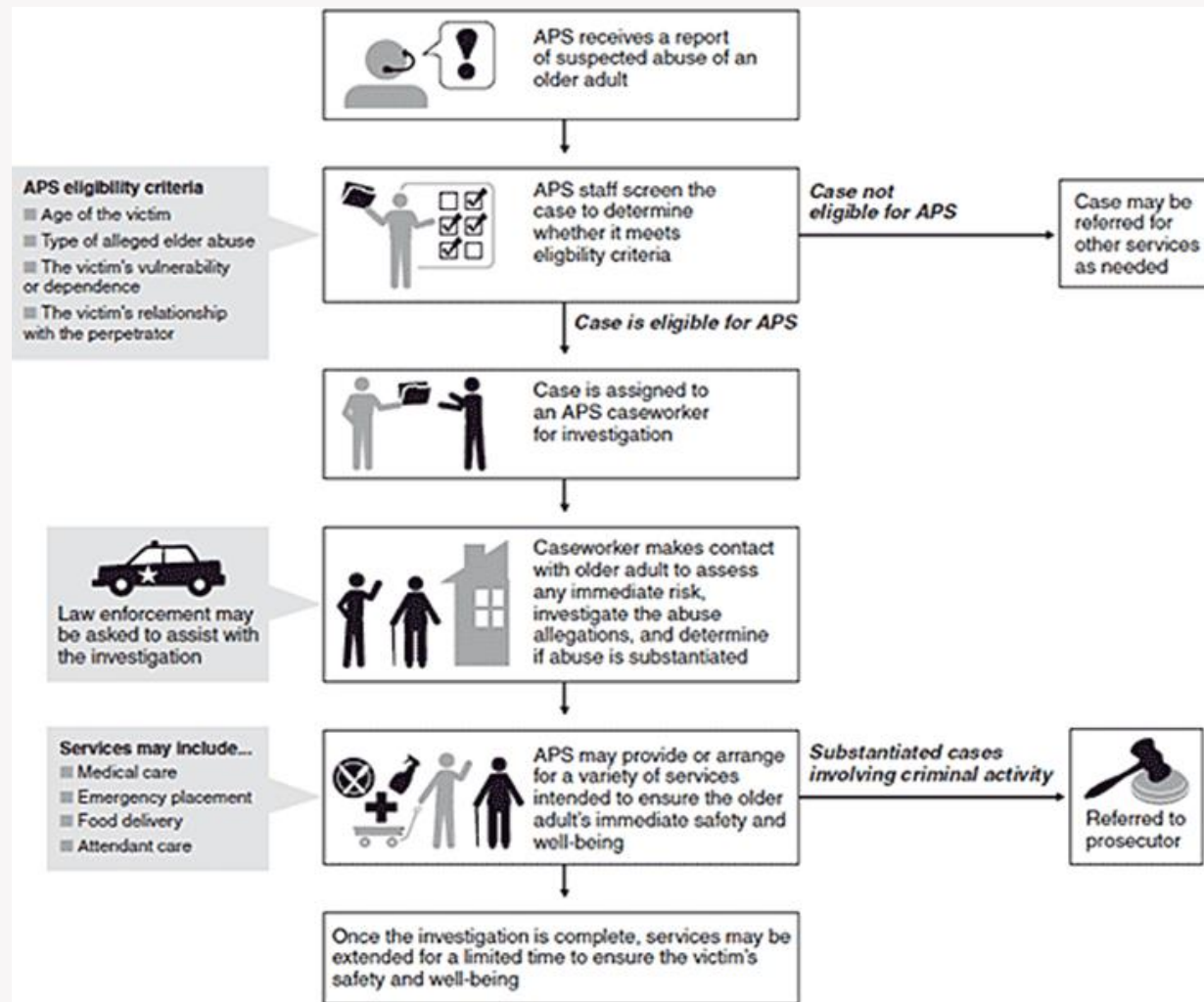
Adult Protective Services

- ❖ Adult Protective Services is a county-based program that intervenes to remedy or reduce danger to elders and dependent adults at risk of physical, sexual, mental or financial abuse, and neglect or self-neglect.
- ❖ APS's goal is to maintain the health and safety of elder and dependent adults in the community, in the least restrictive environment possible.

APS Challenges...

- ❖ APS is an entirely voluntary service. A client may refuse to cooperate with APS at any time. If a penal code section has been violated, law enforcement would take the lead in a criminal investigation.
- ❖ If a client lacks capacity to give consent, a petition for conservatorship may be initiated.
- ❖ APS seeks to respect self-determination to the greatest extent possible and offer the least restrictive services to clients.

What Happens When I Report Something to APS?



[Source: Administration on Aging]

Who Investigates?...

Ombudsman's Office

- ❖ The primary responsibility of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is
 - ❖ investigate and endeavor to resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, individual residents in long-term care facilities.
 - ❖ Facilities include nursing homes, residential care facilities for the elderly, and assisted living facilities.
 - ❖ LTPO investigates elder abuse complaints in long-term care facilities and in residential care facilities for the elderly.



[California Department of Aging]

Who Investigates?...

Law Enforcement

- ❖ Law enforcement will often investigate when:
 - ❖ A victim is in immediate physical danger or another obvious crime has occurred.
 - ❖ They will often work in partnership with Adult Protective Services or the Ombudsman's Office.



What If I'm Not Sure?

- ❖ You don't need to be sure
- ❖ You simply need to suspect the abuse
- ❖ The appropriate authority will investigate the alleged abuse
- ❖ You can always call Adult Protective Services or the appropriate authority to consult about a situation
- ❖ They are happy to listen and to give you advice and recommendations

San Mateo County

Elder and Dependent Adult Protection Team

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About FCA

Family Caregiver Alliance offers education, services, research, and advocacy based on the real needs of caregivers. Founded in the late 1970s, FCA is the first community-based nonprofit organization in the United States to address the needs of families and friends providing long-term care for loved ones at home.

National Center on Caregiving (NCC) was established by FCA to advance the development of high-quality, cost effective programs and policies for caregivers in every state. NCC sponsors the Family Care Navigator, a state-by-state resource locator designed to help caregivers find support services in their communities.

Bay Area Caregiver Resource Center — operated by FCA for the six-county San Francisco Bay Area — provides support to family caregivers. FCA's staff of family consultants through education programs and direct support offer effective tools to manage the complex and demanding tasks of caregiving.

Be sure to visit FCA on social media:



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Acerca de FCA

Family Caregiver Alliance ofrece servicios educativos, de investigación, y abogacía basados en las necesidades reales de los cuidadores. Fundada a finales de 1970, FCA es la primera organización comunitaria sin fines de lucro en los Estados Unidos, dedicada a atender las necesidades de familias y amigos que brindan cuidado a largo plazo a seres queridos.

National Center on Caregiving (NCC) fue establecido por FCA para promover el desarrollo de programas y políticas de alta calidad y efectivas en costo que beneficien a los cuidadores en cada estado. NCC es patrocinador del Family Care Navigator, un localizador de recursos disponibles en los estados, diseñado para ayudar a los cuidadores a encontrar servicios de apoyo en sus comunidades.

Bay Area Caregiver Resource Center — operado por FCA para los seis condados en el Área de la Bahía de San Francisco — ofrece apoyo a cuidadores. El equipo de consultoras familiares de FCA provee herramientas efectivas para sobrellevar las complejas y demandantes tareas de ser cuidador a través de programas educativos y apoyo directo.

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