



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Department for the Aging*

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**March 1, 2011**

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11-80

*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Department for the Aging*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Executive Directors  
Area Agencies on Aging

**FROM:** Jim Rothrock, VDA Interim Commissioner

**DATE:** March 1, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Improving the Health and Well-Being of Older Americans  
by Translating Research into Practice

The Administration on Aging (AoA) and the National Institute on Aging (NIA) are pleased to announce a joint initiative to support moving evidence-based research findings towards the development of new interventions, programs, policies, practices, and tools that can be used by community-based organizations to help elderly individuals remain healthy and independent, and living in their own homes and communities.. The mission of AoA is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated system of services and supports at the community level that helps elderly individuals maintain their health and independence in their homes and communities. NIA has long been the primary sponsor of research in social and behavioral sciences on the processes of aging at both the individual and societal levels.

Translating research knowledge into practical advances to benefit the health and well being of older Americans has increasingly become a priority for both agencies. Although there is some adoption of translated, evidence-based interventions into practice, it has been limited and few evidence-based interventions have been brought to scale nationwide. This program announcement encourages applications that focus on the translation of behavioral and social research in aging into the development of new interventions that can be used by community-based organizations that assist elderly individuals.

Collaborations between academic research centers and community-based organizations with expertise serving the elderly are a top priority. Partnerships of this nature will enhance our understanding of practical tools, techniques, programs and policies that communities across the nation can use to more effectively respond to needs of their aging populations. The two funding announcements can be found on the NIH website at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-123.html>



11-81

*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Department for the Aging*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Executive Directors  
Area Agencies on Aging

**AND:** Nutrition Directors, Care Coordinators, and  
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Coordinators

**FROM:** Elaine S. Smith, MS, RD  
Program Coordinator

**DATE:** March 1, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Aging and Mental Health Conference

Following is a flyer and registration form for a conference addressing aging and mental health issues sponsored by the Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board & Area Agency on Aging, Aging Together, and the Mental Health Association of Fauquier.

# Aging...Mental Health: Connecting the Dots

Understanding Mental Health & Substance Abuse Treatment Issues Specific to Older Adults



**Wednesday March 16, 2011 8:30 am—4:30 pm**  
**Daniel Technology Center 18121 Technology Drive, Culpeper**  
**For directions click [Here](#)**

## Conference Topics:

- Treatment options including traditional/ non-traditional therapies, medication & behavioral options
- Mental health issues of family caregivers
- Latest research on Alzheimer's Disease and dementia
- The effects of substance use on older adults



### Presenters:

**Sue Freidman, CEO, Alzheimer's Association Central & Western Virginia Chapter**  
**Regina Whitsett, Education Coordinator, Virginia ABC, AAAG Chair**  
**Dr. Richard Lindsay, MD**  
**Patricia A. Campbell, RN, MSN, PGH, DBHDS**  
**Dr. Jonathan Evans, MD, MPH**

### Sponsors

Rappahannock  
Rapidan  
Community  
Services Board  
& Area Agency  
on Aging



Aging Together



Mental Health  
Association of  
Fauquier

### Registration Required By March 11, 2011

Mail:

RRCSB

PO Box 1568

Culpeper VA 22701

Attn: Linda Hawkins

Email:

lhawkins@rrcsb.org

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\$15 Registration for full conference, including lunch**  
**Payment accepted in advance or at the door, cash or check.**



11-82

*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Department for the Aging*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Executive Directors  
Area Agencies on Aging

**FROM:** Jim Rothrock, VDA Interim Commissioner

**DATE:** March 1, 2011

**SUBJECT:** UVA Study of Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation

Attached is an article about the UVA study of elder abuse and financial exploitation that is going to appear in the journal, "Victimization of the Elderly and Disabled." The final report is now on NCJRS at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/233613.pdf> Virginia APS facilitated the study and local APS workers collaborated with the researchers to identify victims who agreed to be interviewed. Please feel free to share as appropriate.

**Elder Maltreatment: Lessons Learned from Interviews  
with APS Caseworkers and the Elderly Victims They Serve**

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&

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U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this paper are those of the authors and do  
not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would first like to thank the many elderly victims residing in Virginia for sharing their experience of abuse with us, and to their respective adult protective services caseworkers for sharing their insights. We would also like to thank the APS supervisors, regional coordinators, as well as Barbara Jenkins, Gail Nardi, and Todd Areson, each affiliated with the Virginia Department of Social Services, for facilitating our research. Finally, we would like to thank James Peugh, Ph.D. and Kelly Gurka, Ph.D. for their statistical assistance, as well as our stellar team of research assistants, Charles Koransky, Milena Zimmerman, Ann Emory, Emma Spielman, and Sally Mays.

## **Introduction and Purpose**

Financial exploitation of elderly people is expected to proliferate over the next decade as this population and its potential for exploitation continue to increase (Bonnie & Wallace, 2003). Thus far, however, financial exploitation has received relatively little attention (Hafemeister, 2003). To help fill this gap, a three-year study of elder abuse in domestic settings in Virginia was undertaken. The purpose of the study was to examine how pure financial exploitation (PFE) (i.e., financial exploitation that did not co-occur with another form of abuse) of elderly persons differs from other forms of maltreatment of elderly persons, namely, physical abuse (PA), neglect, and hybrid financial exploitation (HFE) (i.e., financial exploitation co-occurring with physical abuse and/or neglect). In addition, we wanted to assess whether adult protective services (APS) caseworkers and elderly victims differ in their perceptions of these events.

## **Methodology**

For this study, separate interviews were conducted with 71 APS caseworkers in Virginia who had handled a case of reported elder maltreatment in the past two years, 55 abused elderly persons who were the subject of the caseworkers' response, and 35 other individuals who were not involved in the abuse but had at least some knowledge of the victim's abuse (for a full description of the methodology employed and the following findings, see Jackson and Hafemeister (2010)). These interviews centered on 38 PFE, 8 PA, 9 neglect, and 16 HFE cases in which the occurrence of elder abuse was substantiated. The elderly victims in this study were on average 76 years of age (range 60-94 yrs), with most of them female (74%) and Caucasian (81%), a sample whose

demographic characteristics were consistent with the characteristics of abused elders in Virginia in general. About half (56%) of the elderly victims did not have a high school diploma and 53% were a widow/widower. APS caseworkers were on average 43 years of age (range 22-70) and had worked on average 9 years as an APS caseworker. Most of the caseworkers were female (92%), while 96% held at least a college degree (42% of them had a masters' degree). Finally, the other individuals interviewed were on average 55 years of age (range 28 – 72 yrs), about half were female (44%), and 64% were a relative of the elderly victim. On average, these other individuals had known the elderly victim for 43 years (range 1 – 72 yrs).

Based on a review of the literature, an interview instrument to be administered to these individuals was developed for this study that encompassed a number of domains such as a narrative of the abusive situation, specific case characteristics, consequences of the maltreatment, risk factors associated with victims and perpetrators, the APS investigation and response, the criminal justice system (CJS) response, and case outcomes.

A second source of information for this study came from a state-wide Adult Services Adult Protective Services (ASAPS) database managed by the Virginia Department of Social Services. Data were drawn from the preceding two-year period and used to complement the interview data.

Four broad questions were addressed. First, based on the narratives obtained from the various study participants, we qualitatively assessed the underlying interpersonal dynamics associated with these cases. Second, comparisons across the

four basic types of elder maltreatment were made regarding: a) case characteristics, b) elderly victim and perpetrator risk factors, c) consequences of the abuse, and d) case outcomes. Third, we examined society's response to elder maltreatment (defined as the APS and the CJS response). And fourth, differences in the elderly victims' and APS caseworkers' perceptions of the causes of elder maltreatment were assessed. The results presented below are only a synopsis and readers are encouraged to obtain the full report, which is available from the National Institute of Justice website or the authors.

## **Results**

### ***I. Interpersonal Dynamics***

Narratives from the informants for each case of confirmed elder maltreatment (up to 3 for each case) were studied to determine the underlying interpersonal dynamics of each type of abuse. Not only were there differences in these dynamics across the four types of abuse, but there was also considerable variability within each type of maltreatment, especially within the category of financial exploitation. Within each type of abuse, the underlying interpersonal dynamics were organized into a series of subtypes. For a description of these interpersonal dynamics, see Jackson and Hafemeister (2010). This analysis revealed that both the elderly victim and the perpetrator played pivotal roles in how this abuse unfolded and was manifested. It was determined that the elderly person tends not to be a passive actor in these incidents, but also contributes to an interpersonal dynamic that shapes the occurrence of the abuse.

## **II. Differences Across Domains of Inquiry by Type of Maltreatment**

**a. Characteristics of the Individuals Involved.** Perpetrators of PFE included both family and non-family members, while PA and HFE were committed exclusively by family members (with one case of PA involving an intimate partner). Whereas HFE and PA victims were typically aware that they were being mistreated, a significantly smaller proportion of PFE victims were aware they were being abused. A majority of the elderly victims (84%) were abused more than once by their perpetrator, however, neglect victims were relatively likely to be abused only a single time (albeit this event often extended across a period of time). PA and HFE elderly persons were abused over a significantly longer period of time (sometimes for decades) than victims of neglect or PFE. An APS report had been filed previously for 42% of the elderly victims, but the existence of a prior report did not vary by type of abuse. In 47% of the cases someone had previously tried to intervene to help the victim, although the likelihood of a prior intervention did not vary significantly by the type of abuse involved.

**b. Victim and perpetrator risk factors by type of maltreatment.** Variables that were significantly related to the occurrence of PFE included the elder's age (PFE victims were younger than for other types of abuse), communication problems (PFE victims had fewer such problems), dependence on others (PFE victims were less dependent on others), confusion/dementia (PFE victims were less likely to demonstrate these characteristics), history of childhood family violence (PFE victims were less likely to have such a history), residential status (PFE victims were more likely to be living alone), parental status (PFE victims were more likely to have no children), and relationship with

the perpetrator (PFE victims were more likely to have a good relationship with the perpetrator). Significant PFE perpetrator variables included parasitic behavior (PFE perpetrators were less likely to live off the elder or to have ready access to the elder), relationship status (PFE perpetrators were less likely to be a family member), parental status (PFE perpetrators were more likely to have children of their own), length of time they had known the elderly person (PFE perpetrators tended to know the victim for a shorter period of time than was found for the other forms of maltreatment), and the commission of intimate partner violence in a current relationship (PFE perpetrators tended to be less likely to commit such violence). The analysis of associated interpersonal dynamics confirmed that elders who have experienced PFE tend to be relatively physically, cognitively, and psychologically healthy and independent, while the perpetrators of PFE tended to be less directly involved in the elder's life than was found for other types of elder maltreatment.

Variables that were significantly related to the occurrence of PA included the elder's dependence on others (PA victims were less likely to exhibit confusion/dementia), mental health history (PA victims tended to have some mental health problems), history of childhood family violence (PA victims were more likely to have such a history), marital status (PA victims were more likely to be a widow), capacity to drive (PA victims were more likely to be able to drive), cohabitation with the perpetrator (PA victims were more likely to be cohabiting with the perpetrator), perception of the perpetrator as a caretaker (PA victims tended not to view the perpetrator as their caretaker), aggression towards the perpetrator (PA victims were

more likely to act aggressively towards the perpetrator), perception of the nature of the relationship with the perpetrator (PA victims tended to view their relationship with the perpetrator as being poor), and history of abuse (PA victims were more likely to have a lengthy history of abuse). Significant PA perpetrator variables included exhibiting parasitic behavior, being unemployed, and having no children.

Variables that were significantly related to the occurrence of neglect included the elder's age (neglect victims tended to be younger), communication difficulties, dependence on others, medical problems, confusion/dementia (although neglect victims were less likely to have other mental health problems), history of childhood family violence, and an absence of fear towards the perpetrator. Perpetrator variables included being the overburdened social support person, but parasitic behavior was less prevalent. These neglect cases tended to involve highly dependent and vulnerable elderly people not receiving critically needed care, arguably the quintessential cases that members of society envision when they think about elder abuse, which in turn underlays society's approach to elder abuse (Quinn & Zielke, 2005). Although our results indicate that these perpetrators are not parasitic but rather overburdened caregivers, our analysis of the interpersonal dynamics involved indicated that in many cases they chose not to provide adequate care for the elderly person rather than being unable to provide adequate care because of the overwhelming nature of the task.

Finally, variables that were significantly related to the occurrence of HFE included the elder's history of childhood family violence, cohabitation with the perpetrator, widow status, poor health, inability to drive, fear of the perpetrator,

perceptions of the perpetrator as their caretaker, and long history of abuse. Perpetrator variables included parasitic behavior, being a family member, unemployment, inability to drive, knowing the victim for a long period of time, and financial dependence upon the elderly person. This group of cases is unique in that it is characterized by mutual dependence between the elderly person and the perpetrator. The interpersonal dynamics analysis similarly indicated that the elderly victims perceived their perpetrators as their caretakers, while at the same time they provided care and support for their financially dependent adult offspring.

An in-depth analysis of these risk variables can be found at Jackson and Hafemeister (2010), as well as in the project's final report that is posted on the National Institute of Justice's website.

***c. Consequences of victimization.*** The consequences of maltreatment also differed by the type of abuse involved. Combining the cases of PFE and HFE, financially exploited elderly persons lost a total of \$4.6 million, with an average loss of \$87,967 per elderly person. In 17% of these cases, a power of attorney was misused to financially exploit the elderly person. Most (86%) of these elderly persons did not recover any of their lost funds or assets. PA victims were more likely to visit a doctor or a hospital as a result of their maltreatment. Neglected victims were more likely to have a health-related consequence (e.g., amputation as a result of a caregiver not tending to an infection). HFE victims, in addition to the financial exploitation they experienced, also had more negative health consequences and trended toward social isolation as they

suffered a disruption in social relationships as friends and family members stopped visiting them.

**d. Case outcomes.** Case outcomes following APS intervention were also differentially associated with the type of abuse involved. For example, the reason the elderly person's maltreatment stopped was different for each type of abuse. For PFE cases, the abuse generally had already stopped by the time APS became involved. For HFE cases, there was likely to be a change in living arrangement, with frequently the elder and the perpetrator who had been cohabitating now separated. PA most often stopped because the perpetrator was in the criminal justice system. And finally, neglect was most often stopped because of an APS or family intervention.

HFE victims were the most likely to have someone appointed as guardian for them. HFE and PA victims were more likely to perceive themselves as being at risk of future abuse. HFE victims were more likely to have a new APS report involving them filed since the close of the initial case triggering APS involvement.

In addition, there were different consequences for the perpetrators for each type of abuse. For example, perpetrators of PA were the most likely to be subject to criminal investigation, arrest, and prosecution.

### **III. Society's Response Through APS and the CJS**

Almost all (81%) APS caseworkers perceived cases involving financial exploitation to be more difficult to investigate than PA or neglect cases. Caseworkers explained that financial exploitation cases take longer to investigate, require evidence that is harder to produce, and involve financial institutions and victims that are often uncooperative. In

addition, APS caseworkers perceived that CJS officials (e.g., law enforcement officers, prosecutors) were generally unhelpful when they investigated elder abuse, but particularly so when they investigated financial exploitation. For example, 72% of the APS caseworkers believed that prosecutors were less helpful and willing to accept their cases when financial exploitation was involved compared to PA or neglect.

These expectations likely result in a vicious cycle as APS caseworkers ultimately refer even fewer of their cases to the CJS, particularly those involving financial exploitation. In turn, this is likely to result in CJS officials concluding that the maltreatment of elderly persons, particularly financial exploitation, is not a significant issue in their jurisdiction and does not justify assigning significant resources to the investigation and prosecution of this maltreatment. In addition, interviews with a small group of prosecutors (conducted in conjunction with this study) revealed that 56% of them found elder abuse cases to be more difficult to prosecute than other types of crime, with neglect and financial exploitation, respectively, being the most difficult types of elder maltreatment to prosecute, which further impeded their prosecution (Jackson & Hafemeister, 2010b).

The result is that financial exploitation cases are less likely to be vigorously pursued by APS caseworkers. If financial exploitation and PA of an elderly person co-occur, the APS caseworkers may focus on the PA in their investigations and base any determination of maltreatment on a finding of PA rather than financial exploitation because PA is easier to investigate and confirm, and CJS assistance will be more forthcoming. Compounding this problem, we found that the definition of financial

exploitation varies from caseworker to caseworker. For example, one APS caseworker considered a grandson who had just returned from prison and who was “living off” of the elderly person victim to be a case of financial exploitation, while another caseworker did not, concluding that the elderly person “knew” what she was doing.

In general, most elderly persons did not want law enforcement or prosecutors (63% and 74%, respectively) involved in their case. In light of this, it is perhaps not surprising that only 18% of the cases in this study were prosecuted (Jackson & Hafemeister, in press). Elderly persons who had experienced PA, however, were more likely to call the police for assistance, although they often attempted to withdraw their complaint after the situation was defused. Once contacted, however, police were reluctant to drop the charges, with PA cases the most likely to be prosecuted.

Prosecution was more likely when the elderly person had strong support from family or friends encouraging the elderly person to pursue prosecution. Also, the elderly person’s preference for prosecution was associated with the occurrence of actual prosecution, suggesting that victim cooperation is a key factor in prosecutors’ decisions to pursue these cases. Our prosecutor interviews similarly indicated that a number of variables indicative of victim cooperation (e.g., ability to testify, the elderly person pressed charges) were important to prosecutors’ decisions regarding whether to pursue prosecution (Jackson & Hafemeister, 2010b).

#### **IV. Differences in Perceptions Between APS Caseworkers and Elderly Victims**

One apparent impediment to a better societal response to elder abuse is that the goals and perceptions of the abused elderly person may differ from that of the

responding APS caseworker. We found that when the perceptions of the elderly victim and the APS caseworker diverged regarding the causes of the perpetrator's behavior (e.g., a ne'er-do-well vs. someone with a mental disorder), the resolution of the case was less likely to be successful and the abuse likely to continue. When these perceptions were reconciled, however, the likelihood of an effective intervention was enhanced.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

There are twelve conclusions and/or implications that can be derived from this study.

#### ● *When Responding to Elder Abuse, It Is Important to Differentiate by Type of Abuse*

Whether focusing on the interpersonal dynamics, case characteristics, risk factors, consequences, case outcomes, or society's response, there were significant differences among the four types of maltreatment. Clearly elder abuse is not a single monolithic phenomenon. It is thus important to differentiate between these forms of elder maltreatment, and to craft interventions accordingly (Jackson & Hafemeister, under review).

#### ● *Financial Exploitation Is Devastating, Underinvestigated, and Poorly Redressed*

As described, the elderly victims of financial exploitation in this study lost \$4.6 million. In 17% of these cases, a power of attorney was misused to financially exploit the elderly person. Most (86%) of these elderly persons did not recover any of their lost funds or assets.

Financial exploitation is underinvestigated and poorly redressed because of the challenges associated with investigating it, the perceptions of APS caseworkers that assistance will not be forthcoming from the CJS, and the acknowledgement of prosecutors regarding the difficulty of prosecuting elder abuse cases in general, and financial exploitation cases in particular (Jackson & Hafemeister, in press). Trainings for APS caseworkers regarding financial exploitation are becoming more prevalent, but investigations are still often impeded by various structural barriers (e.g., financial institutions' confidentiality restrictions) that should be dismantled (Malks, Buckmaster & Cunningham, 2003; Price & Fox, 1997). In addition, better training tools for APS caseworkers are needed as many (81%) felt their ability to handle financial exploitation was inadequate (see also Choi, Kulick, & Mayer, 1999; Setterlund, Tilse, Wilson, McCawley, & Rosenman, 2007). Ulrey (2010) asserts that similar training should be made more widely available for prosecutors as well.

#### ● *Hybrid Financial Exploitation Constitutes a Distinct Form of Elder Abuse*

Our findings identified critical distinctions between PFE and HFE (Jackson & Hafemeister, 2009). When financial exploitation co-occurs with other forms of maltreatment, the situation has devastating consequences for the elderly person, with these cases the most entrenched and intractable due to the mutual dependency between the elderly person and the perpetrator and with the most draconian outcomes for the victim (e.g., the appointment of a guardian with plenary decision making authority over the elderly person). To best respond to financial exploitation, a key is to avoid a reductionist tendency to conflate these two very different types of abuse.

### ● *Nuanced Differences Exist Within the Various Forms of Elder Maltreatment*

The interpersonal dynamics analysis conducted for this study determined that the behavior within each category of abuse is far more nuanced than is generally recognized. For example, financial exploitation should not be characterized solely as perpetrators methodically taking an unaware elderly person's goods or assets for their own gain, as it can also encompass a range of other behaviors, motivations, and, importantly, relationships between the elder and the perpetrator.

### ● *Elder Maltreatment Should Be Conceptualized as Occurring Within a "Relationship"*

When responding to elder maltreatment, our study indicated the importance of taking into account both the elderly victim and the perpetrator. For example, our risk factor analysis revealed that characteristics of both the elder and the perpetrator were linked to the occurrence of elder maltreatment. Similarly, the interpersonal dynamics analysis revealed that both played a pivotal role. An exclusive focus on the elderly victims, which has traditionally been the APS approach (Bergeron, 1999; Otto, 2000; Quinn & Zielke, 2005), or on the perpetrators, the typical orientation of the CJS, is likely to result in ineffective interventions that leave many elderly people vulnerable. Only by understanding the perspectives and characteristics of both members of this dyad can we truly understand and appropriately respond to elder maltreatment.

### ● *Victims May Be Complicit or Complacent in the Occurrence of Elder Maltreatment*

The narratives provided revealed that in many cases the elderly person is not a passive participant, but rather may be complicit or even complacent in the occurrence of the abuse, which contributes to a dynamic that engulfs both the elderly person and

the perpetrator (see also Doerner & Lab, 2008; Gordon & Brill, 2001; Jackman, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Wallace, 2007). Because there is typically a long-standing relationship between the elderly person and the perpetrator, there is a need to reconceptualize the maltreatment of elderly persons away from an exclusive focus on something that “happens” to elderly persons, towards an increased understanding that the maltreatment of elderly persons typically takes place within a dyadic relationship. By recognizing that abused elderly persons were active participants in the events that led up to their abuse (which is not to say they should be viewed as having caused or be held “responsible” for the occurrence of the abuse), efforts to prevent and redress this abuse can be more appropriately tailored. For example, it is important to understand that many elderly victims will be emotionally attached to the perpetrator, or may view themselves as having contributed to or being responsible for the perpetrator’s actions, particularly with regard to financial exploitation, with a subsequent impact on efforts by others (including APS and the CJS) to remediate the abuse.

● *Efforts to Remediate Abuse Should Encompass the Perpetrator as Well*

There is a tendency for APS to eschew responsibility for perpetrators and to let the criminal justice system handle them. However, as suggested above, if we reconceptualize elder maltreatment as a “relationship,” it follows that interventions should target both members of the relationship (see also McCreadie, 2000; Neale, Hwalek, Goodrich & Quinn, 1996; Nordstrom, 2005; Vinton, 1991).

● *Elder Maltreatment Tends to Be Ongoing Rather Than Episodic*

The interpersonal dynamics analysis and the risk factor results revealed that for most cases of elder maltreatment, particularly PA and HFE cases, an abusive relationship had existed for years, if not decades. Recognizing the long-term nature of maltreatment and its occurrence within a relationship will enable interventions to be better crafted, including preventing reoccurrences or intervening early before the situation becomes dire as is especially likely to happen with HFE. When these relationships are complex and long-term, interventions will typically need to be nuanced and ongoing.

● *A Dependent Son Can Be a “Risk Factor” for Elder Maltreatment*

Over 25 years ago, Pillemer (1985) identified the presence of a dependent adult offspring as a risk factor for elder maltreatment, particularly when PA was involved. Although little has been made of this finding, our results similarly identified this as a risk factor. The emotional entanglement accompanying such a relationship can leave the elderly person particularly vulnerable to maltreatment. Those responsible for the well-being of elderly persons should remain conscious of this risk factor.

● *Elderly Victims and APS Caseworkers Often Perceive Maltreatment Differently*

Case outcomes were less likely to be successful, and abuse more likely to reoccur, when the APS caseworker and the elderly victim held discrepant perceptions regarding the perpetrators’ motivations for the abuse and the likely outcome of intervention. This was particularly likely to occur when the perpetrator was a family member. Reconciling these differences, however, can enhance the likelihood of effective interventions. Better methods are needed to persuade elderly victims that the

consequences of taking actions against their perpetrator will not result in serious harm to either themselves or the perpetrator.

#### ● *Better and Enhanced Use of Multidisciplinary Teams Is Needed*

Because of the complexity of these cases, input from multiple disciplines are often required to address the diverse needs of the elderly victim and the perpetrator. Their assistance may also be needed to accumulate the evidence needed to prepare a case of elder maltreatment for prosecution. Multidisciplinary teams can also promote and facilitate collaboration among APS caseworkers, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, victim services, geriatricians, neuropsychologists, guardianship programs, and others (see also Brandl, Dyer, Heisler, Otto, Stiegel & Thomas, 2007; Navarro, Wilber, Yonashiro & Homeier, 2010; Teaster, Nerenberg & Stansbury, 2005; Wigglesworth, Mosqueda, Burnight, Younglove & Jeske, 2006). Resulting improved communication and coordination may also enhance the willingness of victims of elder maltreatment to cooperate with investigations and support the implementation of remedial measures, including prosecution where appropriate. Furthermore, limited research indicates that approaching elderly victims about prosecution from the perspective of gaining access to services for perpetrators is likely to enhance their willingness to support prosecution (Bergeron, 2007; Brownell, 1998; Korbin, Anetzberger, Thomasson & Austin, 1991).

#### ● *APS Has a Valuable Role to Play in Research and Evaluation*

Without the cooperation of APS caseworkers in Virginia, we would not have been able to learn the valuable lessons contained herein. Those who agreed to

participate were generous with their time and their valuable insights. However, we found it difficult to recruit APS caseworkers to assist our study. This was likely due to many factors, but chief among them may have been a general lack of trust in research enterprises. As is true in nurturing any relationship, building researcher-practitioner partnerships takes time and effort. But it is important. Too little empirical work has been devoted to demonstrating which interventions are effective for which types of elder abuse (Mixson, 2010; Powell & Berman, 2006; Ramsey-Klawnsnik, 2000; Teaster et al., 2006; Wolfe, 2003). It is equally important to assess when interventions may be harmful (Lithwick, Beaulieu, Gravel & Straka, 1999; Wright, 2010). The participation of APS caseworkers in research and evaluation and the collection of state agency data such as Adult Services Adult Protective Services (ASAPS) will greatly facilitate these goals, with the ultimate benefit realized by elderly victims.

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