

Elder Abuse – The Hidden Crime



Elder Abuse Workshop – Objectives

By the end of this workshop you will be able to :-

- Provide a definition of Elder Abuse
- Identify the various forms this abuse takes
- Appreciate some of the tell tale signs of Elder Abuse
- Start considering the implementation of prevention strategies within your organization
- Start to draw up a written Elder Abuse Policy



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What Is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse - “A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress”

World Health Organization 2002



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Types of Elder Abuse

- *Physical Abuse*
- *Sexual Abuse*
- *Psychological Abuse*
- *Financial Abuse*
- *Neglect and acts of omission*
- *Discriminatory Abuse*



Signs of Elder Abuse

Victims of Elder Abuse may show the following symptoms

- Depression, fear, anxiety or withdrawal/mood changes.
- Unexplained physical injuries or deterioration of health without obvious cause
- Dehydration, or loss of weight due to lack of food.
- Poor hygiene, soiled clothing, rashes or pressure sores.



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Prevention of Elder Abuse

Develop and promote:

- zero tolerance policies
- resident-focused mission statements
- residents' bills of rights
- residents' councils
- abuse prevention protocols



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Prevention of Elder Abuse

Consequences of Abuse:

- To the Victim
- To the Organization



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Prevention of Elder Abuse

Legal Highlights:

- Vicarious Liability
- Direct Negligence
- Damages



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Prevention of Elder Abuse – Supportive Environment

Develop a supportive environment by respecting:

- The individual
- Ethnic background
- Culture, Customs and Religion
- Possessions and property
- Deal with aggression
- Review care plans
- Review incident and accident logs
- Reporting of abuse / encourage whistle blowing



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Prevention of Elder Abuse – Supportive Environment

Staff also need a supportive environment:

- Adequate levels of skilled and competent staff are available at all times to deal with residents and/or their challenging behaviours
- There are adequate levels of supervisory staff available at all times
- Suitable and sufficient training and support is provided
- Avoid over reliance on agency staff
- Policies and procedures are understood and regularly reviewed with staff



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Staff Selection and Training

- Selection of new staff and volunteers should be based on their level of competence to safely perform the tasks they are going to be undertaking.



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Staff Selection and Training

Job selection procedures for new staff (including temporary staff) should be based on :

- Relevant qualifications and experience
- Specific training received for example manual handling techniques, first aid, food hygiene and conflict management
- Applicants should produce evidence of their qualifications and any refresher or specific training received



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Staff Selection and Training

When working with seniors and vulnerable adults it is important to.

- Screen all paid employees, including management.
- Screen all volunteers.
- Carry out reference checks on all paid employees & volunteers.



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JOB DESCRIPTION, ORIENTATION & TRAINING

- **Current Job Descriptions are available and reviewed**
 - Understand the role or position being applied for or volunteered for.
- **Proper orientation to policies**
 - Have proper orientation procedures in place for new volunteers / employees.



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What to do when someone alleges abuse occurred

Respond Quickly and Pro-actively

- Inform authorities as required
- Involve the organization's Legal Advisor
- Report the incident to your Insurer



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Develop Policies & Protocols

- Policy Statement and Aims
- Standard definition of abuse and the forms this typically takes
- The measures to be taken to ensure the aims of the policy are met
- The process and procedures in place to report specific incidents or allegations of Abuse
- Sets out the duties and responsibilities of all involved



Elder Abuse

In summary, first you need to recognize and define what Elder Abuse is, what forms it takes and what the tell tale signs look like.

Then develop a culture and environment that is inclusive and supportive through resident involvement, together with staff selection and training

All under pinned by clearly documented policies and protocols supported at the highest level and communicated throughout the organization



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Elder Abuse

- Questions?



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