Collaborating to Serve Victims of Elder Abuse

Presenters:

- **Barry Beck**, Deputy Commissioner – Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services
- **Jenny Hicks**, Project Coordinator: Abuse in Later Life Grant – Vera House Inc
- **JoAnne Spoto Decker**, Director Community Service Programs and Long Term Care – Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services
Agenda

- Overview of the issue of Elder Abuse
- Importance of collaboration
- History of working together
- Coalition projects and successes
- Training and outreach efforts
- County Reorganization
- Office for Aging role in elder abuse prevention and cross-referral process
The Problem

- NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Under the Radar
  - 7.6% experience annually
  - 14.1% have experienced since turning 60
  - Most common form – major financial exploitation
- Less likely than child abuse to get reported
- Met Life Mature Market Institute
  - $2.9 billion annually lost to financial exploitation
  - Soon to announce much larger figures...
Elder Abuse: Under the Radar

For every one case of elder abuse that comes to the attention of a responsible entity...

another twenty three cases never come to light.

Source: NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study; Weill Cornell Medical College, NYC Department for the Aging; Lifespan; (2011) Slide courtesy of Life Long Justice
U.S. POPULATION AGE 65 AND OLDER IS ON THE RISE

1990-2050

Source: U.S. Census Bureau population estimates.

Slide courtesy of Life Long Justice
Domestic Violence/Child Abuse History

- Movement from a private family matter to a public issue
- Lack of action = permission / consent
- Learned importance of collaboration – all on the same side, but have different jobs
Call to Action

• Similar to Domestic Violence & Child Abuse
  ◦ Older adult is dependent on abuser
  ◦ Family Relationship – reluctant to report

• Cost of Financial Exploitation
  ◦ Average bank robbery - $7,500 in 2010
  ◦ Resources spent on petit larcenies vs. individual cost of one elder abuse case
    • In Syracuse, annually over 5,000 petit larcenies investigated and over 3,000 arrests
    • One Elder Abuse case could be $100,000 or more
Collaboration: Who Might be Involved

- Faith Leaders
- Advocates
- Aging Network
- Adult Protective Agencies
- Health Professionals
- Friends
- Private Law Firm
- Ombudsman
- Family
Community Collaboration
Onondaga County Model

- Syracuse Area Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition
  - Elder Abuse Committee
  - Justice Committee

- Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)– Abuse in Later Life Grant

- County Reorganization
Community Collaboration
Syracuse Area Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition

- History
- Meeting Topics
  - Case Review
  - Roles/Responsibilities/Community Resources
  - New Laws/ Rules
  - Projects
- Email List Communication
  - Events/Trainings
  - New developments in elder abuse work
  - Meeting notices
  - Subcommittee work
Community Collaboration
Abuse in Later Life Grant

- Kickoff event
- Training
  - Law Enforcement
  - Victim Service Providers
  - Prosecutors
  - Judges
- MOU Partner meetings
- Projects
Community Collaboration
Abuse in Later Life Projects

- Strategic Planning
  - Survey of the Community
  - Small Group planning
- Decision Tree
  - Various Disciplines
- Resource Guides
  - Law Enforcement
  - Victim Service Providers
- Outreach Materials
- Multi-Disciplinary Teams
Community Collaboration
Strategic Planning

The Syracuse Area Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition’s Elder Abuse & Justice Committees

VISION
Older adults in our community are honored, respected and valued, living with dignity and freedom from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

MISSION
To identify, prevent, address and eliminate elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to foster community awareness through:

- Collaboration
- Education
- Intervention
- Advocacy
- Accountability

VALUES
1. We value the right of every older adult to live with dignity, free of the fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. We value safety, integrity, self-determination and cultural diversity by serving with empathy and compassion without judgment.
3. We are committed as a team to educate ourselves and the community we serve.
4. We value a coordinated community process through the cooperative efforts of agencies and individuals to protect and serve those who cannot protect themselves.
Community Collaboration
Decision Tree sample

Elder Abuse, Neglect & Financial Exploitation
Older Adult/Caregiver Decision Tree

Do you suspect an older adult is being abused, neglected or financially exploited? (see page 2, EASI)

- **YES**
  - Determine severity: Is older adult in immediate danger?
    - **YES**
      - Call 911
    - **NO**
      - Is older adult NOT safe in current environment? Does older adult require medical attention? Is a crime being committed?
      - **YES**
        - I still have concerns about the older adult
      - **NO**
  - If older adult wants assistance, contact appropriate medical intervention, law enforcement and Adult Protective Services
    - Refer to: Onondaga County Department of Adult & Long Term Care Services – Adult Protective Services
      - (315) 435-2815
      - M – F 8:30am – 4:30pm
      - Services include: advocacy, safety planning & referral to community resources.
    - Refer to: Onondaga County Department of Adult & Long Term Care Services – Office for Aging
      - (315) 435-2392
      - M – F 8:30am – 4:30pm
      - Services include: Caregiving/Respite Services, case management and outreach.
    - Refer to: Vera House, Inc.
      - 24/7 Crisis & Support Line (315) 468-3290
      - Services include: Shelter, safety planning, advocacy, education, sexual assault counseling and referrals to community resources.

- **NO/UNSURE**
  - Does older adult appear to be able to make informed decisions?
    - **YES**
      - No or unsure? Contact APS or Vera House to discuss circumstances in more detail.
    - **NO**

Supplemental Information Elder Abuse Suspicion Index® (EASI)®

The EASI was developed to raise a doctor's suspicion about elder abuse to a level at which it might be reasonable to propose a referral for further evaluation by social services, adult protective services, or equivalents. While all six questions should be asked, a response of 'yes' on one or more questions 2-6 may establish concern. The EASI was validated for asking by family practitioners of cognitively intact seniors seen in ambulatory settings.

**ASK CLIENT** Within the last 12 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Did not answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you relied on people for any of the following: bathing, dressing,</td>
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<tr>
<td>shopping, banking, or meals?</td>
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<td>Has anyone prevented you from getting food, clothes, medication,</td>
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<tr>
<td>glasses, hearing aids or medical care, or from being with people you</td>
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<td>want to be with?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you been upset because someone talked to you in a way that made</td>
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<tr>
<td>you feel shamed or threatened?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has anyone tried to force you to sign papers or to use your money against your will?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has anyone made you afraid, touched you in ways that you did not want, or hurt you physically?</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBSERVE: Elder abuse may be associated with findings such as: poor eye contact, withdrawn nature, malmournment, hygiene issues, cuts, bruises, inappropriate clothing, or medication compliance issues. Did you notice any of these today or in the last 12 months?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS) CRITERIA (18 AND OVER)**
- Mental or physical impairment
- Unable to manage their resources or carry out activities of daily living, and is unable to protect themselves from neglect or hazardous situations
- No one available who is willing and able to provide assistance responsibly

**NOTE REGARDING PRIVACY & CIVIL LIABILITY**
- NY Social Services Law §473-b provides civil immunity to any person who reports in good faith to APS, Office for Aging, or law enforcement believing that an adult may be endangered or in need of protective services.
Community Collaboration
Resource Guides

Elder Abuse Resource Manual
For Victim Service Providers

Onondaga County Legal Resource Manual for Abuse in Later Life

Revised September 2014

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Community Collaboration
Outreach Materials

Aging is natural... Abuse is not


24-hour Hotline
☎ (315) 468-3260
Community Collaboration
Multi Disciplinary Team

Syracuse Area Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition’s
Elder Abuse Multidisciplinary Team (EA-MDT) Referral Process

Referral made to EA-MDT Coordinator

Screening by EA-MDT Coordinator
- Eligibility and intake completed by phone
- EA-MDT Coordinator reaches out to other agencies to see about current/prior involvement

EA-MDT Review vs. Case Consult

EA-MDT Review
- Date identified for case presentation to EA-MDT
- EA-MDT Coordinator arranges for needed players to be present at the meeting
- EA-MDT Coordinator works with presenter prior to meeting to prepare for case presentation

Case Consult
- EA-MDT Coordinator assists client with reaching out to other agencies
- Case may turn into an EA-MDT Review

Jenny Hicks
(315) 425-0818 x221
Community Collaboration
Multi-Disciplinary Team

- Policy and Procedure
  - Confidentiality
  - Rules for Attendees
- Who should attend
- Role of Coordinator
- Importance of follow-up
Community Collaboration
Onondaga County Reorganization

- Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services

**Mission**: to provide and support comprehensive, coordinated services to improve quality of life for adults in Onondaga County
Service Areas:

- Aging (60+)
- Adult Mental Health (18+)
- Long Term Care/ NY Connects Onondaga County (all ages)
- Adult Protective (18+)
- Veterans
Reorganization

- Departments of Aging and Youth, Mental Health, Veterans, and DSS were either eliminated or changed.

- Aging, Adult Protective, Mental Health (SPOA, AOT, DRC), and Veterans became the new Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services.
Benefits of 2014 Reorganization

• Shared mission and goals, more coordinated approach to overlapping populations of people served

• Co-location of services
  ◦ Aging, Mental Health and Veterans on the 10th floor;
  ◦ Protective Services and LTC on the 5th floor
  ◦ NY Connects 15th Floor
Benefits of 2014 Reorganization

- Development of a more holistic view of our community’s needs and resources and shared needs analysis
  - Identifying populations served/overlap between divisions (often the same people are being, or should be, served in multiple divisions within A&LTC)
  - Inventorying and coordinating services and contracts across divisions to maximize services for the money spent and avoid duplication of effort
  - Identifying unmet needs of the clients/the community and programs/staff on a more systemic level, and tailoring services to meet those unmet needs.
  - Identifying future needs and promoting systems level planning
  - Recognizing shared goals and challenges
  - Example: The State is creating a “No Wrong Door” for accessing community services. The existing Onondaga County “New York Connects” program will become the “no wrong door”, and will work closely with the Mental Health Single Point of Access (SPOA) to provide access to specialized services. While many counties are struggling with how to coordinate these functions, Onondaga County is already doing it within the Adult and Long Term Care Department.
Improved communication between specialized divisions within the Department – with greater knowledge of and access to expertise in each division and greater coordination of services. Examples:

- **Adult Protective Services and Mental Health**: helping vulnerable people with mental illnesses who may need access to care coordination or permanent housing. In the past, the Adult Protective was familiar with the emergency housing available through DSS (e.g. shelters), but did not have ready access to permanent, supported housing. The Mental Health Single Point of Access (SPOA) specializes in connecting people with care and with permanent, supported housing. The two divisions have worked together to coordinate services, leading to better outcomes for vulnerable adults with mental illness.

- **Aging and Adult Protective Services**: Many of the people who need Adult Protective Services are elderly. These people may need access to community supports like meals on wheels, home care, which is the specialty of the Aging and Long Term Care divisions. Although these divisions have always worked together to coordinate services, the reorganization has lead to more familiarity and closer working relationships, leading to better outcomes for vulnerable senior citizens.
Elder Abuse and Mental Health

- Persons with mental illness, on average, die 20-30 years earlier than the general population.
- However, the large number of “baby boomers” with mental illness are living longer.
- Dementia is not a mental illness, it is a physical brain disease that damages brain cells, so it is not treated in the mainstream mental health system.
- The combination of the aging process and mental illness make a senior four times more likely to suffer all types of abuse.
Elder Abuse and Substance Abuse

- Substance abuse has been identified as the most frequently cited risk factor associated with elder abuse and neglect. It may be the victim and/or the perpetrator who has the substance abuse problem.
- Substance abuse is believed to be a factor in all types of elder abuse, including physical mistreatment, emotional abuse, financial exploitation, and neglect. It is also a significant factor in self-neglect.
- Researchers and practitioners have observed the following patterns with respect to perpetrators of elder abuse who abuse drugs or alcohol:
  - Persons with alcohol or substance abuse problems may view older family members, acquaintances, or strangers as easy targets for financial exploitation.
  - The perpetrator may be seeking money to support a drug habit or because they are unable to hold a job and have no source of income.
  - Perpetrators may move into an older person's home and use it as a base of operation for drug use or trafficking.
The research on domestic violence shows that abusive partners are more likely to be violent while they're under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The relationship between domestic violence and substance abuse, however, is not fully understood. Although it has been assumed that alcohol and drugs reduce users' inhibitions, it has also been observed that perpetrators of domestic violence use drugs and alcohol to rationalize their behavior.

Caregivers who are having difficulty coping with the demands of providing care may use drugs as a misguided coping mechanism.
Neglect by Care Giver, 6.3%
Physical Abuse, 4.1%
Sexual Abuse, 0.5%
Psychological abuse, 3.9%
Financial or other exploitation, 15.5%
Self Neglect, 18.8%

Mentally Ill, 41.8%
Poor Housing Conditions, 15.0%
Eviction Homeless, 8.6%
Drug/ Alcohol, 0.3%
Environmental Hazards, 10.2%
Unable to manage finances, 5.8%
Self-endangering Behaviors, 10.0%
Untreated Medical conditions, 6.0%
Ways Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Elder Abuse Prevention

- (Historically) Fiscally supported the “elder aide” program in collaboration with Onondaga PSA
- Created collaboration with Vera House to provide public education and training to seniors, caregivers and professionals for more than one decade
- Sponsor the Elder Abuse Conferences held in December of each year.
- Participate annually in workshop presentations
Ways Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Elder Abuse Prevention

Received a grant from the NYSOFA for elder abuse prevention. The initiative was an outreach program promoting the PSA phone number in English and Spanish, as well as frauds and scams. The billboard campaign was the first of its kind in Onondaga County.
Ways Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Elder Abuse Prevention

If It Sounds To Good To Be True...

Worked with Vera House and the local AG office to develop a marketing campaign educating the public on telephone scams and where to report scams
Ways Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Elder Abuse Prevention

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Ways Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Elder Abuse Prevention

**Staff Collaboration**

- Participate in the Elder Abuse Committee
- Participate in the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)
- Participate in the Elder Abuse Conference Planning Committee
- Participate in the development and updating of the Victim Services Resource Guide
- Participate in the Decision Tree committee
In 2009, the Office for Aging and PSA entered into a Memo of Understanding creating the seamless transfer of referrals closed at PSA intake to OFA for follow-up.
How the Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Adult Protective Services Today

- Shopper Service Program
- Transportation Program
- EISEP
- MOW
- Caregiver Services
- Neighborhood Advisor Program
- HIICAP
How the Onondaga County Office for Aging Collaborates with Adult Protective Services Today

New York Connects:

- Home visits to assess for services
- Make recommendations for community-based long term care services
- PRI assessments
- Joint visits for nursing assessment for:
  - Guardianships
  - STIPSO’s
  - Other Medical Concerns
Aging is Natural, Abuse is Not