

Crimes Against the Elderly

Study Session Overview

This Study Session will introduce you to investigation considerations when dealing with crimes against the elderly. This Study Session is intended to supplement Module 06 Session 01 - Vulnerable Adults.

*****This exercise is not mandatory but is a valuable study aid.*****

Learner Objectives

- Identify common forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly and other crimes against the elderly.
- Identify best practices for communicating with the elderly and vulnerable adults.

Total Study Time: 2 hours

Main Topics of Session:

- *Common Crimes Against the Elderly*
- *Factors Leading to Older People's Risk of Becoming a Victim*
- *Needs of Elderly Victims*
- *Special Considerations with Older Victims*
- *Communicating with Older Victims*
- *Indicators of Physical/Sexual Abuse*
- *Types of Financial Abuse*
- *Prevention of Elder Abuse*

Attached Materials:

- *ATTACHMENT - Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse*
- *HANDOUT - Effective Communications with the Elderly*
- *HANDOUT - Enhancing Law Enforcement and ID Theft Victim Communication*
- *HANDOUT - The Seven Deadly Scams*

You Should Bring to Class:

- *ATTACHMENT - Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse*



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Background

This module will teach you how to investigate crimes where the victim is elderly and/or a vulnerable adult. Our elders are the fastest growing segment of our society and they are also an important part of our country's economy. We are living longer but we as a society do not always recognize this population as being at risk. America's growing senior population is uniquely vulnerable to a broad range of exploitation and abuse.



Problem Statement:

An elderly man and his daughter come into the police department one afternoon and wish to speak to an officer privately. You have just finished roll call and are asked to speak with the man and his daughter. Mr. Patchin, a retired army colonel who lives in a continuing care facility, appears very nervous and confused. After some hesitation, Mr. Patchin states: *"All of my life savings is gone. The nice young man that I spoke to on the phone said that I would see a significant return on my investment. I was hoping Patty wouldn't find out. I'm so embarrassed. I was so stupid."*

Consider the following questions and jot down your thoughts and ideas for the questions that are not already answered. You should make use of the resources in the computer lab and the BLEA thumb drive you were provided.

1. Who is your direct client(s)?
2. What do you think the problem is?
3. What would Mr. Patchin and his daughter's expectations be of the police?

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4. Do you think that any crime has occurred? If so, what crime has taken place?

5. What would you do next?

6. What new information, knowledge or skills would assist you to investigate this incident?

7. What are the most common types of crimes committed against the elderly and vulnerable adults?

The most common are abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation (i.e. fraud). Financial crimes against the elderly share some characteristics with other crimes. Related problems requiring separate analysis and responses include

- Identity theft
- Internet fraud
- Check and credit card fraud
- Prescription fraud

8. What conditions or factors increase an older person's risk of being victimized?

- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Recent losses
- Physical or mental disabilities
- Lack of familiarity with financial matters
- Caregivers who are unemployed and/or are substance abusers

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9. So, what do you think are the needs of an elderly or vulnerable adult victim?

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) recognizes that victims of fraud and victims of violent crime have much in common and share similar needs.

- Each needs protection from further harm
- Each needs information about rights, remedies, the criminal justice process, and legal advocacy
- Each needs practical assistance and referrals to people and agencies for help with short and long-term problems stemming from the crime, such as mental health counseling and financial help

10. Are there any special considerations that you need to take into account when interviewing Mr. Patchin?

- They may suffer psychological and emotional harm and stress-related physical effects in addition to financial damage
- Victims may lose their entire life savings and be devastated by the psychological and social impact
- They feel robbed of their money, their security, their self-esteem, and their dignity
- They have lost their faith and trust in a system they believed would protect them and their resources
- Economic crime victims may spend years trying to recover from these crimes

11. What are some things you should consider doing when speaking with an elderly and/or hearing and speech disabled person?

- Communicating with the elderly or vulnerable adults may be difficult
- Be respectful and patient
- Build rapport
- Speak more slowly, and enunciate well
- Do not push them to speak, allow them time to collect themselves and their emotions
- Find a location that is well lit and quiet

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IMPORTANT POINT

Also remember, that it's very possible that your victim has a disability or mental illness (Module 2). Different disabilities and mental illnesses may require you to be flexible in how you communicate. Be aware of difficulties your victim is having and adapt your communication techniques to their needs.

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STUDY

RECOMMENDED STUDY - ATTACHMENT - Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse

For: **Module 06**

Instructions: Answer the questions on this attachment. Be ready to discuss your answers during the Module 6 Exam Review.



END OF STUDY SESSION



Elder & Vulnerable Adult Abuse Questionnaire

1. Who is considered a Vulnerable Adult?
2. What are the different types of abuse?
3. What are the indicators of physical abuse?
4. What are the indicators of sexual abuse?
5. What are some of the types of financial elder abuse?
6. Who are the perpetrators?



Elder & Vulnerable Adult Abuse Questionnaire

7. What conditions or factors increase an older person's risk of being victimized?

8. Why are the elderly attractive targets?

9. What role do law enforcement personnel play in elder abuse prevention?

10. How can law enforcement personnel get involved in elder abuse prevention?

