

EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS

This newsletter is to help caregivers providing care for loved ones who are participating in the Family Caregiver Support Program. This monthly newsletter covers a variety of health and care giving topics. If you have any suggestions for topics, comments or questions about the newsletter please email us at caremanagement@ursulineseniors.org.

June 2011

June is Elder Abuse Awareness Month

What is Elder Abuse?



Elder abuse awareness month is a time to raise the awareness and educate the public about this growing problem. Raising awareness is a

fundamental prevention strategy that not only teaches new information, but also helps to change attitudes and behaviors.

Elder abuse is defined as intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder. The types of abuse are **physical abuse; caregiver & self neglect; emotional/psychological abuse; financial exploitation; sexual abuse; and abandonment.**

Research indicates that more than *one in ten* elders may experience some type of abuse, but only *one in five* cases or fewer are reported.

Elder abuse can occur *anywhere* – in the home, in nursing homes, or other institutions. It affects seniors across all socio-economic groups, cultures, and races.

Elder abuse, like other forms of violence, is never an acceptable response to any problem or situation, however stressful. Effective interventions can prevent or stop elder abuse. By increasing awareness among those who provide services to the elderly, family members and the public, patterns of abuse or neglect can be broken, and both the abused person and the abuser can receive needed help.

What to do if You Suspect Elder Abuse



When you suspect that an older adult is being

abused, neglected or exploited, call the Allegheny County Elder Abuse Hotline at (412)350-412-350-6905 or 1-800-344-4319. A state hotline is also available at

1-800-490-8505. Someone is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to take your call.

Abuse can continue and often escalates if there is no intervention. When a report is received and the need for investigation is indicated, a trained Adult Protective Services

Investigator is assigned to investigate. The identity of the reporter of the abuse is confidential.

The investigators can assist by providing a variety of social, medical, environmental and financial interventions.

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Special points of interest:

- Assess your stress level
- Find some free resources
- Learn more about the issue of elder abuse
- The Farmer's Market Vouchers are coming!

If you suspect elder abuse, report it.

Elder Abuse Statistics

In 2004, the National Center for Elder Abuse gathered data on elder abuse from investigating agencies across the county. Here are some of their findings:

Types of Abuse Reported

Type of Maltreatment	% of Allegations
Self-Neglect	37.2
Physical Abuse	10.7
Caregiver Neglect	20.4
Financial Exploitation	14.7
Emotional/Verbal Abuse	14.8
Sexual Abuse	1.0
Other	1.2

Ethnicity of the Victims

Ethnicity	% of Reports
Caucasian	77.1
African American	21.2
Other	1.5

Gender of the Victims

Female: 65%
Male: 35%



Perpetrators' Relationships to Victims in Substantiated Reports

Relationship	% of
Spouse/Intimate Partner	11.3
Adult Child	32.6
Unknown/Other	16.3
Other Family Members	21.5

Risk Factors for Older Adults

There are certain risk factors that increase the likelihood someone will be the victim of elder abuse:

Decreased Physical Health and Mobility

This may cause increased dependency on others for the necessities of daily living. As the level of impairment and need for care increase, so does the risk for elder abuse.

Social Isolation

Isolation is often the result of deaths of spouses, siblings and friends. Abusers often try to keep an elder isolated by refusing to apply for economic aid or services, resisting outside help, and/or changing social and healthcare providers frequently so that the older adult's situation is hard to assess. Isolation can hide the effects of physical abuse, neglect or exploitation and can also be used as a form of emotional abuse.

Web of Dependency

Older adults may become increasingly dependent on others for their care. Caregivers may also be dependent on the older

adult for financial assistance, emotional support or housing.

Caregiver Stress

Sometimes the demands of caring for a very frail older adult can lead to caregiver "burnout", resulting in impatience, depression, anger and hostility...sometimes resulting in abuse.

Other pressures, such as unemployment, can exacerbate caregiver stress.

Impairment of the Older Adult or the Caregiver

Physical impairment, mental illness, or memory impairment of either the older adult or the caregiver are risk factors for abuse.

Substance Abuse

If the older adult abuses alcohol or drugs, the result might be increased confusion, forgetfulness, agitation or unsteadiness. Caregivers who are substance abusers may financially exploit the older adult to finance the caregiver's addiction and may physically or emotionally abuse the older adult in the process.

Adapted from: www.ocfs.state.ny.us



Caregiver Resources & Information

FREE Resources for Seniors & Caregivers! To view or order the forms, go to:

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) has over 125 FREE publications that you can access. On the NIA website, www.nia.nih.gov, you can view the publications or order printed versions to be sent to you at home, **free of charge**.

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/babyboomers.htm>

Don't have internet access? Call Emily at Ursuline at (412)683-0400 x262 and she can send you the National Institute on Aging Publications Catalog. Once you receive it, you can place your order by mail.

Some of the publications include:

Caring for a Person with Alzheimer's Disease

Home Safety for People with Alzheimer's Disease

Talking with Your Doctor

There's No Place Like Home—For Growing Old

Age Page—over 40 topics available



Caregiver Stress Questionnaire

Are the following statements true?
Please circle either YES or NO for each statement:

I have frequent headaches, stomachaches, or other physical health	Yes	No
I am easily irritated, angered, or saddened.	Yes	No
I do not have much interest in activities I used to enjoy, such as reading,	Yes	No
I have recently experienced unplanned weight gain or loss.	Yes	No
I feel tired or without energy most of the time.	Yes	No
I get too much sleep.	Yes	No
I do not get enough sleep.	Yes	No

If you answered YES to more than two questions, you might be experiencing caregiver stress. Sometimes we do not realize how much stress can affect our physical, emotional, and mental health.

Remember, you are not alone.

Your Ursuline Care Manager can help if you need resources and information on respite services or other assistance.

Source: www.myhealthcaremanager.com

10 Tips for Family Caregivers

- Caregiving is a job and respite is your earned right. Reward yourself with respite breaks often.
- Watch out for signs of depression, and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
- When people offer to help, accept the offer and suggest specific things that they can do.
- Educate yourself about your loved one's condition and how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- There's a difference between caring and doing. Be open to technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.
- Trust your instincts. Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
- Caregivers often do a lot of lifting, pushing, and pulling. Be good to your back.
- Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself to dream new dreams.
- Seek support from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.
- Stand up for your rights as a caregiver and a citizen.

Source: [National Family Caregiver's Association](http://NationalFamilyCaregiver'sAssociation)

Did you know...?

Caregivers supply nearly 257 billion dollars a year in services for their loved ones, such as transportation, supervision, financial management, feeding, bathing, lifting, and toileting.

Caregivers juggle many roles. Besides assisting a loved one, most are married or living with a partner, have a paid job, and care for a child or another elder.

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Visit us on the web at www.ursulineseniorservices.org

Senior Farmer's Market Program

The annual Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is available to eligible consumers across the county. Eligible individuals may receive \$20 in checks to be spent at participating farmer's markets. The checks may be spent throughout the summer on produce that is grown, or can be grown, in Pennsylvania.

Eligible Individuals Must Be:

- An Allegheny County resident;
- 60 years of age or older;
- Meet the income guidelines
 - 1-person household : at or below \$20,147
 - 2-person household : at or below \$27,214*

*Married couples may each receive one set of checks

Distribution Day:

Tuesday June 28, 2011

Distribution will take place at most senior centers in your area. Distribution begins in the morning on Tuesday, June 28, but checks run out fast! They are distributed on a first-come-first-served basis, no exceptions. At the time of distribution, be sure to bring photo identification with proof of age and residency.

