

Ready, Set, Go: Know Your Risks

Leadership Tool for a Learning Organization

Preventing Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older and Vulnerable Adults

WHY IS PREVENTING ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS IMPORTANT?

- Preventing the mistreatment or neglect of long-term care recipients is a concern for any risk manager. Inadequate staff training, understaffing, difficulty recruiting adequate staff, and low pay contribute to the challenge, as do the increasingly complex care needs of residents, failure to report abuse, and lax enforcement of state and federal laws.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), elder abuse can be categorized into the five following types: physical abuse, sexual abuse or abusive sexual contact, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and financial abuse or exploitation.¹
- The most recent major studies on incidence reported that 7.6% to 10% of study participants experienced abuse in the prior year.² Estimates vary, but it is widely believed that 4 million older Americans are victims of physical, psychological, or other forms of abuse and neglect every year. According to experts, the actual number of incidents of elder abuse may be 23 times higher than the foregoing estimate.³

DID YOU ASK?

- Does our organization have an effective strategy for complying with all statutes, regulations, and standards regarding vulnerable adults and responding to abuse?
- Does our organization have clear definitions of abuse and implement policies and procedures for recognizing, monitoring, and managing abuse and its aftermath?
- Are staff trained to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse, and does our organization offer mandatory, ongoing training for preventing and responding to abuse?
- Are staff subject to criminal background checks at hire and periodically thereafter?
- Has our organization established periodic auditing practices to ensure effectiveness of our policies and procedures related to preventing all manners of abuse?

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Violence Prevention. Elder abuse. 2017 Jun 8 [cited 2018 Jan 22]. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/index.html>

2 Acierno R, Hernandez MA, Amstadter AB, Resnick HS, Steve K, Muzzy W, Kilpatrick DG. Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse and potential neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *Am J Pub Hlth* 2010;100(2):292-7 [cited 2017 Dec 22]. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804623/> PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20019303> doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2009.163089

3 American Psychological Association (APA). Elder abuse and neglect: in search of solutions. 2012 [cited 2017 Dec 21]. <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/elder-abuse.aspx>

Need More Information?

As a member of ECRI Institute's risk and patient or resident safety program, you and your staff can access guidance outlining strategies for preventing episodes of violence, abuse, or neglect:

- ▶ [Guidance: Preventing Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older and Vulnerable Adults](#)
- ▶ [Guidance: Event Reporting and Response](#)
- ▶ [Tool: Nursing Home Abuse Prevention Checklist](#)

ECRI Institute can help you with all of your patient or resident safety, quality, and risk management projects. Email us at hrc@ecri.org.