Elder and Dependent Abuse

What every nurse needs to know
What is Elder Abuse?

+ Maltreatment of people greater than 60 years of age causing or creating a risk of harm.

+ Most common forms of abuse are:
  + Physical
  + Sexual
  + Emotional
  + Neglect
  + Financial
  + Abandonment

(CDC, 2018)
Physical Abuse

- The use of force that results in any physical pain, impairment, or bodily injury. Examples are:
  - Striking with or without an object
  - Hitting
  - Pushing
  - Kicking
  - Slapping

(CDC, 2018)
Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises
- Broken bones
- Lacerations
- Internal bleeding
- Laboratory results indicating a medication overdose
- Caregivers refusal to allow visitors to the elder

(NCEA, 2018)
Sexual Abuse

- Nonconsensual sexual activity with an elder, or when an elder is unable to give consent.

- Examples include:
  - Unwelcome touching
  - Forced nudity
  - Rape or Sodomy
  - Unwanted sexual contact or penetration

(CDC, 2018)
Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Bruising around breasts or genitals
- Unexplained venereal disease
- Torn, stained, or bloody underwear
- Elders statement of sexual abuse

(NCEA, 2018)
Emotional Abuse

The infliction of distress, fear or pain from verbal or nonverbal acts. Examples:

- Intimidation
- Humiliation
- Verbal assaults or insults
- Threats
- Destroying property
- Not allowing friends or family visits

(CDC, 2018)
Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Withdrawn
- Non-communicative
- Unusual behavior, attributed to dementia
- Elders statement of emotional abuse
- Emotionally upset

(NIA, 2016)
Neglect

- Refusal or failure to fulfill obligations and provide basic needs to an elder:
  - Food
  - Water
  - Medicine or essential medical care
  - Shelter
  - Safety
  - Personal hygiene

(CDC, 2018)
Signs of Neglect

- May include:
  - Dehydration
  - Malnutrition
  - Untreated pressure ulcers
  - Unsafe or unsanitary living conditions
  - Untreated health problems

(NCEA, 2018)
Financial Abuse

- Illegal or unauthorized use of an elder’s money, property or assets for the benefit of someone other than the elder

- Examples include:
  - Forging checks
  - Unauthorized check cashing or credit card use
  - Stealing money or assets
  - Coercing and or deceiving an elder into signing legal documents (such as a will or trust)

(CDC, 2018)
Abandonment

When someone who has assumed responsibility for an elder, or who has custody of an elder, desert the elder.

Examples include:
- An elder’s statement of being abandoned
- Leaving an elder at a public place
- Disserting an elder at the hospital

(NCEA, 2018)
Risk Factors

- Domestic abuse grown old (spousal abuse)
- Social isolation
- Drug abuse/alcoholism
- Caregiver stress
- Cycle of abuse (learned behavior)
- Difficult personalities/disease processes (i.e. dementia) of the elder

(NIA, 2016)
Prevention

**Goal: Stop it before it starts**

- Be an active listener to older adults and their caregivers
- Report abuse or suspected abuse to authorities immediately (Adult Protective Services)
- Recognize signs of potential or actual abuse and educate others as well
- Frequent visits or calls to older adults with few friends or family
- Connect older adults to community senior centers and other community activities

(CDC, 2018)
BRN Requirements

- A Registered Nurse (RN) must report known, reasonably suspect, or observed instances of abuse to the appropriate authorities.

- Applies to those situations that occur in the RN’s professional capacity or within the scope of employment.

(State of CA Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010)
What the law requires of you

- Report of injuries Penal Code 11160:
  - Report by telephone immediately or as soon as practically possible and a written report shall be prepared.
  - The completed forms shall be sent to local law enforcement agency within two working days of receiving the information regarding the person.

(State of CA Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010)
Elder Abuse Reporting
Phone Numbers (24 hours)

- Los Angeles County, Ca. (877) 477-3646
- Orange County, Ca. (714) 800-451-5155
- San Bernardino County, Ca. (877) 565-2020
- Eldercare Locator (800) 677-1116 (toll free)
- National Adult Protective Services Association (217) 523-4431

