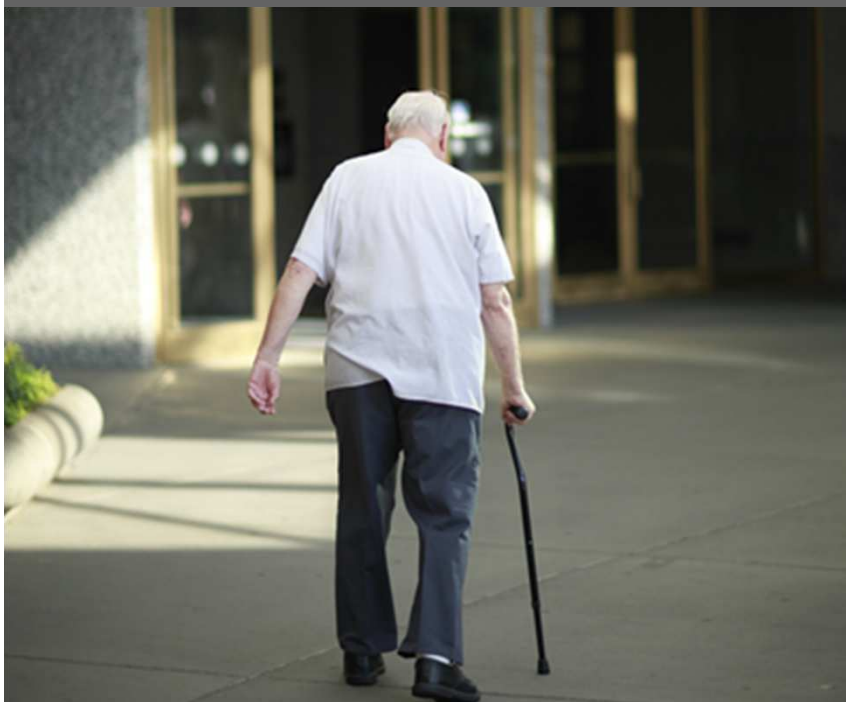


Elder Abuse

Annual Compliance Education



This course contains annual compliance education necessary to meet compliance and regulatory requirements.

Instructions:

To receive credit for completion:

1. Read the content in full.
2. Complete the online exam.



Carolinan HealthCare System

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One

Elder Abuse

Welcome

Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to provide the steps you need to know in order to recognize, prevent and report the possible abuse of older (elder) patients.

Learning Objectives:

When finished with this course, you should be able to:

- Define elder abuse
- Identify types of abuse, risk factors and signs of elder abuse
- Describe how to recognize elder abuse
- Discuss how to prevent and report elder abuse
- Identify ways to learn more about elder abuse



Elder Abuse

Defining Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is the infliction of harm on an older adult.

Elder abuse can be:

- Physical harm
- Emotional or psychological (mental) harm
- Financial exploitation (misuse of money)
- Intentional or unintentional neglect by a caregiver



Elder Abuse

Facts about Elder Abuse

In the United States, the number of people age 60 and older is growing fast. About 2.1 million older Americans are victims of physical, psychological and other types of abuse every year.

Experts say as many as 10% of older adults may be victims of abuse. This is difficult to prove because much abuse goes unreported.

Adult Protective Service Agencies say that of the reported abuse:

- 70% involve neglect
- 30% involve emotional or psychological abuse
- 30% involve financial exploitation

Abuse is two to three times more common in people over age 80 than in those between 60 and 80.



Elder Abuse

Cultural Issues

What “abuse” is varies between different cultural and ethnic communities. Varying factors include devaluation and lack of responsibility for older adults.

Some believe that what goes on in the home is a private “family matter”. This allows abuse to continue without being reported and addressed.



Elder Abuse

Religious or Ethical Beliefs



Sometimes, religious practices or ethical beliefs may look like elder abuse or mistreatment. Instead, it is part of the culture. As a teammate, you must be careful and ask questions about such practices during the review.

In some cultures, women's basic rights are not honored. Older women in these cultures may not realize they are being abused. They may not be able to call for help outside the family and may not even know that help is available.

Healthcare workers have a duty to recognize and report elderly adults at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation. This is a North and South Carolina law.



Elder Abuse

Types of Elder Abuse

There are different types of abuse. A victim may be abused in more than one way at the same time.

The most common types of abuse include:

Caregiver
Neglect

Emotional or
Psychological
(Mental) Abuse

Financial or
Material
Exploitation
(Abuse of Money
or Property)

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Self-neglect
(Not Taking Care
of Oneself)

Abandonment
(Being Left Alone)



Elder Abuse

How to Recognize Types of Elder Abuse

Type of Abuse	Definition
Caregiver Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caregiver Neglect happens when a caregiver refuses or fails to give an older person basic needs• Examples include not providing enough food, clothing, shelter, medicine or assistance with daily living activities• Abuse also includes not paying bills or managing money responsibly (if those tasks are part of the caregiver's duties)
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotional or psychological abuse is causing severe upset, emotional pain or suffering on purpose• Abuse can range from name calling or giving the "silent treatment" to intimidating (scaring) or threatening the older person• Examples include verbal assaults, threats, humiliation, harassment and isolation from friends and regular activities
Financial Abuse or Material Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial abuse or material exploitation happens when someone takes an older person's money or belongings without permission• Abuse can range from misuse of an elder's money to stealing



Elder Abuse

How to Recognize Types of Elder Abuse (continued)

Type of Abuse	Definition
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical abuse is the use of physical force to cause pain or injury• Abuse can include slapping, shoving, severe beatings or restraining with ropes or chains• Examples include punching, slapping, restraining, biting, burning, pinching, pushing and pulling
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual abuse is sexual contact of any kind without the permission of the elder person• Abuse can range from sexual exhibition to rape• This is not reported often as a type of elder abuse
Self-neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-neglect is self-inflicted behavior that threatens a person's own health and safety• Examples include refusal to eat or drink, keep oneself clean, wear appropriate clothing, secure appropriate shelter or take prescribed medicines
Abandonment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abandonment happens when the care provider deserts (leaves) a dependent person



Risk Factors

Experts say that 10% of all older adults are victims of abuse. Authorities believe that the reported cases are just the tip of the iceberg. For every elder abuse case reported there are five that are unreported.

Common risk factors that may lead to abuse include:

- Stressful caregiving circumstances. This is more common if the older person has a physical or emotional disability.
- Caregiver feels bitter about the older person's needs and helplessness
- The family has ongoing relationship problems and may not function as a social unit. The family may have a history of violence.
- Isolation (separating themselves from others)
- Poverty
- History of personality problems in the victim or the abuser, such as alcoholism, drug addiction and emotional or mental disorders



Signs of Abuse

Many of the symptoms listed below can happen because of debilitating conditions or medications. The appearance of the following symptoms call for an investigation to figure out the cause:

Physical Abuse

Bruises or grip marks around the arms or neck

Rope marks or welts on the wrist and/or ankles

Repeated unexplained injuries

Uncaring or odd attitude or statements about injuries

Refusal to go to same emergency department for repeated injuries

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Not communicating or responding

Fearful or suspicious for no reason

Lack of interest in social friends or family

Ongoing physical or mental health problems

Avoiding questions

Sexual Abuse

Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding

Torn or bloody underwear

Bruised breasts

Venereal disease or vaginal infections



Signs of Abuse (continued)

Any of the following symptoms call for further investigation to decide the cause:

Financial Abuse or Exploitation

The way the person is living does not match the size of the estate

Large withdrawals from bank accounts, switching accounts or unusual ATM activity

Signatures on checks do not match the elder's signature

Neglect

Sunken eyes or loss of weight

Extreme thirst

Bed sores

Not keeping clean

Dirty clothes

Matted hair



Suspecting Possible Abuse

Many victims may not want to report abuse because they are ashamed and afraid. They may fear being left alone or that the abuser may cause further harm to them. Victims can sometimes react angrily or strongly deny that there is anything wrong.

The goal of reporting elder abuse is to protect and make sure the victim is safe.

If you think a resident is possibly being abused:

- As much as is possible, make sure your resident is safe
- *IMMEDIATELY/as soon as possible*, report your suspicions to your supervisor, the facility Social Worker, the Director of Nursing (DON), or the Administrator
- Fill out the necessary reporting paperwork and provide it to your supervisor in a timely manner



Reporting Elder Abuse



Both North Carolina and South Carolina require healthcare workers to report suspected abuse.

Follow your facility's reporting policy.

- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF): Notify your supervisor, the DON, Social Worker or the Administrator

Also contact the local Department of Social Services if you encounter an older adult (not a facility resident) who:

- Shows signs of mistreatment without a medical explanation
- Complains of abuse
- Is someone you suspect is a high risk of abuse or neglect



Preventing Abuse

Patient education plays a key role in preventing abuse to an older patient.

Offer these tips to help a patient avoid becoming a victim:

Stay sociable and active	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep in touch with neighbors and friends• Keep up with routine healthcare
Keep your possessions in order	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open your own mail• Arrange for direct deposit of checks• Do not leave valuables lying around
Consult a lawyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider designating a power of attorney in the event you may need it• Do not sign anything until someone reviews it
Know whom to ask for help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Adult Protective Services or an elder abuse hotline



For More Information

To learn more about elder abuse and how to report it, contact the following:

National Center on Elder Abuse

1225 Eye Street, NW, Suite 725
Washington, DC 20005

P: (202) 898-2586

F: (202) 898-2583

www.elderabusecenter.org

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Center for Aging Policy

Find information on elder rights, housing, access services, and community and home based services.

P: (202) 872-0888

www.n4a.org

U.S. Administration on Aging Eldercare Locator: Sponsored by the Administration on Aging (AoA)

If you know the address and ZIP code of the older person being abused, Eldercare Locator can refer you to the appropriate agency in the area to report the suspected abuse.

P: (800) 677-1116

www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare/Public/Home.asp

Selected References:

- Carolinas Healthcare System, Administrative Policy and Procedures
- Manual American Psychological Association: Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions. Available online at <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/eldabuse.html>; accessed April 15, 2015
- Boltz, M., Capezuti, E., Fulmer, T.T., Zwicker D.A, O'Meara, A. (2011). 4th Ed. Evidence Based Geriatric Nursing Protocols for the Best Practice. New York: NY. Springer Publishing
- North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings at www.reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac-.asp



Summary

The goal of reporting abuse of an older person is protect and make sure the victim is safe. As a healthcare provider, it is your duty to recognize and report older adults at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation in accordance with North and South Carolina laws.

The following are some tips covered in this course:

- Be aware of all types of abuse, including physical, emotional, financial, sexual, neglect and abandonment
- Immediately report any suspicion of abuse
- Note elder abuse signs, such as stress, bitterness towards the elder, family relationship problems, isolation, poverty and personality problems
- Educate older patients to prevent elder abuse. Encourage elders to stay social, keep their possessions in order, consult a lawyer, and know who to contact if they feel taken advantage of or threatened
- Contact the facility Social Worker or the Department of Social Services for information or assistance if you suspect an elder is being abused



Elder Abuse: Job Aid

Purpose: Use this job aid to refer to information you are expected to know to recognize, prevent and report suspected elder abuse.

- Elder abuse is causing physical, emotional or psychological harm on an older adult
- About 2.1 million of older Americans are victims of physical, psychological and other types of abuse every year
- Healthcare providers have a duty to recognize and report elderly adults at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation in accordance with North and South Carolina laws
- Types of abuse include caregiver neglect, emotional abuse, financial, physical, sexual, self-neglect and abandonment
- Risk factors include stress, bitterness towards the elder, family relationship problems, isolation, poverty and personality problems
- Many of the symptoms of abuse can occur as a result of debilitating conditions or medications but should prompt further investigation of cause
- The goal of reporting abuse is to protect and make sure the victim is safe
- Patient education plays a key role in preventing abuse to an older patient
- The facility Social Worker and the Department of Social Services may be contacted for additional information and assistance

