

Elder Abuse Awareness Day, June 15th: Protecting Our Elders

By: Katee Rose

It's not pleasant to think about, but it happens far too often. Aging can leave you vulnerable to being taken advantage of, neglected or abused. This injustice towards our elders has sparked a worldwide movement to recognize the importance of protecting and advocating for this population. Our elders' contributions in providing wisdom and advice to younger generations and society as a whole should be not only acknowledged, but encouraged and nurtured.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. "The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect. In addition, WEAAD is in support of the United Nations international plan of action, acknowledging the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. WEAAD serves as a call-to-action for individuals, organizations and communities to raise awareness about elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation," according to WEAAD's website.

All people, regardless of age or disability should be able to live independently and participate fully in their communities, and have the right to make choices and control the decisions in and about their lives.

Here are some ways to help support elders in your community: These tips should be approached with care and respect. Bottom line is to protect the elderly as much as possible without being overbearing and encroaching on their freedom.

Ensure their safety by helping to pick up their house. Making sure there are no major obstacles that could contribute to them sustaining an injury. Make simple repairs. Be sure that handrails are secure or put in place if needed. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are fully charged, review their medication with them at least once a year, encourage exercise to keep up their strength, make sure the home is secure, that locks are functional. You can also encourage them to have their vision checked and install nightlights to navigate the home at night. Look up local resources and groups that can help keep them up to speed with a fulfilling social life. This may be more touchy but it can help to review bills, insurance coverages and investments to ensure there has been no fraud or over-billing. Make sure to check on them frequently with a phone call or better yet, in person! Also talking about sensitive issues such as when they should stop driving, seek assisted living or drawing up their will can alleviate a lot of struggles and grief at the time when these plans are necessary.

Below is a hand out from WEAAD breaking down common signs of fraud:

Everyone has a right to safety and justice. However, it is estimated that millions of older adults, from all walks of life, encounter harmful scams every year. We are not providing the necessary support needed to keep everyone safe and engaged as we age. Ageism (biases against or stereotypes about older people that keep them from being fully a part of their community) also play a role in enabling elder abuse. By changing these contributing factors, we can prevent elder abuse and make sure all of us have the opportunity to thrive as we age. Here are things we can do to help protect our communities from abuse and neglect:

Build Supports

If we think of society as a building that supports our wellbeing, then it makes sense to design the sturdiest building we can—one with the beams and a solid foundation and walls necessary to keep everyone safe from scams and healthy as we age.

1. We can construct community supports and human services for family caregivers and older adults to alleviate risk factors tied to elder abuse like ageism (bias against older adults in our culture) or social isolation.
2. We can increase funding to support efforts to train service providers in how to prevent and detect scams when working with older adults.
3. And we can create, maintain and improve

organizations like consumer protection agencies that work to stop scams and make sure companies, banks and lenders treat us fairly.

Is It A Scam?

1. Is the sales person using high pressure sales tactics? Scams often say things like, "Act Now!"; "Time is running out!"; "This is a one time offer!"
2. Are you being asked to pay upfront fees? Lottery and sweepstakes scams often employ this tactic. If you really won something the fees can be taken out of your winnings.
3. Are you being told that you won a contest that you didn't enter? Lottery and sweepstakes scams almost always start this way. You can't win a contest that you didn't enter.
4. Have you been scammed in the past? Often scam victims have their personal contact information sold to other con artists. You may get unsolicited calls from people promising to get your money back or provide other remedies or offers. These 'offers' can be scams too. Beware!
5. Did you receive unsolicited mail, emails, or phone calls for services that you were not seeking? Research the companies that you want to employ. Many scams begin with someone knocking on your door offering services, or sending out promotional materials. This often happens in the case of home repair scams.
6. Are you being contacted by the police over the phone? Verify that they are who they say they are. Some scams begin with a person pretending to be a police officer who tells you that they are concerned that you have been a victim of a crime. They then proceed to solicit your personal information. In truth, the police will contact you in person if they have questions for you or believe that you have been a victim of a crime.

How To Protect Yourself

1. Sign up for the Do Not Call Registry at www.donotcall.gov.
2. When no longer needed, shred junk mail, old bills, bank statements and any other documents that have personal identifying information.
3. Don't give out personal information over the phone unless you originated the call and you know with whom you are talking. Particularly safeguard your social security number.
4. It is ok to be rude. If a sales person calls you or comes to your door who does not seem to be taking no for an answer, it is ok to terminate the conversation. Hang up the phone or close the door. You don't have to let yourself be pressured into anything.
5. Never sign something that you don't understand. Have a trusted and unbiased professional assist you when entering contracts or signing legal documents.
6. If you hire someone for personal assistance services, in-home care services, etc. ensure that they have been properly screened with criminal background checks completed.
7. Learn about scams and stay informed – Sign up for AARP's Fraud Watch: https://action.aarp.org/site/SPageNavigator/FWN_Registration_Page.html
– Check out AARP's interactive national fraud map: <http://action.aarp.org/site/PageNavigator/FraudMap.html>
– Consumer Financial Protection Bureau offers information and tools for older Americans: – www.consumerfinance.gov/older-americans
– The Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force offers resources and reports to help protect yourself against common types of frauds and scams: – www.stopfraud.gov/protect.html
– Stay alert to common frauds and scams by checking consumer protection sites such as www.Fraud.org
– External Web Site Policy and FBI Common Fraud Schemes: www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-fraud-schemes

Please take the time to check in with the elders in your community. It's important to remember that we will all age and find ourselves in need of more support to sustain a comfortable and quality life. Remember the golden rule: Treat others as you would like to be treated. If there is a senior(s) you know in your community that could use

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A Safety Reminder from the **Head of the Lakes Natural Gas Group**

FOR QUESTIONS, CALL YOUR LOCAL UTILITY PROVIDER:

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Superior Water, Light & Power | Two Harbors Public Utilities
Virginia Public Utilities

HOLNATURALGAS.COM

CLASSIFIED ADS

AA MEETINGS: MONDAYS, 7:30 PM, Clair Nelson Center in Finland.
TUESDAYS, 7:30 PM, Sychar Lutheran Church, Silver Bay, MN. 218-226-3914 or 218-353-7340

We have our rights, but we also have our responsibilities. ~Christine Tetzlaff

Group Living with Anxiety and Depression (GLAD), a confidential peer support group, is online (zoom) second and fourth Mondays at 6:30 pm. Contact North Shore Mental Health Group on Facebook or email: nsmentalhealth@gmail.com.

Nail Care and Blood Pressure Clinic

When: June 16 | 9 am – 3 pm (3rd Thurs. each month)

Where: NSAP | 36 Shopping Center, Silver Bay

Who: Services for older adults 60+. We are unable to offer nail care to individuals with certain health conditions such as diabetes.

Details: Free blood pressure checks—drop in between 9 and 3. Nail care by appointment only—please schedule a time by calling Keri at 218-353-1449.

For Sale: Band saw cut lumber:

8 ft. 2x4's - \$4.00, 8 ft. 2x6's - \$6.00, 1" also available. Call 218-323-7622

\$500 Reward

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SILVER BAY:

- 3 BR, 1 1/2 BA Lg LivingRm w/fireplace, nice kitchen w/Lg DiningRm. Very spacious. Lg open basement. \$1,500/mo.
- Available July 10th. 2 BR, 1 BA basement. Total remodel! Granite counters. Clean! Clean! Short/long term great for traveling nurses & contractors. \$1,400/mo.
- 2 BR, 1 BA in country on Airport Rd, beautiful, HUGE fully furnished (just bring your toothbrush). All utilities, lawn and snow removal included. \$1,600/mo.

access to resources of support, please reach out to North Shore Area Partners, a nonprofit based in Silver Bay that supports the independence of those 60+ living in their own homes in Eastern Lake County, including Beaver Bay, Silver Bay, Little Marais, Finland and Isabella. Find out more on their website at <https://www.nsapartners.org/>