

Elder Abuse Community Outreach Report

A Program of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee Office on Aging

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Implementing “System-Change” for Elder Abuse Victims

When someone is a victim of a crime, they often make their way through the criminal justice system. This system is comprised of many organizations including law enforcement, prosecution, and the courts.

When we try to put ourselves in the shoes of an older victim, we realize several facts. One, many of these victims have never had to engage with the criminal justice system. Two, while the system can be overwhelming for anyone, it can be particularly so for an older victim of abuse. Three, statistics show that perpetrators of elder abuse are often close family member or caregiver. Victims may be less likely to cooperate with a criminal investigation because they do not want to see their loved ones charged or imprisoned.

Understanding these facts are important as we consider “system-change.” System-change occurs when organizations in the criminal justice and social services systems evaluate their policies from the perspective of an elder abuse victim and makes any necessary changes or additions.

Several organizations will undergo a system-change analysis over the next several months. These partners include the Elder Abuse CCR, Knoxville Police Department, Knox County Sheriff’s Office, Knox County Attorney General’s Office, Helen Ross McNabb Center, Family Justice Center, Adult Protective Services, and the Knox County Courts.

Victim safety is paramount. It is important that every organization that works within the criminal justice system or works with victims of elder abuse implement or review policies with this philosophy in mind. This mind set will help us continue to create changes that help former victims move on with their lives as survivors.

If your organization would like to learn more about undergoing an elder abuse system-change analysis, please contact Joseph Winberry, Elder Abuse Community Outreach Program Manager, at 865-524-2786 or joseph.winberry@knoxseniors.org. More information can also be found at www.ncall.us.

System Process Example



Housing Subcommittee

In August 2016, the elder abuse grant had a kickoff at the O’Connor Senior Center. 100 community partners participated and provided feedback on important issues for victims. The single largest issue that came out of that feedback was safe, affordable housing for elder abuse victims. As such, the CCR has put together a subcommittee to explore housing options for elder abuse victims in Knox County.

We are already ahead of many communities with resources such as the Helen Ross McNabb Family Crisis Center or Catholic Charities’ Samaritan Place, both of which offer essential services

to this community. However, the demand often outweighs the supply and victims unable to manage their activities of daily living face additional barriers in getting help. This subcommittee will explore several potential solutions for this gap such as partnership with health care facilities, senior foster care, and special population beds that exist in the community.

Professionals familiar with housing or state regulations for elder care facilities are encouraged to take part in this effort. This will be a long term project that is completed as part of the system-change process that grant partners are participating in.

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Law Enforcement Training

Knoxville set an ambitious goal of seeing all the officers of the Knoxville Police Department and Knox County Sheriff's Office trained under the grant's elder abuse curriculum. This eight hour curriculum is team-taught by professionals from law enforcement (KPD and KCSO), prosecution (Knox County District Attorney General's Office), Aging Network (Adult Protective Services), and a domestic abuse/sexual assault advocacy organization (Helen Ross McNabb Center). In addition to the team approach, the training is broken up with multiple videos, small group discussions, large group discussions, and case studies.

Many grant recipients agreed to train 300 or 400 officers. The Knoxville Partnership to End Abuse in Later Life pledged to train as many as 877. As of July 2017, Knoxville Police Department Officers had been trained. A total of 389 officers received this training. These officers represent patrol and investigations among other departments. The Knox County Sheriff's Office will receive the identical training in 2018.

Although the training material was written by a team in Washington, there were several opportunities to adapt it for local use. Local laws and resources were included. Also, a tool was created so that officers could reference applicable laws, statutory definitions, and community resources while in the field.

Officer feedback was helpful in guiding the preparation of future trainings. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Officers most enjoyed:

- The collaboration between the four trainers
- Learning about the resources for elder abuse victims
- Discussing the videos
- The thoroughness of the curriculum
- Updates on the laws related to elder abuse

Diverse National Websites

- [SAGE—Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders](#)
- [End Abuse of People with Disabilities](#)
- [CORC—Senior Refugees](#)
- [National Association for Hispanic Elderly](#)
- [Diverse Elders Coalition](#)

(Left to Right)

Joseph Winberry (Office on Aging),
Sgt. Darrell Griffin (KPD),
Karen Partridge (APS),
Lauren Stuart (HRMC), and
Willie Santana (Knox County DA)

pause before starting law enforcement training.



Are you interested in learning more about Knoxville's elder abuse grant or want to know how you can be involved?

Contact Joseph Winberry,
Elder Abuse Community Outreach Program Manager,
(865) 524-2786 or joseph.winberry@knoxseniors.org
www.knoxseniors.org/eacop.html

To report abuse, contact Adult Protective Services at:
1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366) or [online](#).

Remember, reporting abuse is mandatory under state law!

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