

Slide 1

Hello my name is _____. I am here today to present on elder abuse. This presentation was created by the Knoxville-Knox County Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response, which is a group of professionals who work to identify and fill gaps in services for elder abuse victims.

We will provide you a summary sheet that can be copied and shared with whoever you choose. Please note that the purpose of this presentation is to inform and that nothing in this presentation should be construed as legal advice. If you need legal advice, please seek appropriate legal counsel. This presentation was generously supported by the East Tennessee Foundation.

Slide 2

Who can identify this man? [Let audience guess.]

Yes, this is Mickey Rooney. Mr. Rooney was a famous actor whose career spanned 75 years. He is most remembered for his work with Judy Garland as well as successful children's films such as *Pete's Dragon* and *Night at the Museum*. But what most people don't know is that Mr. Rooney was a victim of elder abuse.

We have a video to illustrate Mr. Rooney's situation. This video is by *Hollywood Reporter*.

[Play video.]

Trainer's Note: There is a link to the video in the right hand corner. You may need to go into your settings, then "Display", and choose the "duplicate screen" option so that what is being projected onto the screen is the same thing that you can see on your laptop. For sound, you may need to bring or obtain speakers so that the videos can be heard throughout room.

If the video does not work, explain to the audience that it showed Mr. Rooney being interviewed alongside his wife and step son. Mrs. Rooney repeatedly interrupted him, causing Mr. Rooney to become agitated. He let out a scream, and the step son said that Mrs. Rooney had kicked Mr. Rooney under the table.

Slide 3

In 2011, Mr. Rooney testified before Congress that he was a victim of elder abuse.

Mr. Rooney faced physical abuse, emotional abuse, and financial exploitation from his wife and step son. Consider the Hollywood Reporter video or this picture on the right. Mr. Rooney stated this was from falling over a big screen TV but further investigation suggests physical abuse may have been involved. Mr. Rooney's step son agreed to pay nearly 3 million in a civil lawsuit after it became clear he had stolen 8 million from his step father. Mr. Rooney died in 2014 and his step son never repaid the estate. Mr. Rooney's case shows that anyone can be a victim of elder abuse.

Slide 4

Trainer Note: This is designed to give you a better sense of where this training fits into other elder abuse response work. Feel free to share as little or as much as this information with the audience as you choose.

You may be wondering how this training fits into other work being done to address elder abuse. A grant obtained by the Knoxville Police Department led to the establishment of the Elder Abuse Community Outreach Program at the CAC Office on Aging. This program has several components including training, a coordinated community response, and case management for elder abuse victims.

Training – This grant offers several training efforts.

Law Enforcement - Every sworn officer in the city and county are being trained under this grant. That means that as many as 877 officers will receive 8 hours of elder abuse training co-taught by representatives from their law enforcement agency, the Knox County District Attorney’s Office, Adult Protective Services, and the Helen Ross McNabb Center.

Law Enforcement investigators will receive an additional 8 hours of training on financial exploitation and elder neglect deaths team taught by two nationally recognized trainers.

2 prosecutors and 3 judges were sent to multi-day training seminars on how to prosecute or oversee elder abuse cases.

75 social workers and other victim service providers were trained in an 8-hour curriculum team taught by Helen Ross McNabb Center, Adult Protective Services, and the Office on Aging.

Coordinated Community Response – a Monthly meeting of partners who look at making “big picture” changes which would help all elder abuse victims more easily move past their abuse. Some of these partners include law enforcement, assisted living staff, and representatives of diverse communities such as the Latino community or people with disabilities. Some of their goals included raising public awareness by creating this training, seeking emergency housing options for elder abuse victims, and having each of the grant MOU partners review their policies for any potential changes they could make to better support elder abuse victims, such as creating a certain day and time that elder abuse cases will be heard in the courts.

Case Management – The grant also offers case management services to elder abuse victims in Knox County. Clients must be 50 years or older, must be a victim of elder abuse, and must live in Knox County.

For more information on this program, please see Joseph Winberry’s contact information which will be on the backside of the handout we provide you.

Slide 5

The purpose of this training is to help you identify, report, and respond to elder abuse.

Slide 6

Keep these points in mind throughout this training:

Take Allegations of Elder Abuse Seriously – if an elder tells you that they are being stalked or were sexually assaulted, do not ignore them or assume they are confused.

Reporting Elder Abuse is mandatory under state law – we will discuss this more in a few minutes.

Competent people have the right to make unwise decisions – it can be frustrating, but all we can do is connect them with resources.

Consider your own assumptions on aging – do you think that an older adult can't be a victim of stalking or sexual assault? If this was a presentation on child abuse would you react any differently?

Slide 7

Adult Protective Services assists impaired adults over the age of 18 such as those with developmental disabilities including older adults. This training will focus specifically on older adults.

According to state law, "older adult" is anyone age 60 or over.

Some elder abuse grant programs consider anyone age 50 and older to be an older adult because services are not available for people in the middle like they are for parents with children or people who are retirement age.

Slide 8

Here are some statistics on who are older adults in Knox County. It is important to remember that Knox County is diverse and that some people will have additional barriers to getting help when in an elder abuse situation. Immigration status, sexual orientation, and disabilities are all examples of things that could be used by abusers to trap older victims.

Slide 9

This section is on identifying elder abuse.

Slide 10

Ask the group: what are the types of elder abuse?

[Let audience guess.]

Slide 11

[Mention any types of abuse the group missed.]

Slide 12

Key Point Reminder: Take an elder's allegation of abuse seriously! Physical abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, these do occur. Older adults are nearly as likely as younger people to be stalked. Sexual abuse against older adults has been reported in our community. Don't just assume they are confused or trying to get attention. Try to discuss the situation more with them and report abuse if you suspect it is occurring.

[Read 1-2 types of abuse and possible signs they are occurring.]

Slide 13

[Read 1-2 types of abuse and possible signs they are occurring.]

Key Point Reminder: Competent people have the right to make unwise decisions. Self-neglect is not a crime, but it should be reported. Sometimes providing people with referrals may lead them to change their ways. Also, take a close look at self-neglect cases. What appears to be self-neglect at first glance could be a byproduct of one or several types of abuse.

Slide 14

Now that we have mentioned the types of abuse, let's talk through a scenario. [Read the scenario, let people guess].

Slide 15

[Mention any types of abuse the group missed.]

You have probably realized by now that if one type of abuse is occurring it is very likely other types of abuse are occurring as well.

The handout we will provide has more information on identifying abuse. Please review that closely.

Slide 16

Are there any questions on identifying elder abuse?

Slide 17

This next section is on reporting elder abuse.

Slide 18

We have a video on Adult Protective Services or APS. This video is by Nashville Public Television.

[Play video.]

Trainer's Note: There is a link to the video in the right hand corner.

If the video does not work, explain to the audience that it describes some more on abuse and introduces Adult Protective Services or APS. APS is the state agency empowered to investigate allegations of elder abuse.

Slide 19

Key Point Reminder: Reporting suspected elder abuse to Adult Protective Services is mandatory under state law. What does this mean? It means that ANY person who suspects or observes elder abuse is required by state law to report the abuse to Adult Protective Services. If you have reported a situation that you really believe is elder abuse, this is considered reporting in "good will" and you would not be to blame if the situation does not turn out to involve abuse. Also, you are able to report abuse anonymously so there is no reason not to fulfill your moral and legal obligation to report elder abuse.

APS is forbidden by law to tell who the reporter is. The only exception is an order from a judge.

Slide 20

I cannot stress enough how important it is to report to Adult Protective Services. Without getting too detailed, every non-self neglect case reported to APS is reviewed by APS, law enforcement, and local prosecutors. If you leave your contact information, APS will let you know if the case can be investigated or not. Even if a particular case cannot be investigated, do not let that keep you from reporting abuse in the future.

In addition to APS, you can report to these other organizations. Social service agencies are good for connecting victims with resources, but reporting the abuse to them does not absolve you from reporting to APS.

Slide 21

Are there any questions on reporting elder abuse?

Slide 22

This section is on responding to elder abuse.

Slide 23

These are some tools that could be used to help an elder abuse victim. As a reminder, this is meant just to inform. This information can change and there can be specific details on a case-by-case basis. Please seek appropriate legal counsel when necessary.

Slide 24

The important thing to remember about Powers of Attorney is that there are several types. They do not necessarily take away a person's ability to make decisions for themselves. It could just allow another person who can make those decisions as well. Some abusers think that the Power of Attorney gives them the right to do anything they wish and this is not true.

Slide 25

A guardianship and conservatorship are basically the same thing but guardianships involves government taking over the authority of another while a conservatorship involves someone going to court to obtain the ability to make decisions for a specific person. It is stronger than the Power of Attorney and the person under care can no longer make legal decisions for themselves (i.e. to marry, enter contracts, etc. requires the conservator's written permission).

Slide 26

Sometimes people are not able to properly spend their money. A Payee is someone who is approved through the Social Security Administration to manage the Social Security or disability benefits on behalf of an individual. The payee has to go through a Social Security Administration approval process and provide routine documentation of how money is being spent.

Slide 27

The bottom line on orders of protection is that they are for domestic violence victims. Domestic violence is defined very broadly under state law so many people can take advantage of this document which provides legal consequences for abusers who disobey the orders.

Slide 28

If you own the property, you can obtain a detainer warrant. If you rent, get with your landlord to see if a detainer warrant is an option for you. If the landlord won't assist, or if the abuser continues to harass you after being evicted, consider an order of protection.

Slide 29

The Long Term Care Ombudsman investigates abuse in nursing homes, assisted livings, and resident homes for the aged. The ombudsman has a federal exemption from reporting to APS. If you report to the Ombudsman, be sure to report to APS as well.

Slide 30

Now that we have mentioned remedies for elder abuse, let's talk through a scenario. [Read the scenario.] Which of the legal tools that we just discussed would be helpful for Mr. Joe?

Slide 31

[Read these if audience missed them.]

Key Point Reminder: Consider your own assumptions on aging. Many of us think that the majority of older adults are senile and living in nursing homes. This is not true. The vast majority of seniors live in their own homes. The vast majority of elder abuse occurs in the senior's private residence, not in a long term facility. Older Adults are a diverse group with diverse needs so keep that in mind as you think about remedies and resources for their situation.

Slides 32-38

Resources.

[Walk through these quickly. Say the name of the organizations and linger on each slide for a few seconds. You can talk about a few of the resources in greater detail as desired.]

Slide 39

Let's think back to Mr. Joe who owned his house, used a wheel chair, and got rid of his abusive caregiver. Which of these community resources might be useful for him?

[Large group discussion.]

Slide 40

[Read these if audience missed them.]

Slide 41

Abusers often use caregiver stress as an excuse for abuse. However, we know that this not a valid excuse. There are resources for stressed caregivers. In addition to these, think about the Daily Living Center, which is the adult day care service offered by the Office on Aging or caregiver stress resources through the Area Agency on Aging and Disability. Caregiver stress is real and must be dealt with. However, it is not an excuse for committing elder abuse.

Slide 42

We have talked about how to identify abuse, how to report it, and what can be done about it. But maybe you are wondering why you should care?

Slide 43

This graph really speaks for itself. Advances in technology, health care, and other areas have helped make people 85 and older the fastest growing group for the first time in our history. People are living longer, healthier lives. This is a great thing, but it also presents more opportunities for elder abuse to occur.

Slide 44

But most people don't think elder abuse is that widespread. Let's consider local statistics. In 2016, Knox County Adult Protective Services investigated allegations of every kind of abuse we mentioned today—everything from financial abuse, to physical abuse, and yes, sexual abuse. The numbers here show us just how widespread this issue is.

If you do the math, this number is more than 20,000. If 20,000 people came down with a terrible virus, we would all know about it and recognize it for what it is: a public health crisis. We all need to be alert and be able to identify, report, and respond to elder abuse. If this issue is not affecting you or a loved one now, it very possibly will in the decades to come.

Slide 45

As you leave please note the key points and remember what Mr. Rooney's story shows us: anyone can be a victim of elder abuse. Thank you for your attention to this important topic. Let's close with some words from Mr. Rooney's testimony to Congress.

Trainer's Note: There is a link to the video in the right hand corner.

If the video does not work, explain to the audience that it showed Mr. Rooney describing his situation in greater detail while testifying before a congressional committee. All of the videos from today's presentation are available on YouTube.

Slides 46-47

[Resources and references.]

Trainer's Note: For more information on anything in this presentation or just to learn more about elder abuse response work being done in Knoxville, contact Joseph Winberry, Elder Abuse Community Outreach Program Manager, at the Knoxville-Knox County CAC Office on Aging at 865-524-2786 or joseph.winberry@knoxseniors.org.