TOOLKIT for individuals

No Excuse for Elder Abuse is a multi-media awareness campaign in Michigan to tell older adults and the general public about the growing problem of elder abuse and financial exploitation. It is believed that 1 in 10 older adults suffer elder abuse, but most don’t report it. Elder abuse is not just a "family matter"; it is a crime. If you know someone who you think may be being abused or taken advantage of, or if it’s happening to you, help is available. Call Michigan’s statewide Protective Services number (855) 444-3911. There are many forms of elder abuse, including a loved one taking money without permission or in an underhanded way, a caregiver withholding food or medications, hitting or physical violence, and even self-neglect.

The No Excuse for Elder Abuse campaign is made possible through the collaboration of Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Neighborhood Legal Services/Elder Law and Advocacy Center, Lakeshore Legal Aid, Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County, and Oakland Family Services, and is supported with funding from the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. Neighborhood Legal Services/Elder Law and Advocacy Center grants permission to reproduce Toolkit materials for educational purposes only.
WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

Elder abuse is any form of mistreatment that results in harm or loss to an older person. It is generally divided into the following categories:

- **Physical abuse** is physical force that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. It includes assault, battery, and inappropriate restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** is non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.
- **Domestic violence** is an escalating pattern of violence by an intimate partner where the violence is used to exercise power and control.
- **Psychological abuse** is the willful infliction of mental or emotional anguish by threat, humiliation, or other verbal or nonverbal conduct.
- **Financial abuse** is the illegal or improper use of an older person’s funds, property, or resources.
- **Neglect** is the failure of a caregiver to fulfill his or her care giving responsibilities.
- **Self-neglect** is failure to provide for one’s own essential needs.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

**Physical Abuse**

- Inadequately explained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores or burns
- Complaints of being physically assaulted
- Excessive repeat prescriptions or under-usage of medication
- Malnourishment or dehydration without an illness-related cause
- Evidence of inadequate care or poor standards of hygiene
- Person seeks medical attention from a variety of doctors or medical centers

**Sexual Abuse**

- Complaints of being sexually assaulted
- Sexual behavior that is out of keeping with the older person’s usual relationships and previous personality
- Frequent complaints of abdominal pain, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Recurrent genital infections, or bruises around the breasts or genital areas
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes

NOEXCUSE FOR Elder Abuse

1-855-444-3911
Psychological and Emotional Abuse

- Change in eating pattern or sleep problems
- Fear, confusion or air of resignation
- Passivity, withdrawal or increasing depression
- Helplessness, hopelessness or anxiety
- Contradictory statements or other ambivalence not resulting from mental confusion
- Reluctance to talk openly
- Avoidance of physical, eye or verbal contact with caregiver

Financial Exploitation

- Withdrawals of money that are erratic, or not typical of the older person
- Withdrawals of money that are inconsistent with the older person’s means
- Changing a will or property title to leave house or assets to “new” friends or relatives
- Property is missing
- Older person “can’t find” jewelry or personal belongings
- Suspicious activity on credit card accounts
- Lack of amenities, when the older person could afford them
- Untreated medical or mental health problems
- Level of care is not commensurate with the older person’s income or assets

THE FACTS ON ELDER ABUSE

Elder Abuse Prevalence

- Nearly 6 million cases of elder abuse were reported nationwide in 2012
- Adults 60 and older comprise 15% of the population and account for nearly 30% of fraud victims
- 66% of perpetrators are family members
- 77.9 is the median age of an elder abuse victim

Perpetrators of Financial Exploitation

- 47% of perpetrators are one of the victim’s own children
- 24% are other relatives
- 19% are the spouse
- 5% are a friend or neighbor

Types of Abuse

- 33% of victims suffer from caregiver neglect
- 24% from financial exploitation
- 17% from physical abuse
- 2% from sexual abuse
Activities that You Can Do

- Watch out for older neighbors, friends, and family members who may be vulnerable.
- Learn the signs of elder abuse and neglect
- Call or visit an older loved one and ask how he or she is doing
- Provide a respite break for a caregiver
- Ask your bank manager to train staff on how to spot elder financial abuse
- Ask your doctor to ask older adult patients about possible family or caregiver mistreatment
- "Tell Two Friends" about elder abuse, and ask them to tell two friends, and so on...
- Take the message to local social clubs, senior centers, civic and fraternal organizations, and houses of worship.
- Place the logo in your e-mails - below your signature line.
- Ask local businesses to display the logo in support of elder abuse prevention.
- Memorize the Michigan Protective Services hotline (855) 444-3911. Put it in your cell phone directory.
- Write and submit letters to the editors of local print and online newspapers.
- There are several new elder abuse laws in Michigan. Learn about them. The local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) can assist. Call (517) 886-1029 to find your local AAA.
- Send a letter or email or make a phone call to state legislators thanking them for their support to strengthen vulnerable adult laws - and ask them to support the bills that haven't passed yet. Again, your local AAA can assist.
- Encourage domestic violence organizations to integrate older adults into their services.
- Join the campaign on Facebook and Twitter:

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  #NoExcuse4ElderAbuse
Links to Useful Information

- Facebook  www.facebook.com/noexcuseforelderabuse
- Michigan Governor Rick Snyder declares June 10-15 Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Week  http://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577_59874-305234--,00.html
- Year of Elder Abuse Prevention Toolkit  http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/YEAP/index.aspx
- National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)  http://ncea.aoa.gov/
- Actor Mickey Rooney testifies before Congress on suffering elder abuse  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ST_7kf7UCqw
- Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan  http://www.mi-seniors.net/
- Abuse of LGBT older adults  http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/index.cfm?s=5
- US Mail Fraud Schemes  https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/investigations/MailFraud/fraudschemes/FraudSchemes.aspx
- Aging Alliance - grassroots coalition connecting people of all ages who stand United Against Elder Abuse  http://www.agelessalliance.org/