

Myths and Realities of Asking for Help in 2023

A Presentation in honor of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

With Panelists:

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Roberta Goodman, *Pace Women's Justice Center*

Patricia Grasse, *Adult Protective Services*

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SENIOR LAW DAY
COLLABORATIVE

Today's Agenda

1. **Introductions**
2. **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**
3. **Case Study - A common financial scenario**
4. **Myths and realities of asking for help**
5. **Open Q&A**

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)

Launched 6/15/2006 by International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse & World Health Organization.

Goal: Awareness and understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.

More information: eldermistreatment.usc.edu/weaad-home



Case Study: Martha and Roger

Themes:

- Living with an adult child
- Power of Attorney
- Hidden spending
- Home equity loans

Case Study: Martha and Roger

Martha's Background:

- Martha is a Westchester Resident in her 70s
- Retired 5 years ago
- Owns her home (no mortgage)
- Receives her monthly pension and Social Security
- Financially supports herself and her adult son, Roger

Case Study: Martha and Roger

Developments

- Martha's vision is declining
- She needs Roger to help with finances and bills
- Roger finds an attorney to help him become Martha's Power of Attorney

Pause: risk factors and warning signs?



Case Study: Martha and Roger

Changes in spending:

- Roger starts making withdrawals and purchases for his own benefit
- Roger takes out a home equity loan
- Martha receives a call from her bank

Pause: growing concerns and early action?



Case Study: Martha and Roger

Growing tension:

- Martha questions Roger and he starts to get hostile
- Roger is isolating Martha from family and friends
- Martha's niece calls and starts to get concerned
- The niece reaches out to Adult Protective Services

Conclusion & Next Steps



Myths and Realities of Asking for Help

Myths:

- Contacting APS means relocation/institutionalization/loss of independence
- Police involvement will lead to arrest and jail time
- Order of protection means I'll never see my loved one again
- Emotional/psychological abuse isn't a crime

Realities:

- These agencies are here to help, not to automatically proceed to a “gloom and doom” scenario.
- Often, life can go on as before – with some additional protections in place.

Important Helplines

For emergencies and dangerous situations, call 911

Westchester Elder Abuse Hotline (Mo - Fr, 9-5): (914) 995-1940

Westchester Adult Protective Services Intake: (914) 995-2259

NYS Bureau of Adult Services: (844) 697-3505

National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-7233



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Senior Law Day Collaborative Online Safety Toolkit:

<https://www.seniorlawday.info/toolkit/>

