

Advocacy Perspectives of Adult Protective Services and the Vulnerable Adult Act

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Mission

- Mobilizing communities to prevent and alleviate abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of older and vulnerable adults.
 - Public Awareness
 - Professional Education
 - Public Policy
 - Direct Service and Advocacy

Issue 1: Complexity of Cases

- Elder and vulnerable adult abuse present complex social and legal problems that are not easily solved by our justice systems or social service systems alone.

Types of Abuse

- Domestic Violence Late in Life
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Financial Exploitation
- Neglect
- Self Neglect

Prevalence of Elder Abuse

- 1,000,000 – 2,000,000 adults in later life in U.S. are victims of abuse.¹
- 1 in 10 persons over the age 60 are victims of elder abuse.²

¹National Center of Elder Abuse: 2005 Elder Abuse Prevalence and Incidence

²National Institute of Justice: Elder Abuse as a Criminal Problem

Prevalence of Elder Abuse

- Victims of elder financial abuse in U.S. lose close to \$3 Billion each year.¹
- For every 1 case that is reported to authorities, 23 cases go unreported.²

¹ Blancato, Robert: Violence Against Older Women and The Elder Justice Act; 3/04/12.

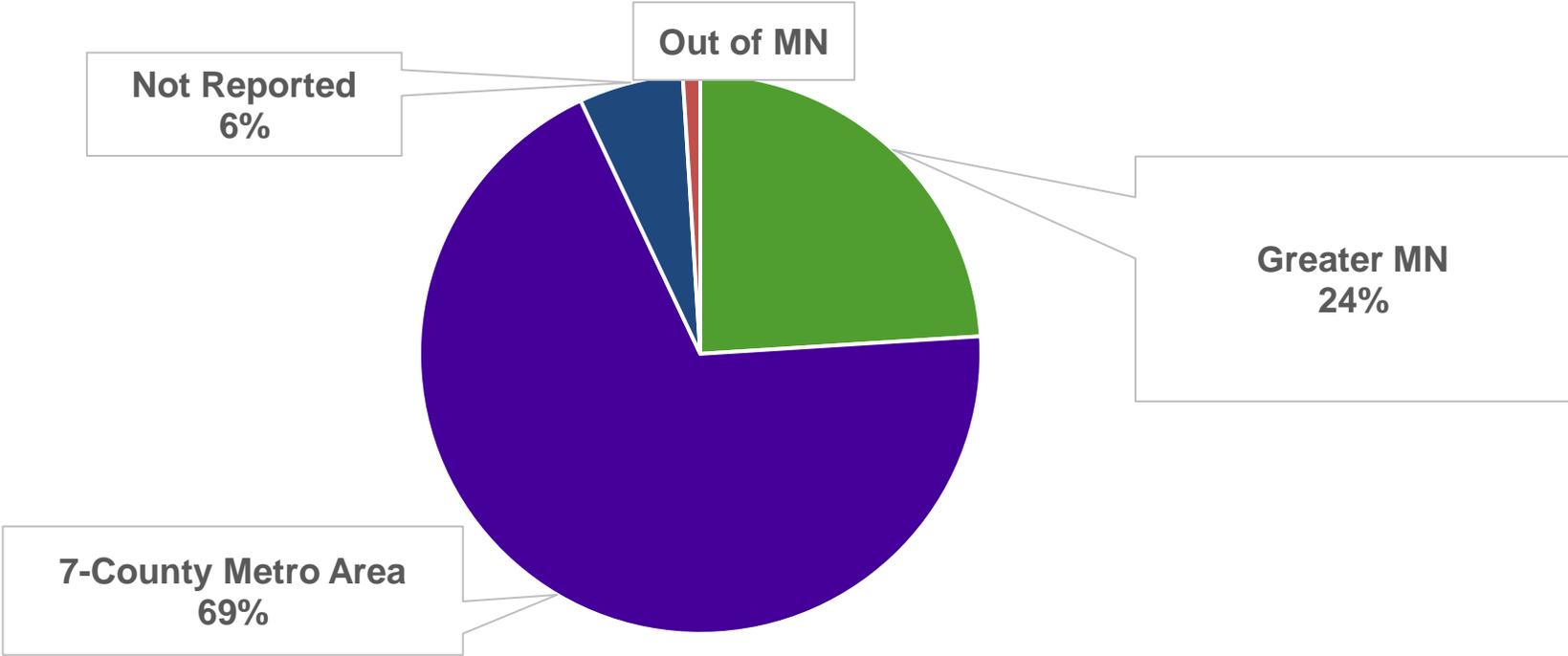
² NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study; Weill Cornell Medical College, NYC Department for the Aging; Lifespan; (2011).

Poly-victimization

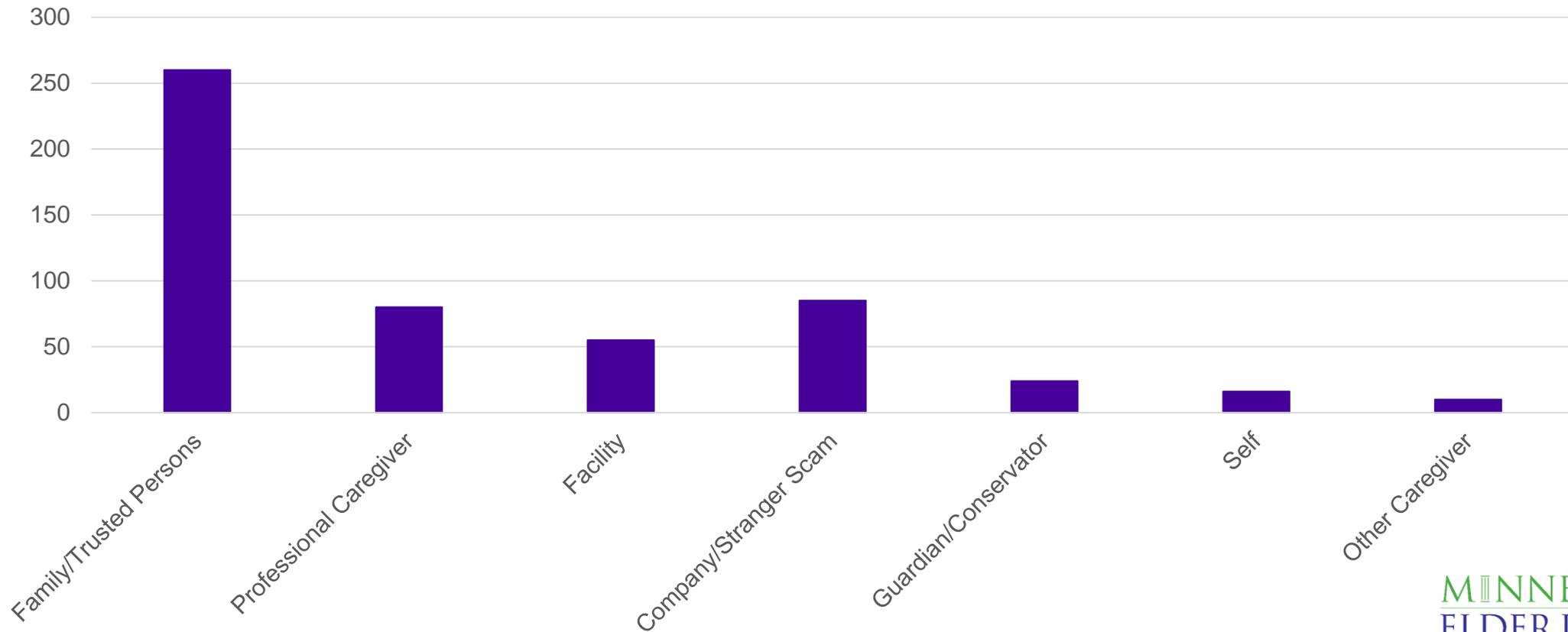
- “Poly-victimization” refers to different forms of abuse occurring at the same time.
- Between 10% and 40% of older adults experience polyvictimization.¹

¹ Dong, X., Simon, M. A., & Gorbien, M. Elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation: Risk factors and prevention strategies. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 33, 5-25. (2007).

Locations of Participants



MEJC - Alleged Perpetrators of Abuse



Potential Human Services Policy Interventions

- Investments that will help APS with interventions
 - Housing supports
 - Cash assistance
 - Caregiver education and support
 - Home and community based services - especially elderly waiver and the alternative care program
- Investments in practices that promote the balance of autonomy and safety, such as supported decision making

Issue 2: Funding APS While Investing in Other Services

- Current funding sources and levels for APS can lead to disparate outcomes and services
- Need more funding to APS while recognizing it is not the only response to maltreatment
- Invest in and support other services and programs

Disparate and Limited Results

- Even the most well-funded APS system will not address every case:
 - Victim may not be found to be “vulnerable”
 - APS investigation may end with a finding of “inconclusive”
 - The individual for whom APS is trying to provide services needs much more sustained service than APS is designed to provide

Responses to Elder Abuse

- The Elder Justice Roadmap¹ tells us that as a best practice to address elder abuse, you must include:
 - Direct Service
 - Policy
 - Research
 - Education

¹ Connolly, Marie-Therese JD, Bonnie Brandl, MSW, and Risa Breckman, LCSW; [*The Elder Justice Roadmap: A Stakeholder Initiative to Respond to An Emerging Health, Justice, Financial and Social Crisis.*](#) (2014).

Response in Time of COVID-19

- 19% increase in calls for help in 2020
- Increased isolation and concerns related to cause/effect of maltreatment
- Increased barriers for help for already vulnerable population
- Housing issues – perpetrators living in homes, and maltreatment or isolation concerns in long term care facilities

Potential Human Services Policy Interventions

- Investments in research to understand best practices regarding prevention and intervention
- Investments in programs that help reduce social isolation and other risk factors of maltreatment
- Investments in programs to help those advocates who help older adults and address the needs of perpetrators

Contact Us

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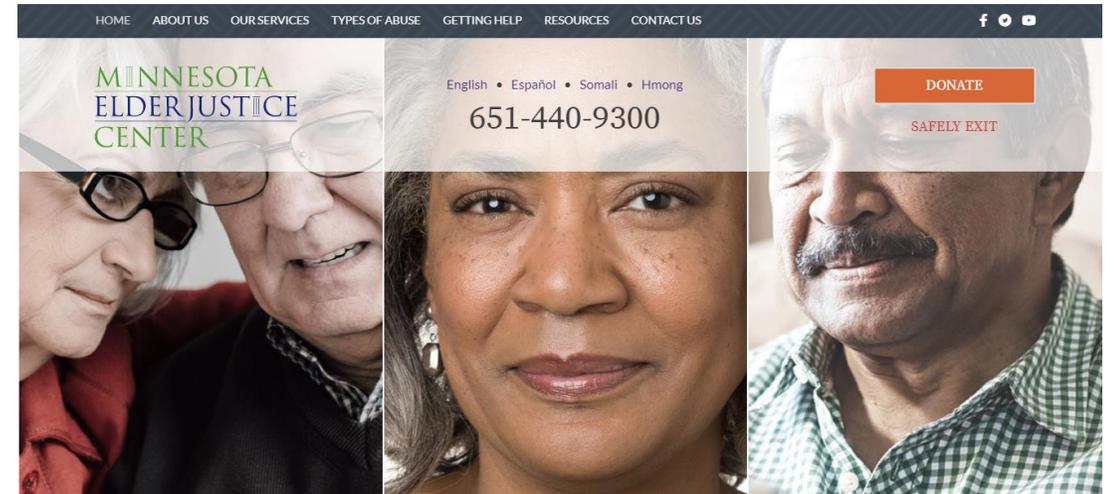
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