Responding to Elder Abuse Victims with Alzheimer’s Disease or Other Dementias

JULY 19, 2018

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Elder Justice Initiative

OVC TTAC
Office for Victims of Crime
Training and Technical Assistance Center
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ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE

The **mission** is to support and coordinate the Department of Justice’s enforcement and programmatic efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud and scams that target older adults.

The Initiative does so by—

- Promoting justice for older adults.
- Helping older victims and their families.
- Enhancing state and local efforts through training and resources.
- Supporting research to improve elder abuse policy and practice.
The mission of the Elder Justice Initiative is to support and coordinate the Department’s enforcement and programmatic efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud and scams that target our Nation’s seniors.

You’re fighting elder abuse on the front lines. We’ve got your back.

**Outreach Materials**
Get involved, get safe community presentations, pamphlets, and materials on all types of elder abuse.

**Prosecutor Video Series**
Training videos geared toward successful prosecution of elder abuse cases.

**Elder Abuse Research**
References to articles, books, and government reports on all types of elder abuse and financial exploitation topics.

**MDT Guide & Toolkit**
Start or grow a local elder abuse case review multidisciplinary team with this research- and resource-rich toolkit.

**Financial Exploitation & Reporting**
Learn about financial scams and find the right reporting agency.

**Webinars**
Webinars targeted to elder abuse professionals and those interested in elder abuse topics.

**Elder Abuse Statutes**
State statutes relevant to elder abuse cases.
PRESENTERS

Lt. Hank Levenson (Ret.)

Sgt. Tim Sutton
OBJECTIVES COVERED TODAY

1. Proper response to these calls
2. Dealing with and understanding Alzheimer's patients
3. Working with and understanding the caregiver
4. Protecting everyone while on these calls
5. Effective methods for search and rescue
6. Additional resources available
Module 1
Understanding Alzheimer's
PREVALENCE

24.3 Million Worldwide

5.4 million in the US
The Year 2050
Life Expectancy Will Reach 90+

Over 70 million people will be over the age of 65; 10% will have Alzheimer’s disease.

Close to 20 million will be over the age of 85; 50% will have Alzheimer’s disease.
WHY THE DRAMATIC INCREASE?

- Baby Boomers are getting older
- Veterans with PTSD
- Advanced medical testing
- Better education
- Being diagnosed in younger people

Proportion of People With Alzheimer’s Disease in the U.S. by Age Range

- 4% <65
- 15% 65–74
- 44% 75–84
- 38% 85+

Source: Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures, 2014 (Alzheimer’s Association) p.18. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.
Who is Affected by Alzheimer's?

- Son / Daughter
- Grandma / Grandpa
- Friend
- Brother / Sister
- Mom / Dad
ALZHEIMER’S AWARENESS

- How does it impact Law Enforcement
  - Missing/Lost patients
  - Found patients
  - Traffic stops/Driving Issues
  - Wanderers
  - Other calls for service
  - Risk assessment
What is DEMENTIA?

A loss of intellectual functioning such as thinking, remembering, and / or reasoning...
Dementia

- Alzheimer’s
- Strokes
- Cancer
- Alcohol

- Brain Injury
- Parkinson’s
- Numerous Others
THE LIFE AND LOSS OF LENNY
ALZHEIMER’S RESPONSE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT INSTRUCTORS: HANK LEVENSON & TIM SUTTON
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LEO

DIVORCE

Retire

Breath

Swallow

Social Skills

Rolling Walking Potty Training

Driving Multi-Tasking

Married Jane

2nd Marriage Betty

Joe Lori

Frank Lisa

Boy Girl

Boy Girl
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Breath

Swallow
A Progressive Brain Disorder

What Happens to a Person’s Brain When They Have Alzheimer’s?
Alzheimer's Disease Video

What is Alzheimer’s Disease?
STIGMA OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

- Denial
- It’s not Alzheimer's, it’s Dementia
- It's just a little memory loss, it happens to us all
- It’s progressive memory loss
- It’s a cognitive deterioration of the brain
Clock Test
**The Three Stages of Alzheimer's**

- **Early Stage**
  - Neurons lose their ability to function and communicate with each other, and eventually they die.

- **Middle Stage**
  - Basically Alzheimer’s Disease have 3 stages which are the Very early Alzheimer’s, Mild to Moderate Alzheimer’s and Severe Alzheimer’s.

- **Late Stage**
  - As Alzheimer’s disease progresses, neurofibrillary tangles spread throughout the brain (shown in blue). Plaques also spread throughout the brain, starting in the neocortex. By the final stage, damage is widespread, and brain tissue has shrunk significantly.
### Symptoms of Early Stage

- Forgetfulness
- Speech issues
- Poor judgment
- Losing things
- Taking longer to complete daily activities
**Early Stage - Possible LE Observations**

- Speech problems
- Driving problems
- Difficulty locating documents you request (i.e. license, proof of insurance)
- Shoplifting
Symptoms of Middle Stage

- Increased memory loss and confusion
- Problems recognizing people
- Inability to learn new things
- Poor motor skills
- Unbalanced walking
Middle Stage - Possible LE Observations

• Speech problems
• True disorientation
• Issues with basic needs
• Driving impairment
• Wandering
• Being uncooperative
LATE STAGE SYMPTOMS

- Inability to recognize oneself or family
- Inability to communicate
- Weight loss
- Skin infections
- Difficulty swallowing
- Groaning, moaning, or grunting
- Increased sleeping
- Lack of control of bowel and bladder
LATE STAGE - LE OBSERVATIONS

• Signs of elder abuse and neglect
• Calls for assistance
• Wandering
• Suicide
• Homicide
What Goes Thru The Mind Of Someone With Alzheimer’s
(This Could Be You…)
MEDICATIONS

- Donepezil HCl
- Memantine HCl
- Galantamine HBr
- Tacrine Hydrochloride
**Wandering Off**

- Approximately 60% of patients will wander off at some point.
- Approximately 70% of those will wander repeatedly.
- May not remember name, address and may become disoriented even in familiar places.
- Term “wandering” is misleading, most become disoriented doing routine activities.
Often Have An Intended Mission (Real Or Imagined)

- Searching For Something
- Escaping From Something
- Reliving The Past
- May Not Recognize Signals To Stop (Pain, Thirst, Hunger, Dehydration)
Wandering Off Cont.

- Unlikely to shout for help (don’t know they are missing)
- Seldom take a logical path
- May walk straight until they hit a barrier
- Will often hide or seclude themselves
- Don’t know the dangers of water
WANDERING OFF CONT.

- Most will wander on foot
- Normally during the daytime
- Have an intended mission
- Sundowning

50% Will Become Seriously Injured Or Die Within The First 24 Hours If Not Found
According to a Virginia study: *(on foot)*

- 94% of all cases are within 1.5 mile of the “point last seen”
  - Nearly 70% are found within residence
- If not in residence, usually found a short distance from a road
- If not found on a road, 63% were found in a creek, drainage ditch, and/or caught in briars or bushes
- 80% of those found after 72 hours died of hypothermia, drowning, or dehydration
Driving Issues We May Face

Calls for Emergency Services

- **Driving**

  It is VERY difficult to convince a person to stop driving

**Common Dangers include:**
- Difficulty Staying Alert
- Missing traffic signals or road signs
- Becoming Disoriented/Distracted
- Running out of Gas
DEALING WITH THE “INSISTENT UNSAFE DRIVER”

- Discuss with caregivers
- Review common dangers
- Suggest DMV medical review form
- Recommend getting a ‘no driving prescription’
- No driving contract
- Suggest disabling or selling the vehicle
INTERVIEWING CAREGIVERS

Ask Family Members

- Have They Gone Missing Before/Wandered Off
- Time
- Where May They Go
- Time Period May They Be In
- Check The House Yourself
- Treat Like A Crime Scene If Needed
- Get A Picture Of Patient
WHAT LE MAY ENCOUNTER

- Domestic Violence
- Suicide and Homicide
- Calls about abuse
- Shoplifters
- Neglect
- Emergencies
- Wandering or Lost
- Theft or Home Invasion

If you are a bad Dementia cop, you are probably upset all the time by the behavior of your Alzheimer's patient.

If you are a good Dementia cop, you probably learned that your Alzheimer's patient is not guilty of a crime.
**EXPLOITATION**

- Easy Targets (can’t remember)
- Phone Scams
- “Friends”
- Nursing Home/Assisted Living
- CNA’s/Nurses
- Check Pawn Lists
- Unfortunately Public Safety

http://topmedicalassistantprograms.org/elder-abuse-prevention-guide/
EXPLOITATION

- Medications
- Jewelry
- Money
- Abuse and Neglect
  (Are you mandatory reporters for APS?)
- Having them sign documents
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

- What should we do when dealing with an Alzheimer's Patient
- What NEVER to do when dealing with an Alzheimer's Patient
- Risk Management
- Consider what they may be feeling and/or thinking
- They are not criminals; they are someone's loved ones
INTERACTION WITH ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS

- People with dementia are easily startled, approach from the front
- Always maintain eye contact
- Keep your voice soft, and pleasant
- Smile!
- Speak slowly and calmly
- Be prepared to identify yourself
- Short, simple sentences

- One question at a time. Don’t overwhelm them
- Try to eliminate background noise, if possible
- If you’re asking a question, wait patiently for the answer
- If he or she can’t find the word...help them out by finishing the thought
- Be prepared to repeat. Repeat. And repeat.
What Not To Do When With An Alzheimer's Patient

- Don’t argue. Ever.
- If you’re getting angry or frustrated…STOP! Try again later.
- Don’t be sarcastic. And don’t – ever – talk down to them.
- Don’t correct them. As far as you’re concerned…they’re right.
- Never demand. Request.
- Speak slowly. Hurrying will only increase their frustration…and yours.
- Always remember: It’s not personal.
Officer Safety Comes First

- Never Let Your Guard Down
- Always Be Prepared
- Always Adhere to Officer Safety Standards
- Use Caution

But remember who you may be dealing with!
USING YOUR UNIT FOR SAFETY - LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

- Caged units
- Confinement
- Radios blaring
- Weapons
- Flashing lights
- To cuff or not to cuff
- Other concerns
Community Collaboration

- Caregiver Support
- Service Organizations
- Council on Aging
- Hospitals
- Social Services
- Resources for Alzheimer's Patient and Care Givers
- Family Advocacy
- State and Local Agencies
- Critical Care Clinics
- Department of Motor Vehicles

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Policies

- Every Agency Should have a Specific Policy on Responding to Alzheimer's Patients
  - Response
  - Search and Rescue
  - Care Givers
OTHER STEPS & RESOURCES TO CONSIDER

- Roll Call Trainings
- Crime Prevention Units
- Educate Citizens
- Invite Alzheimer's Association to meetings
- Encourage Family Members to keep in touch
- Mutual Aid for Investigations and Searches
- Others?
- Take Me Home Program
Thank you!

Please Recommend and Review Us

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Questions

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