


**The Adult Advocacy Centers  
Presents  
Trauma-Informed Victim Services  
for Older Adults**

Ohio Attorney General's Elder Abuse Commission  
2023 Ohio Elder Abuse Awareness Day  
Conference  
June 28, 2023




---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**The Adult Advocacy Centers (AACs)**

- **Presenter**
  - Katherine Yoder, CFI, MS
    - Executive Director
    - Background
  - Adonna Wilson-Baney CFI, MPA
    - Outreach and Training Specialist
    - Background




---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**The AACs**

- **Mission statement**
  - The Adult Advocacy Centers (AACs) work within the disability, victim services, and criminal justice systems to improve access and equity for adult crime victims with disabilities and older adults.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Presentation overview
  - Issues facing older adults
  - Trauma
  - How the Adult Advocacy Centers can help




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Issues
  - Number of older adults in the U.S.
  - Crime victimization rates for older adults
  - Underreporting of crimes committed against older adults
  - The affect of abuse on older adults
  - Poverty experience by older adults
  - Older adults and disabilities




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Number of older adults in the U.S.
  - According to the Administration on Community Living & Administration of Aging in 2018, there were approximately 52.4 million adults in the U.S. aged 65 or older, or 15% of all Americans.
  - Projections by the U.S. Census Bureau suggest that the percentage of older Americans is expected to increase to 21% by 2030 and 25% by 2060 (NCOA, 2022).




---

---

---

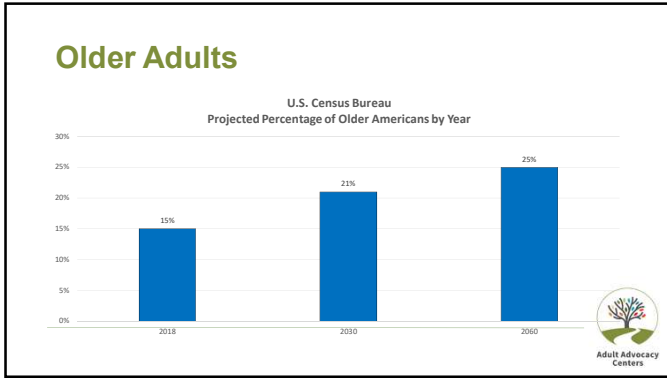
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Despite the growing population of older adults, research and statistics reveal that the current systems in place to protect older adults from victimization are inadequate to meet that responsibility.



---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Victimization of older adults living in the community
  - The majority of older adults live in the community.
  - Almost 50% of older adults living with dementia are abused or neglected by their care provider (NCVRW, 2017).
  - Neglect, financial exploitation, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and physical abuse.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Victimization of older adults residing in nursing homes
  - In a study conducted in 2000 involving interviews with 2,000 nursing home residents,
    - 44% said that they had experienced abuse
    - 95% said that they had either experienced or witnessed neglect (Broyles, 2000).
  - A nursing home study found that more than 50% of staff admitted to engaging in physical violence, mental abuse, or neglect of older patients (NCVRW, 2017).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Crimes perpetrated against older adults is highly underestimated
  - Crimes committed against older adults are the least reported.
  - The National Center for Elder Abuse estimates that less than 5% of individuals over the age of 65 report their victimization to the police (NCVRW, 2017).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Underreporting
  - Unable to report due to physical or mental ability
  - Dependence on the abuser for care
  - Fear of retaliation
  - Fear of being institutionalized (RAINN, 2023)




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Crimes perpetrated against older adults are more likely to result in serious harm
  - Older adults that have been abused have a 300% higher risk of death, compared to older adults that have not been abused (NCOA, 2021).
  - Risks also include deterioration in health, hospitalization, depression, and diminished quality of life.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Older adults experienced an increase in poverty
  - Poverty increased for older adults in the U.S. from 8.9% in 2020 to 10.3% in 2021.
  - This increase in poverty results in more than 1 million more older adults relying on scarce resources.
  - In total, 6 million older adults live in poverty.
  - Older adults are the only age segment that experienced an increase.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Households at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) had more than double the rate of violent victimization compared to high-income households.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Older Adults

- Prevalence of disabilities among older adults
  - Disabilities are more common among older adults
  - Approximately 2 in 5 older adults have a disability (CDC, 2016).



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Prevalence of disabilities among older adults



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Older Adults

- There are unique issues faced by that are older adults
  - Guardianship abuse
  - Human trafficking
  - Financial exploitation



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Guardianship abuse
  - Silver Collar Crimes
  - Older adults are disproportionately impacted by guardianship abuse
  - Guardians wield immense power
  - Guardianship abuse is a form of exploitation
  - Loss of autonomy
  - Loss of property and finances




---

---

---

---

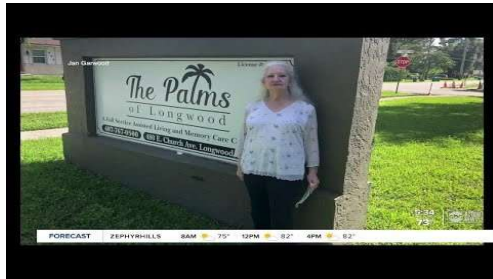
---

---

---

---

### Guardianship Abuse




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- The typical images used to depict human trafficking include children or young women being sold on street corners for sex or undocumented persons working in the fields or in nail salons as indentured servants (DOJ, 2020).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Human trafficking and older adults
- Labor trafficking
  - 22 U.S.C §7102
  - The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services using force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Human trafficking and older adults
- Benefits trafficking
  - GA Code § 16-5-102.1(a)(4)
  - Trafficking of a Disabled Adult, Elder Person, or Resident
  - Exploitation means illegally or improperly using a disabled adult, elder person, or resident or such individual's resources through undue influence, harassment, duress, false representation, false pretense, or other similar means for one's own or another person's profit or advantage.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Although this type of human trafficking exists, the unrecognized truth is human trafficking knows no barriers.
- There is no single profile of a trafficking victim. Victims of human trafficking can be anyone, regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, education or citizenship status (DOJ, 2020).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Older Adults

- Case example involving elements of human trafficking perpetrated against older adults.
  - Henry's Turkey Service




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Henry's Turkey Service
  - Henry's Turkey Service supplied workers for a poultry processing plant in Iowa.
  - Regardless of how many hours the men worked they were not paid more than \$2 a day/\$65 a month (Rothschild, 2012).
  - The men did not receive any sick time or medical insurance.
  - Henry's Turkey Service also served as the men's representative payee for their SSI and denied them access to their benefits.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- The men were housed in a dilapidated bunkhouse.
- An inspector for the Iowa Workforce Development advised that the boiler should be removed, resulting in the bunkhouse not having central heat for 8 years.
- A 69 year old man working at Henry's Turkey Service collapsed and later died while being forced to load bags of feed into a truck (Kauffman, 2014).
- Another worker wandered from the bunkhouse and was later found frozen to death.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- The men were allegedly
  - Punched.
  - Isolated in bedroom with no access to their television.
  - Made to place hands on a pole and stand in place for an extended period of time.
  - Handcuffed to a bed.
  - Forced to walk in circles while carrying weights.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- In 2009 the men were rescued from Henry's Turkey Service.
  - Missing fingernails, long fingernails caked with blood, forked hands, curving toenails cutting into the pads of their feet.
  - Soiled mattresses, cockroaches, mice, trash bins to collect dripping water from the ceiling (Barry, 2014).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- In 2013 an Iowa jury awarded \$240 million to the 32 men that were abused and discriminated against while working at Henry's Turkey Service.
  - \$2 million in punitive damages for each victim plus.
  - \$5.5 million in compensatory damages for each victim (U.S. EEOC, 2013).
- The damages were later reduced to \$1.6 million due to federal law that caps damages in employment-discrimination cases (Kauffman, 2014).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- No criminal charges were ever filed related to the physical, mental, and financial abuse endured by the men employed by Henry's Turkey Service.
  - Sheriff – The men had a pretty good life and enjoyed going to work.
  - Attorney General – Criminal charges wouldn't offer appreciably better remedies than those obtained civilly.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Financial exploitation of older adults
  - According to the National Council on Aging financial exploitation of older adults costs as much as \$36.5 billion each year.
  - Perpetrators may include strangers, family members, trusted friends, and caregivers




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Older Adults

- Financial exploitation
  - Stealing and older adult's checkbook or credit cards.
  - Tricking an older adult to signing forms that transfer ownership of cars, homes, bank accounts, or investments.
  - Pressuring an older adult to change their will
  - Sweepstakes scams
  - Robocall scams
  - Government impersonation scans




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Financial exploitation



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs and Trauma-Informed Services

- In 2019, the Adult Advocacy Centers (AACs) were formed through a Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office.
- The AACs work to establish trauma-informed services that include accommodations and accessibility to provide a pathway to justice for crime victims with disabilities and older adults.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs and Trauma-Informed Services for Older Adults

- Trauma
  - Results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on an individual's functioning, emotional, or spiritual well-being.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs and Trauma-Informed Services

- Providing trauma-informed services
  - Reduce additional trauma
  - May prevent revictimization
  - Improve the ability of survivor to report what happened
  - Provides a pathway to equitable justice




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs and Trauma-Informed Services

- Trauma principles
  - Safety – Provide services in a safe and neutral environment
  - Transparency – Ensure that a signed consent and clear disclosure is obtained
  - Empowerment – Provide accessibility and accommodations




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Services provided by the Adult Advocacy Centers
  - Training
  - Forensic interviews
  - Coordinating forensic nurse examinations
  - Safety planning
  - Resources




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Training
  - To ensure the integrity and quality of the trainings provided by the AACs, we have developed a network of experts and consultants in the fields of disability, crime prevention, trauma, medical, and criminal justice.
  - Most importantly, the AACs' model involves extensive collaboration with people with disabilities and older adults.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Training
  - The AACs provide training through Advocacy and Disability-Focused Education for Professionals and Teams (ADEPT)
    - Basic forensic interview training
    - Disability forensic interview training
    - Forensic interview training for individuals with expressive communication disabilities
  - <https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/training-classes>




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Forensic interviews
  - Audio and video recorded interviews of crime victims with disabilities that are conducted by trained professionals to gather information in a non-leading manner that may be used in a criminal investigation and can be admissible in a court of law.
  - Publication - *Forensic Interviewing and Victim Advocacy Services*: [adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/aacs\\_forensic\\_interviewing\\_and\\_victim\\_advocacy\\_services\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/aacs_forensic_interviewing_and_victim_advocacy_services_booklet.pdf)




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Forensic interviews
  - A signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by law enforcement.
    - Attorney general's office, state highway patrol, county sheriff, and local law enforcement.
  - Consent from the individual or the individual's guardian.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Forensic interviews
  - Non-leading questioning format.
  - The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) advises the forensic interviewer.
  - An audio/video recording is provided to law enforcement.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Forensic interviews
  - Introduction
  - Neutral sequential narrative
  - Transition
  - Topic of concern
  - Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) consult
  - Trauma-informed closure



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) may include
  - Forensic interviewer
  - Law enforcement
  - Forensic nurse examiner
  - Prosecutor's office
  - Victim services provider
  - Area agency on aging
  - Adult protective services



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- It is important that law enforcement gain a full understanding of both the details of a crime and the victim's experience of the crime to successfully prosecute a crime.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- The AACs partnered with forensic, legal, and disability experts to develop disability-specific adapted forensic interviewing protocols.
- These protocols address communication needs for survivors who use little or no speech, individuals with psychiatric disabilities, and individuals with age-related disabilities such as dementia.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### The AACs

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that criminal justice entities avoid discriminating against people with disabilities.
- Having forensic interview protocols that provide accommodations and accessibility is a step towards creating a trauma-informed process and more equitable pathway to justice for older adults.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Accessibility
  - Ensuring physical and service accessibility allows older adults full participation
- Physical accessibility
  - Ramps
  - Internal doorways that are wide enough to allow the passage of a wheelchair
  - Accessible restrooms
  - Even floor surfaces




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Service accessibility
  - Providing an interpreter
  - Using alternative communication
  - Plain language
  - Using a vocal pace that maximizes an individual's ability to understand what is being said.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Accommodations
  - Adjustments to some aspect of a process or system to overcome or eliminate barriers
- Physical accommodations
  - Dim lighting
  - Modifying the layout of furniture
  - Ensuring that the individual is positioned in a preferred place




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Service accommodations
  - Offering additional breaks
  - Providing material in large print or braille
  - Minimizing environmental noise




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Currently forensic interviews are customarily conducted at Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) and are reserved for children.
- The AACs believes that specialized forensic interviews as an ADA accommodation under Title II should be available to anyone with a disability, regardless of age.
- Find additional information about ADA accommodations on the [Disability Rights Section of the Department of Justice website](#).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Requesting a forensic interview from a forensic interviewer who specializes in disabilities may qualify as an ADA accommodation under Title II.
- A specialized forensic interview may necessary to be in compliance of both the "reasonable" and "effective communication" language in Title II of the ADA.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Requesting a forensic interview from the AACs is a straight-forward process and can be done for cases nationwide. Call 614-338-8809 or send a message at [adultadvocacy-centers.org/contact](mailto:adultadvocacy-centers.org/contact).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- If a request for a forensic interview conducted by a trained forensic interviewer who specializes in disabilities is requested as an ADA accommodation, and not provided, the following steps may be taken:
  - Email the AACs at [Contact@adultadvocacycenters.org](mailto:Contact@adultadvocacycenters.org)
  - Submit a report with the [U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division](https://www.dhs.gov/easysitecontent/easysitecontent/department-of-justice/civil-rights-division).




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Coordinating a forensic nurse examination
- The Forensic Nursing Network (FNN)
  - Understanding Medical Forensic Exams  
[adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/aacs\\_medical\\_forensic\\_exam\\_faq\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/aacs_medical_forensic_exam_faq_booklet.pdf)




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Victim Services
  - The AACs employs a registered advocate with advanced standing.
  - Coping with victimization  
[https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/aacs\\_coping\\_with\\_victimization.pdf](https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/aacs_coping_with_victimization.pdf)




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Safety planning
  - Assisted Safety Planning Guidebook  
[https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/safety\\_planning\\_guidebook\\_assisted.pdf](https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/safety_planning_guidebook_assisted.pdf)
  - Self-Directed Safety Planning Guidebook  
[https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/safety\\_planning\\_guidebook\\_self-directed.pdf](https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/assets/documents/safety_planning_guidebook_self-directed.pdf)




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- Resources
  - A guide to informed consent for people with disabilities
  - A guide to leaving your mark through legacy writing and projects
  - Human trafficking and older adults
  - Maintaining mental health and well-being among older adults with disabilities
  - <https://www.adultadvocacycenters.org/resources>




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- The AACs' goal is to address as many disparities in attitudes and accessibility as possible in the pursuit of equal justice and equal access for crime victims with disabilities and older adults.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- The AACs are developing partnerships with several disability-specific organizations, community mental health agencies, organizations serving older adults, legal services, and other local and state agencies that serve crime victims with disabilities and older adults.
- By building these partnerships, the AACs hope to facilitate a holistic approach to the support of victims.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The AACs

- We must revamp the current criminal justice system to provide older adults with needed accommodations and accessibility, as required under the ADA.
- Forensic interview protocols used for adult crime victims with disabilities should not be the same protocols as those used for children and must incorporate needed accommodations.
- Disability-informed victim services should be provided to adult crime victims with disabilities and include disability-specific resources.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Adult Advocacy Centers



People with disabilities have always had a voice. We're just teaching the world different ways to listen.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Thank You!

[contact@adultadvocacycenters.org](mailto:contact@adultadvocacycenters.org)

[adultadvocacycenters.org](http://adultadvocacycenters.org)

Facebook: @adultadvocacycenters



*This presentation was developed by the leadership of the AACs.*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### References

- CDC. (2016). Prevalence of disabilities. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/features/kf-adult-prevalence-disabilities.html>



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### References

- NCOA (2021, February 23). Get the facts on elder abuse. <https://ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-elder-abuse>
- NCOA (2022, December 12). Get the facts on older Americans. <https://ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-older-americans>
- NCVRW. (2017). Elder victimization. [https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc\\_archives/ncvrw/2017/images/en\\_artwork/Fact\\_Sheets/2017NCVRW\\_ElderVictimization\\_508.pdf](https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/ncvrw/2017/images/en_artwork/Fact_Sheets/2017NCVRW_ElderVictimization_508.pdf)
- RAINN. (2023). Elder abuse. <https://www.rainn.org/articles/elder-abuse>



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---