



**Staying Connected:  
Adult Maltreatment Prevention &  
Awareness News**

**December 2022**

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**THIS IS ME...**

**3 Tips for Preventing  
Elder Abuse During the  
Holiday Season  
([seniorsafeandsound.org](http://seniorsafeandsound.org))**

***Holiday Visits and  
Wellness Checks***

*“Visiting during the holiday season helps with fostering a good relationship, plus you can check on the things that are happening at home.”*

***Pay Attention to New  
Friends and Caregivers***

*“Be cautious if you notice that the person has a ‘new best friend’ attending all of the holiday events.”*

***Keep Them Informed about  
Charity Scams***

*“Unfortunately, scams targeting the elderly are rampant. Taking time to inform your senior family members about fraudulent charity solicitations is a powerful way to help them avoid getting conned.”*

The holiday season is upon us. A time when many of us spend some extra time with our loved ones. This season provides a wonderful time to check in with the adults in our lives that may need a little extra help.

Make an effort to visit with an adult in their home to see how things are going. By going to their home, you have the opportunity to look at the living situation and see if there are any safety concerns that need to be addressed.

Consider bringing a homemade meal and a loaf of bread that will need to be stored in the refrigerator and the pantry. This will provide you an opportunity to glance inside the fridge and pantry so you can see how much food they have on hand. Turn on the lights in several rooms, and run the water in the kitchen and the bathroom to ensure that some basic necessities are in working order.

When you are walking around the home take note of the cleanliness, any signs of an infestation and any repairs that may need to be addressed.

If you identify any safety concerns, find a way to work them in to a conversation. Be mindful that very few people want to admit that they need help from others to maintain their independence, so the way

you approach the conversation may mean the difference between the adult addressing or ignoring the concerns.

If the adult is willing to address the safety concerns take some time to discuss what help is going to be acceptable. If you are not sure about resources that are available consider visiting [KY ESTEAM - Resources](#) to identify available resources in your community.

In addition to the safety concerns in the home, consider the external safety concerns that others present as well. Inquire about who all has been to visit or called lately. If you don't recognize someone, find a way to ask questions about this individual.

Consider having a conversation about popular scams that are currently going around. Visit [Consumer Alerts - Kentucky Attorney General](#) to find out more about the specific scams that are affecting Kentuckians.

If you have concerns about the adult's ability to make informed decisions or meet their basic needs after your visit, contact adult protective services to make a referral. You can either contact 1-877-597-2331, 24/7, or complete an online referral during business hours at [Web Referral \(ky.gov\)](#).





# Holiday Safety Checklist

## Accessibility

- Are there stairs leading into your home?
- Can your guest safely climb a few steps?
- Are there handrails?
- Are the doors and hallways wheelchair accessible?

## Rest Room

- Do you have a first floor rest room?
- Is it wheelchair or walker accessible?
- If there is no bathroom, or if it is inaccessible, is there a private area where you can set a commode?

## Memory Concerns

- If your holiday guest has Alzheimer's or a related dementia, there are some special precautions you can take to help ensure their safety:
- Make sure exterior doors are securely closed and locked to prevent wandering.
- Keep the noise level to a minimum, lower voices.
- Serve foods that are easy to eat and manage.
- Avoid having too many decorations, especially items that your loved one may mistake for food.
- Plan activities that include sharing memories and stories, like looking through old family photos or movies.

## Naps

- Does your loved one's schedule include a nap or rest time?
- Is there a quiet place to lie down and rest?

## Medication Schedule

- Remind your loved one to bring all medications that will be needed.
- Take medicine on time.

## Clear the Way

To help eliminate falls:

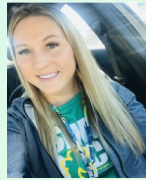
- Remove all throw rugs and secure edges of area rugs.
- Create clear, wide paths around furniture.
- Keep rooms and hallways free of clutter.
- Secure or remove extension cords or other electrical cords.

## Dietary Needs

- Are there any diet restrictions? Be mindful of salt, sugar, fat.
- Adapt favorite recipes to fit within dietary restrictions.
- Serve a few dishes that can be enjoyed by everyone.
- Is there a mealtime schedule that must be observed? Some conditions, like diabetes, require meals at regular intervals.

# This is me...

Holly Cole MSW, CSW  
Social Service Clinician II  
APS—Southern Bluegrass



I work with Adult Protective Services (“APS”). I have many responsibilities; however, my two most common responsibilities that combat adult maltreatment are: 1) guardianship assessments, and 2) field investigations.

A guardianship assessment is when the local district court judge hears evidence to determine if an adult needs a guardian or conservator. My role, as an APS worker, is to interview/assess the individual and make a recommendation to the judge, county attorney, and guardian ad litem regarding the need for a guardian or conservator. Sometimes, in doing so, I uncover a ploy by a family to gain guardianship status over an individual to influence their money, assets, relationships, or long-term placements. Or, alternatively, and more common, I get to assist families in helping them earn guardianship status.

Second, during field investigations, I am often accompanied by local law enforcement to investigate abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In doing so, I often analyze bank statements, credit card statements, and living situations. Unfortunately, sometimes I uncover some deplorable living situations. However, at this point, I have the opportunity to work with local community partners to assist in curing these situations.

Helping people is my life’s mission. Everyday, both as an APS worker and in my personal life, I strive to make someone’s life better. Fortunately, every person and/or family I come in contact with provides me with an opportunity to identify their issue and/or weakness and present an opportunity for change. Personally, I believe I have an opportunity on a daily basis to change someone’s family tree through my role with APS and cooperation with community partners.

Without a doubt, any day I get to change someone’s life makes the day more enjoyable. Whenever I get to utilize a community partner to provide food, shelter, clothing, or the like to a person in need will turn any bad day into a wonderful day. For example, recently, I received a report of a male with known mental illness who has not eaten in several days and was in the cold without shelter. I utilized a local community partner who, within an hour, arranged transportation to a local shelter, provided him clothing, and food. We worked together to get in contact with his son, re-kindled that relationship between the two, and presented a stable opportunity for my client. Stories like this one are what makes me so passionate about my career.

Adult maltreatment, like any other issue that plagues our community, has the opportunity to turn into an epidemic. With this being said, we, in my opinion, often fall short in educating the community about adult maltreatment. We do a good job at educating about youth maltreatment, but what do we do about adults who can no longer advocate for themselves, or their voices have been silenced by “loved” ones. I believe we must leverage our relationships with community partners to educate our community. We must have seminars, be represented at local community events (i.e. fairs, festivals, and local events), and make the adult abuse hotline’s phone number more commonly known. If leveraged appropriately, then I believe we can properly combat adult maltreatment.

I am fortunate to have a strong supporting family. My husband, Chad, supports my job and my passions and does everything he can to make my post-work life easier. Additionally, I have, in my opinion, the best dog in the world. With these two in my corner, they ensure a hard workday is significantly easier whenever I get home.

## Defining Words! How do we communicate?

Exploitation is defined by KRS 209.020 (9) as obtaining or using another person’s resources, including but not limited to funds, assets, or property, by deception, intimidation, or similar means, with the intent to deprive the person of those resources.

To reach the threshold of exploitation, the regulation establishes that a report will be accepted if the report alleges isolation from friends, relatives, or important information (such as screening telephone calls, denying visitors, or intercepting mail); physical or emotional dependency; manipulation; acquiescence; and loss of resources to a person in a position of trust to the alleged victim.

The most common form of exploitation of adults is the misuse of a bank account by a family member or trusted friend. This is typically accomplished when the alleged perpetrator takes on the role of paying bills, of purchasing necessities or is established as the power of attorney.

It is important to remember that a person does not need to be added as a co-owner to a bank account for someone to assist with financial management. The most appropriate way to handle finances for someone else is through a well written power of attorney to address the specific needs.

Just like with most things, you should only give a person the most minimal access necessary to accomplish the needed tasks. Just because some power of attorney’s allow for gifting, does not mean that you also have to allow for that.

Other common forms of exploitation are the theft of homes, cars and other deeded property through manipulation.

Exploitation cases make up the most common charges and convictions from the criminal code of KRS 209.



Senior Planet: From AARP

[Click Here](#)

Cognitive and neuroimaging correlates of financial exploitation Vulnerability in older adults without dementia: Implications for early detection of Alzheimer’s disease

[Click Here](#)

From State to Federal: A Legislative Snapshot of the Last 12 Months

[Click Here](#)

## What did the holiday card say to the stamp?

“Stick with me and you will go places!”



January 12th, 2023 at 2:00pm (ET)  
Stalking and Older Adults Webinar + Ask the Experts

[Register Here](#)