



Protect Yourself from Exploitation

By Meaghan McMahon and Lee Reed (DCV Case Management Team)

June marks the start of Elder Abuse Awareness month. Elder abuse and exploitation can come in many forms including physical, emotional, and financial. Learn more about how to protect yourself by visiting the National Center on Elder Abuse: <https://ncea.usc.edu/publications/>

Lee Reed, R.N., our Healthcare Navigator and **Meaghan McMahon, LGSW**, our Social Worker want you to be aware of situations that can sometimes lead to abuse and exploitation:

- **Dishonest Attorneys** — Living with a dementia diagnosis can make you more susceptible to abuse and exploitation. A lawyer may try to become your power of attorney or executor of your estate without your consent.
 - **Remedy:** Make your wishes known, in writing, early in your diagnosis and only work with attorneys referred to you by a trusted source. Use these resources to help document your wishes: <https://compassionandchoices.org/news/three-ways-to-prepare-for-dementia-today/>
- **Ill-Intentioned Family/Friends** — Sadly, family members and friends are often found to be exploiting their loved ones. (<https://www.ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-elder-abuse/>)
 - **Remedy:** make sure your wishes are documented in writing, as well as digitally, and cannot be altered. Share these documents only with trusted family members and friends.
- **Short Staffed Healthcare Settings** — our healthcare system is increasingly fractured, and staffing shortages can lead to dangerous staffing shortcuts. (<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/workforce/>)
 - **Remedy:** Decide who will act as your advocate if you are facing a health crisis. Don't have a friend or family member to take on this role? Contact Eva who can connect you with Lee and Meaghan who can speak on your behalf to ensure your wishes are respected.

If you want to learn more about any of these resources, please contact Eva so she can connect you directly to our nursing and social service team.