

September 2022

A Safer Naper --- Senior Programs & Resources

Naperville has a growing senior population, many of whom have lived in Naperville for most of their lives. Our seniors have been instrumental in developing the Naperville we live in today and are assets continuing to add value our City.

In this month's "A Safer Naper" campaign, the Naperville Police Department focuses on some of the many programs and resources available for older adults as well as education on common phone and email scams targeting seniors, domestic violence assistance and warning signs, elder abuse/neglect, and mental health and wellness resources for older adults.

Section 1 – PROGRAMS

AARP Smart Driver: The Naperville Police Department is partnering with AARP to offer a program entitled "Smart Driver." This classroom driver refresher course, designed for drivers age 50 and older, has assisted millions of mature drivers to stay safe. The objective of the course is to help participants drive safer and therefore keep their licenses longer. Topics include:

- Understanding the normal effects of aging on driving and practical ways to compensate for those changes
- Driving strategies for the mature driver
- Identifying the most common crash situations and how to avoid them
- An update on the rules of the road, vehicle accessories, and local traffic hazards.

Classes will be held on Nov. 9 & 10, 2022 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Naperville Police Department. To register, call (630) 420-8479 or click the link below.

Register for Smart Driver [<http://www.naperville.il.us/aarpsmartdriver>]

Fastrack: The Naperville Police Department has combined "tried and true" radio technology with specially trained response team members to build an effective, life-saving program to locate high risk persons who have a history of wandering. Called Fastrack, this program uses Care Trak International equipment and has proven itself to be reliable, responsive, practical and affordable.

Clients who are part of the Fastrack Program wear a personalized transmitter on their wrist or ankle that emits a continual, silent tracking signal assigned just to them. When caregivers notify the Naperville Police Department that a client is missing, a search and rescue team responds and begins tracking the client with a hand-held, directional response system targeted at the client's specific frequency.

Learn more about Fastrack

Caring Hands: The Caring Hands program allows residents to voluntarily provide Naperville's first responders with critical information about themselves or loved ones with developmental, cognitive, mental, medical and/or physical disabilities who may require special assistance during an emergency or

non-emergency situation. Information provided could include methods of communication, sensory and medical issues as well as approach and de-escalation techniques.

Learn more about Caring Hands

Section 2 – EDUCATION

Elder Abuse: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Elder abuse including neglect and exploitation are experienced by about 1 in 10 people aged 60 and older who lives at home.”

Elder abuse is an underreported crime that can happen in many places, including the older person's home, a family member's house, an assisted living facility, or a nursing home. The mistreatment of older adults can be by family members, strangers, health care providers, caregivers, or friends. This abuse can take many forms such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, financial exploitation, abandonment or neglect.

It can be difficult to identify this abuse due to variety of reasons; oftentimes, the perpetrator is somebody that the older adult is related to or reliant on for care, which can make them reluctant to come forward. Older adults may be isolated or struggle with a mental impairment such as Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Recognizing some of the many signs of abuse is a critical step in protecting our seniors. Some of the warning signs may include:

- Depression, confusion, or being withdrawn
- Being isolated from friends and family
- Having unexplained bruises, burns, or scars
- Having bed sores or other preventable conditions
- Recent changes in banking or spending patterns
- Appearing dirty, underfed, dehydrated, over- or undermedicated, or not receiving needed care for medical problems

Financial Exploitation: Not all forms of elder abuse are physical, but no matter the form it takes the abuse of our country's senior citizens should not be taken lightly. Financial exploitation of seniors is a common occurrence, and because many retirees do not have the ability to defend themselves from this kind of threat it carries with it the possibility of significant financial losses and a wide array of related problems. In many instances victims of financial exploitation suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's Disease, making them easy targets for financial predators, but in other cases, such as when a victim in a nursing home is being exploited by a staff member, the victim feels that they do not have a means of getting help, or that if they report it their living situation may be drastically affected by retaliation.

Types of Financial Exploitation

Financial exploitation can take a variety of forms, but are typically either a form of theft or fraud, such as:

- Theft of cash or personal property.

- Fraud on the part of someone who is intended to be managing the victim’s assets.
- The sale of inappropriate financial products, such as out of compliance mortgage ventures, high fee or high-risk investments, Ponzi schemes, falsification of insurance products, or similar acts.
- Unauthorized sales or transfers of real estate owned by the victim.
- Services that are billed but never received, such as contractors that do not complete projects.
- Lottery or Prize scams that involve the transfer of funds in order to collect “winnings”.
- Electronic fraud such as “phishing” scam emails, computer fraud, or fraudulent telemarketing.

Warning Signs of Financial Exploitation

Financial exploitation can in many cases go on for extended periods of time, often because financial information is a subject that is not always talked about within a family, so caretakers might not come across suspicious occurrences. Some warning signs to look for include things like:

- Utility past due notices or shutoffs.
- Unpaid bills and debts despite the victim having sufficient income to cover them previously.
- Unexplained foreclosure notices or liens on property.
- The task of managing a victim’s finances being turned over to a different person without explanation, or assets being transferred to people unfamiliar to the family.
- Checks being written out to “cash”; often in large amounts or high volume.
- The victim not having a grasp of their current financial situation, or having implausible explanations.
- The disappearance of assets or financial documents.
- Unexplained changes to a will, estate documents, or other financial instruments.
- Gifting money or personal property.
- Unusual changes in spending habits

Section 3 – RESOURCES

The Naperville Police Department has a social services unit with licensed social workers who are specially trained in senior related issues. More information can be found at www.naperville.il.us/NPDSocialServices or by contacting Licensed Social Worker Ali Smith directly at (630) 305-7061 or by email smithal@naperville.il.us.

To report suspected abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, please call the statewide 24-hour Adult Protective Services Hotline at 1-866-800-1409. If immediate action is needed or the abuse/neglect is so severe that there is a risk of serious injury or death, call 911.

Additional Resources

National Institute on Aging – <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/elder-abuse>

Illinois Department of Aging – <https://www2.illinois.gov/aging>

CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/riskprotectivefactors.html>

CDC – Preventing Elder Abuse – <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/em-factsheet-a.pdf>