

SFST BULLETIN

The Senior Financial Safety Tool Bulletin is a Monthly Newsletter for Financial Professionals



JUNE IS WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

Fighting Isolation: Being together while staying apart

For many older adults, especially those living alone, social distancing amid the COVID-19 pandemic may increase feelings of loneliness and isolation. These feelings can lead to an increased risk of health and financial issues.

A key strategy for reducing elder abuse is speaking up. Too often abuse, neglect and financial exploitation go unreported. Maintaining connections with older adults helps ensure their safety. We are all in this together!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

by Melissa Woods, Staff Paralegal

According to the *The New York Times*, in New York City 30,000 seniors a day meet at gathering centers away from their homes. Older adults in our community were accustomed to gathering at senior centers and other venues. Social isolation may be more difficult for seniors given changes implemented due to COVID-19.

So what can you do? It is critical that financial service providers screen for social isolation, evaluate the impact it could have on the well-being of older adults, and refer to the appropriate supports.

Providing some form of connection, even a phone call to your customers, can make a profound difference. Older adults may not have access to the internet, smart phones, desktop computers, or tablets.

Screening tools such as the Senior Financial Safety Tool provide a safe method to assist individuals who may express concerns regarding their financial security, decisions regarding a Power of Attorney and possible scams.

Access the tool at:

probononet.neotalogic.com/a/sfst

During this time, older adults may benefit from:

- An annual credit report review: Older adults in isolation may provide their personal information in exchange for companionship. Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion are now offering free weekly online reports through April 2021.
- Drawing up a monthly budget that accurately reflects current spending. Older adults may be concerned about expenses related to COVID-19 (such as grocery delivery, medical equipment and transportation).
- An explanation regarding the pitfalls of peer-to-peer payment platforms. Clients should proceed with caution before sending money to someone they don't know. Scammers will use these apps to access a victim's bank account and transfer funds with no paper trail.

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