

Case Scenarios

(Obtained from NAPSA Core Competency Training/Elder Abuse Dynamics)

TONY AND JOSEPHINA

Tony and Josephina have been married for almost 60 years. He is 80 and she is 77. Two years ago, Josephina was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The disease progressed very quickly. Their son, Henry, told the residential care home director that Tony and Josephina's marriage had been tumultuous. During all of their married life, Tony had been verbally and physically abusive to Josephine. For years he told her that she was stupid and ugly, that no other man would want her, and that she was lucky he put up with her, though he might leave her at any time. He threw things at her, slapped her in the face, threatened to kill her, and once, pushed her down the stairs. On several occasions, Josephina left Tony. When Henry offered to help her move in with his family, she refused and went back to her husband. Since then, Henry has tried to talk to his mother about her relationship with Tony, but she always shut him off, saying that a wife had her duties, and it was none of his business.

Three months ago, Tony was diagnosed with liver cancer. His prognosis is not good. Recently, the aide who assists Josephina with her toileting and bathing noticed bruises on her breasts and inner thighs. When asked about the bruises, Josephina shook her head and cried, but did not answer. The aide suspected that Tony was having intercourse with his wife, and that she was unable to resist. When Tony was confronted, he became angry, saying, "It's nobody's business but ours! She's my wife and I can have sex with her whenever I want. I've done it for 60 years. Besides, I don't have long to live, and I deserve to have some pleasure before I die."

ROSIE AND HER PARENTS

Rosie is a 47 year old woman with Down Syndrome. When she was born, her parents vowed never to place her in an institution, as was often done in those days. As a result, she has lived with her father and mother her whole life, and has had little exposure to the outside world. As her parents have aged, Rosie has taken on more and more of the household work and personal care for her parents. Although Rosie is relatively high functioning, she struggles to help her father, Frank, age 79, who has severe Parkinson's disease, and her mother, Betsy, age 72, who is legally blind and increasingly frail. The family has a limited income and barely makes ends meet. They do have a home health aide paid through Medicaid twice a week, as well as Meals on Wheels and senior transportation. Due to his Parkinson's disease, Frank is unable to feed himself. Rosie tries to help him, but often gets frustrated and roughly jams the spoon into his mouth. On one occasion, she broke his front tooth. She blamed Frank, because "He jiggles around too much."

Returning after a long weekend, the in home aide found Betsy unresponsive and lying on the floor between the bed and the doorway of the adjoining bathroom. She had several pressure ulcers on her left hip and left leg, apparently the result of her lying on that side for an extended period of time. The home aide called an ambulance, and the paramedics reported the carpeting beneath Betsy's body was badly soiled.

Rosie and Frank said that they found Betsy lying on the floor in her present location several days earlier. Rosie said she tried to help her up, but her mother cried out in pain and told her to leave her alone. After that, they left her lying on the floor, bringing her food and water and giving her medications. Frank said that Rosie put a pillow under her head and tried to care for her. When asked why he did not call for medical assistance, Frank told the paramedics that his wife said not to call anyone. The paramedics reported the case to APS.

JAKE AND REGINA

For years, Jake, who is 56, has been struggling to make a living as an artist, with little success. Sometimes he does house painting. But because he is an alcoholic, he doesn't hold onto a job for long. So he turns to his mother, Regina, for financial help. In the beginning, Jake claimed that the money Regina gave him was loans, and that he would pay her back as soon as he "got on his feet." But the loans were never repaid. Now Jake is saying that if only he could take another art course, his paintings would finally begin to sell. He wants Regina to take out a reverse mortgage on her house, so he can have \$10,000 for his art studies.

Regina, who is 75 years old, has advanced macular degeneration and relies on a private pay aide to help her with housework and to drive her to appointments. She is reluctant to mortgage her home. As an immigrant woman, she is very proud that she owns her own home free and clear. Also, her mother lived to be 101, and Regina is worried that if she cashes in on her home now, she will outlive the income provided by the reverse mortgage. She is also concerned that she will be unable to continue to pay for the increasingly levels of assistance she will need to cope with her vision loss. But she also wants to support Jake's dream of being a painter. He has sold an occasional picture, and she believes that he has real talent.

Jake is getting impatient with his mother. He claims that if she really loved him, she would help him out. Yesterday he barged into her house and kicked Bootsy, Regina's small dog. Regina started to cry, and begged Jake not to hurt the dog. She promised him that she would find the money "somehow." Jake replied, "You better find it." Before he left, Jake took the ATM card from Regina's wallet without her knowledge. He had helped her use it previously as her sight was failing, so he knew the PIN. That day and the next he made two withdrawals totaling \$1,000.