

Case Example of Financial Exploitation

Leon is 76 years old. At 70 years old, Leon lost all of his hearing. He did not know sign language and showed no interest in learning it. Leon began to isolate as he no longer could communicate with others. He stopped taking his medications and stopped shopping for nutritious foods and would eat food only from a convenience store.

Adult Protective Services (APS) became involved out of concern for Leon's well-being and safety. A grandson (Sean) was found who agreed to be a paid caregiver for Leon. Leon and his grandson slowly developed their own way of communicating. When Leon needed to communicate with the outside world, Sean would go with him and serve as his interpreter, his only link to be able to communicate.

Initially, Leon flourished in the environment. But it became apparent that something had changed as Leon was losing weight, often appeared dirty, and the condition of his home began to deteriorate.

APS became reinvolved and eventually learned that Sean had emptied Leon's bank account, was using Leon's rent money for drugs, and often had "drug parties" at Leon's home. Sean was quick to anger and Leon now had facial bruising and appeared fearful of Sean and was isolating into his room.

APS was able to explain to Leon that he was being financially exploited by his grandson. Sean had gone through roughly all of Leon's savings (\$250,000). APS wanted to involve law enforcement, find an appropriate caregiver, and file for a restraining order to keep Sean away from him.

Leon declined all services. He conveyed that it was his money and he wanted to give it to his grandson despite risking his ability to pay his rent and pay for nutritious food. Leon was decisional and unfortunately, APS had to walk away with the knowledge that Leon was being exploited but no actions could be taken.

In assessing this situation, we were able to see that Leon could not jeopardize the relationship with his grandson and he could not lose his link/interpreter to the outside world. Leon also could not take actions that could involve his grandson going to prison.



WISCONSIN

ELDER



JUSTICE

COALITION

Wisconsin FA\$T

Financial Abuse Specialist Team

LESSONS LEARNED LOG

CASE NAME

DATE OF REPORT

Leon Smith	01/01/2024
------------	------------

TEAM MEMBERS

APS worker assigned case, APS supervisor, and Corporation Counsel

GOALS

What were our goals for this case?	Were those goals achieved? (Y / N)
To determine if financial exploitation had occurred. To ensure the safety and well-being of Leon. To assess the needs of Leon and the support needed to enable him to live as independently as possible in a safe manner.	No

LESSONS LEARNED

What went well?	How would you improve these processes for next time?	Assigned To
We were able to educate Leon that what was happening was not healthy; there appeared to be financial exploitation.	The process was appropriate.	APS worker

We made Leon aware of possible services and areas of support he can access if he so desires.	The process was appropriate.	APS worker
We made the alleged abuser aware that we felt his treatment of Leon was inappropriate.	It was important to have law enforcement involved in this interaction.	APS worker and law enforcement

What did not go well?	How would you improve these processes for next time?	Assigned To
Leon appeared fearful of any possibility of an intervention.	It would have been ideal if we could have spoken to Leon without the knowledge of the alleged perpetrator. This was not possible as Leon did not leave the home.	APS worker
Leon refused services.	Leon is his own person and currently can refuse services.	APS Worker
Leon refused to make a report to law enforcement.	Leon's fear of being alone and isolated prevented him from reporting financial exploitation. Leon is very dependent on his alleged abuser to communicate with the "outside world" due to his hearing impairment.	APS worker and law enforcement

Further Comments	At this point, Leon is his own person and is able to make decisions that the department feels are not in his best interest. At this point, Leon is refusing services and the case will be closed.
------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------