

Wisconsin FA$T

Financial Abuse Specialist Team

Date

Title  
Organization.  
Contact Information

Dear Name,

Elder abuse is gaining recognition. National prevalence studies indicate that over 10% of Americans age 60 and older experience some form of elder abuse in a given year. Elder abuse typically is a term used to refer to five types of elder abuse: financial exploitation, caregiver neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. The consequences for those who experience elder abuse include diminished health, finances, social connections, independence, and may even hasten death.

With this increased recognition and understanding comes more sophisticated responses. One best practice being promoted is the use of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) so prolific in the field of child abuse.

**As an important member of our community, we are inviting someone to represent your organization/agency on the** County or Region **Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST)--a multi-disciplinary team that works collaboratively to protect vulnerable and older adults from financial abuse and exploitation.**

## Join Us!

The County or Region Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) is a multidisciplinary team committed to addressing financial abuse, exploitation, and polyvictimization of adults at risk and older adults at risk. The purpose of the team is to prevent financial abuse and exploitation and to improve the system’s capacity to respond to the needs of victims in accessing support, advocacy, and services. Our objective is to set up our new FAST venture for success. Your organization has been identified as a potential strong partner and crucial member. We cordially request your participation as we move forward with FAST planning and development. Your input into the development of our team is highly valuable and we believe that together, we can have a positive impact on the lives of our mutual client, our community, and our respective organizations/agencies. Below, you can learn more about what FASTs are, why they are considered a best practice, and what expectations can be anticipated if you choose to participate in our FAST.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A FINANCIAL ABUSE SPECIALIST TEAM (FA$T)

A Financial Abuse Specialist Team is a group composed of members with varied but complementary experience, qualifications, and skills, bound by a common purpose, working collaboratively to achieve a shared goal. A multidisciplinary Financial Abuse Specialist team is characterized by five elements:

1. **Shared Decision-Making**

The entire team participates in the decision-making process, sharing information, and sharing successes through case review.

1. **Partnership**

A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed by all participating organizations/agencies.

1. **Interdependency**

Group and individual outcomes are influenced by the group, that is, the actions of one member impact important outcomes of other members and the team.

1. **Balanced Power**

All members have equal input and discourage a single member from dominating the group.

1. **Process**

The development and use of protocols to introduce predictability and accountability into the case review process, including protocols for conflict resolution.

BENEFITS OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY FINANCIAL ABUSE SPECIALIST TEAMS

Reasons why FAST MDTs are considered “best practice” when responding to financial abuse cases:

**Successful partnerships can benefit *professionals/organizations* in the following ways:**

* FASTs result in a greater number of cases being referred for prosecution.
* FASTs can increase confidence and enhance job satisfaction by promoting collegiality.
* FASTs extend and leverage interagency resources in part by reducing the financial and staff burden on individual agencies.
* FASTs can instill confidence that the case is being handled the best way possible by obtaining validation from other team members.

**Successful partnerships can benefit *older victims* in the following ways:**

* Coordination of multiple services may reduce the number of systems with which victims have to navigate.
* Coordination creates an integrated array of services tailored to the victim’s multifaceted needs that can build upon the family’s strengths.
* Collaboration produces creative solutions that no one agency could produce on its own.
* Collaboration results in more desirable case outcomes for victims by enhancing the probability that no matter where a victim enters the system, they have access to coordinated services.

**Successful partnerships can benefit *communities* in the following ways:**

* By creating community responsibility for victim safety.
* By enhancing relationships among public and private service providers.
* By strengthening families, which strengthens communities.
* By extending the reach of limited resources within a community.

As more communities recognize the relevance and value of FASTs, the number of elder abuse victims benefiting from services will increase, and communities will become safer for older Americans.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Expectations foryour organization’s representative on the FAST include:

* Your organization’s authorized representative will sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines procedures and legal and ethical issues.
* Your organization’s representative on the FAST will:
* attend a FAST orientation meeting;
* attend and actively participate in case review meetings; and
* be available to consult with other team members (by phone or email) outside of case review meetings.

What **y**ou can expect from us:

* A recurring and predictable meeting schedule in which the team meets [monthly/weekly] at [location] for approximately [1-1.5 hours].
* The case review meeting agenda will be emailed to members **the Friday before** the scheduled meeting to ensure members come prepared to discuss cases.
* A semi-formal case review meeting led by [name].

In closing, we would like to thank you for taking the time to learn about our multidisciplinary FAST. We hope we have provided you with adequate background material to evaluate the pros and cons of becoming a member of our team. Please feel free to reach out with additional thoughts or questions, as we intend for this process to be as collaborative as possible.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Name.  
Title  
Organization.  
Contact Information