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Elder abuse and neglect in nursing homes

Abuse of the elderly in nursing homes and residential care facilities is a growing issue facing tens of thousands of senior citizens every year. As the population of older Americans grows, so does the hidden problem of elder abuse, exploitation and neglect. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Elderly abuse (also called “elder mistreatment,” “senior abuse,” “abuse in later life,” “abuse of older adults,” “abuse of older women,” and “abuse of older men”) is “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. Abuse violations are among the most serious violations that can occur in nursing homes. The elderly and disabled residents living in nursing homes cannot protect themselves from physical attack or sexual assault. All too often, the elderly and disabled cannot even communicate to family members when they have suffered abuse. The World Health Organization defines elder abuse as “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person”. Elder abuse occurs in nursing homes across the United States and affects individuals in every social, economic, cultural or religious background. Abuse against the elderly is no respecter of persons, it can happen to anyone. Seniors are victims of negligent nursing homes and staff members. Nursing home abuse against the elderly often goes undetected, unreported and unaddressed because of inadequate internal systems to detect abuse. Seniors residing in nursing homes are afraid to report when they are being abused for fear of retaliation. Every year one out of three facilities is cited for causing serious bodily injury or death to a resident. The American Association for Justice states that the Federal and State governments financing of nursing homes are estimated at 75 billion with the nursing home industry profiting of 3.4 billion. The shocking fact is that 90% of U.S. nursing homes have staffing levels too low to provide adequate care and seniors are suffering from abuse by paid caregivers. The elderly are easy victims for abuse. There are more than an estimated 2.1 million reports of abuse each year as found in studies of the American Psychological Association. She addresses elder abuse in residential, community and institutional settings with emphasis on curtailing the incidence of abuse and neglect by providing highly trained care advocates at no cost for service.

Biography

Rita Stuckey completed a BS in Nursing from California State University, Los Angeles, a dual Masters in Public Administration and Education from California University, East Bay, and a PhD in Educational Leadership from Mills College. She served as the Director of nursing, care management, care coordination, and utilization management in acute, long-term acute, skilled nursing, home health, hospice, psychiatric, and public health care organizations. She served on the Board of Governors at Mills College; and is the first African American Nurse to earn a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Mills. She is the founder of the Care Advocate Program, an author and educator.

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