



# Successes and failures with community partnerships: Lessons learned

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## Working Together to Improve the Lives of Older Adults

“...when people look back at our time, they will be amazed at one thing more than any other. It is this – that we do know more about ourselves now than people did in the past, but that very little of this knowledge has been put into effect.”

- Doris Lessing (1985) in David Bornstein NY Times 8/23/16

Identifying and putting this knowledge into effect is the mission of community-researcher partnerships.





# What Is Success?

- Who decides? What are the trade-offs?
- Focus groups
  - Reciprocity:
    - “It’s worth it to her to have him in her life.”
  - Worse outcomes than abuse
    - Do we offer something better than the abuser?
    - “I know she’ll leave me but she makes me really happy.”
- What tools/remedies are available?
- Summative versus formative evaluation





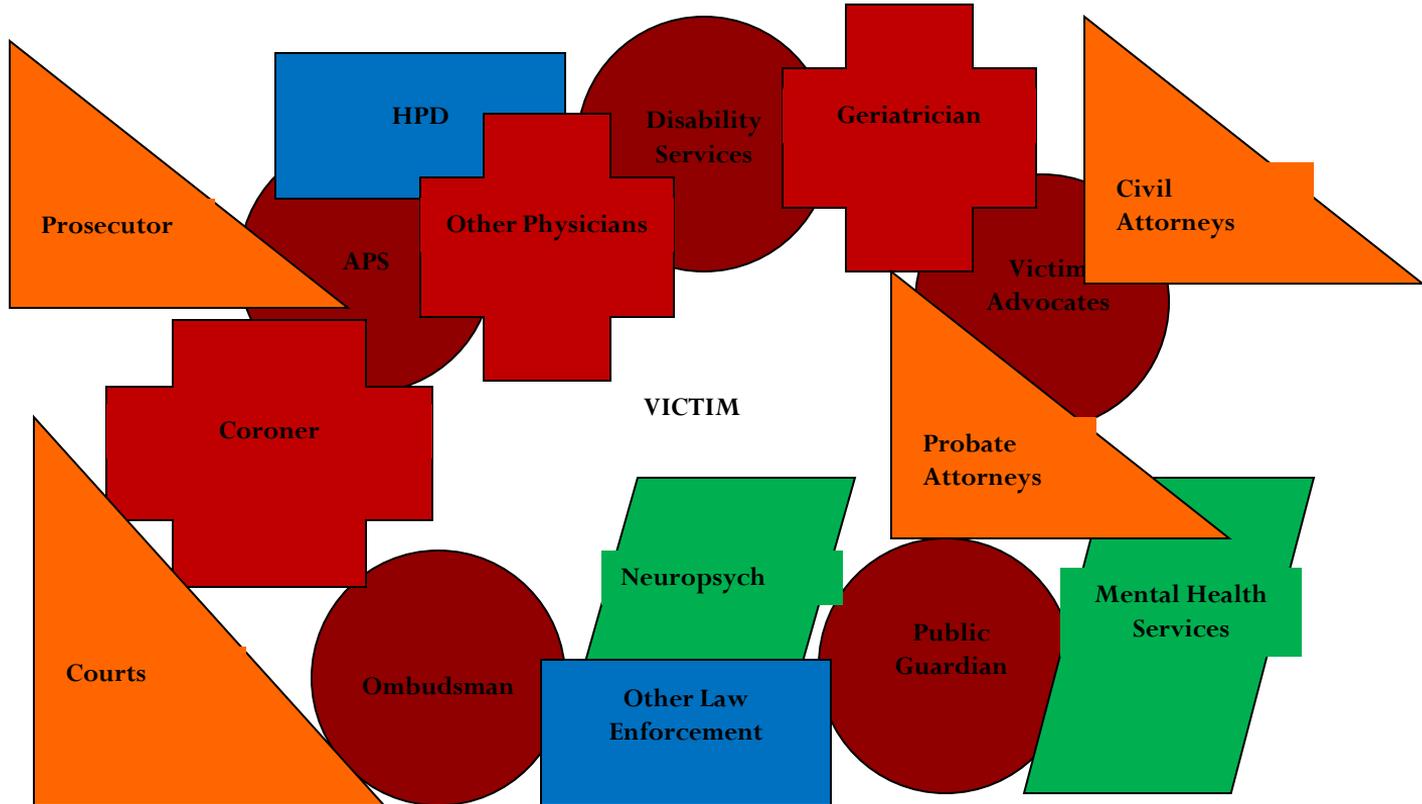
# Practitioners Are from Venus, Researchers are from...?

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- Straight out of practice:
  - GEAR and the age-calculator (Solution)
  - The DA's question (Insights)
- Service Advocate: Lessons on the fly, ethical questions, engaging victims (Dilemma)
- Making mistakes so you don't have to... (Lesson)



# Lack of effort may not be the problem: Lots of professionals working on solutions





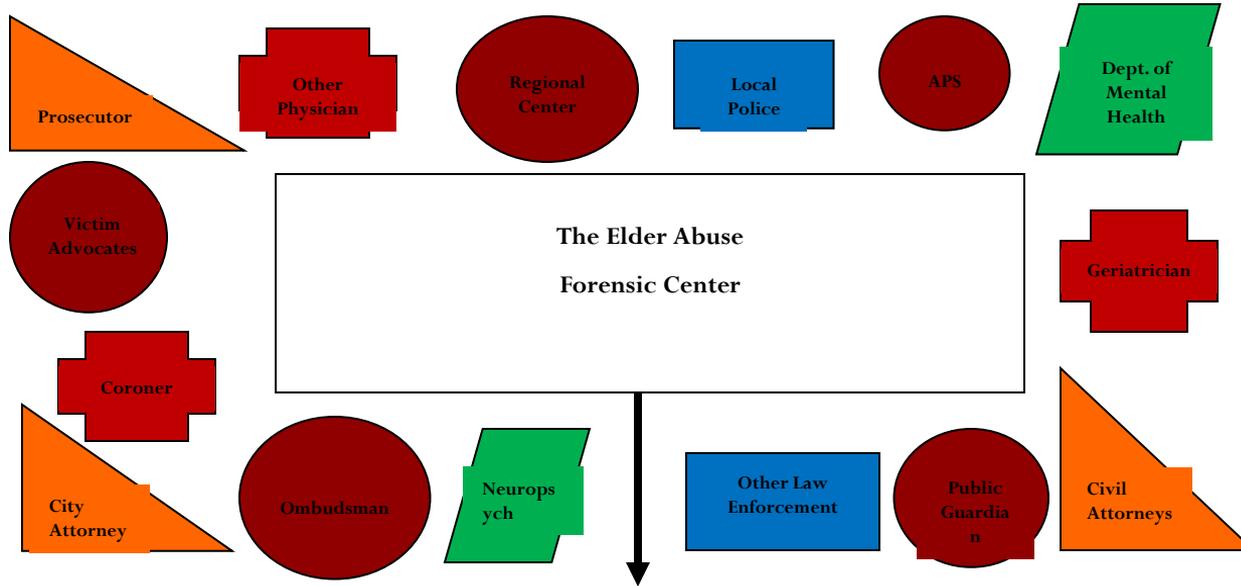
# Organizing a Team



**“Henry! Our party’s total chaos! No one knows when to eat, where to stand, what to... Oh, thank God! Here comes to border collie!”**



# The Forensic Center Model





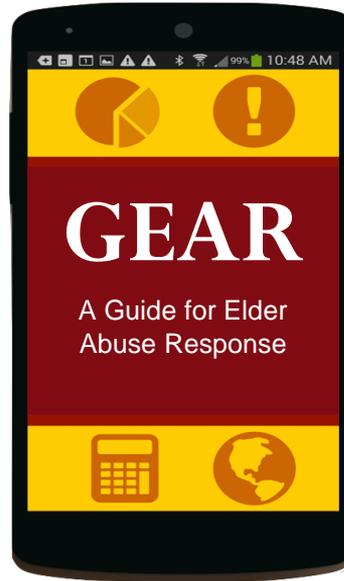
## Forensic Center

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- Weekly case reviews by forensic experts: law enforcement, MD, Mental Health, Neuropsychologist, protective services, public guardians, prosecutors (DA)
- Comprehensive assessments
- Historical record review
- Weekly case reviews
- Consultation and training



Senior (65+)



**REPORT ABUSE**

Physical Abuse    Neglect    Financial Abuse    Self-neglect  
Sexual Abuse    Emotional Abuse    Isolation

**Neglect**

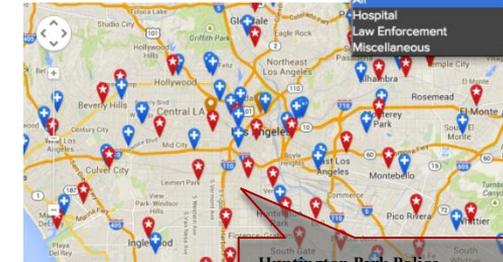
The failure, inability, or refusal to provide for an elder's safety, physical, or emotional needs by an individual in a caregiving role.



**Things you see that may suggest an elder is being neglected:**

- Unclean clothing, poor hygiene, overgrown hair and nails, unusual weight loss, need for medical or dental care, untreated bedsores
- Withdrawal from normal activities, unexplained change in alertness, or other uncharacteristic behavior
- Caregiver appears to be indifferent, apathetic or hostile to elder

Location    Enter Zip Code    Sort    All



- Hospital
- Law Enforcement
- Miscellaneous

**Huntington Park Police Department**  
6542 Miles Ave  
Huntington Park, CA 90255  
(323) 584-6254  
[Visit Website](#) [Get Directions](#)

Month  
Day  
Year

November  
15  
1951  
**Calculate Age**

**64**  
YEARS OLD



# Practice to Research: The DAs question

What is the “ripple effect” of hearing FC cases on our other work and our organization?



- Interviews with six DAs
  - “I take that information and I use it in how I talk to detectives...So, going to the Forensic Center and just listening to what we talk about definitely heightens my own awareness for certain things like medications. And so then I take that knowledge and it affects all my other cases.”
- DeLiema, M., Navarro, A. E., Moss, M. & Wilber, K. H. (in press). Prosecutors’ Perspectives on Elder Justice Using an Elder Abuse Forensic Center. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*.



# Lessons from the Field: The Service Advocate

- What is a Service Advocate?
  - Person-centered approach
  - Supporting those with greatest needs
  - Understand the issues from the client's perspective
- What are the ethical and legal issues involved in serving someone who has been assessed to lack capacity?
- Transitions to services take time





# The Risk Identification Paradox

Mrs. M., 83, a former accountant, had a comfortable retirement, owned her own home, and expected to live off of her investments and Social Security. She recently sent large sums of money to a lottery scam. She told investigators she had stopped, during a home assessment by an MD, she received a call asking for money and responded positively. The assessment indicated moderate cognitive impairment. Conservatorship will take several months. What now?





# Confessions of an Applied Researcher

- Research question: What is the prevalence of abuse among minority elders?
- Method: Field test an instrument using promotores (community health workers) in Latino and African American communities
- We partnered with a well-respected community organization with a history of using Promotores in research projects
- How to protect subjects of possible elder abuse and ensure informed consent?



# Making Mistakes So You Don't Have To

- IRB-moderate risk
  - USC advice: exempt!
    - Anonymous, de-identified, assent
- Be paranoid: If things are going according to plan something is wrong (Michael Q Patton)
- Adverse outcome . . .
- . . . a new a partnership allowed us to complete the study





# Conclusions

- Our realities can be vastly different
- Community/research partnerships are essential for:
  - putting knowledge into practice
  - keeping researchers focused on the right questions
- Require understanding each other's incentives, constraints, and motivations
- Recognizing that things will go wrong, monitoring closely, contingency planning



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  - Elder mistreatment in community settings– National Institute on Aging
  - National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS)– Administration for Community Living

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