



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2022

"Estate Planning & Financial Literacy to Combat Financial Abuse of Older Persons"

Financial Abuse of Older Persons in Trinidad & Tobago

Presented by: Dr. Hyacinth O. Blake (Director, Division of Ageing)

Date: June 15, 2022

Mode: MS Teams



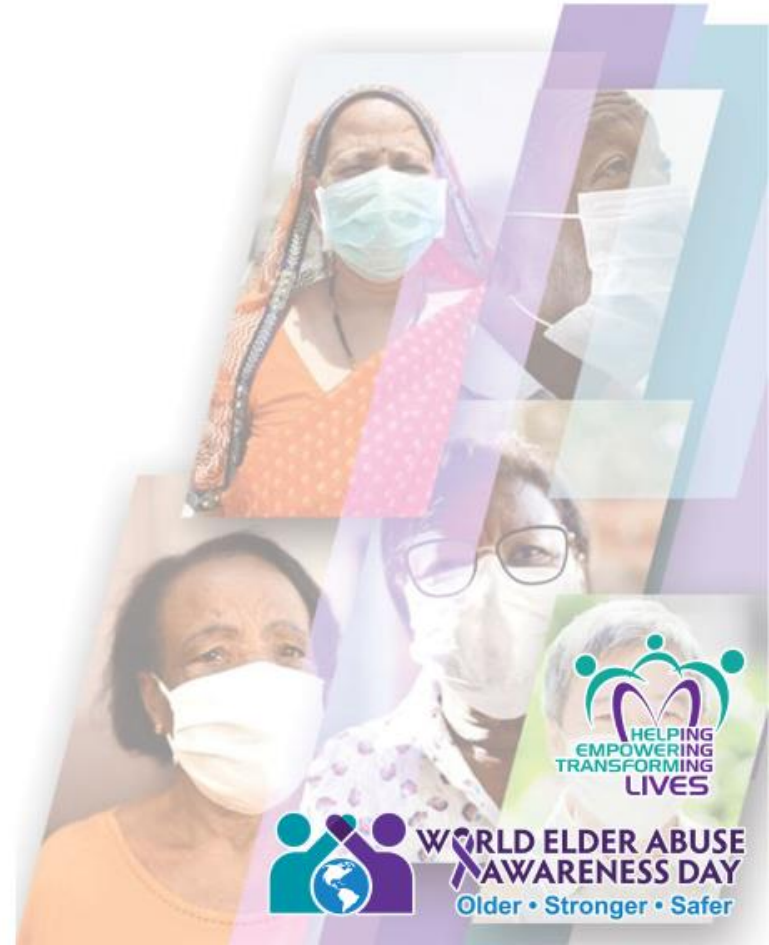


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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Defining Elder Financial Abuse (EFA)
 2. Quantitative data on EFA in T&T
 3. Impact of EFA on elders
 4. Tips for Preventing EFA
- * Qualitative highlights from T&T Elders & Caregivers

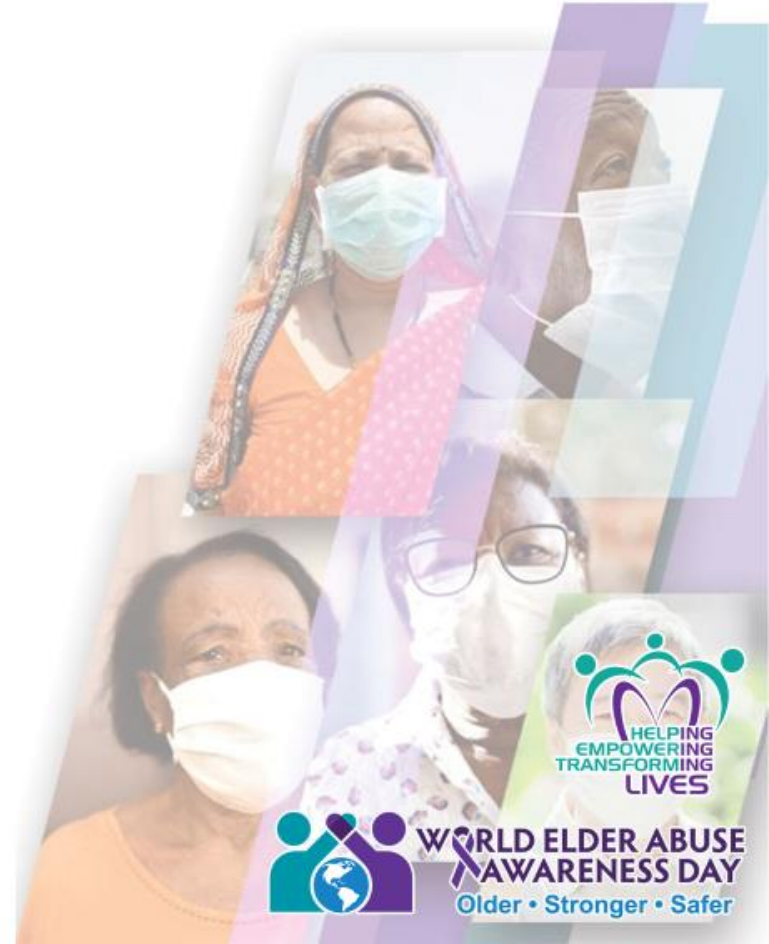




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1. Defining EFA



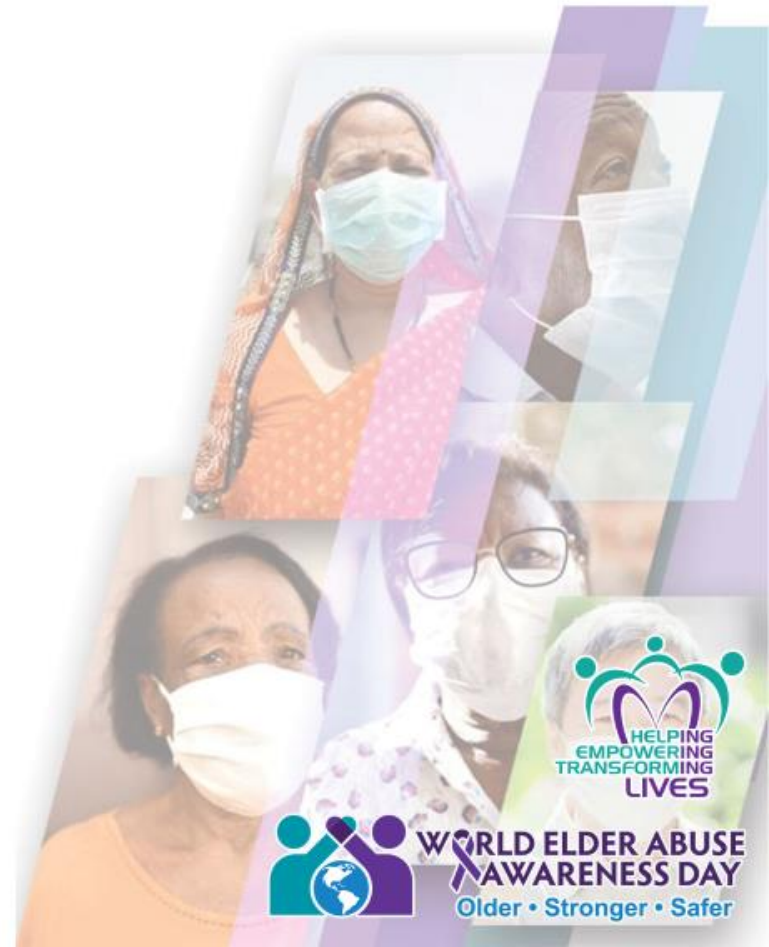


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DEFINITION OF ELDER FINANCIAL ABUSE (EFB)

- Elder financial abuse, sometimes referred to as financial exploitation, is defined as "someone illegally or improperly using an elder's (aged 60 or older) money or belongings for their own personal use" (Forbes, 2021).
- Generally the victim must experience some disadvantage as a result of the transaction, but some jurisdictions also require that the perpetrator gain some advantage from the transaction (Dessin, 2000 in Hafemeister, 2003)





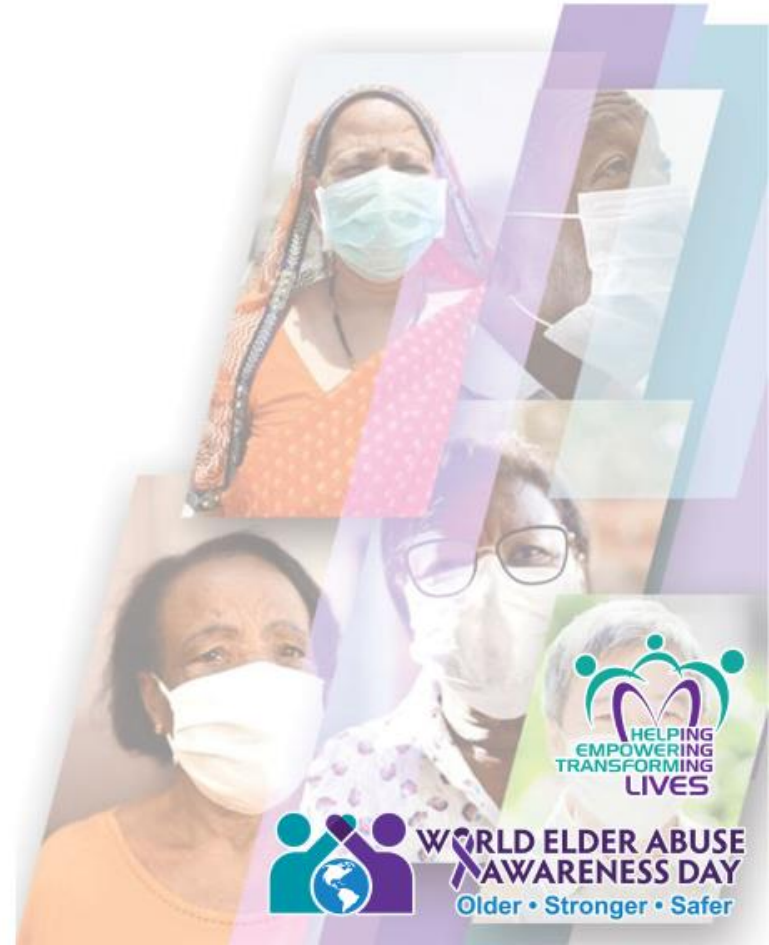
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EXAMPLES OF EFA

Neighbors, caregivers, professionals, and even family or friends may:

- take, use, or misuse money or property without knowledge or permission
- fail to repay money owed to the elder
- overcharge for services
- fail to provide services already paid for
- misuse ATMs or credit cards
- cash an older person's cheques without permission or authorization
- misappropriate funds from a pension





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“I just went through a lil crisis with him. He complain about my handling his finances so I left it to him and he end up giving away all his money... I never argue with him yuh know ... He called me and told me he want me to help him. So I say, “Well ok, well let me go and see what happened”. I checked all the accounts and I say, “You realise it’s all gone? ... So, you ok if I take back charge of it?”. He say “Yes” ...”

Family Carer: Timothy (2013)



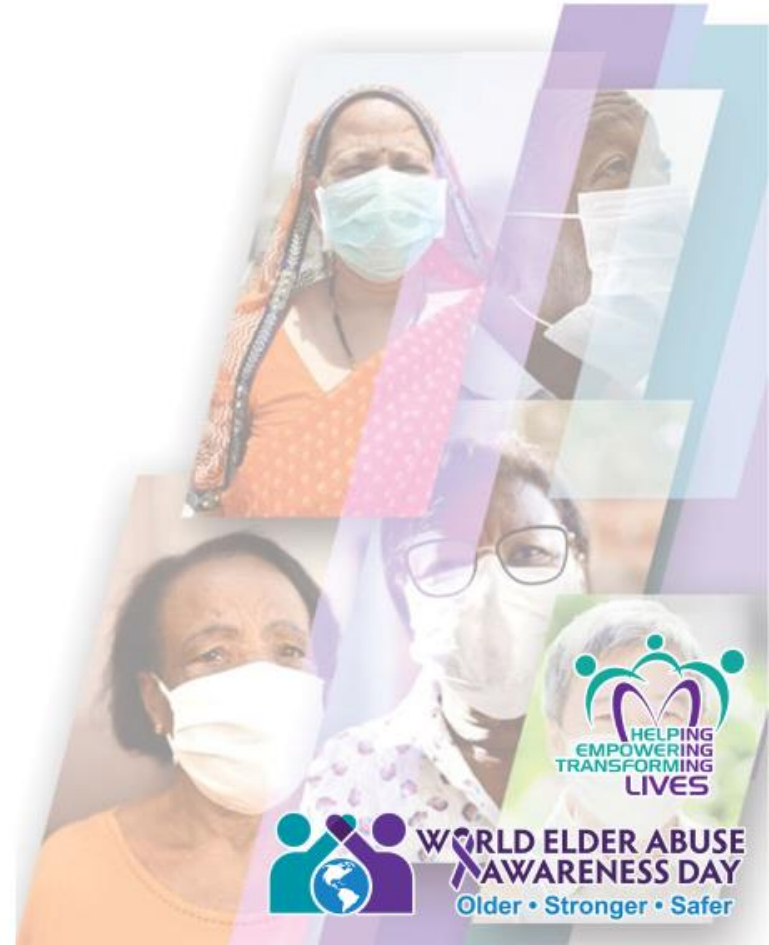


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EXAMPLES OF EFA

- forge or force an older person's signature
- abuse joint signature authority on a bank account
- get an older person to sign a deed, will, contract, or power of attorney through deception, coercion, or undue influence
- improperly using the authority provided by a conservatorship
- denying older persons access to their money or preventing them from controlling their assets





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I have a sister living close [to my father], an' when he get sick to go in de health centre (he said) “Call de one in Tobago” ... but she comin' an' study (what he has) an' that's not fair ... He plant he lil tomato dey pickin' an' carryin'. He lil melongene, he lil pepper an' t'ing: [they] fullin' [dey] bag an' gone but ain't bringin' nothing [back for him] ... [And yet] dey want to know w'en he dead, what [I] doin' with he share. 'Cause de day when [he] buy de land an' we get de deed, he tell meh 'Chile, you carry this to Tobago with you, because anything happen to meh they will take it'. [My sister] gone an' askin' de ole' man 'How she could take de deed ...?' [But], when de house was builin', she ain't put ah fart!'... [She even] sell [my father] van [for] \$20,000. Dat is de ole man comfort!

Family Carer: Lakshmi (2014)





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SIGNS OF EFA

- missing belongings or property (e.g., jewelry)
- unusual or unexplained banking activity
- unpaid bills, eviction or foreclosure notices, or notices to discontinue utilities despite the availability of adequate financial resources may suggest financial abuse
- elder's unawareness of or confusion about recently completed financial transactions
- decline in personal grooming, or an absence of clothing, food, or other basic necessities when the older person can afford them
- unkempt residence when arrangements have been made for providing care
- untreated medical or mental health problems





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“It costs roughly \$40,000 (TT) a month to have full time care for mum. Every one of her children gives. In fact we just had to up it a bit because the carers are complaining this money eh enough. They have to be washing clothes and cleaning mum... when my mum lost her leg in a simple operation... it hasn't been easy. Some caregivers tend to bring a whole load of baggage with them... Recently, when we were having one of our family conferences we were saying that you want quality care but you are paying minimum wages. [If] you cannot afford to pay big money for people who taking care of your loved ones...you going to have a mix of a persons who just trying to make it, because [the] salary smallWe had a terrible incident recently, whereby one of the [care workers] apparently went upstairs where my sister lives and took almost \$6000 (TTD) ”

Family Carer: Ravindra (2014)



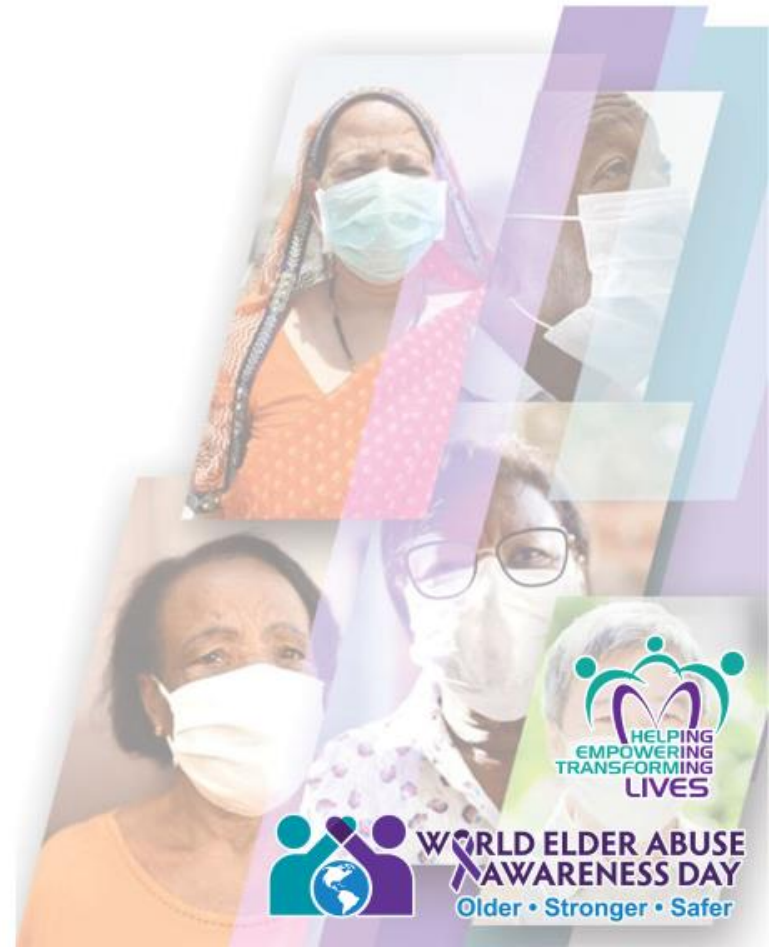


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SIGNS OF EFA

- defensiveness or hostility by the caregiver during visits or on the phone
- social isolation of the elder, including a discontinuation of prior relationships with family and friends
- new acquaintances or "best friends," particularly those who take up residence with the older person, who the elder person relies on totally, or who express overenthusiastic affection for the elder person
- elder afraid or worried when talking about money
- a noticeable increase in the spending of people living with or caring for the older person
- caregivers or family members who express excessive interest in the amount of money being spent on the older person, who ask only financial questions, or who do not allow the elder person to speak
- a promise of lifelong care may be accompanied by an implicit or explicit expectation that the elder person's funds will be transferred to the caregiver





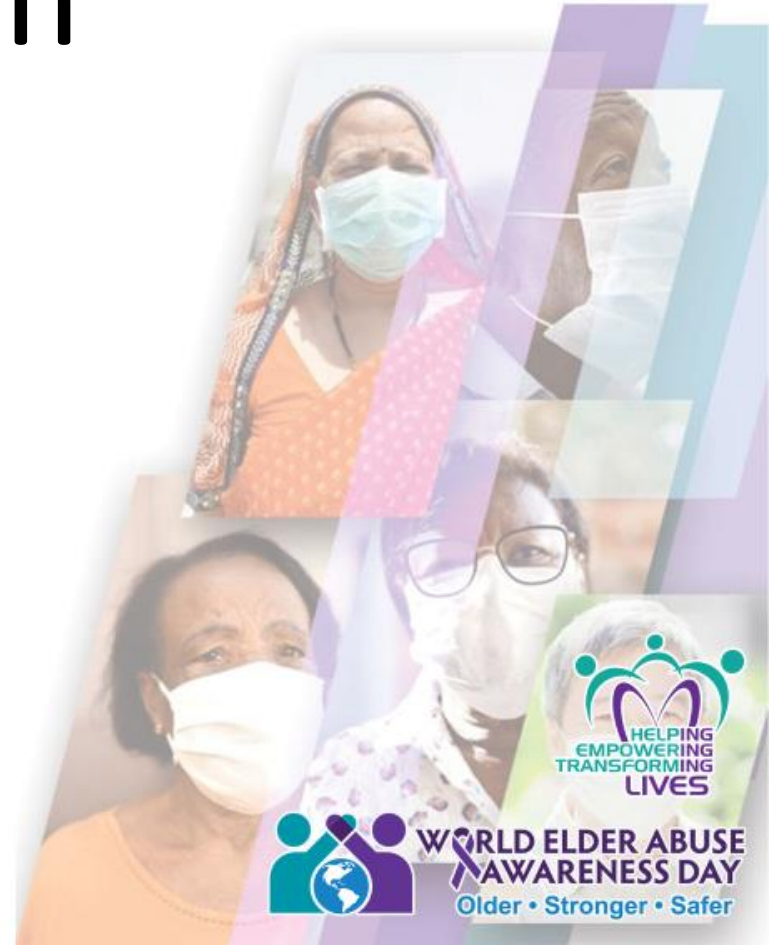
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2. Quantitative Data on EFA in T&T

Crime & Problem Analysis (CAPA)

Older Persons Information Center (OPIC)

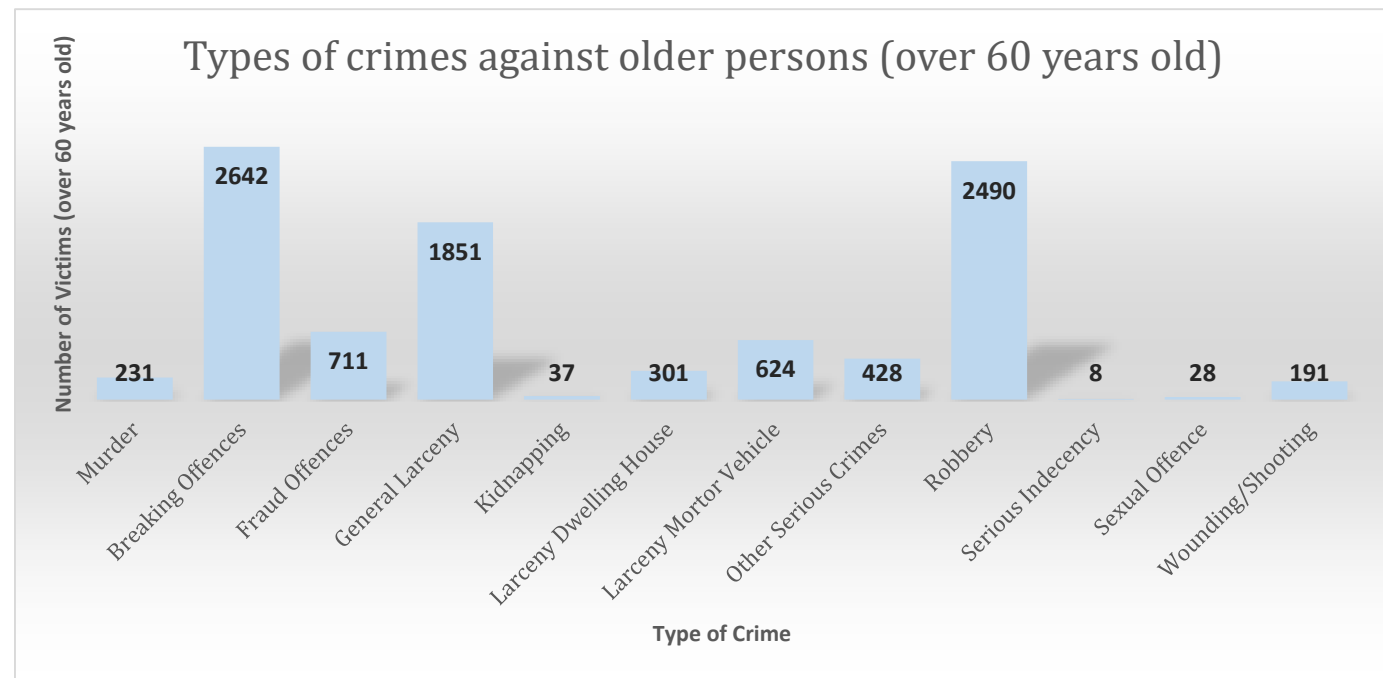




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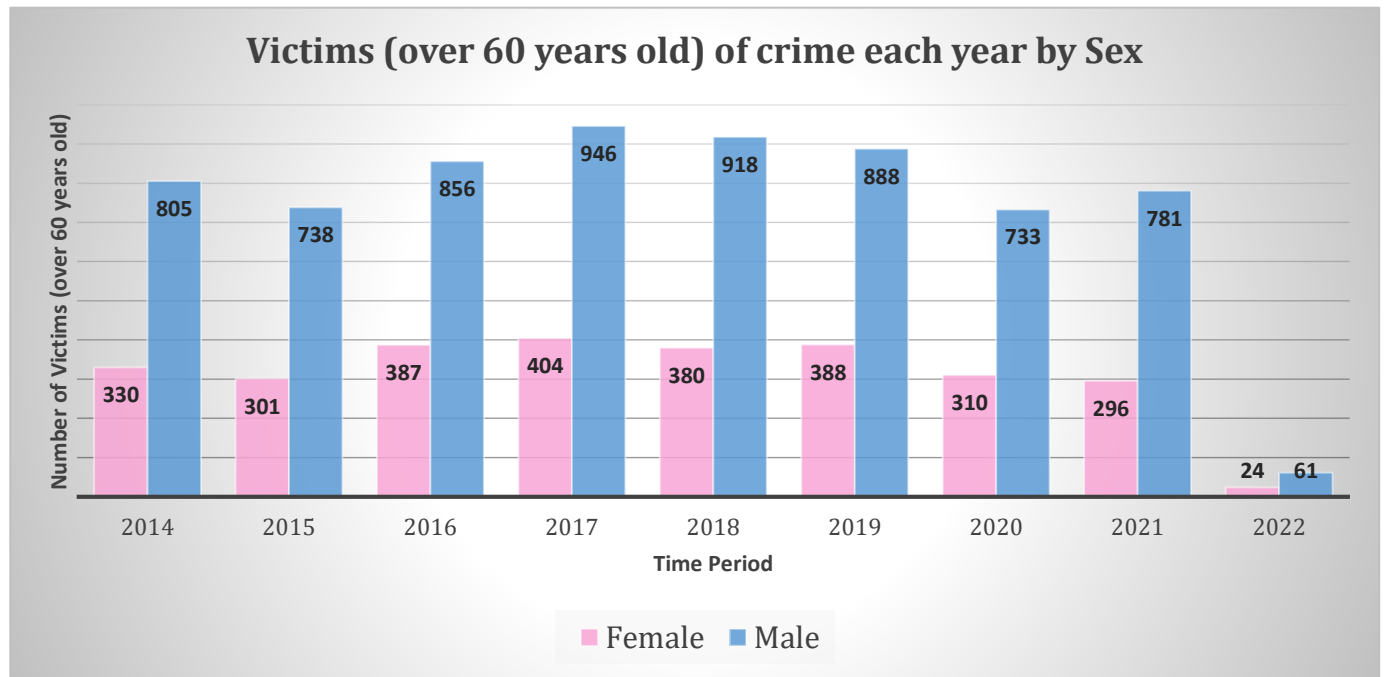
Types of Serious Offences Perpetrated against Older Persons - 2014 to 2022(30.04.2022).



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Gender & Serious Offences Perpetrated Against Older Persons

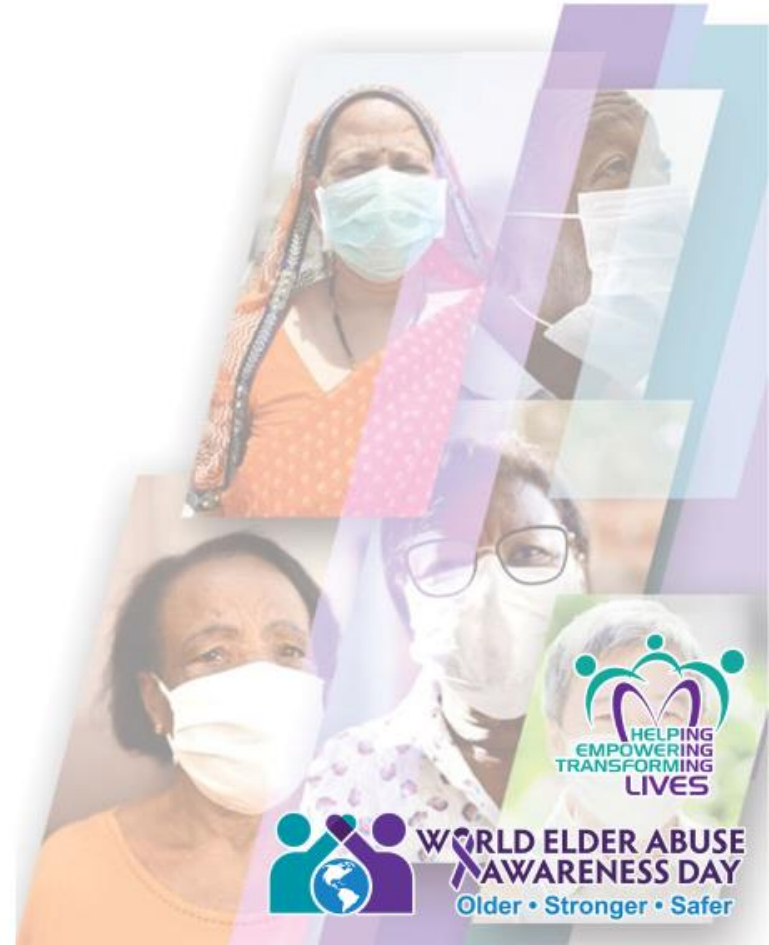
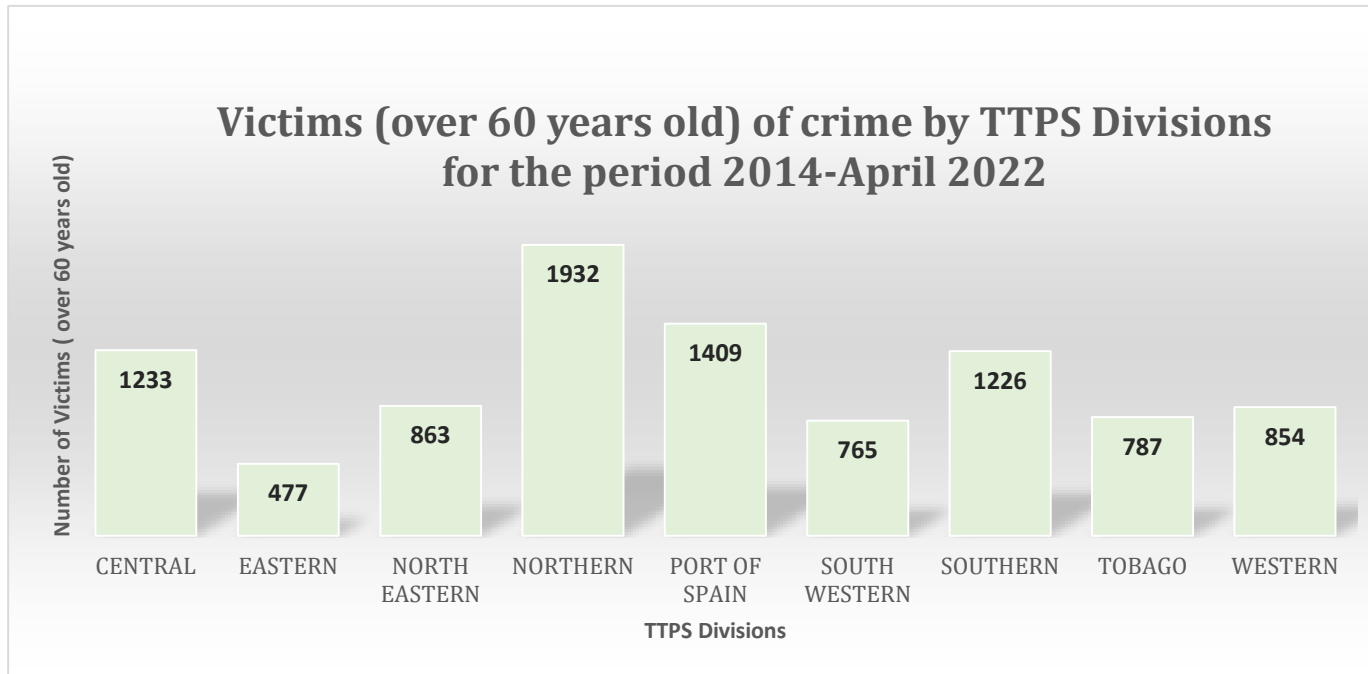




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- Victims of Serious Crimes by TTPS Divisions





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3. Impact of EFA on Older People



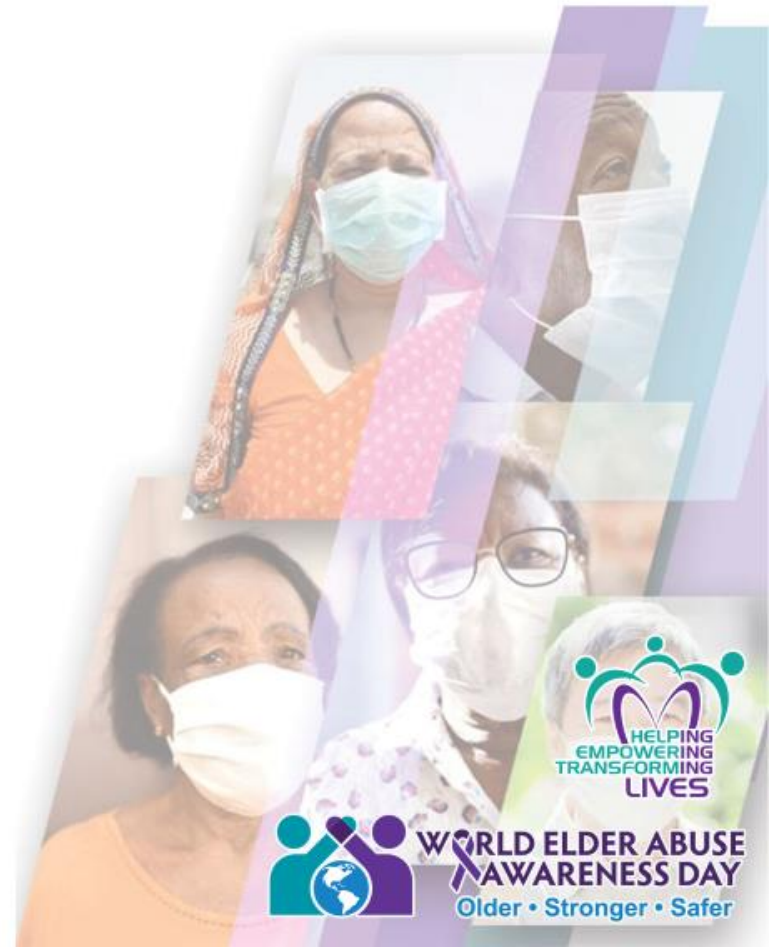


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IMPACT OF EFA on OLDER PERSONS

- Loss of a residence, car or utilities due to inability to make payments
- Loss of trust and an increased skepticism of everyone, even trustworthy friends and family members
- Feelings of depression, loss of dignity, fear, shame, anger and other negative emotions
- Depleted physical health due to stress or the inability to afford proper care or nutrition
- Alcoholism or other risky and destructive behavior
- Dependency on government assistance





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4. CONCLUSION: Tips for Preventing EFA



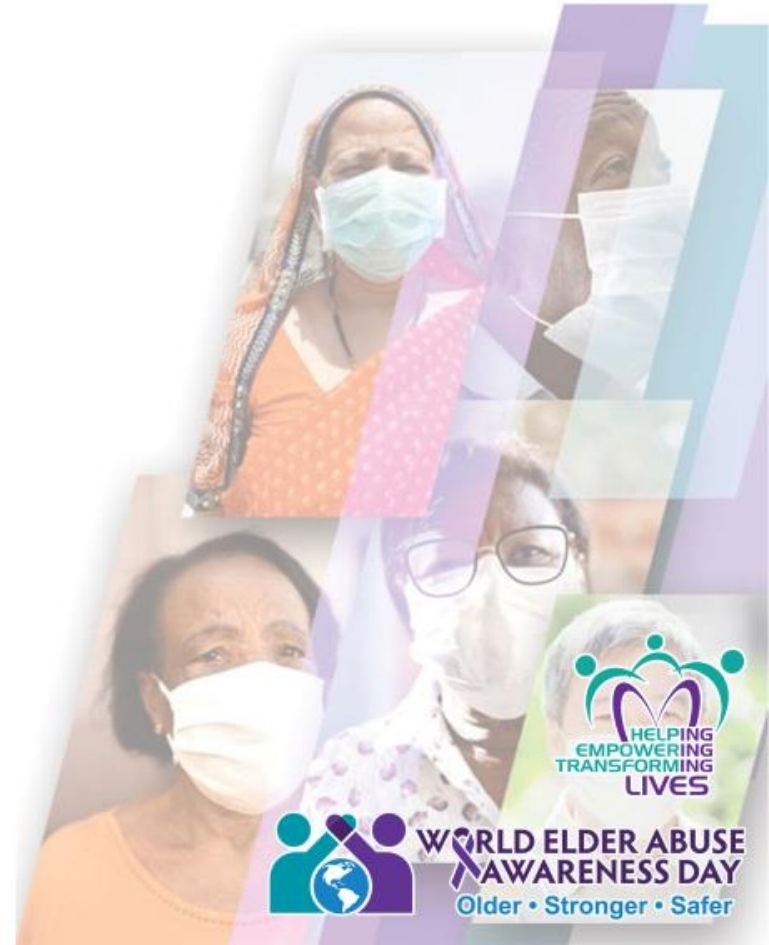


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Well I give my niece (Tricia) money because she see after me ... I does give this next one (Mr. Birch) a few dollars ... because he see after my medication: every month I give him. My niece ... she does draw my pension, she bring the money for me. I will give her so much to last out the month an' I save back the balance in the bank: it on my name and her name – ain't no problem with that. If she buy anything, she bring the receipt for me: I'm sure about that. I gave her yesterday to pay the phone bill ... she say, 'I owe you \$4'. I say, 'You will bring back the \$4?' (*he said in astonishment*).

Elder: Uncle Wilton (2011)



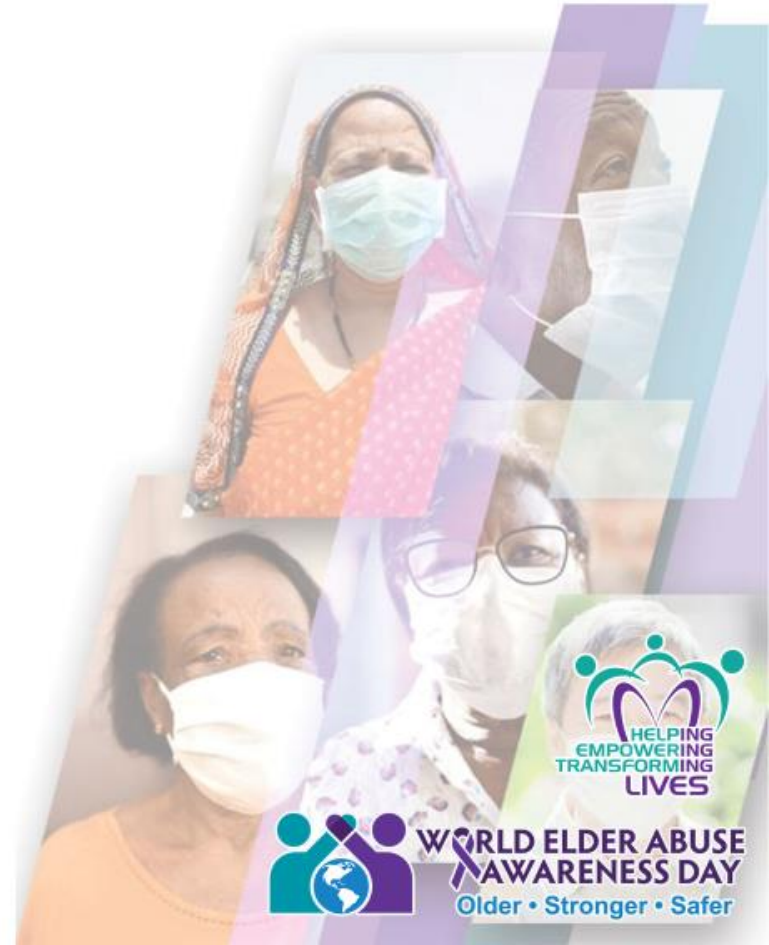


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PREVENT EFA

- Plan ahead to protect your assets and to ensure your wishes are followed. Shred receipts, bank statements and unused credit card offers before throwing them away.
- Carefully choose a trustworthy person to act as your agent in all estate-planning matters.
- Lock up your cheque book, account statements and other sensitive information.
- Check references and credentials before hiring anyone. Don't allow workers to have access to information about your finances.
- Never rush into a financial decision.
- Pay with checks and credit cards instead of cash to keep a paper trail.
- Feel free to say "no." After all, it's your money.





Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SERVICES

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Thanks for
listening.

Any Questions ?

