



Rick Scott, Governor
Mike Carroll, Secretary

Adult Protective Services Training for Professionals

Abuse and Neglect

June 22, 2016

Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency.



Training Goal

The overall goal for this training is to:

- increase awareness of the mandatory reporting requirements
- provide an overview of Florida Adult Protective Services
- improve communication between professionals and the Florida Abuse Hotline.



Florida's Elder Population

Population By Age Category

• Under 60	14,406,458	76.6%
• 60-64	1,135,250	6.0%
• 65-74	1,727,940	9.2%
• 75-84	1,097,537	5.8%
• 85+	434,125	2.3%
• All Ages	18,801,310	



Protecting Vulnerable Adults

- Chapter 415, F.S. – DCF to investigate reports alleging abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults
- **Purpose of Investigation**
 - Determine if alleged victim has been abused, neglected or exploited
 - Determine if assistance is necessary to protect the victim's health and safety



Florida's Elder Population

Disability Status (65+)

Population 65 years and over 3,296,861

- With a disability 1,136,372
- With a hearing difficulty 467,044
- With a vision difficulty 213,370
- With a cognitive difficulty 301,211
- With an ambulatory difficulty 735,714
- With a self-care difficulty 272,530
- With an independent living difficulty 483,199

Source: US Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Study



Who Is A Vulnerable Adult?

Vulnerable Adult means a person age 18 or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living, and/or to provide for his or her own care or protection, is impaired due to a mental, emotional, sensory, long-term physical, or developmental disability or dysfunction, or brain damage, or due to the infirmities of aging.

*Per 415.102(28), Florida Statutes



What is a Caregiver?

“Caregiver” means a person who has been entrusted with or has assumed the responsibility for frequent and regular care of or services to a vulnerable adult on a temporary or permanent basis and who has a commitment, agreement, or understanding with that person or that person’s guardian that a caregiver role exists.

*Per 415.102(5), Florida Statutes



Overview of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

- Abuse, neglect and exploitation are complex and often hidden problems.
- The Department of Children & Families (DCF) investigates and corrects abuse, neglect and exploitation through the reports taken by the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE).
- Everyone has a responsibility to make a report when abuse, neglect or exploitation is suspected.



What is Abuse?

“Abuse” means any willful act or **threatened act** by a relative, caregiver or household member which causes or is likely to cause significant impairment to a vulnerable adult’s physical, mental, or emotional health. Abuse includes acts and omissions.

*Per 415.102(1), Florida Statutes



What Is Neglect?

- **Neglect** means the failure or omission on the part of the caregiver or vulnerable adult to provide the care, supervision, and services necessary to **maintain the physical and mental well-being** of a vulnerable adult.
- **Neglect** also means the failure of a caregiver or vulnerable adult to make a reasonable effort to protect a vulnerable adult from abuse, neglect or exploitation by others.
- **Neglect** is repeated conduct or a single incident of carelessness which produces or could reasonably be expected to result in serious physical or psychological injury, or a substantial risk of death.



Vulnerable Adult in Need of Services (Self-Neglect)

“Vulnerable adult in need of services” means a vulnerable adult who has been determined by a protective investigator to be suffering from the ill effects of neglect not caused by a second party perpetrator and is in need of protective services or other services to prevent further harm.



What Is Exploitation?

Exploitation means knowingly, by deception or intimidation, obtaining or using, or attempting to obtain or use the adult's funds, assets, or property with the intent to temporarily or permanently deprive the adult of the use, benefit, or possession of the funds, assets, or property for the benefit of someone other than the vulnerable adult.

* Per 415.102(1), Florida Statutes



A Person Who Exploits is...

- A person who stands in a position of trust and confidence with a vulnerable adult.
- A person who knows or who should know that the vulnerable adult lacks the capacity to consent.
- Not always known by the victim.



What Does Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Look Like and What are the Indicators?



Who Are The Abusers?

- *Abusers are often a **family members, trusted friends, and caregivers!***
 - Likely to have a history of mental or behavioral disorders
 - May be using/abusing alcohol or other substances
 - May have a poor financial situation or financial dependency
 - Often are critical of others and lack understanding about the needs of those for whom they care



Indicators of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

- **Physical Indicators:** Unexplained Fractures, Unexplained Burns, Unexplained Lacerations, Sexual Abuse, Other such as emaciated, unusual lumps, protrusions, bald spots, scars, lack of clothing or same clothing, fleas or lice, unkempt or dirty.
- **Environmental Indicators: Home;** with garbage thrown about inside and outside, hazardous living conditions due to lack of repairs, human or animal excrement, fire hazards, large number of animals lacking care.
- **Food and Clothing;** little to no food, food spoiled or lying around, insufficient clothing for the weather.
- **Social Deprivations;** no evidence of social visits, television, radio, physically isolated from community, lack of friends, attempt by caregiver to isolate the individual from others. **Financial;** little or no money, activity in account not usual or age appropriate, POA given when the individual is clearly incapable of making this decision, recent will changed, lack of amenities.



Indicators of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation (continued)

- **Behavioral Indicators of Victim:** Destructive Behavior of Victim; assault others, destroy belongings, threatens harm or suicide, inappropriately displays rage in public, afraid of being alone, recent and sudden changes in behavior or attitude, suspicion of other people, shows symptoms of withdrawal, severe hopelessness, constantly moves from place to place, frightened of caregiver, overly quiet, passive, timid, denial of problems.
- **Behaviors of Family or Caregivers:** family discord, striking, shoving, beating, name-calling, scapegoating, hostile, secretive, frustrated, shows little concern, poor self-control, blames adult, impatient, irresponsible, denial of problem, recent crisis, inability to handle stress, recent loss of spouse, withholds food or medication, isolates individual from others in the household, lack of physical, facial, eye contact with individual, changes doctors frequently, past history of similar incidents, unrealistic expectations of individual.



How Does Abuse Happen?

- *Family dynamics contribute to abuse:*
 - Marital conflict, family discord or isolation from others
 - Caregivers who feel forced to provide care, resentment, or jealousy
 - Too many people in a crowded home
 - Financial problems or lack of financial expertise
 - Medical issues, physical or cognitive limitations
 - Adverse life events such as death of a spouse/partner or close friends, financial setbacks, or change in health status
 - Inability to speak English, isolation or dependence
 - Loneliness, fatigue, fear or trauma
 - There is a family history of abuse



The Protective Investigation Process

- Commence investigation within **24 hours of receiving report**
- Determine any indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Assess safety and risk of further harm
- Determine need for services
- Complete investigation within 60 days



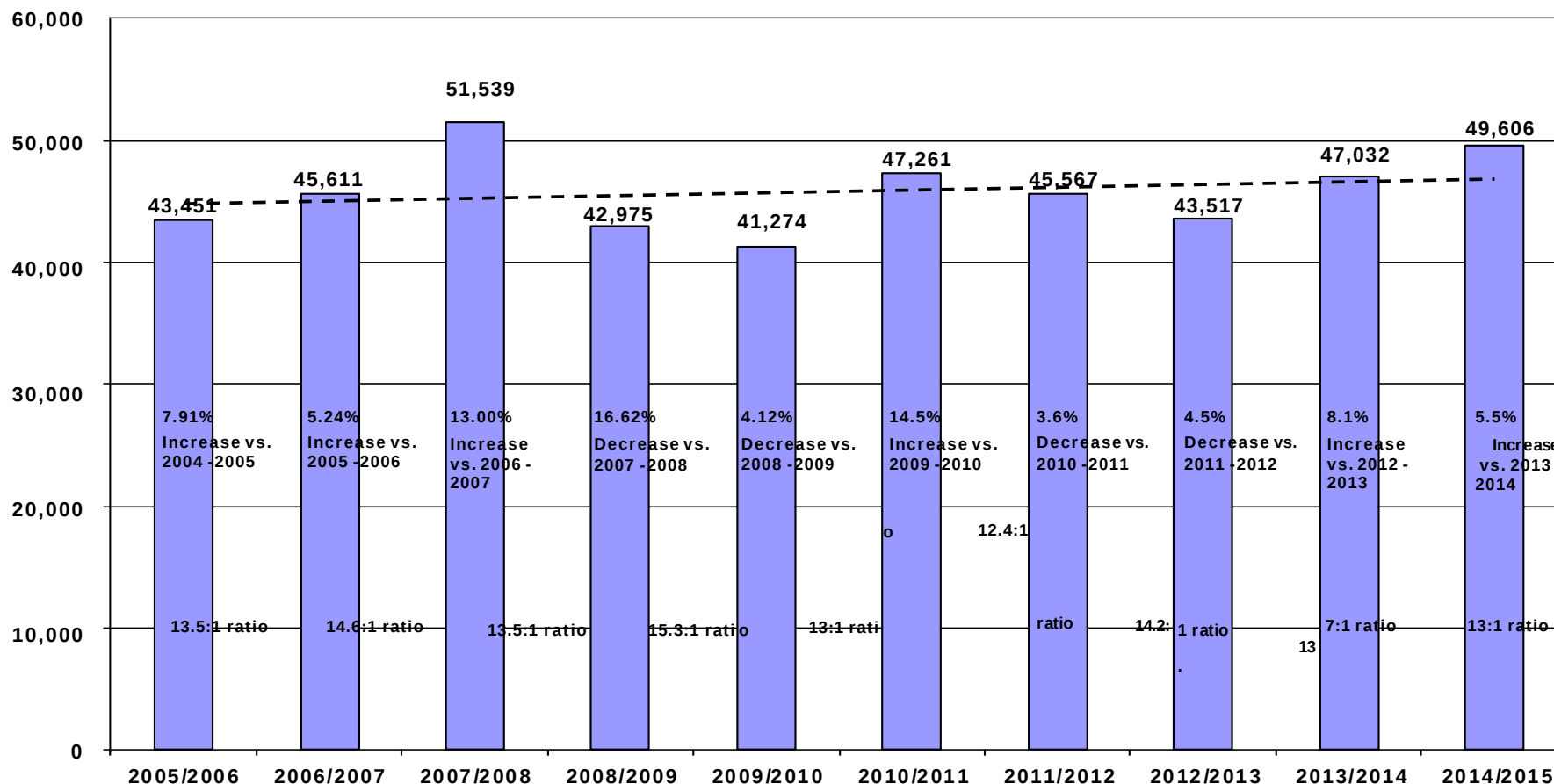
Investigative Process Partnership

Partnerships to assist Florida's vulnerable adult population:

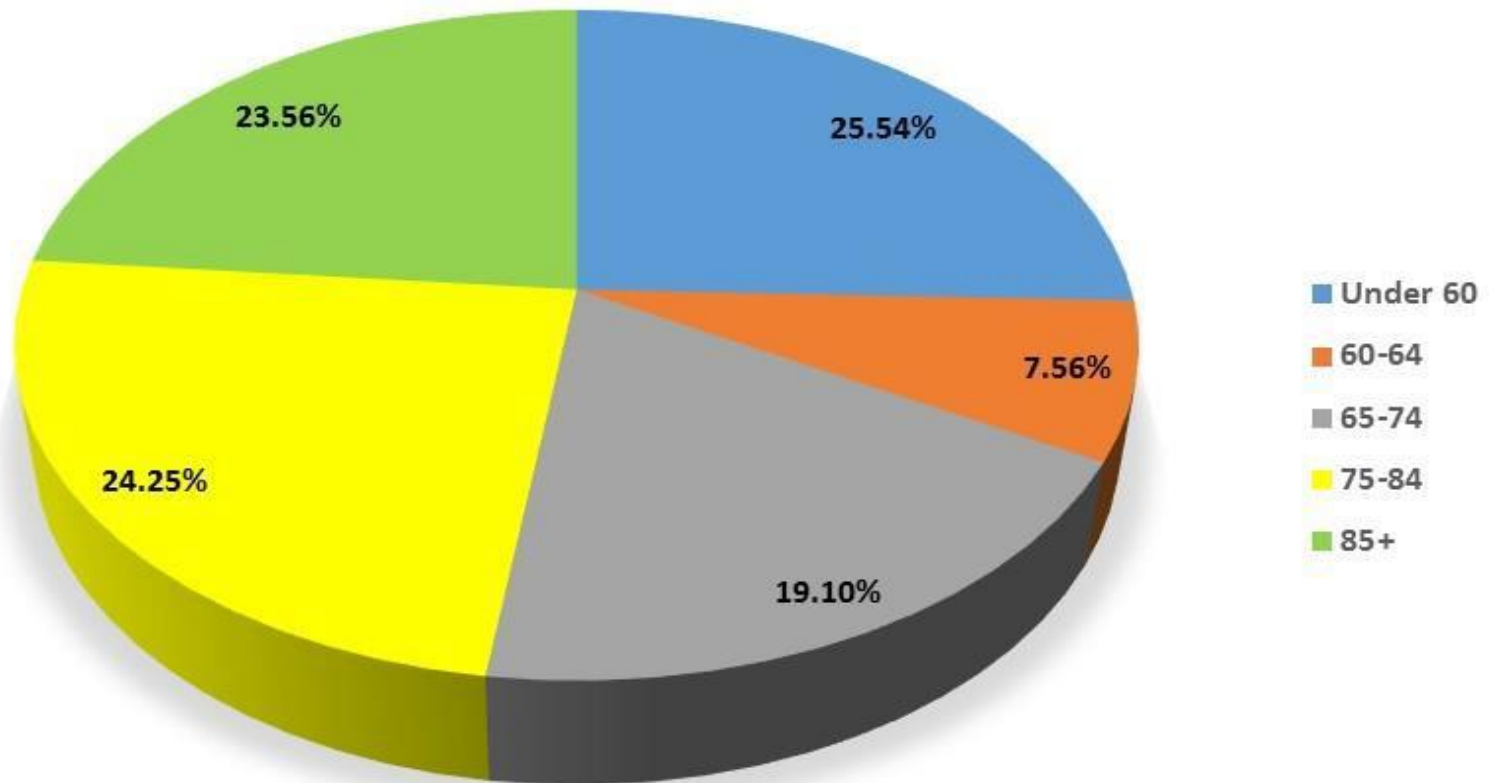
- Department of Elder Affairs
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities
- Agency for Health Care Administration
- Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Office of the Attorney General / Medicaid Fraud Control Unit
- Department of Health
- Law Enforcement and State Attorney's Office



Adult Investigations Statewide Reports Received 2005-2015

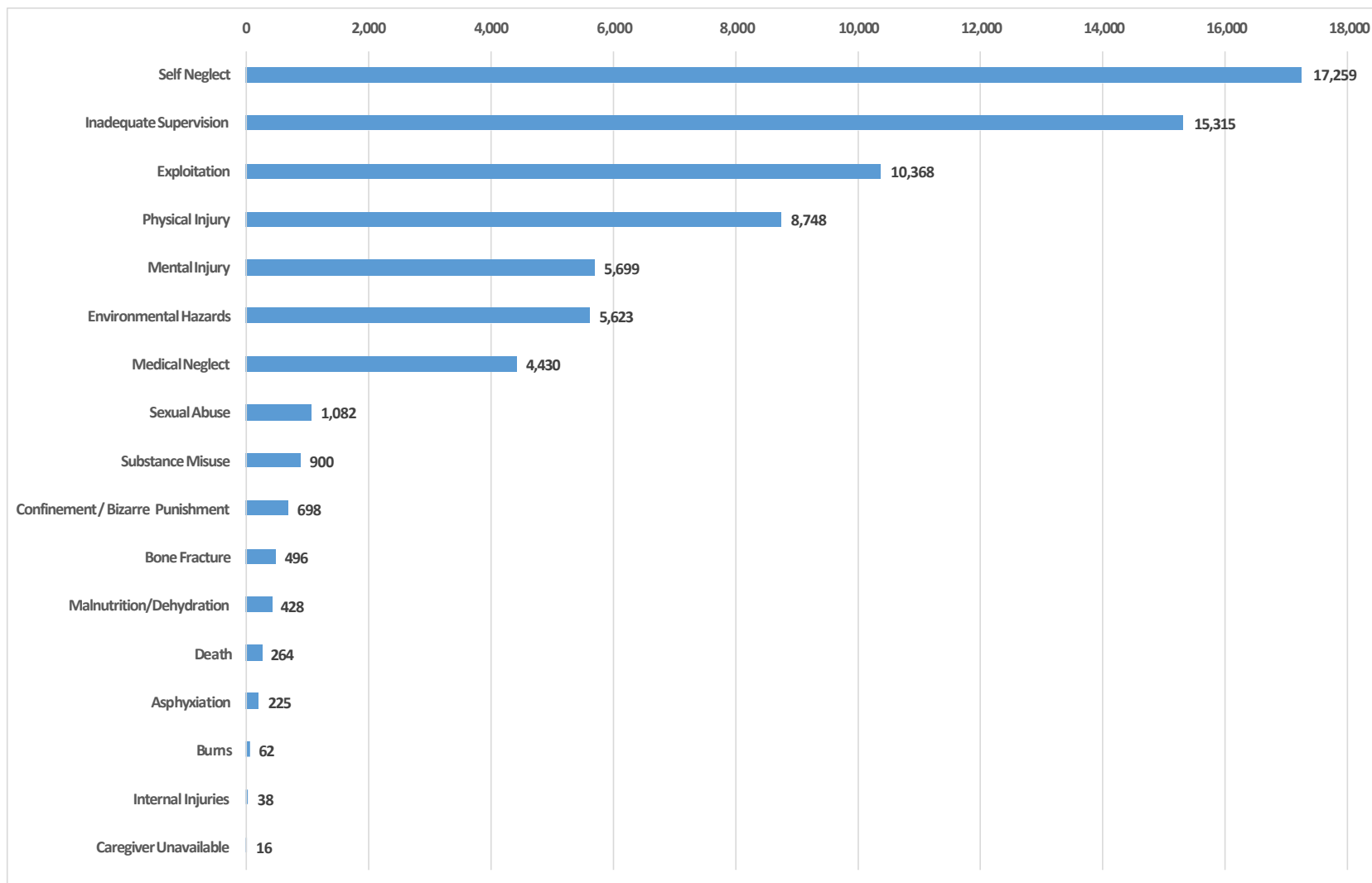


Age of Victims in Reports, FY 2014-2015



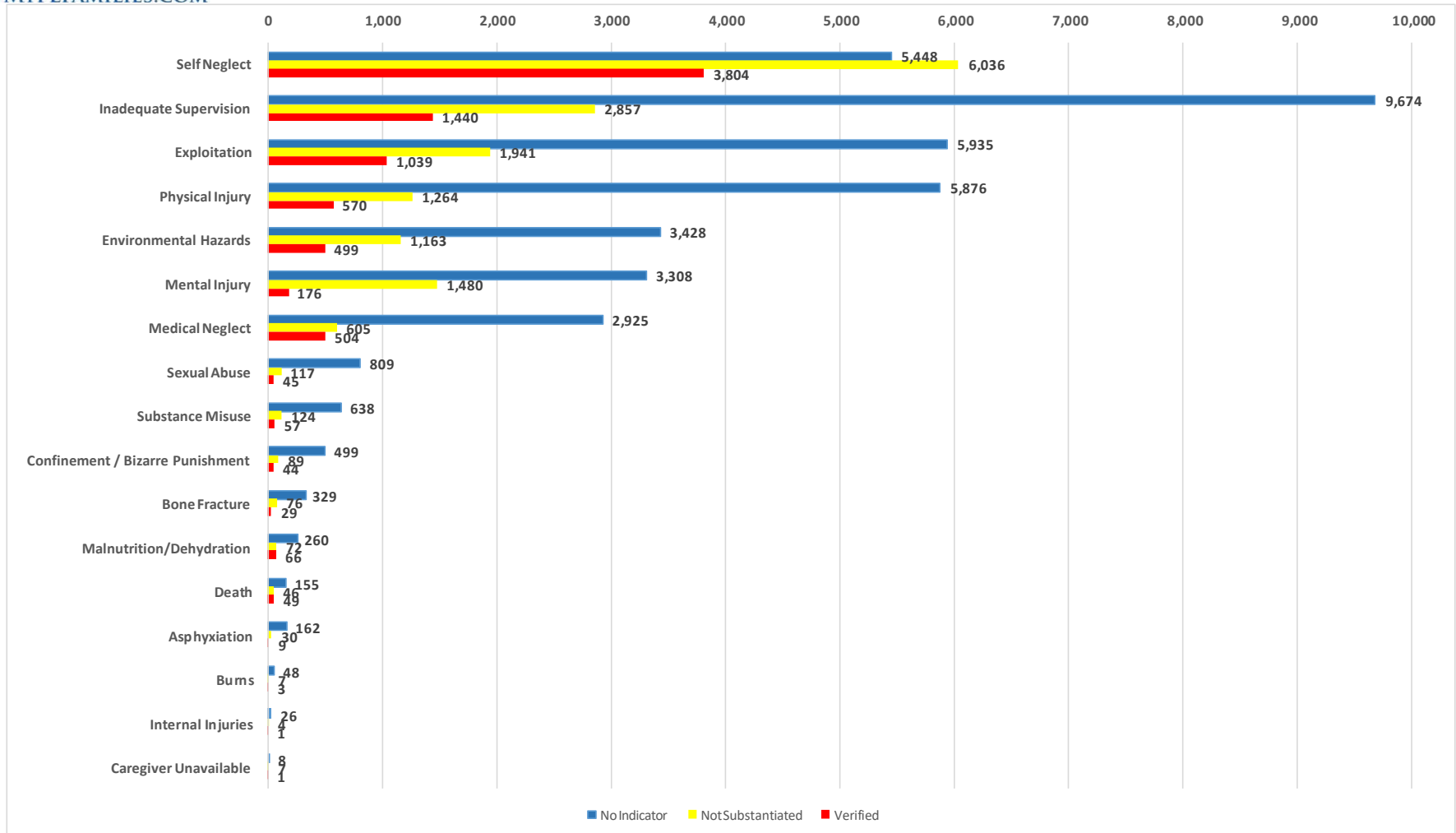
Adult Maltreatments, Statewide

(Fiscal Year 2014-2015)



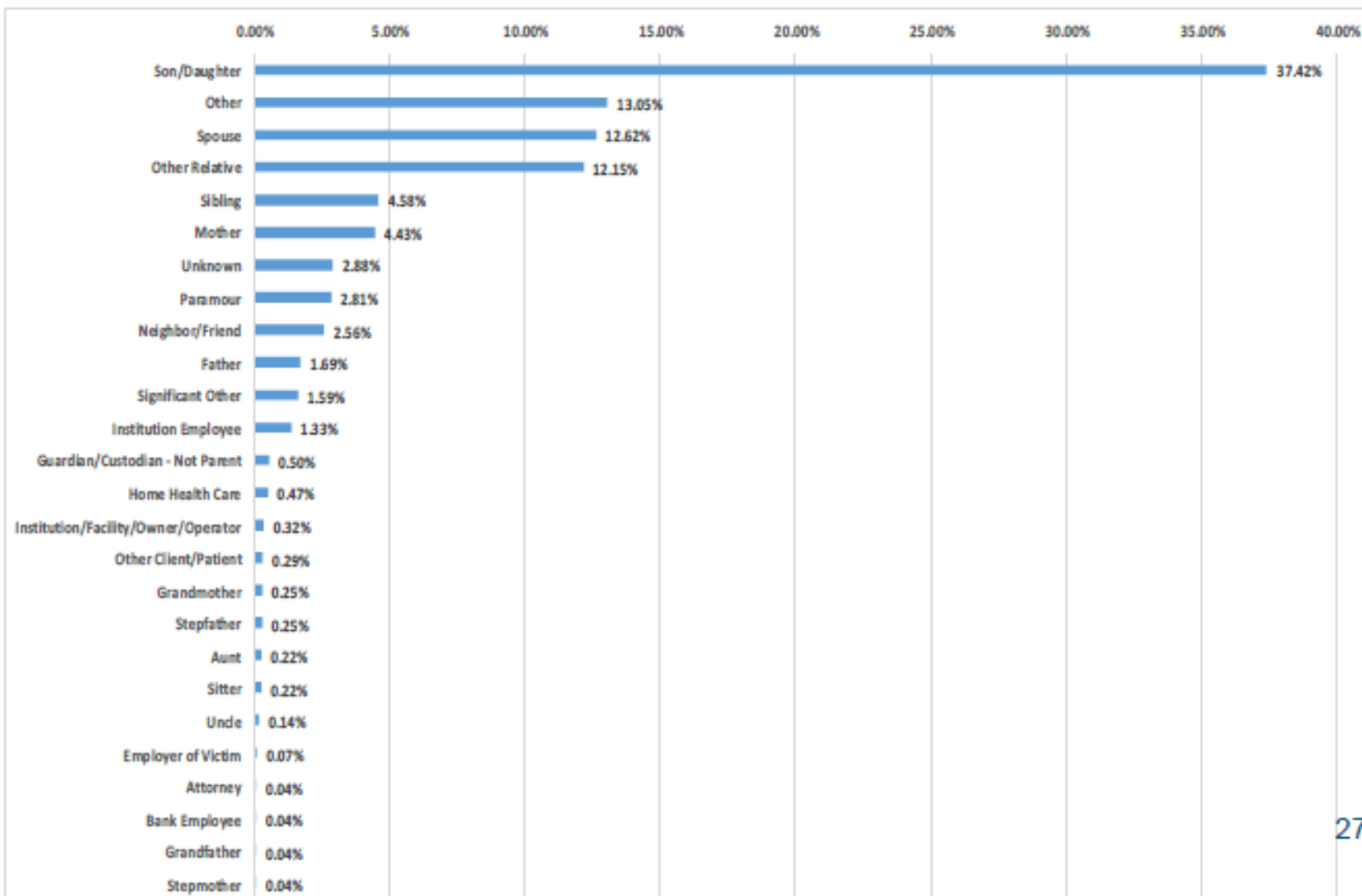
Most Frequent Maltreatments, with Findings

(Fiscal Year 2014-2015)



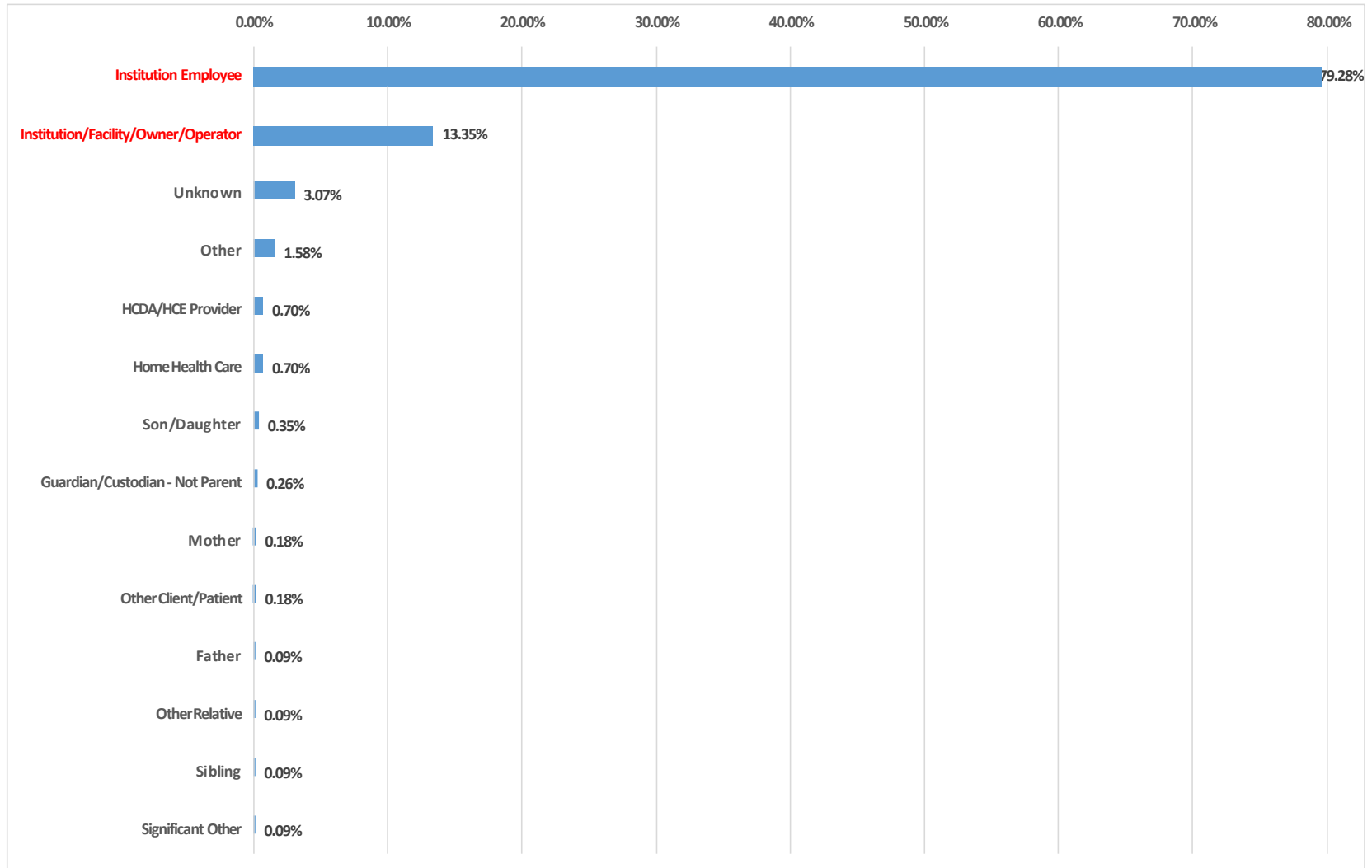
Who Are the Abusers?

(Relationship of Perpetrator to the Victim in Verified Reports –
IN-HOME Reports - Fiscal Year 2014-2015)



Who Are the Abusers?

(Relationship of Perpetrator to the Victim in Verified Reports –
INSTITUTIONAL Reports - Fiscal Year 2014-2015)





Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Mandatory Reporting

- Required by law (415.1034, F.S.)
 - Any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected or exploited
 - A person who knowingly and willfully fails to report a case of known or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083
- **Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE)**
 - 24-hour, toll-free statewide hotline
 - On-line reporting at <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>
 - Accepted 49,606 reports alleging adult abuse in FY 2014-2015



Mandatory Reporters

Any person, including, but not limited to, any:

1. Physician, osteopathic physician, medical examiner, chiropractic physician, nurse, paramedic, emergency medical technician, or hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of vulnerable adults;
2. Health professional or mental health professional other than one listed in subparagraph 1.;
3. Practitioner who relies solely on spiritual means for healing;
4. Nursing home staff; assisted living facility staff; adult day care center staff; adult family-care home staff; social worker; or other professional adult care, residential, or institutional staff;
5. State, county, or municipal criminal justice employee or law enforcement officer;
6. Employee of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation conducting inspections of public lodging establishments under s. 509.032;
7. Florida advocacy council or Disability Rights Florida member or a representative of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; or
8. Bank, savings and loan, or credit union officer, trustee, or employee, shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the central abuse hotline.



What To Report

- Name, age, race, sex, physical, mental or behavioral description or infirmity, and location of each victim alleged to have been abused, neglected, or exploited.
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the victim's family members.
- Name, address, and telephone number of each alleged perpetrator and the relationship.
- Name, address, and telephone number of the caregiver of the victim, if different from the alleged perpetrator.
- Name, address, and telephone number of the person reporting the alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Description of the physical or psychological injuries sustained. A description of the abuse, neglect or exploitation, including any signs of harm or injuries.
- Actions taken by the reporter, if any, such as notification of the criminal justice agency.
- Any other information available to the reporting person which may establish the cause of abuse, neglect, or exploitation that occurred or is occurring.



Reporting

- Barriers to reporting
 - Victims often find it difficult to file a report for themselves due to guilt, pride, shame, fear.
 - Recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect and exploitation is sometimes not easy.
 - Lack of knowledge of mandatory reporting requirements inhibits reporting.



Where To Report

Telephone reporting:

- **1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**
- Always phone in information concerning emergency or critical situations.

Facsimile reporting:

- **1-800-914-0004**

On-line reporting:

- **<https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>**



How Can You Help?

- Learn effective interviewing techniques.
- If the victim is in danger of immediate harm, call 911 or local law enforcement.
- Learn about local support groups, counseling or other available services in your area to which the victim can be referred.
- When in doubt about a situation, make the call and let the Hotline experts decide if investigation is needed.



Assisting Adult Protective Investigations

How can you help?

- **Provide specific information-** It is essential to provide accurate demographics and the locations of the subjects of a report.
- **Provide collateral sources and contact information** — Who can support or provide essential information regarding the allegations? How can the investigator contact them?



Assisting Adult Protective Investigations (continued)

- Provide accurate contact information – It is essential that the adult protective investigator contact you to ensure accuracy of the report as well as any additional details.
- Provide as much details as possible – Think the 5 “W”s -
Who? What? Where? When? Why?



If you disagree ...

with the counselors decision not to accept a report ...

- Ask to speak to a supervisor or manager.



Florida Hotline

To report suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult:

- Call toll free at: 1-800-96-ABUSE
(1-800-962-2873)
- Report online at:
<https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>



Contact Information

Department of Children and Families
Adult Protective Services
Phone: 850-488-2881