

Intro Ep Transcript:

Marian: Welcome to the podcast Pathways to Safety: bridges from Adult Protective Services to community based services for adults experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We come to you with the goal of introducing community partners in Montana, who work together to assist victims and survivors of adults experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. My name is Marian Liu.

Zach: And I'm Zachary Hass. And we are your host today to discuss how the podcast came about. Before we start this episode a quick disclaimer, this podcast is supported by the Administration for Community Living, the United States department of health and human services through a 2021 elder justice innovation grant with Montana Adult Protective Services being our primary community partner. Grantees carrying out projects in our government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Nonetheless, our findings, conclusions, points of view, or opinions do not necessarily represent the official policy of the federal government.

Marian: Well now join our conversation to see what this podcast is about. Well, Zach should we introduce ourselves first.

Zach: Yeah, go ahead, Marian.

Marian: Well, my name is Marian Liu. I am an assistant professor at the school of nursing here at Purdue University. I'm also a faculty associate of center on aging in the life course at Purdue University.

Zach: And I'm Zachary Hass, an assistant professor also with the school of nursing and split between nursing, industrial engineering, and also a full member of the Regenstrief center for healthcare engineering here at Purdue University.

Marian: But you know, I think it might be helpful for our listeners to know a little bit about us our research background, especially our history in working with Adult Protective Services and other service providers. So, I'm gonna go ahead and start. So, I worked on some secondary data analysis using APS data, Adult Protective Services data. And I started working with Adult Protective Services programs in California around 2015. My colleagues and I, received funding from state agencies and federal governments to work with APS programs in various different states, focusing on services and outcomes. And I also work with the national Adult Protective Services association on various project.

Zach: I am a statistician by trade. And my research interest is in evaluating programs, policies, and interventions that impact the way health service systems serve vulnerable populations, such as older, independent adults, which is in part how I come to be in a school of nursing. I

particularly enjoy working on projects that help local and state government agencies make more informed decisions. And that's really what attracted me to your work and your projects. You brought me on, into your collaboration with California in January of 2019, and we've been teaming up ever since, but just the nexus there of serving the older adult population and working with government agencies and integrating data into the processes to help make better decisions, really seemed like a fantastic opportunity to make an impact.

Marian: 2019 it's over three years. Wow.

Zach: Happy anniversary.

Marian: Well, shall we start by talking a little bit about adult mistreatment being a very complex issue? I mean, we've been working on this together for over three years, and it's just complicated, right?

Zach: It is complicated. Most people have heard of child protective services, but not as many are familiar with adult protective services. What's it all about?

Marian: Well, so starting with the most common types of mistreatments discussed in literatures, of, you know, research or practice. There are major types includes physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, in those situations, most of them are caregiver neglect. So, in these different situations, there is usually, this abuser or a perpetrator or a harmer, depending on, you know, the setting. The programs that you work with, the nature and the consequences of these mistreatments are different obviously, but physical harm, psychological trauma, financial losses, and also early mortality are often mentioned as consequences. On the other hand, there is this particular type of mistreatment, called self-neglect that is most frequently reported type of a mistreatment to adult protected services. So, in this particular case, there is no abuser, perpetrator, or harmer. so the adult themselves cannot seem to take care of, you know, their own situation to a point that their health and safety is compromised.

Zach: How does APS come be aware of, a self-neglecting individual?

Marian: Interesting question. I mean, in a lot of the cases, usually, there's a neighbor or a friend or a family member who are concerned about, you know, this particular older, independent adult situation and report them to Adult Protective Services. Otherwise, there are also fewer, I would say, but there are situations where, the adult themselves realize that they're in trouble. So, they called Adult Protective Services or other social agencies for help.

Zach: So usually when folks think about having Child Protective Services called on them, they think about getting in trouble. Is the adult in trouble in the scenario?

Marian: Well, I wouldn't say so. That is an interesting question because I mean, Adult Protective Services, they work with adults. Right? So then, very importantly, APS understand that adults they have. self-determination. So, unless the victims, survivors, they are determined to be incapacitated. Their wish should be honored and respected and APS should be working with the adults on all these different, wishes and you know, what they would like to do. So, this means,

adults experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They have their rights to choose the life they would like, and they can reject any of the help that they don't want to receive.

Zach: Yeah, that's interesting. I think that's a theme that's come up in a lot of our conversations with partners is.

Marian: Absolutely.

Zach: They find a situation they would really like to help. and as far as they're concerned, there are things that ought to change maybe in terms of the cleanliness of a house or service that ought to be provided or something like that. But if the adult says no and they have the capacity, then it's not provided and they're free to do as they wish. Which is... it's frustrating, sometimes, I imagine from the APS perspective in terms of wanting to help. But also good from the individual's perspective and be able to self-determine and live the life they wish to choose yet help is there if they want it.

Marian: For sure. And that's a big, kind of difference between, I would think when people think of APS and CPS and, children, usually they need that level of protection.

Zach: So, getting back to the complexity of, abuse, is it usually just, one thing that occurs.

Marian: Oh, that's a fascinating question. So, oftentimes there are more than one type of mistreatment that could co-occur with whatever allegation, is, you know, reported to APS. So then when APS investigators or case workers investigate, um, you know, an allegation, they will look into all different types of abuse and, it really depends on the jurisdiction, the program, the type of abuse that they investigate. So, then workers would, take a look at all these different things and they try to, um, make sure that things could be resolved. But oftentimes not to the level of zero. But they try to resolve issues of mistreatment, making sure that the client or the at risk adult is safe in their own environment.

Zach: Who tends to be the perpetrator? Is it strangers? With self-neglect, it's obviously just the individual, not quite taking care of themselves, but thinking of neglect or financial abuse or physical abuse who's causing the harm generally, in your experience?

Marian: Well, when it comes to APS cases, unfortunately, the alleged perpetrators or abusers a lot of the times they're family members or caregivers. And, these cases are especially difficult because the adults, they probably rely on their alleged abusers and perpetrators to provide care or something else, you know, or financially, or sometimes it would be very challenging cases where, the victims, the survivors themselves, are providing some financial resources to the alleged abusers and perpetrators. In addition to the care needed by the victim, the survivor, there could also be emotional support needed by the victims and survivors from the alleged abusers and perpetrators. So, it is very difficult to remove the alleged abusers or perpetrators completely from someone's life.

Zach: Yeah, I know we've heard a few tough stories between an adult and their adult child. So an older adult and their adult child, where the older adult knew they were being taken advantage of,

but also didn't want to cause harm to their adult child by fixing the situation. It's really tough situations that they dive into.

Marian: It is unfortunately common. And you know, like you said, very difficult, but that kind of leads into why we decided to make this podcast, right? So how did it come about?

Zach: We should probably talk about the overall project that it is a part of first. So, what is our current work with Montana?

Marian: Yes. So, we have been working with Montana Adult Protective Services for quite a while. I think, that was the time when we started teaming up right, in 2019. So, APS, as some of our listeners know or if you don't listen to our episode two, our conversation with Adult Protective Services. They are the frontline agency that investigate abuse, neglect and exploitation. So, we learned not only from Montana, but also from our project with California, that, APS relies on, community partners to help victims and survivors to receive needed services. So, since mistreatment has many forms, different faces, so APS works with many community partners from legal, healthcare, financial, and other social services programs.

Zach: And one of the terms that I hear tossed around, we talk about APS is that they operate under a crisis intervention model. What is that all about?

Marian: Well, that is a very interesting question. And why don't you tell our listeners about it?

Zach: Well, here's what I've learned so far is that when APS is called, they're looking to resolve the immediate crisis, to get the individual out of harm, whether that's clean up their environment, providing services, removing a potentially abusive perpetrator, sometimes it's just providing education to a caregiver to make sure that the unintended neglect is no longer occurring. But after that, after referrals are made potentially to services, after the immediate harm is reduced, the case is closed, and the individual hopefully is interacting with these other community services. But from the APS perspective, they've largely moved on to the next case because they have generally more cases than they have people to work them. And that's what led into this current project in a lot of ways is what's happening to these folks after the case is closed. Are the referrals landing? Are they getting the services they need? If things are going wrong, what's going wrong that they're not being stabilized. If we can see the full picture, then hopefully we can help provide a, longer term solution and, and a system that just generally better serves these adults. Make sure they don't fall through the cracks after the crisis intervention.

Marian: That is a very nice summary. I don't think I can say it better than you did. And leading into why we're doing this podcast. I think, you know, as someone, myself, who is not very familiar with what the other community partners can do, or are doing, I've always been interested in learning directly from each of them to understand what they can do and that how they can assist. So in that process of speaking with the various community partners, we realized that service providers and, you know, the general public probably can also benefit from having understanding of what each agency does. This is why we decided to invite these agencies, to record this podcast series, to explain what they do, how they can help victims and survivors of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. And we are very excited that our funder, you know, the

Administration for Community Living is also excited about this idea and is willing to support us. Who do we have in this podcast, Zach?

Zach: Well, you've already mentioned that we have Adult Protective Services on the podcast, which shouldn't be too surprising. and that's where we'll start

Marian: Yes. So, APS, they are, the only agency focusing completely on adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. So, there is unfortunately no dedicated federal funding for APS. So, each state's APS is a little bit different on who they serve and what services they can provide. Nevertheless, in general, their responsibilities include investigation of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and then, provision of services or referrals of services to victims and, survivors. And also in Montana, they do not only investigate elder mistreatment with older adults above the age of 60. So, APS also investigate, Mistreatment with younger adults between the age of 18 to 59 for those with disabilities. So, then what we're doing, here is that we have aging and disability service providers also on this particular podcast to share what they do. In Montana APS also investigates in long term care facilities. Therefore, we also have those working to protect resident's rights and health on this particular podcast. Lastly, we have law enforcement to discuss how they investigate and prosecute, criminal cases, including the state's first elder justice prosecutor on the podcast to discuss his vision.

Zach: One of the themes that, we see across several of our guests is that Montana is large and very rural. And so, the number of staff covering these many, many miles is sometimes regionally dispersed, which is helpful and sometimes centrally located. And so, some of the big challenges are serving, those rural, frontier lands and trying to provide services in areas that are somewhat of a service desert. So that's one thing to keep an eye out for those of you in other geographical areas and trying to understand how, Montana's services may differ from your own. So, what's the goal of the podcast, Marian?

Marian: We are lucky to get the state of Montana to participate in this podcast. So, although each state might have different community partners working together, we hope this podcast provides an overview of various service providers who are invested in assisting adult victims and survivors of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. What do they do? How do they work together? And after speaking with all the community partners, we certainly learned that even though it sounds like a cliché, it takes the village to help victims and survivors of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. And we hope that, you know, through this particular podcast, there are some useful information to the public, especially if someone, you know, might have experienced abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Zach: Well, it's certainly been a journey talking to all these folks. I should say we've talked to several of them. We haven't talked to all of them yet. Hopefully we get to talk to everybody that we're hoping to schedule. And hopefully, it is useful to all of you who are listening and that you learn at least a little bit as much as what we have learned. And we're very grateful to all of our partners for participating. So enjoy the podcast.

Marian: Thank you so much for listening to this podcast. We hope you found it useful. This podcast was produced by studio K productions. Our podcast logo was designed by Meng-Yu

Wun. And we welcome your feedback, please visit elderjustice.acl.gov to leave a comment at the bottom of the webpage's contact us section.