

Impact of Crime on Elderly

The scammer had enough personal information that seemed to make his request convincing. He knew the elderly woman's husband was in the hospital when he called. So the older adult sent off the requested amount. Fortunately for the senior, a Western Union official became suspicious and held up the wire transaction until it could be verified. The scam was successfully averted, but the psychological damage to the senior continues. "She's still very upset," said a Home Instead Senior Care® franchise owner, who now provides CAREGiverSM service for the senior.

The damage may continue to be hurtful for some time for a senior who has been scammed or who has been approached by a scammer, said Ed Hutchison, National Association of Triads director. Hutchison said seniors who are victimized by crime or who feel threatened by scammers may suffer these repercussions:

1. Physical and emotional impact.

They may recuperate more slowly, and life-threatening illnesses can occur.

2. Inability to recover financially.

If they lose income from a financial or real estate scam, robbery or burglary, they often struggle even more if they are living on a fixed income.

3. Loss of independence.

Studies have shown that crime is the catalyst that can bring an end to emotional and financial independence and curtail the lives and lifespan of seniors.

4. Diminished quality of life.

Inability to recover, worrying about the likelihood that it will happen again and regretting the consequences of that poor decision may drive victims to become reclusive, embarrassed and distressed, and suffer from poor self-confidence.

5. Vicarious victimization.

The National Center on Elder Abuse has identified a phenomenon called "vicarious victimization," which means the senior has not been a victim but fears being one. They may alter their lifestyle by withdrawing from society, abandoning friends, church and shopping. They may see the world in a warped perspective, which can happen to seniors who are homebound and get all their news from TV.

If your senior is living alone, a Home Instead CAREGiver can provide an extra set of alert eyes and ears for reassurance and protection beyond providing companionship, light housekeeping, meal preparation, medication reminders and transportation.

Contact local law enforcement if you think someone has scammed your senior or might be trying to do so. For more about protecting your seniors from scammers, contact your [local Home Instead Senior Care® office](#), or visit [ProtectSeniorsFromFraud.com](#).

