BALANCING EMPOWERMENT – WITH PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

• Overarching goal is to empower persons with diminished capacity to fully participate in life
• Avoid overly restrictive interventions
• Protect from abuse, neglect and exploitation
HEIGHTENED CONCERN

- Thieves like victims who don’t fight back
HEIGHTENED CONCERNS

- Sometimes we hurt the ones we love
- Dependence on abuser
DEMENTIA RELATED RISKS

- With a decline in Capacity
- Declines in memory
- Less ability to defend self
- To describe what has happened
- To be believed
SIGNS OF ELDER ABUSE

• Unusual injuries
• Withdrawal
• Jittery – fear of a person
• Assess “power and control dynamics
• Be wary of “new person” in the elders life
• Look for “caregiver” isolation of person
SIGNS OF FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

- Unexplained checks
- Cash withdrawals
- Missing valuables
- Cars retitled
- Deeds to real estate
- Changes in beneficiaries
- New debt – with nothing to show for it
- Unexplainable ATM, debt and credit card usage
TRUST BUT VERIFY

- Draft accountings into powers of attorney
- Financial records to third parties (online access)
- Two signature accounts
- Limit Credit and ATM cards – and monitor
ADULTS ARE ALLOWED TO MAKE BAD DECISIONS

- Health
- Money
- Love
- Living Conditions
EMPOWERING A PERSON WITH DIMINISHED CAPACITY

- Assume that the person can
- Live in the moment
- Talk with the person
- Honor long term patterns, values, goals
- Understand culture
COMMUNICATION

• Offer choices
• Let the person make choices on non-critical issues – even if it is obvious they are making bad choices
• Communicate with all senses
• Even with very diminished capacity people will smile at what they prefer or grimace at what they don’t
REDIRECT COMMUNICATIONS

• Word Finding
  • Offer a list of options
  • Look for meaning in the context
  • It will come to you in a minute
  • We will come back to that later
  • It wasn’t that important

• Understand the Person’s reality,
  • The facts will not overcome perception
  • Logic, reasoning and facts only frustrate
  • Redirect, not now, we will (do-talk) later
  • Oh that, is interesting, what about ___________?
MONEY

• Discuss finances
• Have the person sign the checks as long as possible
• Make sure the adult has access to spending money
• Take them shopping
• Ask what they want, and do your best to honor it
• Control the stamps – instead of the check-book?
MINIMIZE DANGER TO THE PERSON

- Is the person likely to wander – GPS technology
- Is the person confrontational? – Get the weapons out of the house – have a safety plan
- Assure adequate
  - Nutrition
  - Clean place to live
  - Appropriate medical care
  - Appropriate clothing
  - Safe home
- Secure valuables –
- Limit cash on hand
- Emphasize, not signing anything unless you are there
- Have back-up keys made
- Be there
SERVICES TO EMPOWER

- Shopping and delivery services
- Home delivered meals, congregate meals
- Home health assistance
- Housekeeping assistance
- Friendly visitors - callers
- Bill paying and financial management assistance
- Visiting pet services – pet care assistance
- Handyman services
- Errand services
- Volunteer transportation
FINDING SUPPORT SERVICES

- Executive Office on Aging
- Senior Centers
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Alzheimer's Association
- Local Health care providers
- Family and caregiver support groups
- Respite care
- Adult day programs
- Hospice
- Cultural centers
- Hā Kūpuna, the National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders
WHEN TO TALK ABOUT GUARDIANSHIP

- A person has a severe decline in capacity and is unable to make or communicate decisions
  - And
- There is a decision that requires legal authority that **must** be made
  - And
- No one has legal authority to make the decision
  - Or
- All other options have been exhausted and guardianship is the last resort to protect a person with very limited capacity from abuse, neglect or exploitation