

# Senior Scams and Fraud

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# General Definitions

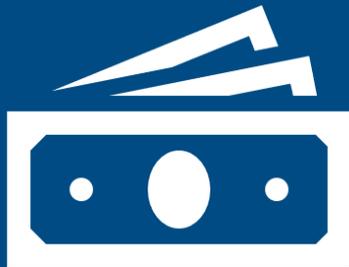
**Elder Fraud:** The act of targeting older adults in which attempts are made to deceive with promises of goods, services or financial benefits that do not exist, were never intended to be provided or were misrepresented.

**Elder Financial Exploitation:** The illegal or improper use of an older adult's funds or property. Often occurs from a known individual such as a caretaker or family member.

**Scam:** A deceptive scheme or trick used to cheat someone out of something, especially money. Any scam can turn into an elder fraud situation when it involves an older adult.

# Senior citizens are one of the most targeted groups for ID theft and fraud.

One study estimated that scammers steal **\$2.9** billion per year from seniors.\*



## But why?!

- Trusting/polite
- Financial savings
- Often own a home
- Good credit



# How a scam starts



# Common scams

- Grandparents scam
- Investment scams
- Remote access
- Sweepstakes/Lottery scam

Phone



- Romance scam
- Investment scams
- Remote access

Online

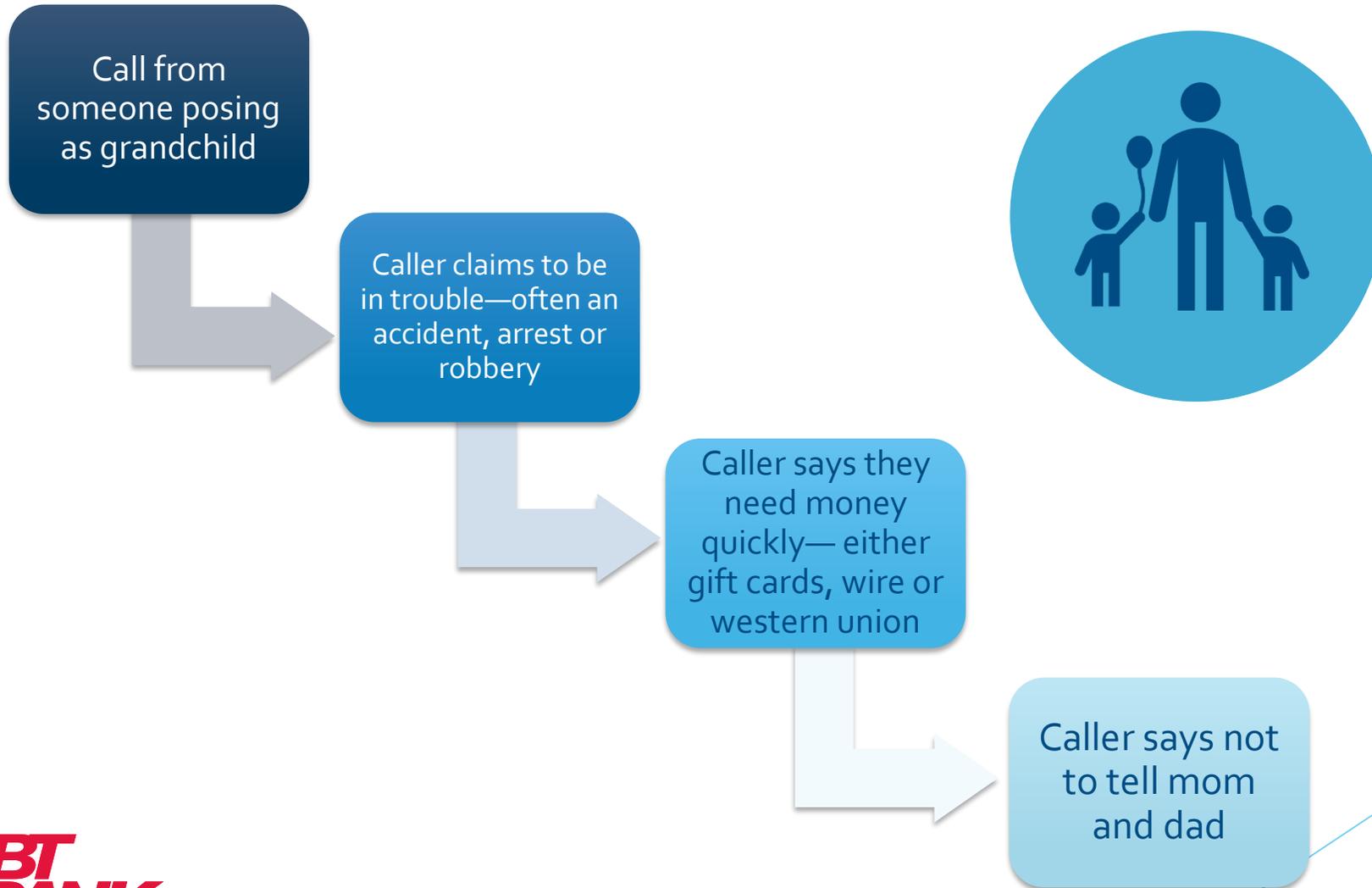


- Sweepstakes/Lottery scam
- Investment scams

Mail



# How to spot a grandparents scam



# How to spot an investment scam

May claim everyone is doing it

May ask for small amounts to start and continue raising the price

The investment doesn't make sense  
Example: Going to an individual instead of a business

This individual is not someone you have worked with in the past for legitimate transactions

They warn you to "act fast" before offer expires

May string along their victim by claiming this is the last payment before the payoff

You have to take funds out of an investment account to do it

# How to spot a lottery/sweepstakes scam



- ▶ Won the lottery but didn't play?
- ▶ Have to send money to pay for the taxes/fees?
- ▶ Form of payment or payee for taxes/fees is suspicious
- ▶ May be contacted via mail, phone or online
- ▶ You're being asked to deposit a check that's not from a lottery company

# How to spot a remote access scam



Often start with a tech support scam/pop up asking you to call



Remote access is requested

Once remote access is achieved, there is often a transfer of funds. Sometimes between the victim's own accounts (i.e. savings to checking) and they are instructed there was an overpayment and a wire/gift cards/other form of payment is needed.

# How to spot romance scams

- ▶ Meet someone online through a dating site or on social media
- ▶ They will ask for the conversation to go off the platform and may ask to use a type of communication you aren't familiar with (kik messenger, google chat, WhatsApp, etc.)
- ▶ The conversation quickly changes to money. There is often an emergency, illness or convincing story they need money to travel out to see you.
- ▶ They ask for many personal details about you and may start opening accounts in your name
- ▶ These scams are highly profitable for the fraudster as the victim may start draining their life savings or taking out loans



# Red flags for scams

You are instructed not to talk to anyone about the situation including family and law enforcement

You have to lie to your bank

There is often a lawyer, captain, attorney or someone else with a title to give an authoritative appearance

Money will come into your account and you need to send it back out

Investments are going to an individual name

You are asked to use applications you have never used before and provided instructions on how to log in/build an account

You are asked to buy gift cards and provide the numbers over the phone

# How to end scams

Start talking about  
the situation

Tell the bank the  
truth

Stop answering the  
phone when they call  
and possibly get a  
new phone number

# Red flags for exploitation



The individual isn't acting like them self and appears withdrawn, nervous or guarded



The individual expresses concerns that bills aren't being paid



Banking activity is changing, balances are decreasing and ATM withdrawals are increasing

# How to help someone who is being financially exploited

1

Call local Adult Protective services

2

Contact local Law Enforcement

3

Become a joint account owner or Power of Attorney (if applicable)

# How fraud is evolving

Cryptocurrency

Person-to-person  
payments/  
gift cards

Remote access

Money mule

Threats/blackmail

Other scare  
tactics

# Does there have to be a financial loss to be considered fraud?

- ▶ Being a “money mule” is considered fraud
  - ▶ A money mule is someone who transfers or moves illegally acquired money on behalf of someone else.
- ▶ Incoming funds that are then transferred out, or intended to be transferred out are also fraudulent



# Reminders

- ▶ Username and passwords should not be shared. If there is someone needed to assist with banking there needs to be a joint owner or power of attorney
- ▶ Don't feel pressured to give out information or money that belongs to you
- ▶ Always verify a person or company by independently researching and finding a phone number to call
- ▶ Don't answer the phone for numbers you aren't familiar with
- ▶ Don't feel pressured or rushed. Slow down and think about the situation and if it makes sense.



# Thank you!



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