BELTZ IANNI & ASSOCIATES

Speaking of...

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UNDERSTANDING AND AVOIDING FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

Imagine working hard for over 30 years to prepare for your future, only to have it stolen away in an instant. Sadly, this is a reality for one-in-five older Americans who have experienced financial exploitation and lost an average of $120,303, according to the AARP BankSafe Initiative.

Fortunately, in most cases, financial abuse can be avoidable. By better educating yourself and your loved ones of the risks, you can help curb the tragic practice.

There are three primary types of financial abuse:

- **Exploitation:** When businesses, individuals, or charities use pressure tactics or misleading language to force older adults to make financial mistakes.
- **Fraud:** When criminals commit identity theft or con older adults into spending money or sharing personal information.
- **Trust abuse:** When family, friends, or caregivers take advantage of a trusted relationship to get money or assets from an older adult.

Those most at risk include individuals who are dependent on others for personal needs, experience cognitive impairments, allow family or friends to handle financial needs, or live in a care-based community like a nursing home.

How to Avoid Financial Exploitation Checklist
Like many other dangers, the best defense against financial abuse is simply understanding the most common warning signs and helping older family members and friends spot them, as well:

- Financial activity that's inconsistent with your loved one's normal financial habits.
- Your loved one is asked to sign documents that he or she hasn't read or may not understand.
- There are changes made to your loved one's official documents such as his or her mortgage, property title, deeds, power of attorney, will, or trusts that they didn't authorize or don't understand.
- An individual is threatening to place your loved one in a long-term care facility as a means to take control of his or her finances or estate.
- Your loved one is asked to take on financial responsibilities for someone else without regard to his or her own best interests.
- A caregiver withholds proper nutrition, medication, or care if your loved one doesn't comply with his or her financial demands.
- A caregiver with access to your loved one's finances uses the money for his or her own needs rather than your loved one's necessary expenses.

Our team is always available to help you and your family navigate the sensitive issue of financial exploitation. Call Beltz Ianni & Associates if we can assist you or a family member.

PENSION PAYOUT: MAKE THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOU

If you're covered by a defined benefit pension plan through your employer, you'll eventually have to choose how you want to receive your pension benefits. You may be given the choice of receiving a lump sum instead of receiving monthly payments for life. Once you make that choice, it's usually irreversible, so you'll want to consider the pros and cons of each option before you decide.

Lifetime Payments
Generally, you can choose to collect monthly benefits over your lifetime — or throughout your life and the life of your spouse. The simple lifetime benefit pays a larger amount each month, but

Beltz Ianni & Associates, LLC is focused on helping people prepare for and maintain a successful retirement. We are always ready with the guidance and tools you need to achieve success. We define a successful retirement simply as one where you can retire with confidence. In addition to retirement, insurance planning and investment planning for individual clients, we help manage the wealth and health concerns of employees at the companies we serve through our retirement plan, group benefit and health care business services.

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benefits stop at your death, potentially leaving your spouse with little or no income. Since traditional pension payments typically continue for as long as you live, you can be assured of an income for life. However, amounts generally aren't adjusted for inflation, giving you less purchasing power as the cost of living rises.

Another disadvantage to monthly payments: You won't be able to access the money in your plan should you ever need it for a large expense.

Lump-sum Payout

If you're confident of your investment skills, taking a lump-sum payout and reinvesting it in an individual retirement account (IRA) or another investment account may benefit you. Taking the payout as a lump sum can ensure that you'll have access to a large amount of cash should you ever need it. Just be certain that you'll be able to resist the temptation to overspend.

Your family's history of longevity and your own health status may also affect your choice. A lump-sum payout may be a good option if you have serious health issues.

But a lump-sum payout has its pitfalls. If you invest unwisely or the market takes a downturn, you could lose a substantial portion of your pension money. Investing too conservatively could also leave you with less money than you planned on.

Other Resources

Before you decide whether to take monthly payments or a lump-sum payout, consider the other income sources you'll have in retirement, including Social Security benefits, retirement plan assets, and personal savings and investments. The financial professional at Beltz Ianni & Associates can help you determine the right payout option for your circumstances.

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