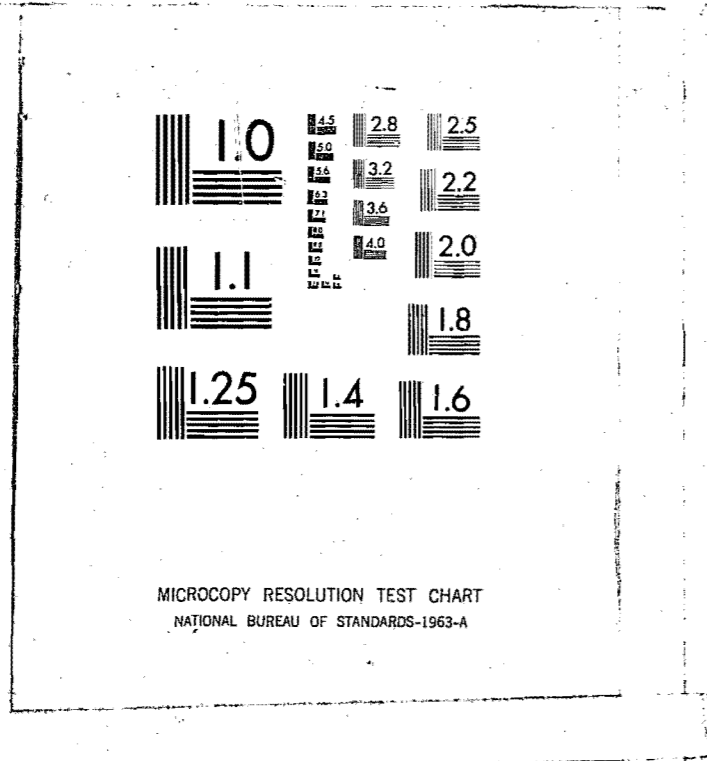


National Criminal Justice Reference Service



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ACQUISITIONS

THE WORLD IS A BARREN WASTELAND

AND, I AM ALONE . . .

ALONE, AFRAID TO LIVE AND AFRAID TO DIE

ALONE . . .

THESE WORDS WERE WRITTEN BY AN 85 YEAR OLD WOMAN.

SHE LIVES ON A MEAGER INCOME AND HAS NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS.

SHE LIVES IN AN OLD HOUSE IN A DETERIORATING NEIGHBORHOOD,

ALONE . . . IN THE PAST YEAR SHE HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY

VICTIMIZED BY VANDALISM. ROCKS HAVE BEEN THROWN AT HER

HOUSE PULVERIZING THE WINDOWS. SHE HAS BEEN ILL SEVERAL

TIMES THIS YEAR AS A RESULT OF THE WINTER COLD. ON ONE

OCCASION \$10.00 WAS STOLEN FROM HER HOME AND SHE WAS FORCED

TO LIVE ON BREAD AND TEA FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS.

THIS CASE ILLUSTRATES SOME OF THE REASONS THAT CONCERN

ABOUT CRIME AND OLDER PERSONS IS ACCELERATING THROUGHOUT THE

COUNTRY. OLDER PEOPLE MAY NOT BE VICTIMIZED BY CRIME IN

GENERAL AS MUCH AS OTHER AGE GROUPS BUT IF AND WHEN THEY ARE

CRIME AGAINST THE ELDERLY

MARLENE A. YOUNG RIFAI
MULTNOMAH COUNTY DIVISION
OF PUBLIC SAFETY

MICROFICHE

61903

VICTIMIZED THE RESULTS CAN BE DEVASTATING. AND, WITH SOME TYPES OF CRIME OLDER PEOPLE ARE REPEATEDLY SINGLED OUT AS THE MOST COMMON VICTIM. THE BASIC QUESTION WHICH FACES US AS A SOCIETY IS WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN GUARANTEE TO OUR OLDER CITIZENS A LIFE BOUND BY SECURITY AND DIGNITY.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION OF THE ELDERLY AND THE POSSIBLE PROGRAMS WHICH CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO REACH SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS, LET US REVIEW JUST THE SOCIAL MILIEU WHICH CREATES THE BASIC VULNERABILITIES OF OLDER ADULTS. SECOND WE CAN INVESTIGATE THE ACTUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMIZATION. FINALLY WE CAN SHARE THE POSSIBLE EDUCATION AND AID WHICH CAN BE OFFERED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS.

VULNERABILITIES OF OLDER PERSONS

THE VULNERABILITIES FACED BY MOST PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 60 CAN BE CATEGORIZED IN THREE SEPARATE GROUPS: INCOME VULNERABILITY, PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITY, AND HEALTH

VULNERABILITIES.

DUE TO THE SOCIO-LEGAL STRUCTURE IN OUR SOCIETY WHICH AUTHORIZES MANDATORY RETIREMENT STATUTES, MOST OLDER PERSONS SUFFER A SEVERE DROP IN INCOME AT AGES 60-65. THIS DROP IN INCOME MAY RESULT IN POVERTY OR NEAR POVERTY. 1970 CENSUS FIGURES FOR THE PORTLAND/MULTNOMAH COUNTY AREA SUGGEST THAT BETWEEN 20-25% OF THE AGED ARE BELOW POVERTY LEVEL. HOWEVER, IN THE STUDY DONE CONCERNING CRIME AND THE ELDERLY, 36% OF THE RESPONDENTS HAD INCOMES BELOW \$400. OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS, 1/3 HAD INCOMES UNDER \$200 AND 12% HAD INCOMES BETWEEN \$100-\$200. SUCH INCOME LEVELS RESULT IN ACUTE VULNERABILITY BOTH TO THE POTENTIAL AND THE ACTUAL CRIME VICTIM.

THE POTENTIAL CRIME VICTIM MAY LIVE IN LOW INCOME HOUSING PROJECTS OR LIVES IN THE CONTROL AREA OF THE INNER CITY DUE TO REDUCED INCOME LEVELS. THE VICTIM CANNOT EASILY MOVE FROM THE AREA BECAUSE OF LIMITED INCOME. TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SHOPPING AREAS, HEALTH SERVICES OR CHURCHES MAY BE

ACUTELY LIMITED BECAUSE OF LACK OF INCOME. ON A SIMPLE LEVEL CONSIDER THE INCREASED VULNERABILITY OF AN OLDER WOMAN WHO MUST WALK FOUR BLOCKS TO THE BUS STOP IN ORDER TO ACCESS A DOCTOR COMPARED TO ANOTHER OLDER WOMAN WITH ENOUGH INCOME TO OWN AND MAINTAIN A CAR.

THE IMPACT OF CRIME ON THE ACTUAL VICTIM IS ALSO EXACERBATED DUE TO INCOME VULNERABILITY. THE LOSS OF \$10.00 TO SOMEONE LIVING ON \$150.00 A MONTH MAY EASILY TRANSLATE TO A DEPRIVATION OF NEEDED MEDICATION OR LIFE-SUSTAINING FOOD. IT IS TIME SOCIETY RECOGNIZED THAT IF SERIOUSNESS OF CRIME IS TO BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES, THESE CONSEQUENCES SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO DOLLAR VALUE LOSS. THE SERIOUSNESS OF CRIME NEEDS TO BE RELATED TO THE ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION SUFFERED BY THE VICTIM.

THE SECOND VULNERABILITY WHICH AFFLICTS MANY OLDER PERSONS IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITY RESULTING FROM LONELINESS

AND ISOLATION. OF ALL THE RESPONDENTS CONTACTED IN THE PORTLAND/MULTNOMAH COUNTY STUDY, 1/3 LIVED ALONE. 50% OF THE WOMEN LIVED ALONE. MANY OF THE GROUP HAD LITTLE OR NO ADULT CONTACT IN A WEEKLY PERIOD. BECAUSE OF DIMINISHING FAMILY STRUCTURES AND LACK OF REGULAR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES OLDER PERSONS SEEM TO BE MORE SEVERELY ISOLATED THAN ANY OTHER POPULATION GROUP.

THE IMPACT OF ISOLATION TO THE POTENTIAL VICTIM IS INCREASED VULNERABILITY. THE PERSON WHO LIVES ALONE, WALKS ALONE AND RIDES THE BUS ALONE IS MUCH LESS OF A THREAT TO A POTENTIAL OFFENDER THAN THE VICTIM WHO HAS A COMPANION. THERE IS DECREASED ACCESS TO HELP AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORKS.

THE ACTUAL VICTIM WHO EXISTS IN SOCIAL ISOLATION IS SUBJECT TO INCREASED TRAUMA, FEAR AND EMOTIONAL REACTION. THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE TO TURN TO FOR AID AND REASSURANCE. THERE IS NO ONE WITH WHOM TO COMMISERATE. I, MYSELF, HAVE BEEN SUBJECT

TO VARIOUS OFFENSES WHEN I LIVED ON THE EAST COAST. BUT NONE OF THE INCIDENTS LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION ON ME. PART OF THE REASON FOR THIS WAS THE FACT THAT I HAD MANY FRIENDS TO WHOM I TALKED ABOUT THE INCIDENT. IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DISSIPATE MY ANXIETY BY VERBALIZING IT. IN REVIEWING CASE STUDIES OF VICTIMS WHICH WERE TAKEN FROM POLICE RECORDS, IT WAS NOTED THAT VICTIMS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT TOOK LESS THAN HALF AS LONG AS "ISOLATED" VICTIMS TO RECOVER FROM THE SHOCK OF BEING VICTIMIZED. IT WAS QUITE EVIDENT THAT FAMILY AND COMMUNITY NETWORKS WERE SERVING A VALUABLE FUNCTION IN REDUCING FEAR AND ANXIETIES.

FINALLY, OLDER PERSONS OFTEN SUFFER HEALTH LIMITATIONS WHICH AFFECT THEIR PHYSICAL VULNERABILITY. IN THE PORTLAND STUDY WE FOUND 48% OF THE OLDER PERSONS SUFFERED SOME DIFFICULTY WITH SEEING, HEARING OR GENERAL MOBILITY WHICH WOULD INCREASE CRIME VULNERABILITY. THIS MEANS THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH OTHER PERSONS ACROSS A ROOM AS A

RESULT OF REDUCTION IN VISION. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO HEAR AN APPROACH OR BREAKING AND ENTERING DUE TO HEARING LOSS. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ESCAPE OR TO AVOID AN OFFENDER IF CONFRONTED IN THE HOME OR ON THE STREET.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT IN THIS RESPECT THAT IN A REVIEW OF POLICE RECORDS PERTAINING TO PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 60, ABOUT 25% OF THE REPORTS INVOLVING BURGLARY INDICATED THAT THE VICTIM HADN'T HEARD THE INTRUDER AND THEREFORE ACCIDENTLY CONFRONTED THE OFFENDER.

CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMIZATION

HAVING REVIEWED THE VULNERABILITIES WHICH MAKE OLDER PERSONS PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO CRIME IMPACT, IT IS USEFUL TO EXAMINE THE CHARACTERISTICS PARTICULAR TO THE VICTIMIZATION OF OLDER PERSONS.

58% OF ALL OLDER PERSONS STUDIED IN PORTLAND HAD BEEN VICTIMIZED AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IN THEIR LIVES. 55% OF

THOSE PERSONS HAD BEEN VICTIMIZED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, APPROXIMATELY 1/3 WERE CONSIDERED MULTIPLE VICTIMS. THIS MEANS THEY HAD ON AVERAGE SUFFERED FOUR VICTIMIZATIONS. MANY OF THESE PERSONS LIVED IN THE INNER CITY AREAS OR PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS. ONE CASE WHICH WAS STUDIED INVOLVED A MAN WHO HAD BEEN MUGGED THREE TIMES IN THE LAST YEAR. HE WAS STOIC ABOUT THE INCIDENTS AND HIS MONETARY LOSS BUT RESENTED THE FACT THAT THE "MUGGERS" ALWAYS HIT HIM ON THE HEAD. ANOTHER WOMAN HAD BEEN BURGLARIZED NINE TIMES IN THE LAST YEAR. THE LAST INCIDENT, THE OFFENDERS BURNED THE INSIDE OF THE HOUSE. SHE SHOWED ME THE REMNANTS OF HER FURNITURE, CHARRED AND CRUDELY GLUED TOGETHER.

OLDER PERSONS ARE MORE OFTEN VICTIMS OF CERTAIN TYPES OF CRIME THAN OTHER AGE GROUPS. FOR INSTANCE THEY ARE VERY VULNERABLE TO PROPERTY CRIME SUCH AS BURGLARY, VANDALISM, AND THEFT. APPROXIMATELY 63% OF ALL CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST

THE ELDERLY FALL INTO THESE CATEGORIES. VANDALISM AND ITS IMPACT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THE PROPERTY DAMAGE CAN BE IMMENSE AND THE EFFECTS OF FEAR SEEM TO PERMEATE DEEPLY WHEN OLDER PERSONS ARE HARASSED WITH MULTIPLE VANDALISM INCIDENTS. PURSE SNATCH IS ANOTHER TYPE OF CRIME COMMON TO OLDER WOMEN. ALTHOUGH IT CONSTITUTED ONLY ABOUT 7% OF THE OVERALL CRIME PICTURE WHEN CASES WERE EXAMINED FROM THE POLICE REPORTS, OF ALL WOMEN ATTACKED NEARLY 50% WERE OVER 60. WHAT IS INTERESTING HERE IS THE PARALLEL CRIME WHICH AFFLICTS MEN, COMMON STREET MUGGING. IN THE OVERALL SAMPLING, THE SAME PROPORTION OF MEN WERE MUGGED AS WOMEN WHO SUFFERED PURSE SNATCH. THIS HAS INTERESTING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL THRUST IN CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION.

FINALLY, A GROUP OF CRIMES WHICH SEEM TO PLAGUE OLDER PERSONS IS THAT WHICH INCLUDES CONSUMER FRAUD, HARASSMENT AND "CON GAMES." THIS TYPE OF CRIME IS DIFFICULT TO DETECT

AND TO STUDY. NOT ONLY ARE PERSONS RELUCTANT TO ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DUPED BUT OFTEN THEY ARE NOT EVEN AWARE THEY HAVE BEEN "CONNED." IN A NUMBER OF GROUP INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH A CROSS SELECTION OF AGE GROUPS OVER 50% OF THE PERSONS WHO RESPOND AS VICTIMS TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING FRAUD WERE OVER 60.

IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY THIS TYPE OF CRIME IS PREVALENT AMONG OLDER PERSONS. NOT ONLY ARE THEY OFTEN MORE EASILY CONFUSED BY THE ACTUAL STRATEGIES INVOLVED, THEY ARE MORE TRUSTING. IN DOING INTERVIEWS IN PORTLAND, AMONG THE FIRST 100 PERSONS CONTACTED, ONLY TWO ASKED FOR IDENTIFICATION: THAT KIND OF WHOLESALW WILLINGNESS TO INVITE STRANGERS INTO YOUR HOME CAN BE DISASTEROUS.

GENERALLY CRIMES AMONG OLDER PERSONS TAKE PLACE IN THE AFTERNOON OR LATE EVENING. PRESUMABLY THIS IS DUE TO THE INCREASED ACTIVITY AWAY FROM THE HOME IN THE AFTERNOON AND

THE RELATIVE DARKNESS OF THE HOME LATE AT NIGHT. 77% OF THE CRIMES TAKE PLACE IN OR NEAR THE HOME. THIS FIGURE LENDS SOME CONCERN TO PEOPLE WHO FEEL THEY ARE SAFE BECAUSE OF LIMITED ACTIVITY. IN MOST CASES THE OLDER VICTIM COULD NOT IDENTIFY WHO THE OFFENDER WAS. BUT, IN THOSE CASES WHERE IT WAS POSSIBLE, 75% IDENTIFIED JUVENILES AS THE ASSAILANTS. THIS SUGGESTS SOME INTERESTING THINGS. OLDER PERSONS SEEM QUITE COGNIZANT OF THE THREAT YOUNGER PERSONS POSE. SIMULTANEOUSLY MANY OLDER PERSONS EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO PROVIDE DIVERSION OR RECREATION FOR THE YOUTHS TO DETER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CRIME.

HOWEVER, MOST OLDER PERSONS ALSO FELT STRONGLY THAT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM SHOULD RESPOND WITH SWIFT AND SURE PUNISHMENT FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS RATHER THAN THE LENIENCY CURRENTLY EXERCISED.

HAVING SEEN SOME OF THE PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF CRIMINAL

VICTIMIZATION OF THE ELDERLY, SOME MENTION SHOULD BE MADE OF THE INTANGIBLE FACTOR IS FEAR. AND, AT TIMES IT WOULD SEEM THAT FEAR IS VERY PALPABLE IN ITS GRIP ON THE OLDER ADULT. FEAR AND ISOLATION GO HAND IN HAND IN ALTERING BEHAVIOR OF OLDER PERSONS. THE MORE AFRAID SOMEONE IS, THE MORE (S)HE WITHDRAWS. THE MORE (S)HE WITHDRAWS, THE MORE AFRAID (S)HE BECOMES.

THERE SEEM TO BE THREE MAIN DIMENSIONS TO THE FEARS OF OLDER ADULTS. THESE DIMENSIONS CAN BE CHARACTERIZED AS: ANXIETY TOWARD AREA CONCERNS; ANXIETY TOWARD OTHER PERSONS; AND GENERAL ANXIETY. ANXIETY TOWARD AREAS SEEM A RESULT OF CONCERN ABOUT SPECIFIC SITUATIONS SUCH AS: FEAR OF WALKING ALONE, FEAR OF GOING OUT AT NIGHT, FEAR OF CERTAIN NEIGHBORHOODS. THIS DIMENSION OF FEAR SEEMS TO BE THE STRONGEST LEVEL OF FEAR. IT IS ALSO STRONGLY RELATED TO THE SEX OF THE OLDER ADULT AND HIS/HER SENSE OF ISOLATION. WOMEN SEEMED MORE AFFLICTED BY THIS FEAR. THIS IS PERHAPS DUE TO

THE NUMBERS OF WOMEN AFRIAD TO GO OUT AT NIGHT. SECONDLY, THE MORE SEVERELY ISOLATED AN OLDER PERSON WAS, THE STRONGER THE SENSE OF ANXIETY ABOUT AREAS.

ANXIETY TOWARD OTHER PERSONS WAS RELATED PRIMARILY TO WHETHER OR NOT ONE HAD BEEN A VICTIM. PERSONS WHO HAD BEEN VICTIMS OF CRIME SHOWED MUCH HIGHER LEVELS OF FEAR ALONG THIS DIMENSION THAN DID NON-VICTIMS.

FINALLY, GENERAL ANXIETIES SEEMED PRONOUNCED THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION. THIS TYPE OF CRIME SEEMED REFLECTED IN GENERAL CONCERN ABOUT CRIME, CONCERN ABOUT THE INCREASE IN CRIME AND CONCERN ABOUT MEDIA RELATED STORIES OF CRIME. IT IS THE KIND OF FEAR WHICH IS SPREAD BY RUMOR AND NEWSPAPER CRIME.

FEAR AS A WHOLE SEEMS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY VICTIMIZATION. HOWEVER, WHAT IS INTERESTING IS THAT MANY PERSONS HAVE LITTLE

INCREASED FEAR AS THE RESULT OF ONE VICTIMIZATION. THE SECOND VICTIMIZATION WILL INCREASE THE FEAR LEVELS DRAMATICALLY. ANOTHER INDICATION IS THAT THE FEAR FACTOR SEEMS TO VARY BETWEEN TYPES OF CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, MANY PERSONS WOULD EXPECT FEAR TO INCREASE MORE DRAMATICALLY DUE TO PURSE SNATCH OR STREET ASSAULT RATHER THAN IN RELATIONSHIP TO BURGLARY. THE REVERSE TENDS TO BE THE CASE. THE REASON FOR THIS DIFFERENCE SEEMS TO CENTER ON THE TRADITIONAL FEELING THAT THE HOME IS "YOUR CASTLE." IT IS AN INNER SANCTUM, A PRIVATE AREA, AN EXTENSION OF SELF WHICH SHOULD NOT BE VIOLATED. THUS AN INTRUSION IN THAT AREA CAUSES ALARM AND INCREASED AWARENESS OF VULNERABILITY. WITH REGARD TO STREET ASSAULT THAT ATTITUDE VARIES. IT SEEMS THAT ONCE YOU VENTURE BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL "MOAT" AND ENTER THE "NO MAN'S LAND" BEYOND THERE IS GREATER EXPECTATION OF ATTACK. THERE IS ALSO THE FEELING THAT IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO WITHDRAW, TO WITHDRAW BACK TO THAT "SAFE" AREA, THE HOME. HOWEVER,

ONCE A PERSON IS IN THE HOME, WHERE CAN (S)HE WITHDRAW TO?

PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

THE VULNERABILITIES OF THE OLDER ADULT AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMIZATION HAVE BEEN BRIEFLY REVIEWED. CERTAINLY THERE ARE THINGS WHICH WE AS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES CAN DO TO REDUCE SOME OF THE IMPACT OF POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL CRIME.

CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION IS A KEY FACTOR IN HELPING OLDER PERSONS. IN LOOKING THROUGH POLICE REPORTS AT ONE POINT CONCERNING BURGLARY VICTIMS OVER THE AGE OF 60, ABOUT 75% WERE NOTED AS BEING THE RESULT OF AN UNLOCKED DOOR OR WINDOW. SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS ON TARGET-HARDENING THE HOME CAN BE EXTRAORDINARILY EFFECTIVE FOR THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE. REMINDING THEM OF LOCKS AND THE USE OF LOCKS IS SIMPLE BUT NECESSARY PREVENTION. "CON" GAMES CAN BE AVOIDED IF THE OLDER PERSON IS TOLD WHAT TYPES OF STRATEGIES TO BE AWARE OF. CERTAINLY THE AVERAGE CITIZEN IS NOT PREPARED TO DEAL

WITH SOME OF THE COMPLEX SITUATIONS OF FRAUD WHICH MAY ARISE UNLESS (S)HE HAS HAD PRIOR WARNING. CAUTION SHOULD BE URGED TO ALL OLDER PEOPLE TO DEMAND IDENTIFICATION BEFORE INVITING A STRANGER INTO THEIR HOMES. ALL OF THESE SIMPLE TIPS NEED TO BE REITERATED IN ORDER TO INCREASE SECURITY ALERTNESS. THERE HAS BEEN A REDUCTION IN PURSE SNATCH CASES IN AREAS OF OUR CITY WHERE OLDER PERSONS HAVE BEEN PERSUADED TO LEAVE THEIR PURSE AND/OR MONEY AT HOME. THE FEAR LEVEL IS HIGH ENOUGH THAT MANY OLDER PERSONS WILL UNDERGO BEHAVIORAL MODIFICATION IN ORDER TO SECURE PROTECTION. BUT, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE THAT INFORMATION.

A SECOND MAJOR FEATURE OF CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION SHOULD BE TO EDUCATE THE OLDER PERSONS TO REPORT. SEVERAL STUDIES HAVE INDICATED THAT ONLY ABOUT 47% OF THE VICTIMS REPORT TO THE POLICE. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST MANY PERSONS ARE AFRAID.... THEY ARE AFRAID OF CRIME

AND, THEY ARE AFRAID OF THE POLICE. THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THEY FEAR ITS WRATH. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO REMEMBER A CERTAIN PORTION OF OLDER ADULTS ARE IMMIGRANTS FROM PRE-WORLD WAR II EUROPE. THEIR BACKGROUND OF LIFE IN FASCIST ITALY OR GERMANY, PROVIDE THEM A RESIDUE OF FEAR WHICH THEY MAY KNOW IS NOT REAL IN THIS COUNTRY BUT THEY STILL FEEL IT IS REAL. OLDER PERSONS OFTEN DON'T FEEL THE POLICE CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE CRIME AND SO FAIL TO REPORT. THEY SHOULD BE REMINDED THAT AN UNREPORTED CRIME HAS 100% CHANCE OF BEING UNRESOLVED. EVERY CRIME REPORT DECREASES THAT 100% NON-RESOLUTION A LITTLE. IT MAY BE THAT EVEN A TRIVIAL INCIDENT CAN PROVIDE THE CLUE NECESSARY TO SOLVE A WHOLE RANGE OF CRIMES.

ONE PROGRAM WHICH IS NEW AND IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED HAS RECENTLY BEEN FINISHED IN TEXAS. IT WAS FUNDED BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS. IT CONSISTS OF AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS WHICH ENCOURAGE REPORTING BY OLDER ADULTS. IT IS

AVAILABLE THROUGH THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF A.A.R.P.

A FINAL NOTE IN CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS: EDUCATION IS ONLY AS EFFECTIVE AS COMMUNICATION. POLICE OFFICERS WHO ARE WORKING WITH OLDER ADULTS SHOULD BE AWARE OF AND SENSITIZED TO THE AGING PROCESS. SOME KEY FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING.

FIRST, MANY OLDER PERSONS HAVE VISION DIFFICULTIES. THEY CANNOT SEE VISUAL AIDS WELL, THEY CANNOT READ PRINT WELL. ALL MATERIALS PRESENTED SHOULD BE REITERATED VOCALLY SO THAT THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE DEALT WITH. PRINTED BROCHURES SHOULD EMPHASIZE BOLD, LARGE PRINT. VISION IS OFTEN OBSCURED IN COLOR DEFINITION AS ONE GROWS OLDER. THE ABILITY TO DISTINGUISH COLORS FADES. OFTEN VISUAL AIDS AND PAMPHLETS ARE DEFECTIVE FOR OLDER PERSONS BECAUSE THEY DON'T REFLECT HIGH COLOR CONTRAST AND SHARP CLARITY. THE SO CALLED "EARTH COLORS" ON BUFF PAPER IS DRAB AND COLORLESS TO MANY OLDER PERSONS. REDS, YELLOWS AND ORANGES ARE FAR SUPERIOR TO BLUES,

BLACKS AND BROWNS IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION.

SECOND, MANY OLDER PERSONS HAVE HEARING DIFFICULTIES. THESE DIFFICULTIES ARE NOT AS OFTEN PROBLEMS WITH VOLUME BUT AGAIN THEY ARE PROBLEMS WITH DISTINGUISHING SOUNDS. THERE ARE VARYING ABILITIES TO HEAR FREQUENCY PITCH DIFFERENCES. IT IS PROBABLY OF MINIMAL AID AND YET VERY OBNOXIOUS TO SHOUT AT AN OLDER PERSON. IF ONE INCREASES OR DECREASES THE PITCH OF ONE'S VOICE WITHOUT INCREASING VOLUME, THE COMMUNICATION MAY SUCCEED. BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEM OF DISTINGUISHING MULTIPLE SOUNDS IT IS NECESSARY TO SPEAK DISTINCTLY AND EMPHASIZE EACH SYLLABLE. SLOW THE PACE OF THE TALK SO EACH SOUND HAS A LONGER TIME TO PENETRATE AND IT WILL IMPROVE THE WHOLE COMMUNICATION EFFORT.

THESE ARE TWO EXAMPLES OF DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION WHICH SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN TRAINING OF POLICE OFFICERS. THERE ARE MANY MORE FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN SENSITIZATION TO

AND AWARENESS OF OLDER PERSONS. THERE SHOULD BE AN ATTEMPT TO COPE WITH THESE AREAS IF WE ARE GOING TO EFFECTIVELY PROVIDE INFORMATION AND SECURITY TO THE AGED.

I HOPE THIS HAS PROVIDED SOME INSIGHT INTO THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF OLDER PERSONS AND WHY WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH THEM AS A GROUP IN SPECIAL WAYS. THEY ARE A VERY VULNERABLE AND SENSITIVE GROUP. THEY NEED UNIQUE AND CONCERNED PROGRAMS TO ALLEVIATE SOME CRITICAL PROBLEMS. I WANT YOU TO THINK BACK A MOMENT TO THE OLDER WOMAN I MENTIONED AT THE BEGINNING....AND CONCLUDE WITH ONE OF MY FAVORITE QUOTATIONS:

"THE DEATH OF ONE MAN IS A TRAGEDY,
THE DEATH OF MANY, A STATISTIC."

I HOPE TODAY YOU WILL REMEMBER THE TRAGEDY IN EACH LIFE REPRESENTED BY THE STATISTICS I HAVE GIVEN YOU. AND, I HOPE IN REMEMBERING THAT TRAGEDY YOU CAN WORK TOWARD INSURING SOME SECURITY AND DIGNITY FOR OLDER AMERICANS.

END