

# MIND- HACKING ALERT FOR SENIORS

## Protecting Yourself and Your Loved Ones from Undue Influence and Elder Abuse



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"Education to Strengthen Families"

## Protect your assets, your relationships, your well-being



You've worked hard to achieve financial security, nurture family and community ties, and safeguard your health. But keeping up with the hectic pace and daily challenges of modern life can be overwhelming. That makes it important to be on

guard against people or groups that might take advantage of any vulnerabilities or insecurities to gain an undue amount of influence over you — to override your independence and take over your life.

Just as a hacker can gain unauthorized access to a computer and the information it holds, an unscrupulous person can hack into your mind through undue influence. Like a computer virus, mind-hacking can corrupt memories and create false ones.

### Think mind-hacking can't happen to you? Think again!

You're a prime target for mind-hackers because of your accomplishments and age. Studies have shown that those over age 50 control most of the nation's wealth, and older Americans lose billions of dollars each year to people who take advantage of them.\* In the process, family bonds and friendships can be broken and the victims' health ruined as well.

Sadly, life experience and formal education do not guarantee immunity from mind-hacking. Familiarizing yourself with the deceptive, high-pressure tactics that mind-hackers use, and recognizing the circumstances when you're most likely to be at risk are your best defense.

\* *Encyclopedia of Aging and Public Health* (Springer, 2008); *The MetLife Study of Elder Financial Abuse: Crimes of Occasion, Desperation, and Predation Against America's Elders* (June 2011).



### Mind-hackers are most harmful when they do any of these things:

- Isolate you by convincing you to cut off your trusted family, friends, and others in your support network
- Magnify your fears or insecurities to create a "siege mentality" — the illusion of enemies everywhere
- Fuel feelings of guilt or shame
- Compromise your health or meddle in your medical decision-making
- Intimidate you to stop asking questions
- Assume control of your savings and/or medical power of attorney
- Insist on communicating with your lawyer or other advisors on your behalf
- Persuade you to change your will in their favor
- Force you to commit crimes

## How do mind-hackers worm their way into your life?

Disguising their cruel intentions with a friendly demeanor, con artists, thieves, destructive cults, unethical caregivers, and other devious individuals and groups may use any of the following tactics to gain your confidence:

- Pretend to be your new best friend, soul mate, or ideal caregiver
- Come across as an ordinary family, absorbing you into theirs
- Masquerade as a club, self-help group, or religion
- “Love bomb” you — repeatedly flatter you and pay you an unusual amount of attention
- Lure you with sex, companionship, or gifts after knowing you for only a short time
- Claim they’re the only ones who understand you and can solve your problems
- Make you believe you have an illness only they can cure
- Promise you a way to “get rich quick”

## How do mind-hackers maintain their control over you?

Once they have your trust, mind-hackers may use exaggerated claims or scare tactics to trap and exploit you. To tighten their control, they may:

- Force you to schedule all your activities around them
- Restrict your access to media and other objective sources of information

- Check in with you excessively, even late at night or when they know you’re busy—and expect you to do the same
- Label those you previously trusted and loved as “negative,” “contaminated,” “toxic,” or “unenlightened”
- Insist that they’re your new family
- Demand that you stop communicating with or keep secrets from others
- Convince you that they’re entitled to your savings or other assets
- Tell you that thinking for yourself interferes with finding happiness or “truth”
- Disrupt your eating and/or sleeping habits
- Trivialize or make you give up social, recreational, religious, political, or other activities that are important to you
- Shun, shame, or hurt you if you raise questions or express doubts
- Rush you into marriage or another serious commitment

**All these tactics increase the mind-hackers’ undue influence over you, emotionally manipulate you, short-circuit your ability to think critically, and undermine your previous relationships so that you become dependent on the mind-hackers.**



## THE SPECTRUM OF INFLUENCE

There are various degrees of social influence all around you. Learning to recognize them is key to protecting yourself from exploitative relationships.

Safe to Continue: Ethical Influence	Caution — Early Signs of Mind-Hacking	Danger! Undue Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nurtures your independence</li> <li>○ Respects your other relationships and interests</li> <li>○ Encourages access to information</li> <li>○ Leaves you in control of your choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disregards your personal boundaries</li> <li>○ Pressures your thoughts, feelings, and behavior</li> <li>○ Begins to isolate you</li> <li>○ Leaves you feeling confused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fuels fears</li> <li>○ Controls your time and keeps you isolated from others</li> <li>○ Demands unquestioning commitment</li> <li>○ Leaves you obligated to get permission before making decisions</li> </ul>

## When are you most vulnerable?

You're most likely to fall for mind-hacking during times of transition, particularly when there are changes in your support network—the family and friends you've always relied on to celebrate life's joys and get through tough times. A mind-hacker can more easily overcome your natural defenses and infiltrate your life to an unhealthy degree when you are:

- Worried about finances or seeking advice on estate planning
- Downsizing/moving
- Concerned about someone who's desperate for money
- Trusting or charitable by nature
- Unaware of the value of your assets
- Inexperienced in using new technology
- Lonely
- Mourning the death of your spouse or another loved one
- Sad about a divorce, illness, or other loss
- Looking for a new way to occupy your time
- Searching for spiritual direction or new place of worship



- Fearful of aging
- Ill or experiencing impaired hearing, vision, or mobility
- Taking medication that makes you depressed, confused, or tired
- Dependent on others for transportation
- Becoming forgetful or distrustful of your memories
- Not getting proper nutrition or sleep



## Reality check to stay safe and secure:

- Be skeptical of anyone you've recently met who lavishes you with attention, compliments you excessively, monopolizes your time, or tries to alienate you from your trusted support network.
- Don't reveal information about your (or your family's) medical history, finances, or other very personal matters to someone you've known for only a short time, or in response to an unsolicited phone call.
- Verify any information that you're given, including references from potential advisors and caregivers, with an independent authoritative source.
- Refuse to sign up for anything that you haven't had time to carefully investigate.
- Don't turn over a large amount of money—even to a relative — without a signed and dated receipt or contract.
- Speak up if you're unhappy with your care, whether at home or in a facility.

## If you think you're being targeted...

Get advice from someone you've known for a long time who is **not involved** with the person or group that you're concerned about.

Report your concerns to law enforcement, and ask to be directed to the appropriate medical or social services agency for help.



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