

Book Review

Elder crimes, elder justice

David R. Snyder

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It is the year 2014 and at the time of this book's publication we are seeing things around us change in large-scale ways. Things in general are bigger, brighter and more expensive, and more people have them. There are more stores, more schools and more streets to live on. There is also more poverty, more hungry children and more families on Government assistance than ever before. David R. Snyder's work *Elder Crimes, Elder Justice* focuses on crime being the greatest problem faced by the United States today. The country's population has a greater proportion of elderly people than ever before, and this monumental population growth is not showing signs of slowing. The author explains that in today's fast-paced and utility-driven society, the elderly are often forgotten, isolated and no longer cared for by the larger and younger population. Snyder argues that we as a society are not unaware of these events occurring; however, no one appears to be too concerned. Thus with this writing, Snyder informs the reader that this large population of elderly individuals living in our society causes law enforcement to more frequently cross paths with this population cohort. As a society we expect our law enforcement officers to adequately serve all members of our population. By utilizing Snyder's writing, officers can better understand the needs and special considerations of the older community that Snyder claims is often forgotten.

Elder Crimes, Elder Justice is concentrated on preparing the law enforcement officer to adequately serve and protect the elderly population within the community by providing the knowledge and skills sets required for day-to-day interactions with this unique cohort. Snyder petitions for society to embrace the standards of enabling older individuals to live in a state of dignity and security and to be free from exploitation and forms of abuse. Snyder also combines and utilizes what is known about the aging process and what is known about crime in order to educate the law enforcement community on the important issues faced by older people with regard to crime and victimization. The book also largely focuses on the unique needs of the elderly and provides law enforcement officers with the knowledge needed to build the confidence to understand the aging process, communicate with older people, understand their fears, create effective crime prevention strategies and respond appropriately to elderly offenders. The book does not necessarily aim to inform the common member of society, but rather targets the law enforcement officer by providing key knowledge and skills appropriate for the field of law enforcement. Snyder designed the book with a sort of 'how-to' textbook format so that the law enforcement officer can easily understand and further apply the points from each chapter.



At the beginning of each of the seven chapters of *Elder Crimes, Elder Justice*, Snyder opens with 'Learning Objectives' for the reader. The author successfully uses this numerically listed set of learning objectives to give the reader a purpose and goal while moving through the text. Each chapter also includes various 'Case Studies' that serve to prompt the law enforcement officer to think about what 'I' would do in such a situation. This function encourages the officer to personally connect with the cases and understand the reality of the issues that he or she may face in the daily routine of law enforcement. Inserted into various appropriate parts of each chapter are 'Attitude Tips' and 'Communication Tips' to prompt the law enforcement officer to appropriately handle calls with effective communication, and address myths or stereotypes commonly associated with elderly people. Each chapter concludes with 'Case Study Summaries' that offer numerous ways the law enforcement officer can approach and successfully handle each provided situation. Also included at the end of each chapter is a list of 'Key Terms' in a glossary format. This provides definitions for each of the bold terms used throughout the text. Each of these purposeful additions to the text allows the reader to gain a more uniquely in-depth understanding of the material and how it can be applied to his or her everyday working situations.

After a brief preface that introduces Snyder's purpose for creating the book and outlines what the reader will find in each chapter, Chapter 1 begins with the author outlining six learning objectives, one attitude tip and the first case study. These initial calls to attention focus the reader directly on the reality of being faced with serving a larger older population and igniting the thought process toward how a law enforcement officer can make a difference. This beginning chapter's main focus is on the attitude of the officer and how such an attitude can have an immense impact on the lives of older people. Snyder informs the officer that it is important to have an appropriate attitude when managing the social, psychological and environmental needs of elderly individuals. The author acknowledges that by gaining education on this special cohort living in the cities the officer serves, he or she is enhancing his or her initial academy training and adding valuable knowledge that will make him or her a better public protector and servant.

Chapter 2 begins with three learning objectives geared toward informing the reader about the physical changes humans endure as they age. This chapter is devoted to educating the law enforcement officer on the normal physical changes that occur with aging. This is vital education because in many precincts it is very common for law enforcement to serve a dual role by providing law enforcement as well as emergency medical services. The author divides the chapter into two specific focuses: aging in the body systems and common diseases among older people. The formatting and presentation of this chapter allows easy readability and a working knowledge that will allow law enforcement officers to confidently anticipate an elderly person's response to various conditions unique to their age.

Chapter 3 opens with six learning objectives centered on understanding the various psychological issues that may arise as people age. This chapter informs the reader of the possible maladaptive psychological developments that officers may encounter within the elderly population that are not necessarily typical of the aging process but are commonly present. Snyder includes detailed definitions, descriptions and various etiologies for each psychological issue, such as depression, suicide, alcoholism and drug abuse. In addition, he provides various solutions to better prepare the officer for these types of situations that arise while serving the aging community. This chapter tells the officer how to recognize, prevent or intervene and manage such issues in a humble, compassionate and dignified manner.

The fourth chapter begins with three learning objectives focused on how to most effectively communicate with the elderly, and special considerations that need to be acknowledged in order to be successful. Snyder opens the chapter by reminding the officer how vital effective communication skills are to the daily interactions between law enforcement and the public that they serve. I believe the most useful section of this chapter to be the attention it pays to the communication changes that occur as an individual ages. Snyder informs the reader that as the aging process occurs older people experience changes in vision, hearing and speech, which the law enforcement officer needs to be able to recognize and prepare for to have more successful encounters with this particular population.

Chapter 5 lists eight learning objectives centered on understanding the elderly person as a victim and understanding the various crimes that the elderly population commonly fall victim to. This chapter is positioned at the half-way point of the text, and serves as a transition from the previous focus on the unique characteristics of the elderly to a focus on the victims and the unique considerations that need to be made. Snyder reiterates why it is so important for today's law enforcement officers to have the knowledge and skills to be prepared to aid, serve and counsel this particular population. The chapter reviews the types of crimes older people may face, how the officer can solve each type of crime and what the officer can do to prevent the types of victimization older people experience.

The sixth chapter guides the reader with six learning objectives concentrated on highlighting the multifaceted characteristics of elder abuse. This chapter is uniquely important because it provides the law enforcement officer with a more developed understanding and grasp of elderly victims as actual human beings rather than just a statistic or growing cohort. This chapter begins by providing a list of definitions of the specific types of abuses and neglect an elderly victim may experience. This is helpful for the reader to be able to recognize types of abuses and the forms they can take. Such a skills set is vital to best serve this cohort because older people often experience more than one form of abuse that needs to be adequately recognized. Snyder includes some very successful in-depth descriptions and photographs of actual victims to prepare and illustrate for the reader the types of injuries to look for and be aware of in an investigation of this nature.

The final chapter focuses on elderly people not as victims, but as criminal offenders. This chapter begins with four final learning objectives centered on learning how to understand older people who commit crimes and the types of crimes they commonly commit. The chapter outlines the learning objectives by first presenting a typology and profile of elderly perpetrators, theories of why older people commit crimes, special considerations regarding the arrest of such individuals, detaining and holding challenges, and finally ways in which law enforcement can prevent crimes committed by elderly individuals. The author notes that in order for the law enforcement officer to build a complete understanding and working knowledge of social gerontology, the officer must also include knowledge of elderly people as perpetrators.

As a supplement to the already successful text, Snyder closes the book with three very useful appendices, letters A–C, which are designed to provide the law enforcement officer with resources to better aid and serve the aging population within their precinct. Appendix A, *Aging Resources*, provides a vast number of sources for law enforcement of agencies and organizations that serve the needs of the elderly community. These resources are listed alphabetically and by topic heading to provide for easy navigation. Appendix B, *State Agencies on Aging*, lists the contact information for all 50 states and United States Territories



State Agencies for Senior Services. The contact information includes the most recent mailing addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and Websites. Appendix C, *Death Investigation and Older People*, serves as a brief refresher to the law enforcement officer on death investigation and provides points to be considered when an investigation involves the death of an older individual.

It is very clear that the target audience for David Snyder's *Elder Crimes, Elder Justice* is those working within the law enforcement community. The writing provides insights into the unique considerations of the growing elderly population and teaches the law enforcement officer how to successfully manage, aid, serve, prevent and respond to interactions with the elderly in an effective manner. The text functions to provide the officer with the skills to compassionately and adequately serve this special cohort in order to create positive outcomes for the elderly person, for the law enforcement officer and for the community that he or she serves. The casual reader will find the text to have easy readability because of the clear and easygoing format; however, the focal issues of this text are almost impossible to solve independently, and purposefully deserve the attention of trained law enforcement officials.

Nonetheless, Snyder's writing provides a unique insight into the rapidly growing and often forgotten population of the elderly within our community. *Elder Crimes, Elder Justice* is a fantastically modern text that successfully provides the law enforcement officer with a vast knowledge base of the special challenges and considerations of our senior cohort. With this text as a supplement to initial academy training, Snyder is working to create a generation of better-prepared and responsive law enforcement officials to adequately serve our community.

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