

Vulnerable Adults Need Protection Against Online Exploitation and Abuse

Christina Marsack-Topolewski, PhD, LMSW

Annemarie Kelly, JD, LLM

Eastern Michigan University

College of Health and Human Services

E

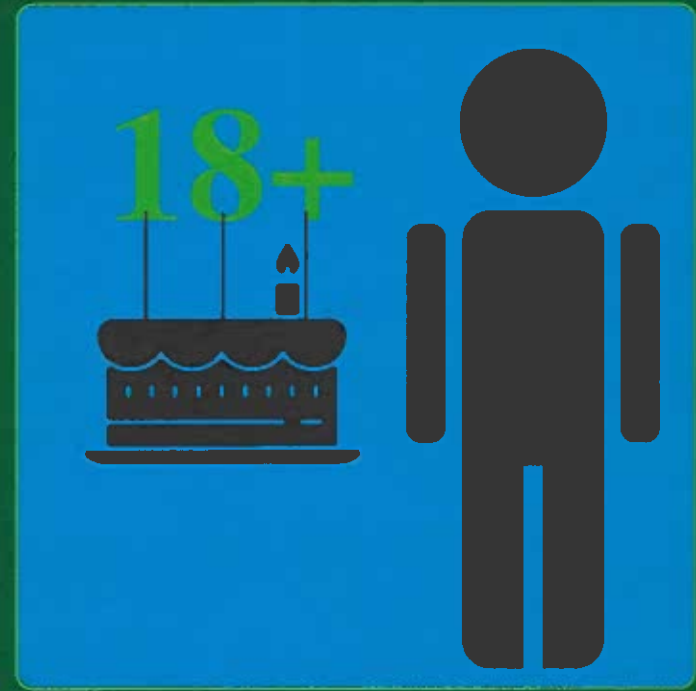
Greatest vulnerability for:

1. Being targeted.

2. Online exploitation & abuse.

3. Long lasting or permanent emotional damage.

Close the Gap in Our Internet Predation Laws



**Intellectual and
developmental
disabilities (IDD)**

&

**Cognitive
impairments
(developed later in life)**

E

Intellectual
function deficits

&

=

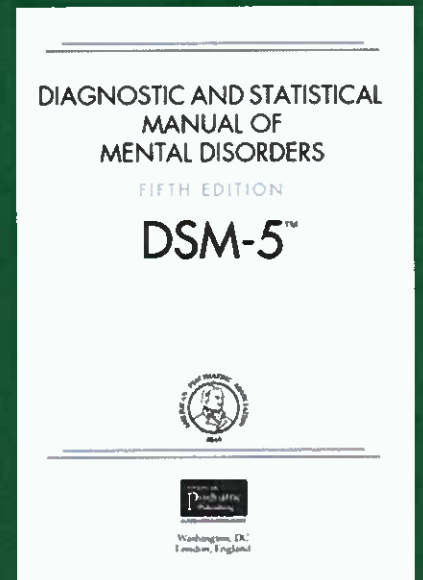
Cognitive
impairments

Challenges with:

- Reasoning
- Problem solving
- Judgment

E

Chronological age \neq
cognitive /
mental age



E

Increased risk of:

- **Difficulty saying “no”**
- **Manipulation**
- **Inability to recognize a dangerous situation**



**Vulnerable
Adults with
disabilities**



*The highest risk for
experiencing
violence*

- ✓ **World Health Organization**
- ✓ **United Nations**
- ✓ **US Dept. of Health and Human Services**

**Online
exploitation
with sexually
explicit visual
material**

=

- ✓ **Abuse**
- ✓ **Predation**
- ✓ **Aggression**
- ✓ **Bullying**

Connect the Dots

- ✓ **Predation**
 - ✓ **Abuse**
 - ✓ **Bullying**
 - ✓ **Exploitation**
 - ✓ **Aggression**
 - ✓ **Breach of consent**
- Internet**
- Internet-based**
- Online/Virtual**



HB 4159



1

Protects sexual expression rights for Vulnerable Adults and the general population.

2

Holds legally accountable those who sexually abuse, harass, or bully Vulnerable Adults online.

3

Deters would-be predators.

E

Conceptual

+

Social

+

Practical

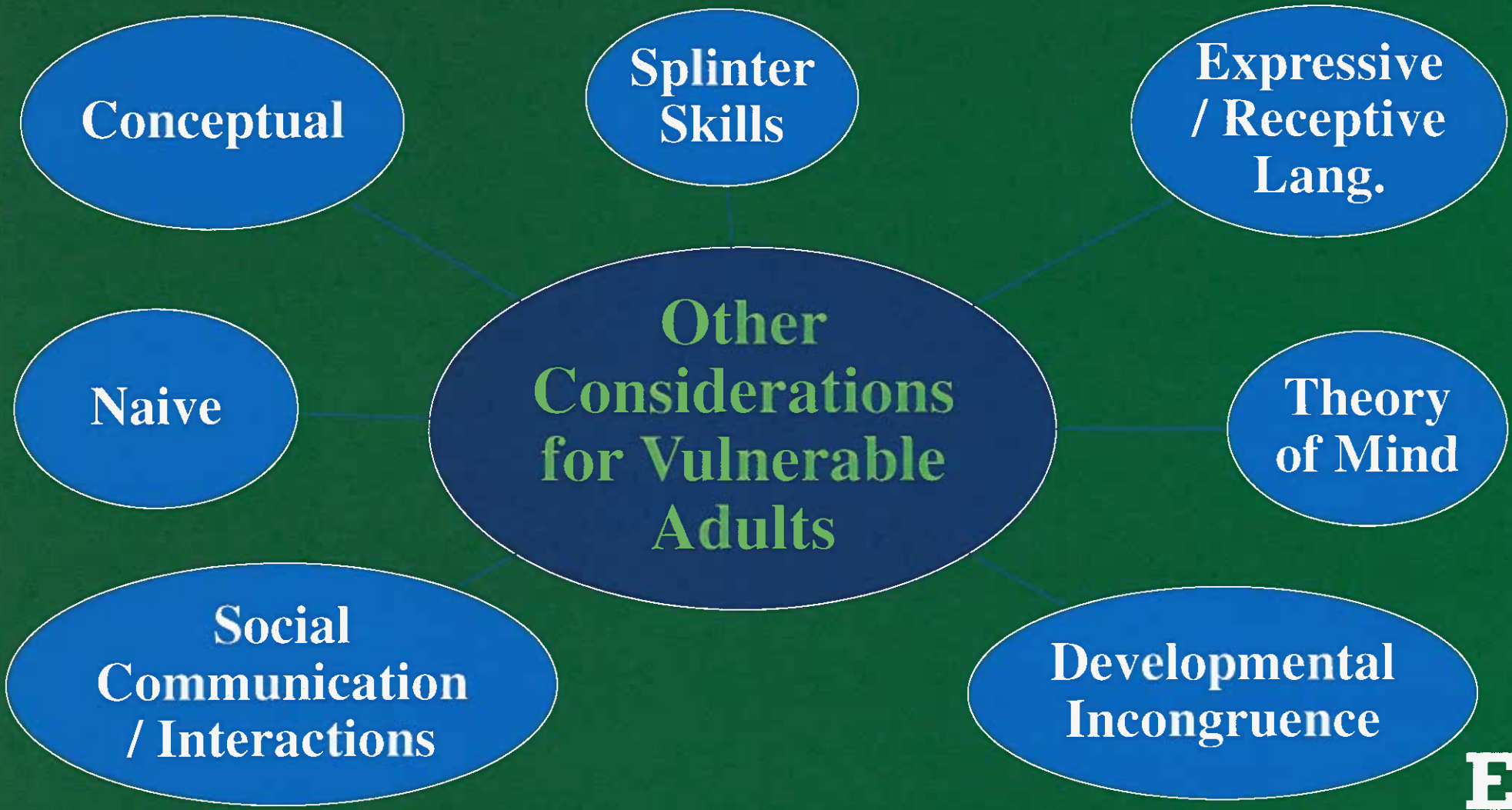
- Reasoning/problem solving
- Processing speed
- Working memory
- Language (expressive & receptive)
- Literacy
- Generalizing
- Overall knowledge
- Learning

- Communication skills
- Social judgment
- Queues and nuances
- Following rules
- Making/keeping friendships

- Personal care (ADL / IADL)
- Responsibilities
- Organizing tasks
- Rely on others

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*. American Psychiatric Publishing, 33-34 (2013).

E



HB 4159: A person shall not

- request
- persuade
- convince
- threaten
- command
- force
- coerce

Vulnerable Adults Need Protections Against Online Exploitation, Abuse, and Aggression

Christina Marsack-Topolewski, PhD, LMSW

Annemarie Kelly, JD, LLM

Eastern Michigan University

College of Health and Human Services

E

