

PREYING ON THE ELDERLY

So sad, especially while we're trying to stay safe from becoming a victim of the pandemic, worrying about the economy, sending our grandchildren back to school and a myriad of other stressful issues we are dealing with. Now we need to be aware of scammers trying to dupe us into believing that a "family member" needs cash. Oh really! Below are ways to protect yourself from these scammers. It was taken directly from the Pinellas County Sheriff's website.

Preying on the elderly is a common tactic criminals use when attempting to steal money. The grandparent scam is where a criminal calls an elderly person about a family member, or pretends to be a family member, who needs help, asks for cash money, and emphasizes that the elderly person needs to keep it a secret. Most times, the cash amount is more than \$10,000, and it may be delivered to the criminal via an unsuspecting third-party courier.

The grandparent scam is all too common, but there are things you and your loved ones can do to prevent becoming a victim.

- Don't answer the phone if you don't recognize the phone number or name.
- Verify information using a phone number that you know (like calling a family member to confirm the story).
- Don't keep secrets. If the caller tells you not to tell anyone, that is a good sign it may be a scam.
- Never give cash to anyone you don't know. The government will never ask you for money over the phone.
- If you are in doubt, call the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office at **(727)-582-6200**.