Disrespect of Our Elders: Preventing Native Elder Abuse

National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

Jacque Gray, Ph.D.
Addressing Elder Abuse
December 10, 2014

“Restoring respect and dignity by honoring Indigenous elders”

Vision:

“Restore respect and dignity by honoring indigenous elders.”
NIEJI Goals Cycle 1

- Establish NIEJI
  - Website: www.nieji.org
  - E-Mail: nieji@med.und.edu
  - Phone: 701-777-2023
  - Toll-free Number: 855-834-1572
- Develop Resources
  - Tribal/State Resource with interactive map
  - Contacting all tribes about Elder Abuse Code
- Developed Elder Abuse Model Code/MOU
- Hold a restorative justice conference

NIEJI Goals Cycle 2

- Maintain and update NIEJI Infrastructure and provide technical assistance to tribes on elder abuse
- Develop training modules on Elder Abuse
- Provide educational information and resources on Native American elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation for dissemination on the website
- Provide a plan for data collection on elder abuse
What is Elder Abuse?

- National Center on Elder Abuse

“Any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult.”

What legal types of elder abuse?

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional/Psychological Abuse
- Neglect
- Financial Exploitation
- Self-Neglect
- Abandonment
Physical Abuse

- Use of force to threaten or physically injure a vulnerable adult.
- Signs: Slap, bruises, falls, pressure marks, certain burns or blisters

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

- Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause or could cause mental anguish, pain or distress to a senior adult.
- Signs: withdrawal from normal activities, unexplained changes in alertness, unusual behavioral change
Sexual Abuse

- Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon a vulnerable elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.
- Signs: Bruises around breasts or genitals, unexplained STDs

Exploitation

- Theft, fraud, misuse, or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over and older person’s money or property.
- Signs: change in finances, altered wills or trusts, loss of property
Neglect

- A caregiver’s failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder’s safety, physical, or emotional needs.
- Signs: Pressure ulcers, lack of medical care, malnutrition or dehydration.

Abandonment

- Desertion of a frail or vulnerable elder by anyone with a duty of care.
Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual Abuse (Doble 2006)
- Anything that interferes with spiritual growth including the corruption of another person’s value system.

Soul Wounding (Duran & Duran, 1996)

Examples
- Elder not taken to ceremonies and spiritual events
- Family not allowed to conduct ceremonies in hospital as elder is dying.
- Ceremonial items taken from the elder’s home by visitors (family, friends, others) for use or sale.
- Elders not raised within the community wanting to have ceremonies at end of life and no connections to provide the ceremonies.
- Others?
Health Effects of Elder Abuse

- Increased Mortality
  - Lachs et al. 1998, Dong et al. 2009

- Poorer physical outcomes (probable)
  - American Medical Association 1990; Anetzberger 2004; Lindbloom et al. 2007

  - Increased pain
  - Exacerbation of existing conditions
  - Welts, wounds, injuries
  - Increased susceptibility to infection

Financial Effects of Elder Abuse

- Restitution often not forthcoming or too late
- No time to rebuild assets
- Loss of choices for older adult; loss of independence
- Reliance on others for financial support
- More quickly spending down to Medicaid
Who is more at risk?

- People with inadequately treated mental health and/or substance abuse problems are more likely to be abusive.
- People who feel stressed/burdened/resentful are more likely to be abusive.
- Providing care for an older adult who is physically combative and/or verbally abusive.

Screening for Abuse

- Best practice: Everyone should be screened.
- Normalize talking about a difficult topic.
- Native Elders talk about disrespect not abuse.
- Asking questions creates a potential to catch abuse in its early stage and prevent it from escalating.
Screening: Ask the Elder

- “Are you being disrespected? If so, in what ways?”
- “Has anybody hurt you?”
- “Are you afraid of anybody?”
- “Is anyone taking or using your money without your permission?”
- “Is anyone taking your things without your permission?”


Talk to Elders About the Future

- Planning Ahead
  - Under what conditions would you want someone to manage your finances?
  - Under what conditions would you want to be placed in a long term care setting
- Staying Connected-Check in on one another
  - When people who regularly attend events are not there
  - Have a buddy system
- Being Cautious
  - Don’t provide resources without checking out the situation
- Reporting Their Suspicions
  - If you think abuse may be going on, tell someone.
  - Ask authorities to intervene.
### Elder Abuse Indicators

#### Unexplained Falls
- Over the past year, 39% of Native Elders report they have fallen!

![Graph showing the number of falls in the past year](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many falls, in the past year</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1 to 4 falls</th>
<th>5 to 9 falls</th>
<th>10 to 14 falls</th>
<th>More than 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cycle III (2007-2008)</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle IV (2008-2011)</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle V (2013-2014)</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Malnourished or inadequate food
- 1 in 6 Native elders report inadequate eating.
  - Fewer than 2 meals a day 15.8%

#### Unable/no help to shop/cook/feed self
- 1 in 9 Native elders report they are not physically able to shop, cook or feed themselves. 11.6%
- 1 in 8 Native elders report they do not have money to buy food. 12.6%
Elder Abuse Indicators

Family & Friends Never Help:

- Shopping/errands
  - 22.8%
- With money
  - 43.5%
- With housekeeping or chores
  - 33.0%
- Provide business/financial advice
  - 48.7%
- Provide companionship
  - 19.0%

Help From Family/Friends-Hardly or Never
### Elder Abuse Indicators

#### Use of Resources For All Tribes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Now Use</th>
<th>Would Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elder Abuse Prevention</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Assistance</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregate Meals</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Delivered Meals</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Care</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Modification</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NRCNAA, 2012

### Resource Locator

#### State/Tribal Hotlines

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming
How to help?

- Join with NIEJI, ACL & NCEA to address Elder Abuse in Indian Country
- Work with tribal government to get elder abuse into tribal code.
- Spread the word—share information about elder abuse, signs, resources.
- Assist in identifying the problem locally
- Support elder abuse prevention & community awareness
- Plan Activities for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15
Partnerships

❖ Please include information on the importance of partnership/collaboration as related to your topic.

➢ National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative
➢ National Resource Center on Native American Aging
➢ National Center on Elder Abuse
➢ National Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect
➢ Administration on Aging/Administration for Community Living
➢ Adult Protective Services Resource Center
➢ Bureau of Indian Affairs, Human Services
➢ Indian Health Services, Behavioral Health

Primary References:


Contact Information

- National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative
- [Http://www.nieji.org](http://www.nieji.org)
- Toll Free: 1-855-834-1572
- info@NIEJI.org

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For More Information

National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

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Website: [www.nieji.org](http://www.nieji.org)

Thank You!
Wado!