



Elder Abuse and Grandparent Abuse

National Indigenous Elder
Justice Initiative

Walker Minnesota Conference

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“Restoring respect and dignity by honoring Indigenous elders”



Objectives

- ❖ What is Elder Abuse and how to recognize the various forms?
- ❖ Traditional View on Grandparents
- ❖ Research on Custodial Grandparents raising Grandchildren.
- ❖ Hand out the custodial grandparent information sheet



Elder Abuse and Neglect: Examples

(Administration on Aging, 2016)

Physical Abuse:

- Slapping/Hitting/Punching
- Throwing items at an elder

Sexual Abuse:

- Bruising of the breasts, perineal, or inner thigh
- Unexplained STD's, Fear of touch

Emotional Abuse:

- Withdrawn, evasiveness, hostility

Neglect:

- Elder who is lying in their own urine or feces for extended periods of time, elder develops malnutrition and pressure sores due to lack of appropriate care, elder is dirty, has elongated nails, is living in a filthy environment

Abandonment:

- Elder is left home alone as the caregiver leaves for the weekend

Self-Neglect:

- Not following medical regimens, failure to acquire needed medicines

Financial exploitation:

- Disparity between assets and condition, improper use of legal documents

Spiritual Abuse: (Doble, 2006)

- Elder is not taken to ceremonies and spiritual events
- Ceremonial items taken from elder's home for use or sale without permission



Why is an Elder Vulnerable to Mistreatment?

(University of Southern California- Center on Elder Mistreatment, 2016).

Psychological, social and economic factors, as well as mental and physical conditions of the elder and the perpetrator.

- Cognitive Impairment such as Dementia
- Intimate partner violence
- Living with others
- Social isolation
- May be currently more dependent on others for assistance.
- Fear of losing independence if a report is made

How to look for Physical Abuse

(Mosqueda, 2016)

- ❖ Malnutrition/Dehydration
- ❖ Unkempt appearance/poor hygiene
- ❖ Skin Bruising
 - Most common form- its hard to tell what's abuse and what is not
 - Age-related changes
 - Medications many contribute to sensitive skin or "easy" bruising
 - Dating by color- a yellow bruise may not indicate an older bruise
 - Multiple stages of healing
 - History consistent with injury
 - Location of bruise

Injury Assessment (Mosqueda, 2016).

- ❖ Types of injuries
 - Bruises, pressure sores (bed sores), fractures, lacerations, burns
- ❖ What to look for
 - Location of injury, old injuries, delay in seeking care, history and physical exam consistent

How to Recognize Sexual Abuse

(Mosqueda, 2016).

- ❖ Any form of sexual contact or exposure without consent or when a person is incapable of giving consent.
 - Unwanted touching and fondling
 - Sexual name calling
 - Forced and coerced sexual acts
 - Purposefully hurtful sex
 - Sodomy and rape

Signs include: blood in underwear, bruising or tears in genitals, fear of being touched, aggression, depression and/or anxiety

How to look for Emotional Abuse

(Mosqueda, 2016).

- ❖ The infliction of mental anguish, pain or distress upon an elder.
 - Threatening, criticizing, debasing, ridiculing, ignoring.
 - Yelling at, humiliating, intimidating, socially isolating.
 - The destruction of property, killing pets and reckless behavior on the part of the abuser.
 - Treating the elder like an infant. Isolating the elder from friends, family, or regular activities.

Signs include: Change in behavior, fear, confusion, isolation, depression and/or anxiety

How to Recognize Neglect

(Mosqueda, 2016).

When a caregiver actively refuses or fails to fulfill the degree of care that a reasonable person in that situation would exercise.

- Denial of care: food, water, shelter, personal hygiene, clothing, bedding, medical care, medication and assistive devices.
 - Decubitus Ulcers
 - Pressure sores (bed sores)
 - Dehydration/malnutrition
 - Over or under-medicated
 - Elder is dirty, and living in unkempt environment
- Isolation: the elder's time, activities, and contacts are controlled including preventing visitors, telephone calls, mail, and false imprisonment by denying access to outside the home and physical restraint.

How to Recognize Abandonment

(Mosqueda, 2016).

- ❖ Willful unattended care or custody by an identified caregiver who has assumed responsibility when a reasonable person in a like situation would not do so.
 - Leaving the elder unattended at home
 - Leaving the elder unattended for extended periods of time:

How to Recognize Self-Neglect

(Mosqueda, 2016).

- ❖ An elder who lacks capacity secondary to physical, mental, disease, substance abuse and cognitive reasons to manage the basic activities of daily living of a reasonable person in a similar situation.
 - Basic activities of daily living are neglected
 - The elder does not understand the consequences of their decisions
 - Threatening personal health and safety to self
 - Hygiene, food, water, clothing and bedding, shelter and surroundings, finances, health care, hoarding.

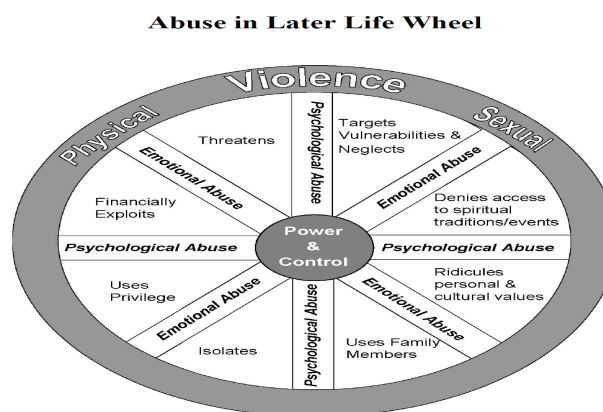
Signs include: Dehydration/malnutrition, dementia, depression, isolation from others, poor hygiene, hoarding behavior, mismanagement of medications, substance abuse, utilities are turned off.

How to Recognize Financial Abuse/Exploitation

(USC Center on Elder Mistreatment, 2016).

- ❖ The illegal or wrongful exploitation of funds, material assets, property, or other resources.
 - Denying access
 - Stealing, hiding
 - Purposeful mismanagement, deception
 - Fraud, extortion, or forging documents
 - Improper use of legal documents

Abuse in Later Life Wheel



Created by the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), a project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV)
307 S. Paterson St., Suite 1, Madison, WI 53703 608-255-0539
www.ncall.us/www.wcadv.org

This diagram adapted from the Power and Control/Equality wheels developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN

Permission to Adapt 2006

Abuse in Later Life Wheel

(NCALL, 1995)

- ❖ In 1995, the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) staff working with older abused women's support groups asked the older ladies to review the Duluth Power and Control wheels to find out if there was differences or similarities between the older and younger groups of women. The older victim woman's group had some suggestions and this Family Abuse in Later Life wheel was created.
- ❖ In 2005, NCALL staff took the Family Abuse in Later Life wheel back to the older woman's group for review. Although this wheel was a reflection of the abuse, it did not fully represent the ongoing psychological and emotional abuse they experience. Within each section of the wheel is a tactic used by the abuser to gain power and control over the victim including:

Screening is essential

USC-NCEA, 2016

- ❖ Interviewing issues
 - Cognitive level
 - Pay attention to body language
 - Reliability of history
 - Deciding when to take it seriously
- ❖ History
 - Unexplained injuries- past or present
 - Interaction between patient and caregiver
- ❖ The importance of context
 - All bruises are due to the same thing: a blood vessel ruptures and blood extravagates into the surrounding tissue.
 - All pressure sores are due to the same thing: there's inadequate blood supply to maintain perfusion of the tissues.
 - All fractures are due to the same thing: an external force greater then the strength of the bone was applied.

It's the medical professional's job to figure out why these things happened to an elder. Understanding the context is key to making a good determination.

❖ Interview and History taking

- Document responses to open-ended questions
- Use direct quotes
- Interview patient separately from suspected perpetrator
- Document discrepancies between sources
- Documentation from multiple professionals
- Document reliability of sources
- Record the patients function of cognitive status

The Physical Examination

- Document the patient's physical and cognitive abilities
- Highlight findings that deviate from or contradict claims made in the history
- Record the interaction of the patient and caregiver
- Document observed inappropriate concerns by caregiver: over concern (refuses to leave the exam room) and under concern
- Record any change in patient behavior when caregiver leaves: shrinking down with eyes to floor, increased anxiety or agitation
- Record skin lesions on a body diagram
- Take pictures of any lesions

The Assessment

- Provide the reasons that lead to your conclusion
- Specify the degree of the mistreatment
- Specify the severity of harm or potential harm to patient
- Document your level of confidence that mistreatment occurred: definite probable possible unlikely
- Document the patient's capacity to make decisions
- Record report to the appropriate authorities

Culturally Appropriate Practice

- ❖ In hospitals, designating a healing room to be used by a spiritual healer can be monumental for abused Native American elders
- ❖ Recruiting Native translators can be effective in allowing victims to communicate in their Indigenous language
- ❖ Ensuring basic needs of elders are met is important, but more importantly is building a society where they are productive and valued
- ❖ It is essential to be aware of cultural sensitivities and aspects of practice that differ from other ethnicities while working with Native American elders
- ❖ Do not assume. Instead, make it a habit of always asking questions in order to clarify what you have understood, in fact, what the client is attempting to convey

Culturally Appropriate Practice

- ❖ Baker-Demaray (2005) found that Native American elders when asked if they have been abused or neglected indicated that they have not. However, when the term “disrespect” was used instead of abuse or neglect, elders discussed many incidents that could be classified as abuse or neglect.
- ❖ When asking Native American women about sexual abuse, no abuse was admitted, but when the term “bothered” was used, descriptions of rape and sexual exploitation were detailed.

Not all tribes have their own elder services or elder abuse laws. Implementing these and establishing elder protection teams are steps to consider to help combat elder abuse in Indian Country.

Traditional Views

<http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/ojibwachildren.html>

Ojibwe Values:

- ❖ Ojibwe people refer to themselves as Anishinaabeg, or the good beings. To help them become good beings, the Anishinaabeg were given seven gifts to help them. These gifts begin and end with knowledge and the ability to know. The seven gifts were:
 - Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, Truth.

Ojibwe Elders:

Gichi-aya’aa or Gichi-anishinaabe are our first teachers, as their knowledge and experience is passed down orally from generation to generation through stories or by example.

- The word “chinshinabe” is a special word for the elders who are responsible for passing on the spiritual traditions.
- Not every elder is a Chinshinabe. These traditional teachers are the caretakers of Ojibwa culture and sacred knowledge, which can only be passed on orally, visually, and intellectually exchanged from a Chinshinabe to the receptive listener.

Way before colonization...

- ❖ Children received their education from their parents, grandparents, and other family members.
- ❖ Children were taught appropriate life skills which would assist them in gathering food, making clothing, and building shelter for themselves and others.
- ❖ Learning life skills in such a manner that it does not harm the environment or interfere with the health and well-being of those around them.

Everyone had a role to play within the tribal community:

- ❖ men provided food and protection
- ❖ Women provided by building shelter for family, clothing, cooking and child rearing.
- ❖ Elders were held in high regard and valued for their knowledge. It was the life goal to become an elder.

Depending on what clan or dodem the child was born into they would be raised to hold specific qualities and responsibilities within their tribal society.

- ❖ For example- the gift given to the Deer clan was that of kindness. Bear clan was gifted with strength not just physically but emotionally and spiritually to stand for the good of the community.

According to the American Community Survey- U.S. Census Bureau (2010), 5.7 million children under the age of 18 are living in a household headed by a grandparent. Factor contributing to an increase in grandparents raising their grandchildren include:

- Alcohol and Substance abuse
- Neglect, abuse and abandonment
- Death of a parent, or divorce
- Parental Incarceration

Housing: Difficulty accommodating children in their residence for the following reasons:

- Home is too small
- Safety hazards in home
- Violations to lease.

Legal: Many grandparents do not have legal custody or guardianship of grandchildren, and without legal custody the caregiver may face problems:

- Obtaining medical information or treatment for child
- Accessing needed benefits for the child.



Research on Custodial Grandparents cont...

(Illinois Department on Aging, 2017)

School Enrollment: Grandparents may face obstacles in school policies such as:

- Unable to enroll child without proof of legal guardianship
- Lack of access to reports, education plans and school records due to “informal custodial arrangements”

Health: Caring for a child can be stressful and overwhelming, especially if the elder is also dealing with personal health problems. Some children may come with their own severe physical, emotional and behavioral problems making caregiving that much more difficult. These factors may include:

- Prenatal drug or alcohol exposure, Physical or sexual abuse
- Feelings of abandonment may cause emotional and behavioral problems

Respite Care: a support system is not established and caregivers may feel isolated, so this is why respite care is vital to help strengthen the family, to help prevent abuse, and support the efforts of the caregiver.



Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren

(Henderson, Stevenson, & Teaster, 2009)

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census of the Children living with their Grandparents **general** population:

- 52% of grandparents raising grandchildren are below the age of 55 years.
- 31% of grandparents are between 55 and 64 years.
- 17% of grandparents are 65 years or older.
- 51% of grandchildren are under the age of 6 years.
- 29% of grandchildren are between the age of 6 and 11 years.
- 20% of grand children are between the age of 12 and 17 years.

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census around 10% of **Native American** Children live with their grandparents.

Reasons Grandparents raise their grandchildren include; providing a home-like experience for the child, to help shape the child's personal and cultural identity, and preventing placement in a foster home.

Rewards for Grandparents rearing grandchildren includes; preservation of family history, culture, and values, maintaining contact with child(ren), Love and Affection.



Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren

(Henderson, Stevenson, & Teaster, 2009)

Challenges for Grandparents

- Health- some grandparents experience health problems from caretaking of grandchildren such as: depression, insomnia, back and stomach problems, and hypertension.
- Social Isolation- busy schedules means less time for other family members and friends, leaving very little time for the grandparent to enjoy community activities.
- Finances- Grandparents may quit their jobs, reduce their work hours, or make other financial sacrifices in order to care for the grandchildren.

Considerations when going to Court

The Court rulings may differ from state-to-state or in tribal courts as grandparent rights are different.

- Burden of Proof
- Custody/Adoption/Guardianship
- Financial Strains/Court Costs



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Key Practice

Issues

This course found at <http://www.netce.com/coursecontent.php?courseid=1023>

There are many reasons why grandparents chose to raise their grandchildren, the authors of this course indicated the following as main reasons;

- Parental substance abuse- This is the most common reason for assuming custody of grandchildren.
 - Data by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (from 2002 to 2007) indicated that 11.9% of children live with at least one parent who have a substance abuse problem. Child abuse or maltreatment estimates indicate that 9.2 of every 1000 children in the U.S. are victims of child abuse or neglect (Children's Bureau, 2014).
- Parental Incarceration- estimates indicate that 1.5 million adults in the U.S. were incarcerated in 2009, and half of these inmates were parents of children under the age of 18 years.
- Parental Deployment- Approximately 1.5 million children have a parent in the military, and parental separation due to military deployment is a reported reason for grandparents taking custody of the grandchildren.
- Parental Mental Health Problems- estimates indicated that more than 5 million children in the U.S. have a parent who is diagnosed with a serious mental illness (Marsh, 2009). The most common mental illness is major depression and affects 6.7% of adults in the U.S (CDC, 2014).
- Divorce- the divorce rate in the U.S. is around 49%, although some of these marriages may not include children there are still a large number of children who are being affected by the separation of parents through divorce.



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Key Practice Issues Continued...

Grandparenting in a cultural context:

- In Native American families, the family is the foundation of social relationships and elders are held in high regard for their wisdom and life experiences. Grandparents are often viewed as the families' roots, and are necessary teachers of cultural traditions and practices to the younger generation.
- In interviews with 28 Native American grandparents, grandparents reported taking on cultural roles to insure that their traditional practices and beliefs are passed on, in addition to their emotional roles for their biological and non-biological grandchildren (Welbel-Orlando, 1990).
- Native American grandparents served as models of appropriate ceremonial behaviors and took on the responsibility for exposing their grandchildren to tribal ways of life in order to reinforce and extend the traditional culture and practices. This belief that grandparents have "enculturative responsibilities" is echoed in other studies with Native American grandparents (Robbins, Scherman, Holeman, & Wilson, 2005).
- These grandparents report using storytelling as a way of teaching younger family members as most of these teachings are done orally or visually with items passed down through the generations. They also saw themselves as family facilitators, ensuring that the family is kept together.



Native American Grandparenting Styles

(Welbel-Orlando, 1997)

The author developed six grandparenting styles based on her encounters while working with American Indians. Through her work and her observations of 26 grandparents interactions with their grandchildren the following six styles were identified by the author:

- 1) **Cultural Conservator**- Grand parent as primary caretaker of 1st or 2nd born grandchildren. This grandparent actively asks their children to allow the grandchildren to live with them for extended periods of time for the purpose of exposing them to the Native American ways of life
- 2) **Custodian**- occurs in cases of unanticipated trauma which separate the parents and child such as; divorce, death, unemployment, abandonment, illness, abuse and neglect.
- 3) **Ceremonial**- these grandparents lived a large distance from their grandchildren but unlike the Distanced style, these grandparents made regular trips to visit the grandchildren. These visits are celebrated and are of great importance to the community and hold a cultural value with the grandparent. The Ceremonial grandparent is an ideal model- during these limited time visits the grandchildren learn the appropriateness of respect of elders, and how elders are displayed respect and love in old age.



Native American Grandparenting Styles

(Weibel-Orlando, 1997)

- 4) Distanced- the grandparents in this style lived to far away from the grandchildren to have regular visits. The distance between the grandparents and the grandchildren were geographical, psychological, and cultural in nature.
- 5) Fictive- an alterative to the lack of biological grandchildren. These grandparents often have taken in foster children for a variety of time, and they later adopt the youth as kin.
- 6) Care-needing- This final grand parenting style is when the children and grandchildren are expected to care for their elders in their homes. Fixing their meals, run errands, and to handle paperwork involved with Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other personal finances. The culturally expected interactions and care taking between the elder and the grandchildren illustrates the core values in Native American family life which is respect for the elderly and the interdependence of all family members.



Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity: Brookdale Foundation Group issues RFP for seed grants

Brookdale Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) grants for supportive services to grandparents and other relatives raising children

The Brookdale Foundation Group has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the creation or expansion of supportive services to grandparents and other relatives raising children. Up to 15 programs will be selected to receive a seed grant of \$15,000 (\$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively) contingent upon progress made during year one with potential for continuity in the future. On-going technical assistance will also be provided. Any 501 (c)(3) or equivalent not-for-profit organization can apply. The RFP proposal and guidelines can be downloaded at www.brookdalefoundation.org.

Proposals due: Thursday, June 15, 2017

Selected applicants will be required to attend, as a guest of the Foundation, an Orientation and Training Conference to be held October 20-22, 2017 in Denver, Colorado.

For additional information, contact Melinda Perez-Porter, RAPP Director, at mpp@brookdalefoundation.org.

[BACK TO TOP](#)



Minnesota Resources

◆ Senior Linage Line:



◆ Alzheimer's Association:

— 24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900



◆ Honoring Elder Wisdom is sponsored in part by a grant from:



◆ Hosted by:



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**For More Information
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Thank You!
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