Elder Abuse in Indian Country

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National Indian Health Board
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National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

- National Resource Center for Tribal Elder Abuse
- Established in 2011
- Develop resources & maintain repository for culturally relevant elder abuse prevention information for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

Mission:
- Restore Respect and Dignity by Honoring Indigenous Elderly
In 2009, persons age 65 or older made up about 12.9% of the U.S. population, and it is estimated that at the current rate by 2030 they will make up 19% (AoA, 2014).

Incidents of elder abuse and/or neglect are expected to increase with the growth of the elder populations.
Implications

- 90% of elder abuse is committed by a family member (Barton, 2012).
- Elders who have been abused are at a 200% higher risk of death than those who have not been mistreated (NCOA, 2014).
- Nationally, financial abuse costs older Americans $2.9 billion year (NCEA, 2013).
- The above numbers are thought to be underreported because of love for or fear of the abuser.
According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, elder abuse generally refers to any of the following types of mistreatment that are committed by someone with whom the elder has a special relationship (for example, a spouse, sibling, child, friend, or caregiver).
Types of Abuse

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, there are seven types of elder abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional or Psychological Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial or Material Exploitation
- Neglect
- Self-Neglect
- Abandonment

According to Gray, LaBore, & Carter (2018), an additional type of abuse commonly affecting Native American elders is spiritual abuse.
Spiritual abuse is defined as harmful interference with spiritual growth including the corruption of another person’s value system. (Gray et al., 2018).

Examples include:
- Preventing an elder from attending spiritual activities or ceremonies
- Theft of an elder’s ceremonial items to sell or use without permission
- Comments or activities which are damaging to the elder’s spirit or sexual abuse as a spiritual activity
- Sexualized touching, molesting, or rape as a part of spiritual healing or ceremonies.
Self-Neglect

- Self-neglect is characterized as the behavior of an elderly person that threatens his/her personal health or safety. Self-neglect may manifest in an elder as a refusal or failure to provide him/herself with adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medication, and safety precautions (NCEA, 2013).

- The definition of self-neglect excludes a situation in which a mentally competent elder, who understands the consequences of his/herself decisions, makes a conscious and voluntary choice to engage in acts that threaten his/her health or safety.

- Examples include:
  - Lacking food or basic utilities
  - Refusing medications or hoarding
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15th
  - Began 2006
  - International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse & World Health Organization
  - NIEJI held the first event 2012

Tribal WEAAD Events
  - June 15th & other times
  - Elder Abuse Awareness Days, Conferences, Events
The National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) is dedicated to restoring respect and dignity by honoring Indigenous Elders. If this is an emergency, call 911. To report Elder abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, view the State/Tribal Hotlines page for local numbers.

Most cases of Elder abuse are undetected, under reported, and unresolved resulting in injury, financial decimation, and even death. The National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) was created to address the lack of culturally appropriate information and community education materials on Elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation in Indian Country.

COVID-19 Resources

These COVID-19 Tribal Elder Resources will help to inform your communities on how to prevent the spread, protect your Elders and loved ones, and prevent falling for scams.

Webinar Recording

A Conversation on Applying Restorative Justice to Elder Abuse, April 28

Tribal Elder Abuse Services Survey

- Learn about TEAS Survey
- Take the TEAS Survey

New Fact Sheets

- View new fact sheets on Indian Country
Resources

COVID-19 Tribal Elder Resources
Resources related to COVID-19

- **Elder Abuse**
  Types of Elder abuse and the warning signs

- **Tribal Elder Protection Team Toolkit**
  A step-by-step guide for developing a successful model for addressing Elder abuse in Indian Country

- **Grandparent Resources**
  Resources for grandparents taking care of grandchildren

- **Model Projects**
  NIEJI projects other groups may want to replicate

- **News & Events**
  News, events, conference and seminars

- **Publications**
  Newsletter articles, research reports and other documents

- **Presentations**
  Presentations/poster presentations from related meetings and conference

- **Sample Products**
  Items created by Elder abuse prevention grantees

- **Videos**
  Videos on a variety of Elder abuse topics and traditional language awareness videos

- **Websites & Tools**
  Related websites

The **Native EPT Toolkit** is a step-by-step guide for developing a successful model for addressing Elder abuse in Indian Country. The Toolkit is designed to help you identify and implement a tribal Elder protection team.

Most cases of Elder abuse are undetected, under reported, and unresolved. Learn more about the types of abuse and the warning signs.
The Elder Protection Team addresses the issues of elder abuse and is dependent upon the resources of each specific tribe. Possible responsibilities of an Elder Protection Team may include:

- Educating the community and conducting prevention activities
- Building collaboration and trust among professionals, elders and families
- Providing empathetic listening
- Implementing an effective method for responding to elder abuse while maintaining confidentiality
- Reporting suspected abuse and intervening when necessary
- Restoring respect of elders
The Elder Protection Team always includes the elder. Due to the complexity of elder abuse, the makeup of the team is individualized, will vary and may include:
Elder Abuse Codes

Alabama
- The Poarch Band of Creek Indians

Alaska
- Curyung Tribal Council
- Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Arizona
- Colorado River Indian Tribes
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Gila River Indian Community
- Hopi Tribe
- Navajo Nation
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Tohono O'odham Nation
- White Mountain Apache Tribe

Code Examples
- Civil Tribal Elder Protection Code Example
- Criminal Tribal Elder Protection Code Example
- Sample Resolution for Adopting Elder Abuse Code

Native Elder Protection Team Toolkit
The tribal Elder abuse code allows the tribe to establish laws that protect elderly persons from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. For more information, view the following section of the EPT toolkit:
- Developing Tribal Elder Abuse Codes
# State & Tribal Hotlines

## Oklahoma

### Tribal Hotlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe/Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma</td>
<td>1-405-275-4030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>1-405-275-4030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town</td>
<td>1-405-452-3987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apache Tribe of Oklahoma</td>
<td>1-405-247-9493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddo Nation of Oklahoma</td>
<td>1-405-656-2344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>1-405-656-9209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee Nation</td>
<td>1-800-256-0671 or 1-918-453-5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children, Youth, and Family Services</td>
<td>1-918-453-5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Care</td>
<td>1-918-453-5000 Ext. 5657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma</td>
<td>1-800-247-4612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Care Program</td>
<td>1-405-422-7726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>1-405-422-7692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickasaw-Cherokee Nation MO/AR White River</td>
<td>1-415-232-3033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee Nation White River Band</td>
<td>1-918-299-5207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creek Nation of Oklahoma</td>
<td>1-580-436-2603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division on Aging</td>
<td>1-580-795-9790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma</td>
<td>1-800-522-6170</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Training Modules

- Interactive
- Engaging
- Accessible
- Training for Professionals

- Elder Abuse
- Legal
- Financial Exploitation
- Caregivers

- Policy
- Healthcare Providers
- Social Services
- Medication Issues

- [https://www.nieji.org/training](https://www.nieji.org/training)
Online Interactive Educational Modules

These educational modules are available to train those working with Indigenous elders to identify and address elder abuse in Indian Country.

The materials presented in the elder justice curriculum are designed to help those working with Native American elderly to understand the various types of elder abuse and become more knowledgeable about elder abuse issues. The materials will assist staff in responding appropriately to Indigenous victims of crimes and their families and enhance provision of culturally sensitive services.

The content for this training is organized for presentation either as a series of workshops or as an individual training. The training modules are designed so the presenter has all necessary information for each section in a format that is easily presented.

Modules

When conducting trainings, always begin the training with the Elder Abuse module. It provides foundational information that is relevant to all other sections.

Elder Abuse

Duration: Approximately 30 minutes

Elder abuse generally refers to many types of mistreatment by someone whom the elder has a special relationship with. Information about the types of abuse, elder protection teams, elder vulnerability, and prevention is provided.
OTHER FACT SHEETS

Intimate Partner Violence and Elder Abuse
Among Native American Elders

There are very few studies on elder abuse in indigenous communities. Findings on abuse from two studies indicate that elder abuse may happen in indigenous communities:
- 6% of men reported experiencing physical violence, intimate partner violence at 3%, emotional abuse at 12% in the past year.
- 25% of women reported physical violence in the past year, 3% reported intimate partner violence, and 8% reported emotional abuse.
- Abuse tends to be associated with sudden death among elderly, up to 50% of cases, as well as personal problems of primary caregivers.

Overview of Stay-at-Home Orders
- Stay-at-home orders limit the circumstances under which people can leave their homes.
- Under a stay-at-home order, all non-essential workers must stay home.
- People can leave their homes only for essential needs like grocery stores, medicine, or for outdoor exercise.
- Only businesses that have been deemed essential can continue to operate.

Stay-at-Home Orders in Indian Country
- Many tribal communities have strict stay-at-home orders to slow the spread of the virus.
- Tribal elders, revered for their knowledge and cultural guidance, are the biggest concern during COVID-19.
- Tribal communities do not want to lose them, as elders are disproportionately affected by the virus with health complications.

Two Spirit Elders

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Two Spirit is a contemporary term that many American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) and First Nations people identify with to bring to the forefront cultural orientation and gender identity with greater spirituality, traditions, and culture.
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Colonization

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Colonization negatively impacted tribal traditions, language, culture, and social and spiritual roles of individuals in tribal communities. As a result, some tribes took the knowledge underground to prevent further destruction of their way of life.
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Physical Distancing Is Being a Good Relative

Here are some ideas to help you keep your days full and to remain socially engaged:

- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to limit face-to-face contact with others to slow the spread of COVID-19. It is important to follow the guidelines of your community because they are trying to keep you safe and healthy.
- Get up-to-date information from your local public health office.
- Physical distancing is being a good relative.

Visit animals at the zoo. Some sites have live cameras, including:
- San Diego Zoo
  http://www.sandiegozoos.org/
- Marineland
  http://www.marineland.com
- The National Zoo
  http://www.nationalzoo.org

Learn more about American Indian history:
- Visit the United States National Museum.
  http://www.si.edu/americanhistory

Exercise:
- Go for a walk.
- Work on strength, flexibility, and balance.

Visit museums doing virtual tours.
- Smithsonian National Museum
  http://www.si.edu/exhibitions/virtualtours

Entertainment:
- Watch a movie.
- Listen to music.
- Play a game.

T a reminder, Scammers are still at it!

If you received an email or call from an organization that claims to represent an official government agency, never give your personal information, including social security numbers, dates of birth, or credit card information.

Visit Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative at Center for Rural Health - University of North Dakota - School of Medicine and Health Sciences North Dakota State University - Grand Forks, ND 58202 - Phone: 701-777-6986 Fax: 701-777-6790 Email: indianhealth@grandfair.com

An independent non-profit organization that promotes the well-being of Native Elders and promotes their social, cultural, and spiritual well-being.

For more information on the indigenous elder justice initiative, visit https://indigenouselderjusticeinitiative.org.
Data

There have been several projects developed through the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative, which will result in valuable information and data.

**Tribal Elder Abuse Services Survey**
The Tribal Elder Abuse Services Survey is a research study focusing on the availability of community Elder services, such as:
- Case management
- Elder abuse coalition
- Elder abuse codes
- Judicial system response
- Legal assistance, including guardianship, power of attorney, advanced care directives, and do not resuscitate orders
- Reporting systems
- Traditional justice

**Research Findings from the NEMS Pilot Survey**
Information gathered during the Spring 2018 tribal Elder justice services online survey needs of American Indian Tribes. Please complete if you would like to participate in the Tribal Elder Justice Services Online Survey.
Your information will help inform plans for the future.

**NEMS Materials**
- How to Get Started
- Step-by-Step Guide
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Tribal Council Resolution
- Verbal Consent Form
- Interviewer’s Guide

**Native Elder Maltreatment Survey**
The Native Elder Maltreatment Survey (NEMS) helps Native American Tribes, Alaskan Villages, and Hawaiian Homesteads understand the prevalence of Elder mistreatment, neglect, and financial exploitation in their respective communities.

**What does the survey assess?**
This survey uses the Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test (HS-EAST) to assess if Elders are at high risk for maltreatment. The survey also uses the Native Elder Life Scale (NELS), which assesses neglect and financial exploitation. The NELS provides insight on financial abuse, self-neglect, family neglect, and physical and emotional harm by others.

**How does NIEJI assist with the survey?**
NIEJI provides training and technical assistance to communities to implement NEMS. We will supply paper copies of the survey for your community. We will also assist in data analysis and producing meaningful and culturally informed reports and fact sheets.

**What is NIEJI’s research approach?**
NIEJI’s approach is consistent with the Tribal Participatory Research model giving the community decision making and oversight of the research process. NIEJI respects community research practices and data sovereignty. It is your decision to share and disseminate the data. NIEJI maintains, with community approval, the data collected in the survey, abuse, guide our program services, and information in our use of the aggregate data.

**Maltreatment of American Indian Elderly**
- NEMS: Elder American Indian Women’s Experiences
- Spiritual Abuse Among American Indian Elderly
- Maltreatment of American Indian Elderly

The documents can be downloaded or contact our office for more information.


NIEJI PARTNERS

Elder Resource Centers
National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian Elders – University of Alaska Anchorage's mission is to increase and improve service delivery of health issues, long term care including in-home care, elder abuse, mental health, and other issues facing Native communities
https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/elders/

Hā Kūpuna National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders – research on improving the health and increasing life expectancy of Native Hawaiian Elders
http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/hakupuna/

National Resource Center on Native American Aging – increasing awareness and advocacy for developing community-based solutions for Native American Elders
https://www.nrcnaa.org/

National Indian Council on Aging – advocating for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic well-being for American Indian and Alaska Native Elders
http://nicoa.org/

Elder Abuse Resources
National Center on Elder Abuse – resource for policy makers, social services and health care representatives, law enforcement, and families
http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/

Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect – University of California’s "living laboratory" of innovative approaches to preventing elder abuse
http://www.centeronelderabuse.org/

Elder Financial Protection Network
http://www.elderfinancialprotection.org/

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center – advocating for rights to residents in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
http://ltcombsman.org/
NIEJI PARTNERS

Elder Resource Centers

Adult Protective Services

Administration on Aging – Older Americans Act and Title VI Programs, Adult Protective Services http://www.aoa.gov/

National Adult Protective Services Association http://www.napsa-now.org/get-help/

Legal Resources
National Legal Resource Center http://nrlc.acl.gov/index.aspx#elder_abuse

National Congress of American Indians: serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities http://www.ncai.org/

Tribal Law and Policy Institute: providing assistance to Native nations and tribal justice systems http://www.home.tipi.org/

Model Civil Elder Abuse Code and Model Criminal Elder Abuse Code https://www.nieji.org/publications
QUESTIONS???

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