

ELDER ABUSE IN INDIAN COUNTRY



OVERVIEW

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), elder abuse refers to any of the following types of mistreatment that are committed by someone with whom the elder has a special relationship (e.g. spouse, sibling, child, friend, or caregiver).

TYPES OF ABUSE

- **Physical Abuse**
 - ◇ The use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment.
- **Emotional/Psychological Abuse**
 - ◇ The infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or nonverbal acts.
- **Sexual Abuse**
 - ◇ Sexual contact with any person who has not consented or is incapable of consent is sexual abuse.
- **Financial or Material Exploitation**
 - ◇ The illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets.
- **Neglect**
 - ◇ The refusal or failure to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elder. Neglect may include failure of a person who has fiduciary responsibilities to provide care for an elder (e.g., pay for necessary home services) or the failure on the part of an in-home service provider to provide necessary care.¹
- **Spiritual Abuse**
 - ◇ Spiritual abuse among Native American older adults are actions that damage one's experience and personal practice of the sacred.
 - ◇ Such as refusing to take elders to ceremonies and preventing them from participating in spiritual activities that lead to hurt or damaged spirits.²
- **Abandonment**
 - ◇ The desertion of an elder person by an individual who has assumed responsibility for providing care for an elder, or by a person with physical custody of an elder.
- **Self-Neglect**
 - ◇ The behavior of an elder 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.¹



ELDER VULNERABILITY

Due to health, cognitive, and social interaction changes with aging, elders are uniquely vulnerable to abuse. Elder abuse often goes unreported because of either lack of resources available to the elder or a hesitancy to report. An elder may be protecting a family member or friend who is the abuser.³

NUMBERS & STATISTICS

In 2009, persons age 65 or older made up about 12.9% of U.S. population, and it is estimated that at the current rate by 2030 they will make up 19%.⁴ Incidents of elder abuse and/or neglect are expected to increase with growth of elder population.

CALL THE POLICE OR 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN IMMEDIATE, LIFE-THREATENING DANGER.

If the danger is not immediate, but you suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring, please tell someone. Relay your concerns to the local/tribal adult protective services, long-term care ombudsman, or the tribal police.

REFERENCES

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4. Administration on Aging (AoA). (2014). A Statistical Profile of Older American Indian and Native Alaskans. Retrieved on February 11, 2016 from <https://www.nieji.org/training/elder-abuse/Statistical-Profile-Older-AmerIndian-NativeAlaskans.pdf>

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