

Preventing Elder Abuse: LGBTQ+ Elder Justice



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Compiled by SAGE & NCEA

SAGE is the country's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) older adults.

The **National Center on Elder Abuse** is a national resource center dedicated to preventing elder abuse, promoting of elder justice, and improving the lives and wellbeing of older adults.



Working for Elder Justice

As the older adult population grows, there will be a corresponding increase in the number of people who are exposed to - and experience - abuse.

It is up to all of us to prevent and address elder abuse





Elder Abuse: What are you seeing?

- How often are you hearing people allege elder abuse?
- What scenarios are you hearing about most frequently?



Elder Abuse – Share 1 Thing

1 Thing you **know** about Elder Abuse

Or

1 Thing you **want to learn** about Elder Abuse



What is Elder Abuse?

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, “Elder abuse is an **intentional act or failure to act** that **causes or creates a risk of harm** to an **older adult**. An older adult is **someone age 60 or older**. The abuse occurs at the hands of a caregiver or a person the elder **trusts**.”

How Prevalent is Elder Abuse?



1 in 10 community-dwelling older adults experience abuse every year.



1 in 3 older adults with cognitive impairment experiences abuse.



Only **1 in 24** cases of elder abuse are reported.

Elder Abuse is believed to be widely under-detected and under-reported.

Reluctance to Seek Help

- Feelings of *embarrassment and shame*
- Fear of *retaliation*
- *Dependence* on offenders for necessities
- Fear of *isolation and loneliness*
- Concern they will *not be believed*
- For older adults with advanced dementia, *inability to recognize or report* abuse
- *Reluctance to report a family abuser*

Types of Elder Abuse



PHYSICAL



PSYCHOLOGICAL



FINANCIAL



SEXUAL



NEGLECT



SELF NEGLECT

Multiple forms of abuse can occur at the same or different times.

Physical Signs of Elder Abuse



Dehydration
or unusual
weight loss



Missing
daily living
aids



Unexplained
injuries,
bruises, cuts,
or sores

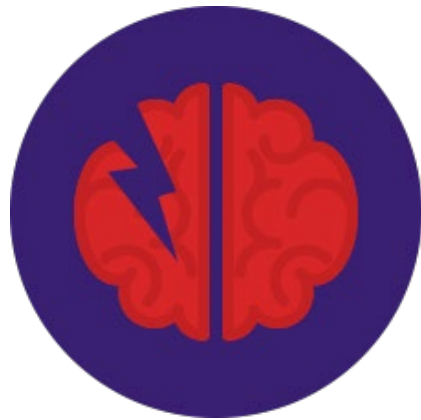


Unsanitary
living
conditions and
poor hygiene



Unattended
medical
needs

Emotional/Behavioral Signs of Elder Abuse



Unusual changes
in behavior
or sleep



Increased
fear or
anxiety



Isolation
from friends
or family



Withdrawal
from normal
activities

Financial Signs of Elder Abuse



Fraudulent
signatures on
financial documents



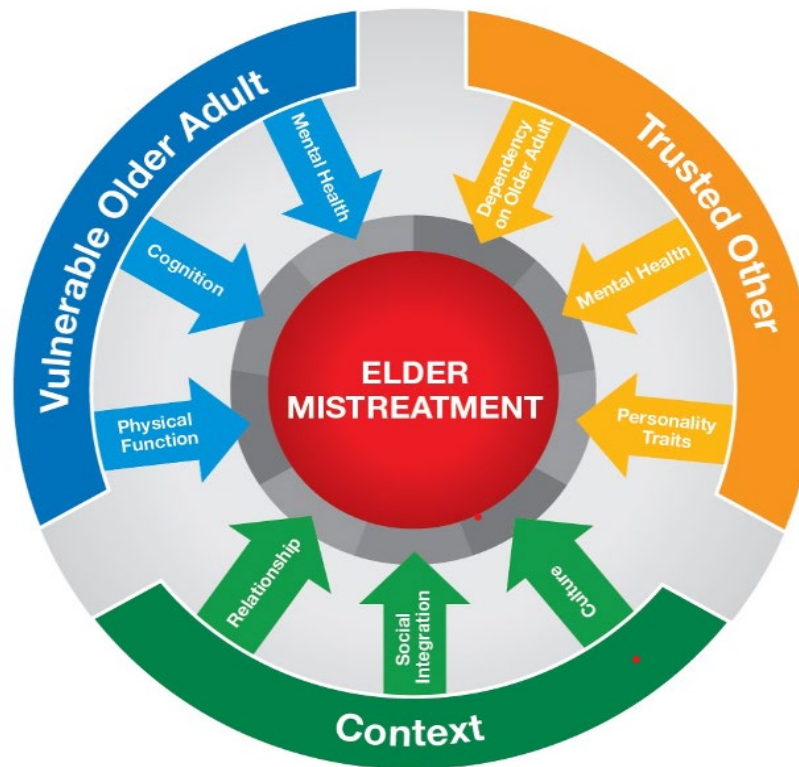
Unpaid bills



Unusual or sudden
changes in spending
patterns, will, or other
financial documents

Risk Factors for Elder Abuse

The Abuse Prevention/Intervention Model



The AIM Model

Older Adult

- Chronic medical and/or mental health conditions
- Cognitive deficits
- Functional deficits or frailty
- Prior trauma exposure
- Stress and poor coping mechanisms

Trusted Other

- Economic dependency
- Emotional dependency
- Substance abuse


Context

- Social connectedness
- Quality of relationship
- Cultural norms



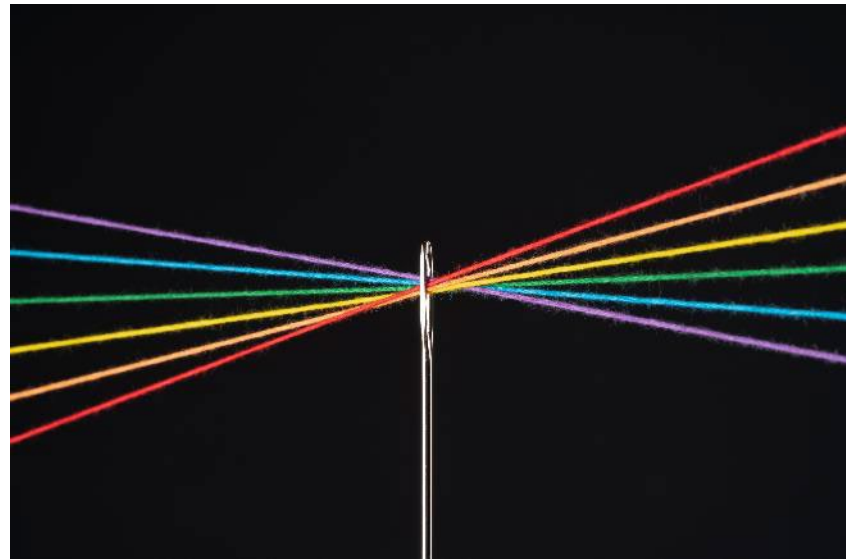


Additional Risk Factors for LGBTQ+ Elders

- Threat of being "outed" as LGBTQ+
 - Convinced authorities won't believe them
 - Loss of financial support from the abusive person
 - Older LGBTQ+ person fears "living their life alone"
 - Older LGBTQ+ person has history of self-reliance and fears authorities
 - History of victimization and violence towards LGBTQ+ community leaves many to believe abuse and neglect is to be expected with nowhere to turn for help
 - Lack of culturally competent and responsive resources
 - Limited cultural awareness and understanding among service providers
- 

LGBTQ+ Elder Justice, Equity & Intersectionality

- Ability
- Age
- Class
- Ethnicity
- Gender/gender identity
- Race
- Sexual orientation





LGBTQ+ Elder Justice & Equity

“African-Americans reported the highest levels of lifetime LGBT-related discrimination, and both African-Americans and Hispanics reported lower levels of household income, education, affirmation of their identities and social support compared to non-Hispanic white LGBTQ older adults.” *Dr. Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen*

Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ and Two-Spirit American Indian/Alaskan Natives (29.4%) reported experiencing hate violence—a higher rate than any other LGBTQ community.

Spot Light on Two Spirit (Native LGBT) Communities. Available at: http://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/A_Spotlight_on_Native_LGBT.pdf



Importance of LGBTQ+ Voices & Elder Justice

Caring and Aging with Pride Study of 2,560 LGBT Older Adults age 50-94 found:

- 68% of had experienced verbal harassment
- 43% were threatened with violence

Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Kim, H.-J., Emlet, C. A., Muraco, A., Erosheva, E. A., Hoy-Ellis, C. P., Goldsen, J., Petry, H. (2011). The Aging and Health Report: Disparities and Resilience among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Older Adults - Key Findings Fact Sheet. Seattle: Institute for Multigenerational Health.



Reporting Abuse

Report suspected abuse or neglect in the community setting:



Adult Protective Services

<https://www.napsa-now.org/>

Get help reporting suspected abuse or neglect in a long-term care facility:



State Licensing Agency

Long-Term Care Ombudsman

<https://ltcombudsman.org/about>

To connect to a local or state reporting number, contact the [Eldercare Locator](https://eldercare.acl.gov) at eldercare.acl.gov or at 1-800-677-1116 M-F 9AM – 8PM ET. For emergencies, call 9-1-1.



5 Things EVERYONE Can Do to Help Prevent Elder Abuse



Listen to older people and caregivers to understand their challenges and provide support



Educate one another about the signs of abuse



Report suspected abuse or neglect as soon as possible



Build a community that fosters social connections and supports



Reach out to professional services for support where available

Responding to LGBTQ+ Concerns

- Increase your sensitivity to interpersonal dynamics
- Relationships may be more complex than they first appear
- Broaden the concept of “family”
- Recognize your own biases
- Listen more, assume less, consider personal circumstances



Including LGBTQ+ Older Adults in Broader Elder Justice Work



Encourage organizations you work with to:

- Implement policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity
- Have inclusive messaging – written and visual
- Provide LGBTQ+ cultural competency training for staff and volunteers
- Work with LGBTQ+ organizations for education and outreach

Case Studies

Identify the signs of elder abuse in the following scenarios





Sweetheart scam: Financial Abuse & Neglect

A 78-year-old man was found by police wandering in the street

- Mr. Wilson is a retired accountant who had been in a 25-year relationship with his partner but never came out or identified as gay.
- His partner passed away 2 years ago.
- Shortly after a “new friend” Sam came into his life, moved into his home.
- Mr. Wilson was diagnosed with dementia.
- Sam denies that Mr. Wilson needs care and insists that he can make his own decisions.
- Police investigation reveals that that Sam is now Mr. Wilson’s legal domestic partner and has gotten Mr. Wilson to sign multiple documents gifting him funds from his accounts.

Case Study (1 of 2)

What signs of elder abuse did you notice?

- Emotional/Behavioral Signs?
 - Isolation from friends/family
- Physical Signs?
 - Unattended medical needs
- Financial Signs?
 - Unusual or sudden changes in spending



What other signs of elder abuse did you notice?





Emotional Abuse & Neglect:

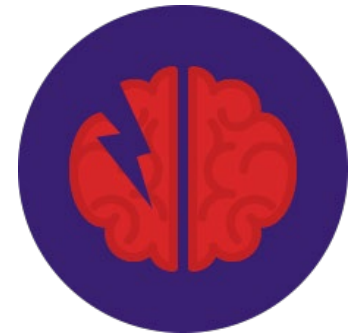
88-year-old woman admitted to hospital with malnutrition and dehydration

- Marta and Lois lived together as a couple for most of their adult lives.
- Lois suffered a stroke and died suddenly leaving Marta alone.
- Marta's nephew Peter came to help although he had never been supportive of the relationship between Marta and Lois.
- Marta struggled with her loss, talked about her grief often.
- Peter humiliated, insulted and threatened Marta with placement in a care home if she didn't stop whining about Lois.
- Within a few months, Marta had become weak, stopped eating and was not getting out of bed.
- Peter was overheard in the ED berating and humiliating Marta.

Case Study (2 of 2)

What signs of elder abuse did you notice?

- Emotional/Behavioral Signs?
 - Unusual changes in sleep or behavior
 - Increased fear or anxiety
- Physical Signs?
 - Dehydration or unusual weight loss

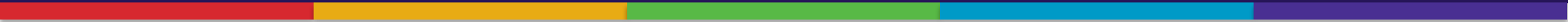


What other signs of elder abuse did you notice?

- Emergence of family member who was not previously invested



Volunteer Opportunities



Elder Justice Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer:

- [Commit to Connect](#): Connecting people with resources to combat social isolation
- [AARP Digital Fraud Fighter](#)
- [AmeriCorps Seniors](#)

Elder Justice:

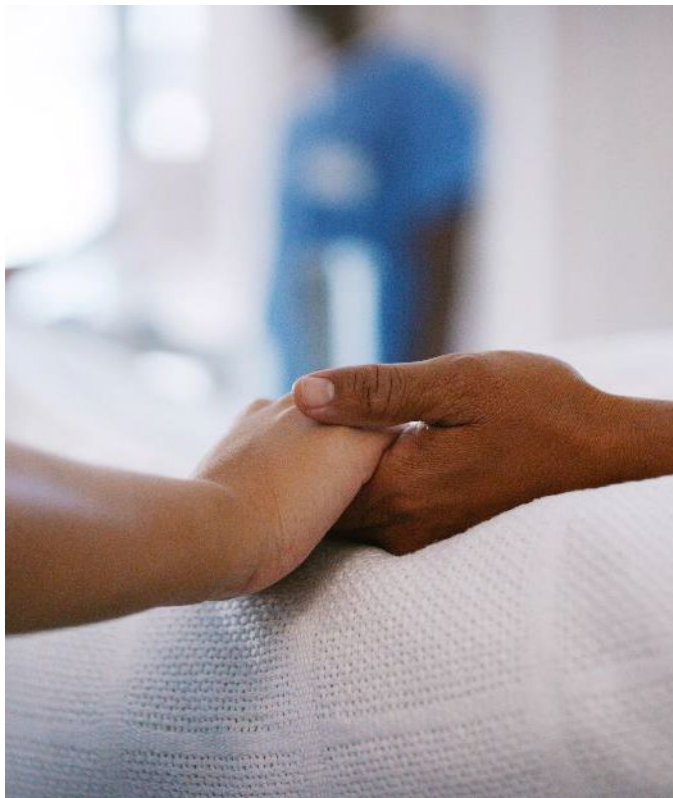
- [Elder Justice Coalitions](#)
- [Elder Justice Network Locator Map](#)
- [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau \(CFPB\) Elder Fraud Prevention Networks](#)

Legal Counseling/Support

- [Legal Services Corporation](#): Ask about ways to support legal assistance for older adults



Elder Justice Volunteer Opportunities (cont.)



Long-Term Care:

- National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care: Become a Long-term care ombudsman. Learn how you can help fight abuse in congregate settings.

LGBTQ+ Older Adults:

- SAGECollab Partners: Partner with non-profit groups and organizations that serve or advocate with older LGBTQ+ people
- SAGE Serves

Faith Communities:

- Safe Havens Staying Safe with Faith Volunteer Program: Learn more about how your faith community can support safety for older adults

Elder Justice Volunteer Opportunities (cont.1)

Services and Programs Supporting Older Adults:

- Eldercare Locator: locate agencies in your area that assist older adults, such as your local Area Agency on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Center, or Adult Day Center, and see how you can get involved. Visit their website or call 1-800-677-1116.
- Meals on Wheels
- Alzheimer's Association
- National Council on Aging: Contact senior centers in your city and see how you can get involved.
- Department of Justice Elder Justice Neighborhood Map

Friendly Visitor/Outreach Programs:

- Disability Information & Access Line (DIAL)
- Visit an assisted living facility or nursing home in your community to socialize with residents

Elder Justice Volunteer Opportunities (cont.3)



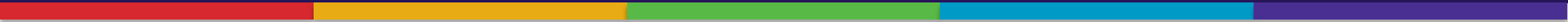
Fighting Scams and Fraud:

- [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) Pass It On](#)
- [Senior Medicare Patrol](#)
- [American Society on Aging](#)
- [AARP Fraud Watch Network](#)

Intergenerational Programs:

- [Grandfamilies and Kinship Support Network](#)
- [ACL National Strategy on Caregiving](#)
- [Generations United Intergenerational Program Database](#)
- [EngAGED Intergenerational Activities Resource Library](#)

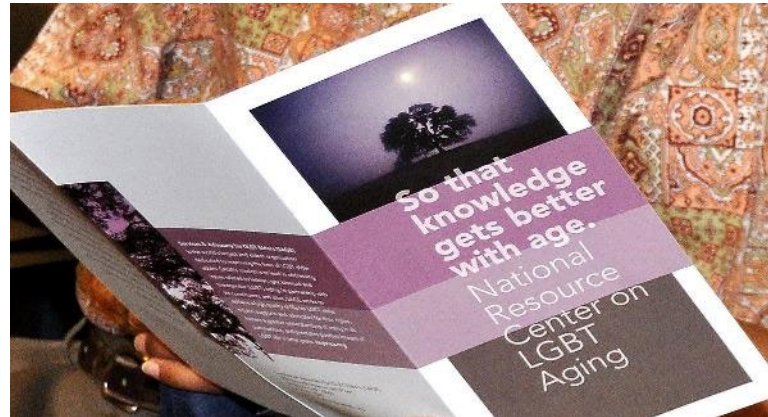
Resources



National Resources

SAGE: www.sageusa.org

NCEA: <https://ncea.acl.gov/>



SAGECare: www.sageusa.care (Training & Credentialing Program)

National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging: www.lgbtagingcenter.org

FORGE- Empowering. Healing. Connecting: <http://forge-forward.org/anti-violence>

National Coalition of Anti-violence programs: <https://avp.org/ncavp/>



NCEA Resources on Elder Mistreatment & Diverse Communities

Explore [fact sheets and publications](#)

- Elder abuse and diverse populations
- Faith Communities
- Tips and Tools
- LGBTQ+ Elders
 - [LGBT Older People Built the LGBT Community](#)
 - [LGBT Older People: Our Right to a Peaceful Life](#)
 - [LGBTQ+ Inclusive Intake + Engagement for Elder Justice Professionals](#)
 - [Looking for Love](#)
 - [Paying it Back: Promoting Justice for LGBT Communities of All Ages](#)
 - [A Spotlight on Two Spirit Elders and Elder Justice Facts](#)

Free Resource: Mistreatment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Elders

- Access the full research brief here: <https://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/resources/resource.cfm?r=603>

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Many LGBT older adults are at high risk for elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- ▶ A pressing need for LGBT elders is dealing with social isolation as isolation is a risk factor for elder abuse.
- ▶ Fear of homophobia or transphobia keep LGBT elders from seeking help and services.
- ▶ Internalized homophobia or transphobia may affect an LGBT elder's willingness to seek help and put them at risk of self-neglect.
- ▶ Some LGBT elders choose to hide their LGBT identity and disclosure of that identity against their wishes can cause problems.
- ▶ Elder gay men and lesbians place high value on self-sufficiency and may be reluctant to accept help.
- ▶ Be sensitive to an LGBT elder's lack of legal protections, desires, relationships, and potential need to be connected to the LGBT community.

SAGE Collaboration with HearMe

In partnership with SAGE, **HearMe** is an on-demand mental wellness app that offers exclusive, round-the-clock access to culturally competent, empathetic LGBTQ+ and allied listeners who are trained in LGBTQ+ and aging issues.

Sign up online at <https://www.sageusa.org/hearme/> and wait for HearMe to email you instructions.



National Center on Elder Abuse

For Technical Assistance,
Information and
Referral, connect to the
NCEA

1-855-500-3537 (ELDR)
ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov

NCEA, ACL
Website

<https://ncea.acl.gov>

Training Resources on Elder Abuse (TREA):
www.trea.usc.edu



[@NCEAatUSC](https://twitter.com/NCEAatUSC)



[@NationalCenteronElderAbuse](https://www.facebook.com/NationalCenteronElderAbuse)

Presentation Download



[LGBTAggingCenter.org -
Preventing Elder Abuse:
LGBTQ+ Elder Justice](#)

Local Resources

[local organizations, websites, contact information, etc.]



Thank You! Q&A

Connect With Us

*[organization name; phone number; address;
Hours of operation; social media handle(s); website]*

