

A Message from the Research Committee of the National Adult Protective Services Association and National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

The mission of this joint Research Committee is to provide guidance, expertise, and feedback regarding data collection, data analysis, and other research activities with which NAPSA and/or NCPEA are involved. Committee members bring a range of backgrounds to the debates and discussion, including direct Adult Protective Services (APS) practice experience, current and retired APS administrators, and researchers from agencies and academia. Committee members believe that practice knowledge improves research projects, and that research outcomes can improve practice. Examining professional practice, such as risk assessment tools and client outcomes, can be difficult for the researcher and uncomfortable for the staff, with concerns for client privacy and negative results. These concerns are balanced against the need for increased knowledge and improved protection of vulnerable adults.

In March 2008 the Committee decided to prepare a series of documents to provide specific guidance and encouragement to APS staff to apply research to practice, and to support research efforts based on compelling questions generated by the APS staff, as well as requests for research data by external researchers interested in elder abuse and the practice of APS. Over several months the Committee developed a statement of principles and guidelines. The outcome of this work is a series of documents for APS direct services staff and administrators to strongly encourage participation in research.

The first of the documents, *Guiding Principles for Research in Adult Protective Services*, provides a set of principles and practical steps to encourage research that will increase knowledge and support best practices and optimal outcomes. The underlying premise and belief of the *Principles* is that knowledge is power. Increased power can strengthen advocacy for individual clients and support the development of expanded resources that benefit all.

Subsequent documents will provide practical guidance for evaluating and applying research to practice, and protocols to follow during a research project. To consult with the Research Committee, or to discuss the documents, email can be sent to the NAPSA Executive Director, Kathleen.Quinn@apsnetwork.org.



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