

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL DISTANCING ON ELDER ABUSE

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SYNOPSIS

Throughout the COVID Pandemic, Elder Justice has been tested to the limits.

Ageism, social isolation and familial anxiety have increased the potential for Elder Abuse in many areas.

Today we explore lessons learned.

- Innovations/Problem solving
- Social Connectivity vs. Physical Distancing,
- Impact on health care,
- Law enforcement,
- Field of elder justice

NCEA will demonstrate some of these situations and innovations brought about by COVID. Together, we can break down barriers and address many needs brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about recent scenarios and allegations of abuse brought to the attention of NCEA information and referral providers.
2. Understand current and future changes in response and prosecution efforts related to elder abuse.
3. Gain insight regarding resources and strategies to remain connected to older members of society (family, friends, neighbors and persons served).
4. Explore unique strategies and/or innovations to outreach and allocating resources to prevent social isolation (; the leading risk factor that results in elder abuse).

WHERE ARE YOU FROM AND HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR WORK?



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL CENTER ON ELDER ABUSE (NCEA)?

A national resource center dedicated to the prevention of elder mistreatment that engages and empowers older adults so that they feel capable of advocating for themselves and their communities.

WHAT WE DO

- Serve as a national authority on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation,
- Make news and resources readily available,
- Share the latest field research,
- Provide trainings to diverse audiences,
- Identify information about promising practices or interventions,
- Operate a listserv,
- Provide subject matter expertise,
- Develop and deploy a communications strategy, and
- Provide information and referrals.

ELDER ABUSE TAKES MANY FORMS



Physical



Emotional/ Psychological



Sexual



Neglect



Financial

Multiple forms of abuse can occur at once.

ISOLATION AND COVID19

While physical distancing has been the norm, we need to be prepared to be of continuous support in many ways.

- Developing safe communication pathways
 - Encourage the use of Elder Care Locator
 - Established Friendly visitor programs
 - Prepare clear concise information
- Promoting creditable resources
 - Helpful resources will be provided



HOW DOES ELDER ABUSE HAPPEN?

Elder Abuse can occur when strong social supports are not in place to keep us connected as we age.

Isolation & Location



Communication Scams



Drug Use



Anxiety



Elder Abuse can be prevented if we work together to create a stronger society that values and supports all of us as we age.

COVID-19 CONCERNS

- Taking Stimulus checks through ID theft
- The FTC is here to help
 - Use [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) to report suspected identity theft only. Other concerns?
- Other Concerns?
 - Visit the IRS's [Economic Impact Payment Information Center](https://www.irs.gov/efile) and [Get My Payment Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.irs.gov/efile)



IT TAKES ALL OF US TO BE INVOLVED

The combination of isolation, lack of community support, financial worries and enforced close living conditions have created the "perfect storm" for potential elder abuse.

Simmering tensions and conflicts are magnified when victim and abuser are "stuck in a lock down" household.



IMPACT: APS

What challenges have you faced during COVID-19?



IMPACT: LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

- Increased responsibilities to ensure that facilities comply with State issued orders
- Appropriate notification of confirmed or suspected cases of COVID19
- Posting of presence of any such cases at entrance
- Availability of adequate PPE and testing
- Extensive care: staffing levels of at least 4.1 hours per resident per day



IMPACT: ELDER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Increased Reports of DV

- Most incidents are done by family members of the older adult
- Family members have "snapped" due to intensified friction during "lockdown"

Response Challenges

- Victims are too afraid to seek help, and might be unable to reach friends or trusted others
- APS or social workers may only be able to respond remotely
 - Weakens comprehension of true household dynamics

Stay Connected

- It is important to stay in touch with older relatives: call or video call often
- Neighbors should listen and look out for signs of elder abuse: signs of neglect, verbal and physical abuse

IMPACT: CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Law Enforcement & Court Systems

- Many Elder Abuse crimes are considered "low-level" or non-violent felonies
- Many suspects are NOT arrested, but instead are given citations to appear in court at a later date
- Some convicted elder abuse defendants are now being released early from jail or prison

Reporting

- Numbers have declined
- Mandated reporters are not following up on telephone inquiries



IMPACT: PROSECUTORS FACE

- Jury trials on hold in many jurisdictions
- Meeting with colleagues and witnesses virtually
- Many newly filed cases of elder abuse are not being heard for several months; as a result there are issues with victim availability and ability to recall events accurately
- Inevitable backlog of cases
- Future budgets of state prosecutor offices will be impacted – reducing opportunities for hiring and promotion



IMPACT: LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Being first responders – face-to-face
 - Gathering and reviewing documents and evidence, in meeting with and assessing the credibility of witnesses
- Responding to a spike in fraud and deception cases surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic
- Dealing with staff shortages
 - April: almost 20% of the NYPD uniformed staff were sick
- Restrictions on access to judges for signing warrants
- General lowering of morale because of recent events

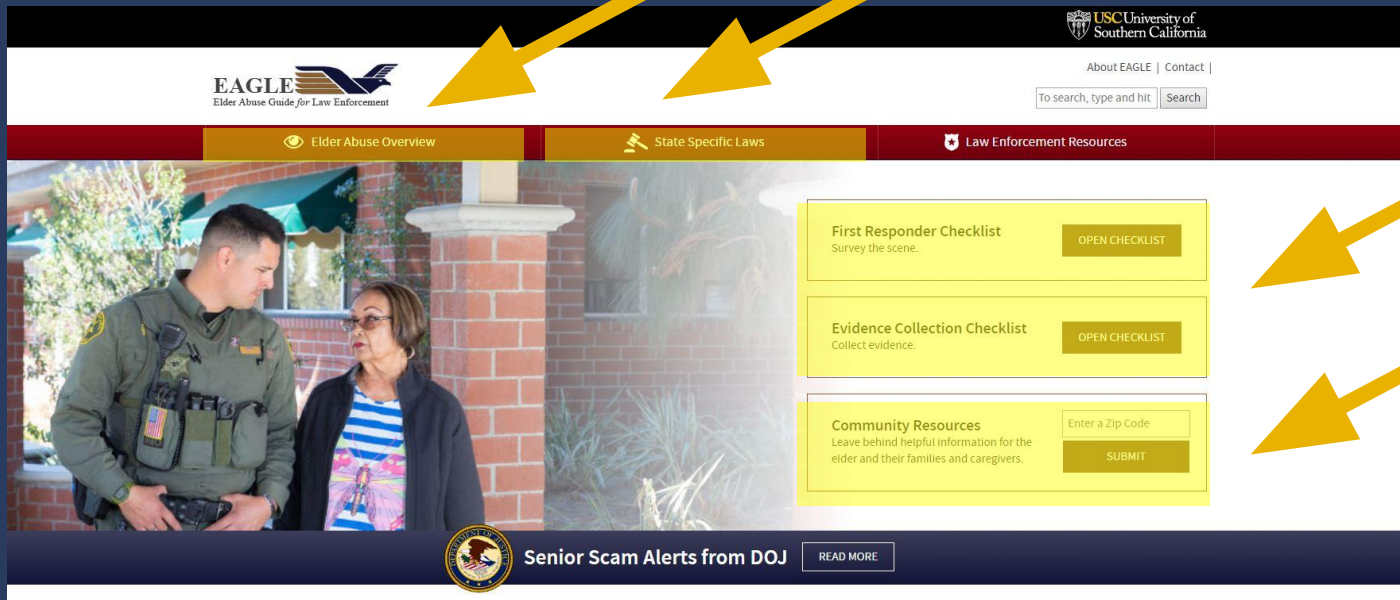


ELDER ABUSE GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT (EAGLE)

Quick reference with definitions, signs, red flags, and actions for all forms of elder abuse

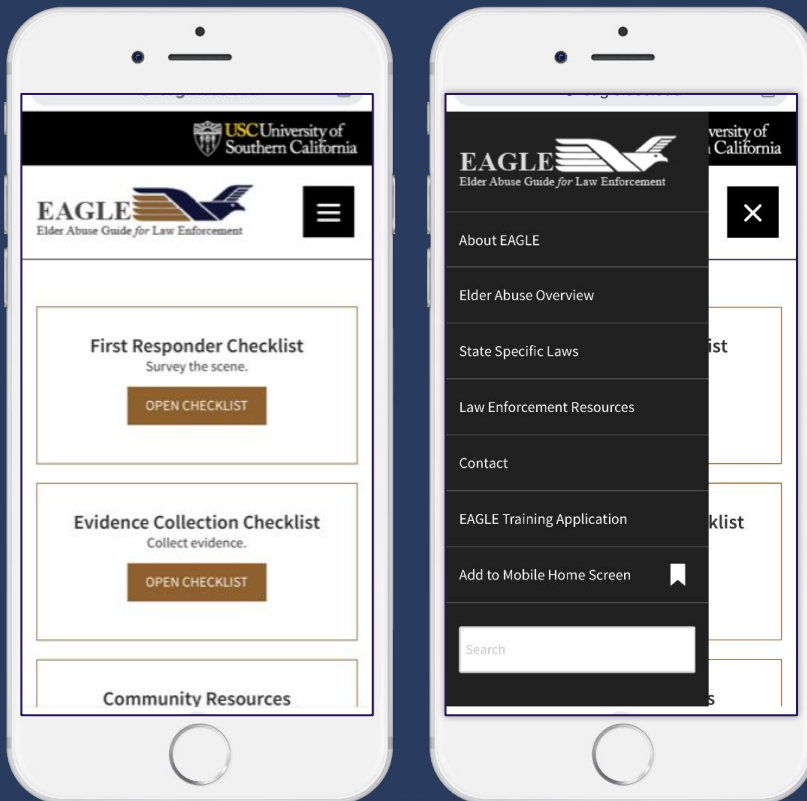
State specific elder abuse statutes, charging information, consumer protection statutes and state mandated reporting

Printable and digital checklist detailing what needs to be collected on scene for a successful prosecution



eagle.usc.edu

ELDER ABUSE GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT (EAGLE)

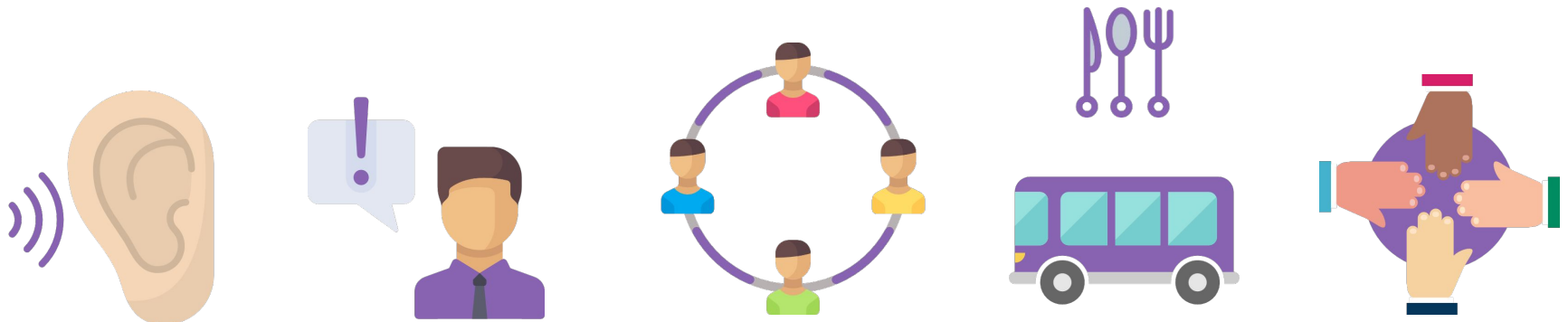


Pin EAGLE to your Mobile

1. Visit EAGLE on your mobile at eagle.usc.edu
2. Select the black hamburger button in the top right, this will populate the drop down menu
3. Once you have the drop down menu, select **“Add to Mobile Home Screen”**

PREVENTION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Elder abuse is **preventable** – and everyone has a role to play. It is up to all of us to build strong supports for one another and prevent abuse before it happens.



It is up to all of us to know the signs of elder abuse so we can immediately report any suspicions of abuse occurring in the community or long-term care setting.

OUR WEBSITES

FREE useful resources and web-based tools!

Training Resources
on Elder Abuse

<https://trea.usc.edu/>



<https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/Reframing.aspx>



<http://eagle.usc.edu/>



<https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/STEAP.aspx>

USC Center on
Elder Mistreatment

<https://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/>

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1-855-500-3537 (ELDR)

ncea-info@acl.hhs.gov

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SUPPORT FOR YOU DURING COVID-19

Keeping Family Together During COVID-19: A Checklist

During the 2008 Financial Crisis the housing market and economy collapsed, finances were decimated and adult children moved back in with their parents. Cases of elder abuse involving physical, emotional and financial harm soared. As a result of COVID-19, we are seeing an increased risk of similar trends.

Let's learn from the past, so that we can prevent similar mistakes ahead.



Prevent Physical and Emotional Abuse

Even in the most genial of families, close quarters and changes in living situations may heighten emotions, potentially contributing to family discord. Efforts can be made to reduce tensions and promote a healthy and safe environment for all.

1. Discuss physical boundaries and household norms to respect one another's space.
2. Communicate calmly, it is natural to feel unsettled and on edge. Recognize and acknowledge these emotions.
3. Engage in individual hobbies or family activities that can help reduce anxiety and bring you joy.
4. Take time to exchange stories about your family and growing up, sharing:
 - Funniest moments,
 - Happiest moments, and
 - Embarrassing moments.
5. Share household chores and ask "How would you like this done?"
6. Take time out for yourself exercise or go for a walk.
7. Create an enjoyable and productive daily routine.



Prevent Financial Abuse

If loved ones are moving back in together, encourage open communication from the onset and form an agreement of plans prior to move in day. Hopefully this is a temporary situation, but should it drag on, it is best to communicate from the very beginning, to eliminate risk of misunderstandings due to unspoken expectations.

1. Establish a task list and schedule for errands, cleaning, and other household chores.
2. Discuss if or how you plan to pool funds and allocate expenses.
3. Respect family members' privacy, including their confidential financial information and resources.
4. Consider if it is appropriate to enter into protective financial arrangements like powers of attorney.



Communication is key. Don't be afraid to establish boundaries and promote a healthy living environment for all.



A Checklist: Starting the Conversation

Keep your family from falling apart while coming together by engaging in thoughtful conversations in the beginning to avoid awkward conversations later.



Prior to moving, discuss expectations:

- ☐ Maintain courtesy, respect, gratitude, and openness while communicating.
- ☐ Forecast duration, formulate an exit plan, put it in writing and have everyone sign.
- ☐ Establish individual or shared living spaces and storage of excess belongings.
- ☐ Determine payments for rent and utilities.
- ☐ Discuss whether groceries will be purchased on an individual basis or shared.
- ☐ Make a chore list to determine who will do laundry, shopping, medication runs, transportation, cooking or cleaning activities.
- ☐ Consider the need to change existing financial arrangements such as personal banking, managing bills, and permitting access.
- ☐ Discuss shared transportation, driving responsibilities, and management of costs; considering shared arrangements, driving responsibilities, and insurance costs.
- ☐ Determine if there is a need for medication management.



It is natural to be stressed during these times. When it comes to family matters, envisioning a checklist and making carefully planned decisions can foster respect and a healthy living environment.

TUESDAY TIPS

COVID-19 Tuesday Tip

Practice social engagement to prevent the negative impacts of isolation. Social engagement contributes to greater physical, mental and emotional health and well-being in older adults.

Learn how to stay socially engaged by visiting **engAGED**, The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults
<https://www.n4a.org/engaged>

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COVID-19 Tuesday Tip

The best way to help someone experiencing domestic violence during COVID-19 is to be supportive. Get creative in how you stay in touch, help provide domestic violence resources, and offer your support.

For more information on Domestic Violence during COVID-19, Visit:
The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life- <https://www.ncall.us/>
The National Network to End Domestic Violence:
https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Library_COVID_helping_a_friend.pdf

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COVID-19 Tuesday Tip

Covid-19 has likely exacerbated feelings of loneliness and suicidality in older adults. Some signs to look out for include voluntary stopping of eating and drinking, withholding of medical treatment, and overdose.

For more information on Suicide Risk in Older Adults, visit
<https://afsp.org/news-and-events/news/addressing-suicide-risk-older-adults-importance-belonging>

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COVID-19 Tuesday Tip

Be wary of scams offering false information on case numbers, test-kits, and treatments. Use legitimate sources such as the CDC or WHO for the latest news and information on COVID-19.

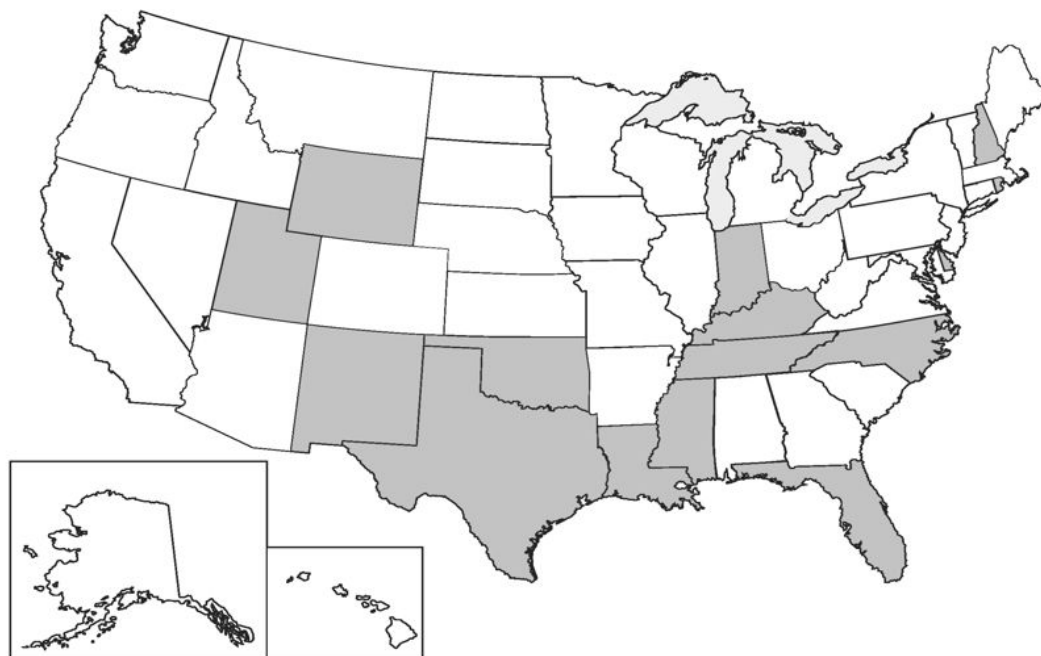
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
World Health Organization:
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

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MANDATORY REPORTING: OUR WORK WITH NAPSA

States where everyone is mandated to report

Mandated Reporting of Abuse of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities



STEAP

Elder Abuse prevention and outreach can take place at any distance.



Access free tools here:

<https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/STEAP.aspx>



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KEEP THESE RESOURCES HANDY

- Consumer Protection Resources
 - [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau \(CFPB\)](#) - Submit a complaint of a financial product or service [online](#) or call (855)411-2372
 - [Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker](#) - Report a business or offer that sounds like an illegal scheme or fraud to warn others and help investigate
 - [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#) - Accepts [online](#) Internet crime complaints
 - [Federal Trade Commission Do Not Call Registry](#) - Register to stop receiving and report unwanted calls [online](#) or call 1-888-383-1222
 - [U.S. Postal Inspection Service](#)
 - [Data & Marketing Association Registry](#) - Register to reduce unsolicited commercial
 - [Report Mail Fraud to U.S. Postal Inspection Service](#)
 - [National Elder Fraud Hotline](#) - For those who have experienced elder fraud call (833) 732-8311

CALL TO ACTION



Elder Abuse Task Forces

Communities need to develop its own EA Task Force of various professionals (I.e. APS, prosecutors, medical personnel, etc.) and include local seniors and service agencies such as AARP and Alzheimer's Association.



Bi-products of Task Forces:

Meals on Wheels trainings for their delivery personnel

Mail carriers being encouraged to keep a special look out for their elderly customers

Local law enforcement agencies developing a version of a “You are not alone” or YANA program

QUESTIONS?



TODAY'S PRESENTERS

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