



Best Practices in Elder Abuse Prevention: A Snapshot of Research Findings

Types of Abuse

- Most programs identified **financial exploitation** as the most common form of abuse. This includes misusing an elder's resources for personal or monetary benefit, such as taking Social Security or SSI (Supplemental Security Income) checks, abusing a joint checking account or credit card, or taking property or other resources.
- Other forms of abuse frequently reported included **self-neglect** and **emotional and physical abuse**.

Challenges to Addressing Abuse

- **Abusers are often family members.** As a result, abuse victims or witnesses may be reluctant or too ashamed to report abuse or, in some cases, may not realize that what is taking place is defined as abuse.
- **Limited funding and staff numbers** mean programs lack the resources to tend to all reported cases in a timely and effective manner.

Recommendations for Establishing Elder Abuse Prevention Programs

- Tribes should work to **increase community engagement** and **improve education and awareness** among community members, tribal elders, and service providers through workshops, conference presentations, printed materials, and community events.
- Tribes should **create or strengthen tribal codes** that specifically address issues of elder abuse among tribal members.
- Tribal elder abuse prevention programs should **secure financial support from a variety of resources** such as tribal budgets, federal grants, and state funds, among others.
- Tribal elder abuse programs should **collaborate with partners** in tribal, county, state, and (if necessary) federal government to identify community needs, issues, and appropriate solutions to address tribal elder abuse concerns.
- Tribal elder abuse programs should **use culturally appropriate strategies** to address reports of abuse. This can include respecting privacy and assuring confidentiality, use of tribal language with elders, and emphasizing traditional values in the program's day-to-day operations and interactions with family caregivers.
- Tribes should **create a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement (MOU or MOA) with state and county agencies** to ensure proper procedures and outcomes for tribal members.