



Elder Abuse Prevention: Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

Bottom line: the goal is to stop and prevent abuse of any person.

The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin Elder Abuse Prevention program assists elders in maintaining independent, healthy, productive, and quality lifestyles through services that provide love, care, and respect.

Program Description

- The tribe's Elder Services program houses the Elder Abuse Prevention program.
- The Elder Abuse Prevention program provides intervention and referral services to victims of abuse.
- Responses to reports of abuse occur within 24 hours.
- The program works to increase abuse awareness, interventions, and prevention.
- To provide more comprehensive services, the program works closely with Brown and Outagamie Counties' Adult Protective Services staff, who are licensed to intervene, move cases to court, and remove victims from abusive environments.
- The common forms of elder abuse reported are:
 - Self-neglect
 - Physical and emotional abuse
 - Financial exploitation

Operated by: Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

Location: Oneida, WI

Area served: Tribal members in Brown and Outagamie Counties

Contact information:

Tina Pospychala, Assistant Director, 800-867-1551

Website:

<http://www.oneidanation.org/elderly/>

Successful Strategies

- Holding monthly team meetings to discuss ways to improve the lives of tribal elders and to coordinate agency work.
- Giving educational presentations on elder abuse within the community and at conferences.
- Developing an educational brochure about elder abuse to be shared with the community.
- Publishing educational and promotional articles in local and national newspapers and on social media platforms.



Collaboration

- Oneida tribal leaders and other area tribes participate in the Great Lakes Native American Elder Association, which involves those who work directly with elder abuse.
- The program collaborates with the Oneida Nation Commission on Aging, which leads events or meetings when program staff cannot.
- The program often contacts the Oneida Police Department during initial investigations of elder abuse.
- Agreements with Brown and Outagamie Counties specify how the organizations work with the Elder Abuse Prevention program.

Cultural Considerations

Tribal members value privacy. The program helps ensure confidentiality by working to resolve abuse issues internally before making referrals to programs outside the tribe.

“The biggest [challenge] is people sometimes just don’t even realize that they are being abused because that’s been their lifestyle so long...or even the abuser is not aware that they’re abusing somebody. The overall prevention [of elder abuse] is opening up people’s eyes...”

–Tina Pospychala, Assistant Director, Elder Services

Funding

The tribe funds the Elder Abuse Prevention program. The tribe’s budget process is set up so that it allocates funding specifically for the program.

Future Considerations

- Encouraging people to report abuse is an ongoing challenge.
- The program would like to employ a Native American liaison who can promote culturally sensitive dialogue between the tribe and the two county agencies.
- The aim is to reduce the number of abuse cases over the next 5 to 10 years through collaboration and education.

Lessons Learned

The program advises other tribal programs to focus on promoting community awareness of abuse. Community presentations and news articles are effective communication tools for getting the word out. Much of the Elder Abuse Prevention program’s success is due to its efforts to make elder abuse information widely available, and encouraging other programs to do the same.