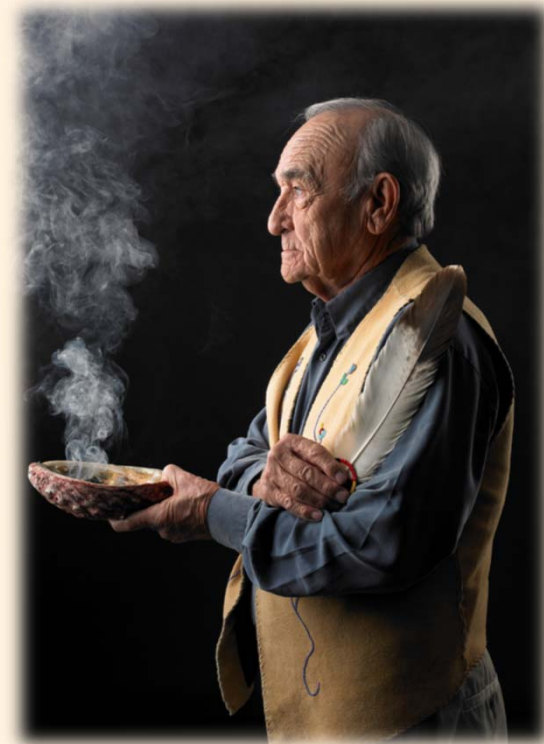


Elder Abuse and Grandparent Abuse

National Indigenous Elder
Justice Initiative

Jacqueline Gray, Ph.D.
Project Director



“Restoring respect and dignity by honoring Indigenous elders”

Objectives

- ❖ What is Elder Abuse and how to recognize the various forms?
- ❖ Traditional View on Grandparents
- ❖ Research on Custodial Grandparents raising Grandchildren.
- ❖ Hand out the custodial grandparent information sheet



Elder Abuse and Neglect: Examples

(Center on Elder Mistreatment, 2016; Mosqueda, 2005)

Abandonment: Willful unattended care or custody by an identified caregiver who has assumed responsibility when a reasonable person in a like situation would not do so.

Elder is left home alone as the caregiver leaves for the weekend

Emotional Abuse: The infliction of mental anguish, pain or distress upon an elderly person.

Threatening, criticizing, debasing, ridiculing, ignoring, yelling at

Financial Exploitation: The illegal or wrongful exploitation of funds, material assets, property, or other resources.

Disparity between assets and condition, improper use of legal documents

Neglect: When a caregiver actively refuses or fails to fulfill the degree of care that a reasonable person in that situation would exercise.

Elder left lying in their own urine or feces for extended periods of time, elderly develops malnutrition and pressure sores due to lack of appropriate care, elder is living in a filthy environment



Elder Abuse and Neglect: Examples

(Center on Elder Mistreatment, 2016; Mosqueda, 2005)

Self-Neglect: An elderly person who lacks capacity secondary to physical, mental, disease, substance abuse, and cognitive reasons to manage the basic activities of daily living of a reasonable person in a similar situation.

Not following medical regimens, failure to acquire needed medicines

Physical Abuse:

Slapping/Hitting/Punching

Throwing items at an elder

Sexual Abuse: Any form of sexual contact or exposure without consent or when a person is incapable of giving consent.

Bruising or tears in genitals, on breasts or inner thigh

Unexplained STD's, Fear of touch

Spiritual Abuse: Colonization or abuse impacting the values and identity of a person is soul wounding results in spiritual abuse. (Gray & LaBore, 2018; Duran & Duran, 1995)

Elder is not taken to ceremonies and spiritual events

Ceremonial items taken from elder's home for use or sale without permission

Why is an Elder Vulnerable to Mistreatment?

(University of Southern California- Center on Elder Mistreatment, 2016).

Psychological, social and economic factors, as well as mental and physical conditions of the elder and the perpetrator.

- Cognitive Impairment such as Dementia
- Intimate partner violence
- Living with others
- Social isolation
- May be currently more dependent on others for assistance.
- Fear of losing independence if a report is made



Culturally Appropriate Practice

- ❖ In hospitals, designating a healing room to be used by a spiritual healer can be monumental for abused Native American elders
- ❖ Recruiting Native translators can be effective in allowing victims to communicate in their Indigenous language
- ❖ Ensuring basic needs of elders are met is important, but more importantly is building a society where they are productive and valued
- ❖ It is essential to be aware of cultural sensitivities and aspects of practice that differ from other ethnicities while working with Native American elders
- ❖ Do not assume. Instead, make it a habit of always asking questions in order to clarify what you have understood, in fact, what the client is attempting to convey

Language used when working with elders

- ❖ Baker-Demaray (2005) found that Native American elders when asked about abuse or neglect, indicated that they have not experienced abuse. However, when the term “disrespect” was used instead of abuse or neglect, elders discussed many incidents that could be classified as abuse or neglect.
- ❖ When asking Native American women about sexual abuse, no abuse was admitted, but when the term “bothered” was used, descriptions of rape and sexual exploitation were detailed.

Traditional Views

Elders:

Elders are our first teachers, as their knowledge and experience is passed down orally from generation to generation through stories or by example.

Children:

Way before colonization...Children received their education from their parents, grandparents, and other family members.

- Children were taught appropriate life skills which would assist them in managing the challenges they encountered.
- Learning life skills in such a manner that it does not harm the environment or interfere with the health and well-being of those around them.

Traditional Roles of Family

Everyone had a role to play within the tribal community:

- Men - Hunted for food and provided protection
- Women - Cooked, made clothing, took care of home
- Elders – Responsible for teaching and raising the children about traditional ways of knowing.

Clan Systems

The child was would be raised to hold specific qualities and responsibilities within their tribal society, for example:

- Bear Clan was gifted with strength, not just physically but emotionally and spiritually to stand for the good of the community. Raised to be leaders of the tribe.



Research on Custodial Grandparents

According to the American Community Survey - U.S. Census Bureau (2019), 7.8 million children under the age of 18 (10.5%) are living in a household headed by a grandparent. Factor contributing to increase include:

- Alcohol and Substance abuse
- Neglect, abuse and abandonment
- Death of a parent, or divorce
- Parental Incarceration

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census, Children living with their Grandparents general population:

- 67% of grandparents raising grandchildren are below the age of 60 years.
- 67% of families maintained by a grandparent include at least one parent.
- 33% of grandparents raising grandchildren have <High School education.
- 20% of custodial grandparents have income below the poverty line.
- 40% of grandchildren raised by grandparents because of substance abuse.
- Average income for grandparents raising grandchildren is <\$20,000/year

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census, around 10% of Native American children live with their grandparents. This as we know is not an accurate representation for grandparents who are actually taking care of grandchildren. As this number should be much higher.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

There are many reasons why grandparents chose to raise their grandchildren the following as main reasons include:

- **Parental Substance Abuse-** the most common reason for assuming custody of grandchildren.
 - Data by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (from 2002 to 2007) indicated that 11.9% of children live with at least one parent who have a substance abuse problem. Child abuse or maltreatment estimates indicate that 9.2 of every 1000 children in the U.S. are victims of child abuse or neglect (Children's Bureau, 2014).
- **Parental Incarceration-** 1.5 million adults in the U.S. were incarcerated in 2009, and half of these inmates were parents of children under the age of 18 years.
- **Parental Deployment-** approximately 1.5 million children have a parent in the military.
- **Parental Mental Health Problems-** more than 5 million children in the U.S. have a parent who is diagnosed with a serious mental illness (Marsh, 2009). The most common mental illness is major depression and affects 6.7% of adults in the U.S (CDC, 2014).
- **Divorce-** the divorce rate in the U.S. is around 49%,
- For every child in the foster care system there are about 25 being raised by grandparents.

Households

The Family Next Door



1 in 6

Americans live in a multigenerational household



7.8 MIL

Children live in grandfamilies, where grandparents or other relatives are the householders



2.7 MIL

Grandparents are responsible for most of the basic needs of children living with them



Honor ~ Respect ~ Dignity

National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

Grandparents Help...

...taxpayers save money.



\$6.5 BIL

Amount grandparents and other relatives save taxpayers each year by raising children and keeping them out of foster care

...students afford school.



\$2.43 BIL

Amount households headed by people 55 and older are spending on primary and secondary school tuition
(three times the \$853 million spent in 1999)

...younger generations understand the world.



>50%

of grandparents talk with their grandchildren about problems they are having as well as morals and values, and religion or spirituality

...children have a healthy start.



1 in 4

Grandparents help pay for their grandchildren's medical or dental expenses

...parents in need of childcare.



30%

of children under 5 with working mothers are cared for on a regular basis by a grandparent

Grandparents Online

Grandparents Online



1 in 4

Grandparents regularly use electronic technology



53%

of American adults 65+ use the Internet or email



34%

of these older adults use social networking sites

Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren

Challenges for Grandparents

Financial- grandparents may quit their jobs, reduce their work hours, or make other financial sacrifices in order to care for the grandchildren **Housing:** Difficulty accommodating children in their residence

Health: Grandparents may have health problems such as: depression, insomnia, back and stomach problems, and hypertension. Some children may come with their own severe physical, emotional and behavioral problems.

School Enrollment: Grandparents may face obstacles with the child's school system

Social Isolation- busy schedules = less time for other family members and friends, leaving very little time for community activities.

Respite Care: Is vital to help strengthen the family, to help prevent abuse, and support the efforts of the caregiver(s).

Legal: Grandparents may not have legal custody or guardianship of grandchildren

Considerations when going to court

The court rulings may differ from state-to-state or in tribal courts as grandparent rights are different.

- Burden of Proof
- Custody/Adoption/Guardianship
- Financial Strains/Court Costs

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Grandparenting in a cultural context:

- In Native American families, the family is the foundation of social relationships. Grandparents are viewed as the families' roots and are necessary teachers of cultural traditions and practices to the younger generation.
- In interviews with 28 Native American grandparents, grandparents reported taking on cultural roles to ensure that their traditional practices and beliefs are passed on, in addition to their emotional roles for their biological and non-biological grandchildren (Welbel-Orlando, 1990).
- Native American grandparents served as models of appropriate ceremonial behaviors and took on the responsibility for exposing their grandchildren to tribal ways of life in order to reinforce and extend the traditional culture and practices. This belief that grandparents have "enculturative responsibilities" is echoed in other studies with Native American grandparents (Robbins, Scherman, Holeman, & Wilson, 2005).
- Use of storytelling as a way of teaching younger family members, teachings are done orally or visually with items passed down through the generations. Grandparents' also saw themselves as family facilitators, ensuring that the family is kept together.

Information for Grandparents Handouts

A grandparent wishing to take on the caregiving of a child should consider their own health, financial situation, and their home environment to evaluate the best solution for the child(ren).

- **Terms to Remember**
- **Areas to Consider:**
 - Emotional stress, family/community supports, social supports, health insurance, legal concerns, financial assistance

Checklist and Tips

The checklist was designed to accompany the Grandparent Information handout. The topic areas are suggested for a grandparent to consider before taking on a young grandchild. Such as:

- ❖ Info about the child, their health, enrollment in school, etc..
- ❖ Financial ability
- ❖ Health and physical ability
- ❖ Support systems
- ❖ Transportation

Grandparent Preparedness Checklist

Assessing your capacity to take on grandchildren, and ability to transition from grandparent to parent.

Category	Topic Area/Event	Yes	No
About the child(ren)	Do you know the age of child(ren)?		
	Do you know the number of children you want to take on?		
	Do you know how to contact the child's school?		
	Do you have access to child's school records?		
	Are you able to enroll the child(ren) into school?		
	Does the child(ren) have any special needs?		
	Does the child have and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan?		
<i>Are they eligible for:</i>	Does the child(ren) have health insurance?		
	Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIPs)?		
	Does the child(ren) have any medical health concerns?		
	Do you have a signed Medical Authorization Form?		

Create a binder or folder for important documents. Include copies of:

- ❖ Birth certificates, death certificates (if the child's parent(s) are deceased), social security cards or the number for each child, and medical and dental records
- ❖ Power of attorney, custody, guardianship, adoption or other legal papers
- ❖ Consent forms signed by parents for medical care and education
- ❖ Proof of your grandchild's income and assets (child support payments, trust funds, etc.)

References

- Baker-Demaray, T. B. (2009). Perceptions of Elder Abuse Among Native American Seniors (Masters Thesis, University of North Dakota).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Burden of Mental Illness. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics/burden.htm>
- Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect. *Elder Abuse: An introduction for the clinician*. Retrieved on 10-13-2016 from http://www.centeronelderabuse.org/docs/RonChez_ElderAbuseforClinicians_slides.pdf
- Children's Bureau. Child Maltreatment 2010. Retrieved on 12-29-2016 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm10/cm10.pdf>
- Doble, R.B. (2006). *Spiritual Abuse*. Retrieved on July 18, 2016 from http://www.abusivelove.com/abuse_types_1_21.htm
- Duran, E., & Duran, B. (1995). *Native American postcolonial psychology*. SUNY Press.
- Illinois Department on Aging. *Facts about children being raised by grandparents*. Retrieved on 12-29-2016 from https://www.illinois.gov/aging/CommunityServices/caregiver/Pages/grg_facts.aspx
- Henderson, T. L., Stevenson, M. L., & Teaster, P. B. (2009). Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren. Rights and Responsibilities.
- Marsh DT (2009). Parental mental illness: issues in custody determinations. *Am J Fam Law*. 23(1):28-36.
- Mosqueda, L., Burnight, K., & Liao, S. (2005). The life cycle of bruises in older adults. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 53(8), 1339-1343.
- Murray J, Farrington DP, Sekol I. (2009). Children's antisocial behavior, mental health, drug use, and educational performance after parental incarceration: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psych Bull*. 138(2):175-210.
- Robbins R, Scherman A, Holeman H, Wilson J (2005). Roles of American Indian grandparents in times of cultural crisis. *J Cult Divers*.12(2):62-68.
- Weibel-Orlando, J. (1997). Grandparenting styles: the contemporary American Indian experience. *The cultural context of aging: Worldwide perspectives*, 139-155.

For More Information
National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

Phone: 701-777-6780
E-mail info@nieji.org
Website: www.nieji.org

Thank You!
Wado!

