

Elder Abuse MDT Statement of Need – A Worksheet

What is a Statement of Need?

A Statement of Need is a summary of data that is related to a problem that you are looking to solve. In the context of creating an elder abuse case review MDT, a Statement of Need should present facts about elder abuse and aging related data that contextualize the problem of elder abuse. It should document proposed responses to the defined problem and clarify the need for your project.

Why draft a Statement of Need?

A statement of need is a requirement of most grant proposals. Having this content pulled together early in the development of your project can facilitate many of your activities including:

- Clarifying the goals of your team
- Drafting grant proposals
- Appealing to local authorities about the need for an MDT
- Recruiting potential team members
- Quickly drafting other outreach and promotional materials

Having agreed upon data and standardized language about the need for your project will prove to be useful throughout the life of your team.

Drafting a Statement of Need

Your needs assessment should include:

- Definitions of elder abuse and related terms
- Elder abuse statistics
- Proposed solutions – specifically how your MDT plans to respond to elder abuse and related problems

National Elder Abuse Statistics – Sample Language

It is estimated that just over 10% of this country's older adults experience physical, sexual, or psychological abuse in a given year.ⁱ However, prevalence rates vary by the type of abuse involved: financial exploitation (5.2%), caregiver neglect (5.1%), emotional/psychological abuse (4.6%), physical abuse (1.6%), and sexual abuse (<1%).ⁱⁱ Although elder abuse occurs in long-term care facilities,ⁱⁱⁱ the majority of reported elder abuse (89.3%) occurs among older adults residing in the community.^{iv}

With the exception of New York, all states have mandatory reporting laws (see elderjustice.gov/statutes). Nonetheless, it is estimated that only 1 in 24 cases of elder abuse is reported to authorities.^v There are differences in rates of reporting depending on the type of abuse involved: 1 in 57 cases of neglect, 1 in 44 cases of financial exploitation, 1 in 20 cases of physical abuse/sexual abuse, and 1 in 12 cases of psychological abuse.

There is tremendous reluctance on the part of victims and those around them to report for a host of reasonable reasons. Some older adults:

- Do not want to get their loved ones in trouble^{vi}
- Do not want to set into motion a series of unwanted interventions such as institutionalization^{vii}
- Feel they have a strong relationship with the abuser^{viii}
- Do not define the behavior as abusive^{ix}
- Fear retaliation from the offender
- Feel shame and embarrassment

The consequences associated with elder abuse can be devastating and may include psychological (loss of trust), social (disruptions in family relationships), health (hospitalization) including early mortality, financial (loss of financial security), and harms incurred by secondary victims (loss of inheritance).^x It is widely held that the consequences of elder abuse routinely lead to a diminished quality of life for abused older adults.

Finally, elder abuse imposes significant costs to society as well. For example, there is an expansive number of agencies that might respond to elder abuse (emergency medical technicians, civil legal assistance, aging services network, etc.), increasing the financial burden to society. Moreover, some older adults may become eligible for Medicaid as a result of financial exploitation, further increasing the cost to society.^{xi}

Local Elder Abuse Statistics

Insert your local data into your Statement of Need. National data can serve to inspire and motivate your community to action by providing the larger context of elder abuse issues of which your community is a part. Local data clarifies the issues and challenges unique to your community to which your team is hoping to respond. Consider utilizing [census data](#) and any local reports that offer insight into elder abuse issues from agencies or organizations such as: Health and Human Services, Adult Protective Services, local law enforcement, local universities, local non-profits, etc.

Exercise: Identify local data to augment your Statement of Need. Cite the sources of that information.

Elder Abuse Definitions – Sample Language

States vary widely in how elder abuse is defined.^{xiii} However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention^{xiii} defines elder abuse as “An intentional act or failure to act by a caregiver or another person in a relationship involving an expectation of trust that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult”. It is a rubric under which five forms of elder abuse fall:

- **Financial exploitation** is defined as the illegal, unauthorized, or improper use of an older individual’s resources by a caregiver or other person in a trusting relationship, for the benefit of someone other than the older individual.
- **Caregiver neglect** is defined as failure by a caregiver or other person in a trust relationship to protect an elder from harm or the failure to meet needs for essential medical care, nutrition, hydration, hygiene, clothing, basic activities of daily living or shelter, which results in a serious risk of compromised health and/or safety, relative to age, health status, and cultural norms.
- **Physical abuse** is defined as the intentional use of physical force that results in acute or chronic illness, bodily injury, physical pain, functional impairment, distress, or death.
- **Psychological abuse** is defined as verbal or nonverbal behavior that results in the infliction of anguish, mental pain, fear, or distress, that is perpetrated by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder.
- **Sexual abuse** is defined as forced and/or unwanted sexual interaction (touching and non-touching acts) of any kind with an older adult.

Tip: To best support your local efforts, you may want to also use the definitions specific to your state or territory.

Proposed Solutions

Now that you have clarified the problem of elder abuse nationally and locally, explain the MDT model that you are proposing and outline how your team intends to function in response to the problems that you have just defined. Depending on how you intend to use this Statement of Need, this section can be adaptable. You may want a detailed explanation of your project for a grant proposal, or a brief outline of your model and goals for soliciting support or participation from local agencies and organizations.

Tip: If you have already completed your Community Needs Assessment, use your findings to support the model that you are proposing.

Endnotes

- i. Acierno, R., Hernandez, M. A., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Steve, K., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2010). Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse and potential neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100, 292–297.
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- iii. Castle, N., Ferguson-Rome, J. C., & Teresi, J. A. (2013). Elder abuse in residential long-term care an update to the 2003 National Research Council Report. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, DOI: 10.1177/0733464813492583
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- v. Lachs, M. S., & Berman, J. (2011). Under the radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study. William B. Hoyt Memorial New York State Children, Family Trust Fund, New York State Office of Children and Family Services.
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- x. Bonnie, R. L., & Wallace, R. B., (Eds.). (2003). *Elder maltreatment: Abuse, neglect, and exploitation in an aging America*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.; Dong, X. (2012). Consequences of elder abuse: the needs for social justice and policy implications. In D. M. Patel & R. M. Taylor (eds.), *Social and Economic Costs of Violence: Workshop Summary*, National Academies Press, retrieved November 1, 2016, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK189999/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK189999.pdf
- xi. US Senate Special Committee on Aging (2011). *Justice for All: Ending Elder Abuse, Neglect and Financial Exploitation*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- xii. Jirik, S., & Sanders, S. (2014). Analysis of elder abuse statutes across the United States, 2011–2012. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 57(5), 478-497.
- xiii. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). *Elder Abuse Surveillance: Uniform Definitions and Recommended core data elements*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention.