



**Indian Health Service**  
**2012 NATIONAL BEHAVIORAL**  
**HEALTH CONFERENCE**

**Welcome**

Elder Abuse in Indian Country

Jacque Gray, Ph.D.



*Mobilizing Partnerships to Promote Wellness*



# House Keeping

- Please be sure to sign in and out on the Sign In Sheets located near the entrance to this room.
- Please complete the evaluation at the end of this presentation.
- For more information on Continuing Education Units (CEUs), please visit the Registration Desk

# Comfort Room

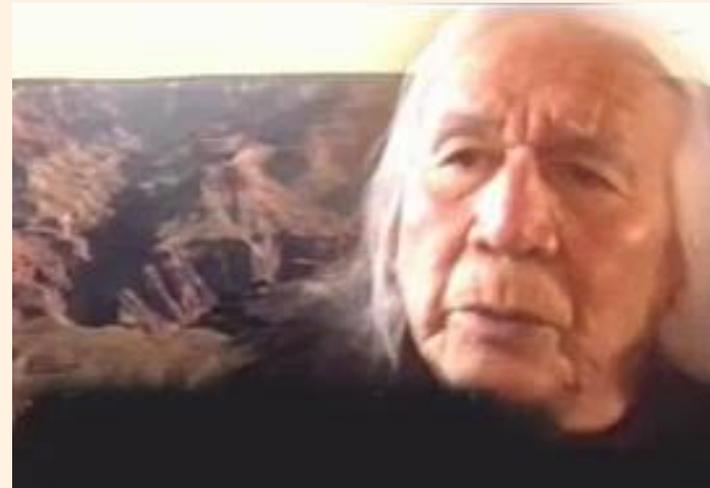
- To promote wellness and self-care, a Comfort Room is available in Atrium Room 8 for your use.
- If you need further assistance, please visit the Indian Health Service Division of Behavioral Health booth.

# National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

## Elder Abuse Issues in Indian Country

Jacque Gray, Ph.D.  
Co-PI & Director NIEJI

IHS Behavioral Health Conference  
June 27, 2012



*“Restoring respect and dignity by honoring Indigenous elders”*

# Why NIEJI?

- ❖ The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) and the Administration on Aging (AoA) offered first-time funding for elder abuse prevention/research in Indian Country
- ❖ **“Elder abuse is wrong. To fight it effectively, we need to build and sustain research, prevention, law enforcement and services”**

HHS Assistant Secretary Kathy Greenlee



# Objectives

- ❖ National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI)
- ❖ Identify the types of elder abuse
- ❖ Understand the different definitions of elder abuse from perspectives of legal, tribal authorities, and indigenous elders
- ❖ Know how to screen for elder abuse
- ❖ What are the resources

# NIEJI Goals: Year 1

## ❖ Year One (2011-2012)

### — Establish NIEJI

- Creation of a website, email, telephone number, board of advisors

### — Develop resources

- Tribal code list
- Tribal/state/national elder abuse contact list
- Fact sheets

### — Develop focus group protocol

## —Mission:

“Restore respect and dignity by honoring indigenous elders.



# Year One Completed

## ❖ Establish NIEJI

- Website: [www.nieji.org](http://www.nieji.org)
- E-Mail: [nieji@med.und.edu](mailto:nieji@med.und.edu)
- Phone: 701-777-2023
- Toll-free Number: 855-834-1572

## ❖ Develop Resources

- Tribal/State Resource with interactive map
- Contacting all tribes about Elder Abuse Code

## ❖ Develop Focus Group protocol

## ❖ Year Two (2012-2013)

- Conduct focus groups
  - Indigenous elders representative from IHS regions
- Develop model elder abuse codes
  - Model codes will be regionally specific
- Prepare relevant journal articles on elder abuse
  - Make available on website

## ❖ Year Three (2013-2014)

- Develop model elder abuse code toolkits
  - Will be regionally specific
  - Available online
  - Technical Assistance for tribes
- Native American Restorative Justice Conference
  - Present findings from focus groups
  - Provide training for stakeholders
  - Focus on respecting and honoring our elders



# NIEJI Primary Staff

- ❖ **Principal Investigator-Twyla Baker-Demaray, MS,**
  - Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation
- ❖ **Co-PI & Project Director- Jacqueline Gray Ph.D.,**
  - Cherokee, Choctaw
- ❖ **Research Director -Paula Carter Ph.D.,**
  - Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
- ❖ **Project Coordinator-Jacob Davis, BA,**
  - Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
- ❖ **Administrative Assistant- Karen Speaker**
- ❖ **Law Research Assistant (Law)-Whitefishwoman, BA**
  - Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation
- ❖ **Graduate & Law Research Assistant-Janie Schroeder**
  - Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

# What is Elder Abuse

## ❖ National Center on Elder Abuse

“Any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult.”

# What types of elder abuse?

- ❖ Physical Abuse
- ❖ Sexual Abuse
- ❖ Emotional/Psychological Abuse
- ❖ Neglect
- ❖ Financial Exploitation
- ❖ Self-Neglect

## ❖ Physical Abuse

### — Tribal Judges

- Intoxicated son hits elderly parent.
- Elder hit by adult child
- Assault/battery on grandpa—wouldn't give grandson keys to the truck.
- Elderly man with dementia hitting wife.

### — Title VI Directors

- Daughter hit elder because of his needs & health
- Granddaughter slapping elder
- Drug taking/alcohol use leads to yelling/hitting other family members

## ❖ Emotional Abuse

### — Tribal Judges

- Drunk/mad relatives enter elder home yelling, scaring the elder
- Grown children moving in with elder—drinking, fighting, taking their money, chasing away caregivers
- Family violence—elder afraid to testify
- Confining elder to one room/no interaction with family
- Elderly mother contacting police to remove intoxicated adult children from home.

## ❖ Emotional Abuse

### — Title VI Directors

- Children abuse alcohol in elder's home
- Verbal abuse by young family members
- Yelling mean things to parents
- Children threatening parents/grandparents with nursing home if they couldn't live with her.

### — Tribal Elders

- Verbal abuse to elderly parents
- Not listening when elders speak.
- Treating them as if they don't matter any more.

## ❖ Neglect

### — Tribal Judges

- Elder confined to home/family wouldn't provide support
- Elder complains of loneliness is left alone
- Family not checking on elder unable to take care of self
- Family goes away leaving elder without food
- Failing to obtain proper medical treatment for elder

### — Elders

- Family locks elder in home
- Lack of family care & attention
- Family too busy to take care of elders
- Not visiting or taking elders to gatherings
- Lack family care and attention

## ❖ Sexual Abuse

### — Tribal Health Directors

- Grandma raped by male high on meth who broke into her house. Ashamed. Would not report or tell anyone. Finally agreed to go to hospital for exam.

### — Tribal VI Directors

- Grandma raped by nephew, wouldn't talk—ashamed
- Elder raped and killed

## ❖ Exploitation

### — Tribal Judges

- Granddaughter wiped out grandma's bank account.
- Misusing elder's monthly check & not paying for food or bills for elder.

### — Title VI

- Family gambled away elder's only income
- Family takes elder's personal items
- Family took elder's check

## ❖ Exploitation

### — Tribal Elders

- Grandchild took elder's car and wrecked it.
- Grandchildren pressured elder for money
- Family cashed elder's checks & locked elder in their room.
- Family borrowed money and didn't pay back
- Granddaughter & boyfriend moved in and supported by elder
- Taking advantage by relatives
  - Using their homes to park grandchildren to feed, clothe, babysit, etc.

## ❖ Title VI Directors

- Elder not taken to ceremonies and spiritual events
- Family not allowed to conduct ceremonies in hospital as elder is dying.
- Elders not raised within the community wanting to have ceremonies at end of life and no connections to provide the ceremonies.

# What causes elder abuse?

- ❖ Caregiver Stress?
- ❖ Violent society?
- ❖ Entitlement?
- ❖ Greed?
- ❖ Ageism?
- ❖ Power and control?
- ❖ All of the above?

# Why does elder abuse happen?

- ❖ Trusting nature
- ❖ Perceived to be easy to fool or con
- ❖ Have steady source of income
- ❖ Isolation
- ❖ Other?

## ▶ Increased Mortality

- Lachs et al. 1998, Dong et al. 2009

## ▶ Poorer physical outcomes (probable)

- American Medical Association 1990; Anetzberger 2004; Lindbloom et al. 2007
- Increased pain
- Exacerbation of existing conditions
- Welts, wounds, injuries
- Increased susceptibility to infection

# Financial Effects of Elder Abuse

- ❖ Restitution often not forthcoming or too late
- ❖ No time to rebuild assets
- ❖ Loss of choices for older adult; loss of independence
- ❖ Reliance on others for financial support
- ❖ Intergenerational transfer of wealth impacted
- ❖ More quickly spending down to Medicaid

# High Risk Situations

-  ❖ People with inadequately treated mental health and / or substance abuse problems are more likely to be abusive
-  ❖ People who feel stressed / burdened / resentful are more likely to be abusive
-  ❖ Providing care for an older adult who is physically combative and/or verbally abusive

# Screening for Abuse

- ❖ Best practice: all clients should be screened at intake
- ❖ Normalize talking about a difficult topic
- ❖ Potential to catch abuse in its early stage and prevent it from escalating

# Screening: Ask the Elder

- ❖ “Has anybody hurt you?”
- ❖ “Are you afraid of anybody?”
- ❖ “Is anyone taking or using your money without your permission?”

- ❖ Planning Ahead
- ❖ Staying Connected
- ❖ Being Cautious
- ❖ Reporting Their Suspicions

# How to help?

- ❖ Join with NIEJI & NCEA to address Elder Abuse in Indian Country
- ❖ Work with tribal government to get elder abuse into tribal code.
- ❖ Spread the word—share information about elder abuse, signs, resources.
- ❖ Assist in identifying the problem locally
- ❖ Support elder abuse prevention & community awareness

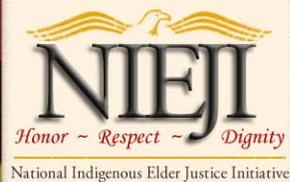
# Partnerships

❖ Please include information on the importance of partnership/collaboration as related to your topic.

- National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative
- National Resource Center on Native American Aging
- National Center on Elder Abuse
- National Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect
- Administration on Aging
- Adult Protective Services Resource Center

# Primary References:

- ❖ American Medical Association. (1990). White paper on elderly health. Report of the Council on Scientific Affairs. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 150(12): 2459-2472.
- ❖ Dong, X.Q., Simon, M.A., de Leon, C.M., Fulmer, T., Beck T. Hebert, L. Dyer, C., Paveza, G. Evans, & D.Gorbien, M. (2009). Elder self-neglect and abuse and mortality risk in a community-dwelling population. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association, Special Issue: Violence and human rights* 302(5): 517-526
- ❖ Jackson, M. Y. & Sappier, T. (2005). Elder Abuse Issues in Indian Country. Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging.  
[http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/NCEAroot/Main\\_Site/pdf/Elder\\_Abuse\\_issues\\_in\\_Indian\\_Country\\_June2005.pdf](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/NCEAroot/Main_Site/pdf/Elder_Abuse_issues_in_Indian_Country_June2005.pdf)
- ❖ Lachs, M.S., Williams, C.S., O'Brien, S., Pillemer, K.A., & Charlson, M.E. (1998). The morality of elder mistreatment. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280(5): 428-432.
- ❖ Lindbloom, E.J., Brandt, J. Hough, L.D., & Meadows, S.E. (2007). Elder mistreatment in the nursing home: A systematic review. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* 8(9): 610-616.



# Contact Information

- ❖ Jacque Gray, Ph.D., Director
- ❖ National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative
- ❖ [Http://www.nieji.org](http://www.nieji.org)
- ❖ Toll Free: 1-855-834-1572
- ❖ NIEJI@med.und.edu
- ❖ Direct Phone: 701-777-0582
- ❖ [Jacqueline.gray@med.und.edu](mailto:Jacqueline.gray@med.und.edu)



# For More Information

## National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

Phone: 701-777-2023

Toll-free Number: 855-834-1572

E-mail [nieji@med.und.edu](mailto:nieji@med.und.edu)

Website: [www.nieji.org](http://www.nieji.org)

Thank You!



# Crisis Hotline Numbers

Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number:

❖ 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Domestic Violence Hotline:

❖ 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224

National Child Abuse Hotline:

❖ 1-800-4-A-CHILD

Sexual Assault Hotline:

❖ 1-800-262-9800

Adult Protective Services

❖ 1-800-