

By Elaine A. Chen, Mary S. Twomey, and Stephanie Whittier Eliason

The National Center on Elder Abuse: Helping America's Elders to Live with Safety, Dignity, and Independence

The Center's goal is none other than to end elder abuse.

The mission of the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), directed by the U.S. Administration on Aging (AOA), is to help communities and professionals ensure that elders and adults with disabilities can live with dignity and independence—and without abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The NCEA began in 1988 as an information clearinghouse demonstration project on abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Its goals were to identify best practices in prevention and treatment, serve as a repository of research, and conduct demonstration projects to promote effective and coordinated responses to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The NCEA was granted a permanent home in 1992 in Title II of the Older Americans Act (OAA).

The NCEA: An Overview

Over the years, the AOA has administered the NCEA as a grant program. In 2011, at the University of California, Irvine, Program in Geriatrics, the Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect was awarded the grant, through 2014, to

be the National Center on Elder Abuse. The Center brings together a community of professionals to build upon the expertise of its leaders from medicine, social work, and gerontology. At the NCEA, we strive to unify and catalyze the people and groups already addressing elder mistreatment across the nation, and disseminate information as specified in the OAA.

We strive to unify and catalyze the people and groups across the nation that are already addressing elder mistreatment.

Recognizing that elder abuse is a multifaceted phenomenon requiring a multi-disciplinary response, the NCEA historically has operated as a consortium of partners. These NCEA collaborators come from various professional fields and serve as a valuable resource to many professionals who work with older victims of elder mistreatment, including Adult Protective Services agencies; national, state, and local aging networks; law enforcement; healthcare professionals; domestic violence networks; and others.

During this grant period, we are proud to be working with an eclectic group of organizations to engage their expertise and to reach their professional networks.

The following sub-grantees play important roles in reaching and serving our lay and professional audiences: the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging; the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving; the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care; the Weill Cornell Medical College, Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology; the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities; the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life; and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

The NCEA Mandate: Clearinghouse for Research, Training, and Practices

To achieve its mission, the NCEA provides information and tools to help professionals identify, address, and prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We encourage the development of programs, models, and initiatives that measurably decrease the incidence of elder abuse.

Title II of the OAA further requires that the NCEA carry out the following activities to support and address the causes, prevention, identification, and treatment of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation:

- Compile an annual summary of recently conducted research;
- Maintain an information clearinghouse on all programs showing promise of success;
- Compile training materials for personnel;
- Provide technical assistance to state agencies and to other public and nonprofit organizations to assist in planning, improving, developing, and carrying out programs and activities; and
- Conduct research and demonstration projects.

We support the growing body of work in elder mistreatment research by disseminating summaries of recent studies and clarifying key findings from research for practitioners. Through the

NCEA website, newsfeed, e-newsletter, and elder abuse listserv, we collect and share information about programs, training materials, and the application of policy to address abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The listserv is an electronic forum for professionals to exchange information and seek assistance. Professionals interested in this free service can join through our website, www.ncea.aoa.gov. We also invite dialogue through social media channels.

The NCEA Goal: Getting Unified and Going Viral

The NCEA creates a place people can turn to in order to learn more and do more about elder abuse. We work with community leaders to refine and broadcast a unified and consistent message. New opportunities include collaborations with aging and disability networks, caregivers, and organizations serving non-English speakers. Students and emerging professionals can join elders and adults with disabilities in shaping the public policy debate. We welcome stakeholder collaboration to reach specific audiences, make the information as relevant as possible to them, and facilitate their participation in helping to prevent abuse.

The Center cannot meet its mission without the participation and commitment of each person reading this article.

Daily we hear from individuals and families experiencing abuse, professionals who provide services to them, and reporters and students wanting to learn more about the issues. The NCEA cannot meet its mission without the participation and commitment of each person reading this article and those who are working in the field of aging. We need and want Alzheimer's Disease services providers, Area Agencies on Aging, caregiver resource centers, providers of long-term-care services and

supports, advocates, caregivers, researchers, and stakeholders from the aging network to collaborate, identify, and share models for intervention, curricula, and tools for raising awareness. Together we will promote aging with dignity and eliminate aging in fear.

We invite readers to share their insights by joining our listserv, subscribing to our e-newsletter, and visiting our website, www.ncea.aoa.gov, and our Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and PopVox pages. 

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A Look at Global Aging

Suzanne Kunkel and Frank Whittington, **Guest Editors**

At every turn we see news stories, United Nations and World Health Organization reports, and other research articles related to global aging and its impact on families, economies, and societies. It is no wonder that the volume of information about global aging is exploding, for the world's older population is growing more than twice as fast as the total population, and more than 1.2 million people join the ranks of the older population per month. Pension system crises, questions about the viability of family caregiving in rapidly changing cultures, concerns about the adequacy of institutional care, and aging workforce issues are relevant to every nation—even though the specific debates and dilemmas take different forms.

This issue of *Generations* will provide an overview of the demographics of global aging and will summarize the major international initiatives designed to raise awareness about and support public policies for the aging population. Articles will explore in depth some of the shared challenges facing aging societies and compare some nation-specific approaches to meeting the needs of aging individuals, families, and communities. Program spot articles will illustrate some of the ways that different countries are coping with the aging of their populations.

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