



Where Faith and Safety Meet:

Faith Communities
Respond to Elder Abuse

*Information for
Faith Communities and Faith Leaders
about Elder Abuse and How to Help*

Created by

**Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence
and The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life**

Where Faith and Safety Meet: Faith Communities Respond to Elder Abuse

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Dear Faith Community Leaders and Members:

Through the ages, faith communities¹ have valued older adults, relied on their wisdom, and respected the depth and breadth of their life experiences. However, this respect is not always reflected in all families or in the wider culture. Tragically, 11% of older Americans experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse and/or neglect in the past year.² Often, the abuser is a family member, caretaker (paid or volunteer), friend, neighbor, banker, lawyer, a person in a position of authority, or a person with whom there is an expectation of trust.

Many victims of elder abuse turn to their faith communities for help. This may mean talking to a member of the choir, mentioning the abuse to a long-term friend during women's group, men's group, or a scripture study, or asking a faith leader for help. Victims of elder abuse need and want the support of their faith communities and faith leaders. For many older adults, faith is a valuable resource, an important aspect of identity and community, and an essential element in decision making and healing.

Faith community leaders and members know older adults and families well, visit in nursing homes, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and homes, and know when an older adult is unexpectedly absent or when her or his behavior suddenly changes. This means that faith community members and leaders are in a unique position to identify elder abuse. Unfortunately, many have not received the training and resources they need to respond effectively and safely.

In October 2008, an innovative collaboration between Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) was funded by the Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice. This collaboration examines the juncture of elder abuse and faith on a national level, and seeks to strengthen collaborations among faith community leaders and domestic violence, elder abuse, and sexual assault service providers.

The goal is to help you, trusted faith community members and leaders, support victims and survivors of elder abuse. Ultimately, we hope that the resources presented here will help you keep older members of your faith community safe.

Sincerely,



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Our heartfelt thanks to the focus group participants in San Francisco, CA, Milwaukee, WI, and Lynn, MA; to the victims and survivors, service providers, and clergy who shared their time and wisdom so generously with us in person, by phone, and in emails; to our diligent and wise peer reviewers; and to Janice Green, Program Manager, Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice. We have learned so much from you all, and we are deeply grateful. It has been an honor to share the journey with you.

**“ Resolve to be tender with the young,
compassionate with the aged,
sympathetic with the striving,
and tolerant with the weak and the wrong.
Sometime in your life you would have been all of these.
-- Dr. Robert H. Goddard ”**

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www.interfaithpartners.org or at www.ncall.us.

This project is supported by Grant No. 2008-TA-AX-K052 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Introduction

“... during a trauma, victims are five times more likely to seek the aid of clergy than any other professional. Clergy are people they know and trust.”³

Whatever their faith, language, or culture, many older victims of abuse agree that faith is critical to their identity, their understanding of abuse itself, the decisions they make, and their healing. Abuse challenges a survivor’s faith, calling into question fundamental values and assumptions. One survivor commented: “What has been most violated... are intangibles: love, faith, trust, and hope. The result is spiritual suffering and a serious sense of loss and powerlessness.”⁴

Many people turn to their faith communities for help in crisis. And a 2003 Canadian study suggests that victims of elder abuse are even more likely to be faith affiliated and to turn to faith communities for help.⁵ Author Elizabeth Podnieks states:

“Faith communities can play a critical role in the prevention of elder abuse and neglect by fostering heightened public awareness of elder mistreatment, as well as providing services to abused elders in the community.”⁶

This booklet is designed especially for faith leaders and for anyone who participates in a faith community or congregation. Perhaps...

- ⊗ you will be the first person to notice something amiss in the life of an older member because you know her so well;
- ⊗ you will notice something during a home, hospital, or nursing home visit that raises concerns;
- ⊗ you will notice that an older person who used to participate regularly is now sporadic or absent; or
- ⊗ an older victim will ask you for help because you are a trusted member of the community.

In these scenarios, you are on the front lines in responding to elder abuse.

While anyone can be the victim of abuse, older adults often keep personal matters private and may not know where to go for help.

The goal of this resource is to provide information that will allow you to:

***recognize the signs of elder abuse,
offer support and information to victims,
and know where to turn for assistance.***

Definitions

You are visiting George, an older member of your faith community, and you learn that an adult grandchild has moved into his home. George seems to be fearful of this grandchild

You notice that 85-year-old Sylvia is having financial difficulty now that her son and daughter-in-law are helping her

You see bruises on Sarah's neck, and she hints that her 25-year marriage has always been "troubled"

You've just heard that 68-year-old Helen was raped by a stranger while walking her dog yesterday evening

Your visit to a nursing home reveals that 92-year-old Ellen has lost a lot of weight and suddenly has poor personal hygiene

62-year-old Robert tells you he received an email that said he was inheriting money from a long-lost uncle. He just had to email his bank account number and security code. The next day, his account was cleaned out

78-year-old Fatima has stopped caring for herself and her apartment, and is now living in miserable circumstances



. . . in all of these cases, an older adult may be a victim of elder abuse.

Elder abuse occurs when an older adult is willfully neglected or abused. Elder abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, spiritual, or financial. People who abuse older adults include family members, intimate partners, caretakers (paid or volunteer), friends, neighbors, bankers, lawyers, a person in a position of authority, or a person with whom there is an expectation of trust. Most abusers are intimate partners and family members, and most abuse happens in the home.⁷ The victims are primarily women, but may also be men. Elder abuse affects people of all faiths.

Elder abuse usually occurs because the perpetrator wants to coerce or manipulate some benefit for him or herself, such as money, a place to stay, free labor, access to prescription medications, or sexual gratification. The abuser may use isolation, threats, manipulation, violence, or other tactics to control the older adult.

Self-neglect and financial scams perpetrated by strangers may also be included in state laws regarding elder abuse. Although these are important, the primary focus of this booklet is on elder abuse perpetrated by a person with whom there is a relationship or an expectation of trust.

Sexual abuse is particularly hard for faith leaders and older faith community members to talk about. Although it is difficult to talk about, sexual abuse does happen, and older adults may need your help to stop it. Sexual abuse

perpetrated against older adults includes non-consensual sexual contact of any kind. Sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent is also considered sexual abuse. This includes, but is not limited to, unwanted touching, all types of sexual assault or battery, and sexually explicit photographing. Abusers can be spouses or intimate partners, adult children, family members, caregivers, strangers, or someone in a position of power. In a nursing home, assisted living, or other facility settings, perpetrators may also be other residents.

Elder abuse is defined differently by each state. Some states define “elder” as 60 years and up, while others say 65 years. Sometimes domestic violence and sexual assault service providers use the term “abuse in later life,” which includes individuals 50 and older. Although the definition or the language may change slightly from state to state, remember that the victim’s experience remains the same: shame, pain, anguish, shortened life span, and poor quality of life.

“*Wherever clergy are trained,
abuse should be at the top of the list.*”
--Survivor of elder abuse,
Lynn, Massachusetts
December 15, 2009

Did you know . . .

⌚ The U.S. population is aging. The number of persons 65 years or older numbered 37.3 million (12.4%) in 2006 and will increase to 71.5 million (20%) by 2030.⁸

⌚ Every year, 11% of older Americans experience elder abuse,⁹ which includes willful abandonment or neglect as well as physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, and financial abuse.

Did you know . . .

- ⌚ Elder abuse affects men and women regardless of their education, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, physical ability, activity level, language, or country of origin. Social isolation, some illnesses, and disabilities that result from aging may make an older adult more vulnerable to abuse.
- ⌚ Victims of elder abuse often love the people who harm them. They may stay in the abusive situation because of that love. Or, victims may want to keep the family together. They might not have the financial resources to leave, or their medical condition (or the medical condition of the abuser) may make living alone too difficult.
- ⌚ Many older victims do not seek services, especially from domestic abuse or sexual assault services. They may consider domestic abuse or sexual assault something that affects only young people. They may be unable to access services due to physical or mental conditions. They may not know about services, or they may be unwilling to access services. They may have difficulty relating to young shelter staff, participating in programs that prioritize child care or employment, or coping with a shelter stay if there are many children present.
- ⌚ A 2009 study reports: “Social support has emerged as a central risk or protective factor for virtually all forms of elder mistreatment. Moreover, prior research indicated that social support is linked to improved health and mental health. Programs that enhance and build relationships between older adults and members of their community, that is, programs that act against the age-related forces of isolation (reduced mobility, poorer health, increased morbidity of friends and family) have the potential to yield extremely high benefits.”¹⁰ Clearly, faith communities that maintain contact with their older congregants and thereby decrease isolation are perfectly positioned to help prevent and/or intervene earlier in cases of elder abuse.

Did you know . . .

☉ YOU CAN HELP!

☉ More than any other demographic group, older adults are actively involved in their faith communities. Faith leaders and members of faith communities are among the few, and in many cases the only, people who visit older community members in homes, hospitals, nursing homes, or assisted living or long-term care facilities.

Red Flags and Warning Signs

Faith community leaders and members often ask for “red flags,” or warning signs of elder abuse. However, be cautious. Some aspects of aging, such as how easily an older person may bruise, may both mask and/or mimic abuse. Most or all of the red flags need NOT be present for abuse to be occurring. If you see one or two of these indicators, please follow up with questions.

Someone who might be a victim of elder abuse:

- ☉ Has repeated “accidental” injuries.
- ☉ Has physical injuries, such as bruises, broken bones, pressure injuries, or burns.
- ☉ Is unable to follow through on treatment plans or medical care.
- ☉ Says she is “walking on eggshells.”
- ☉ Characterizes a loved one as “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.”
- ☉ Appears to be isolated or is unable to meet with you alone.
- ☉ Says or hints at being afraid or harmed.
- ☉ Makes veiled disclosures, such as “my son has a temper,” or “I have to ask my wife’s permission for everything.”
- ☉ Suddenly has poor personal hygiene or is not meeting her personal needs.
- ☉ Experiences sleep disturbances.
- ☉ Considers or attempts suicide.
- ☉ Is living in unsafe, unsanitary, or hazardous living conditions, including homelessness.
- ☉ Misses appointments, meetings, services, or community events unexpectedly.

- ⊗ Has sudden or unexplained changes in lifestyle, choices, or behavior.
- ⊗ Adds new names to his bank accounts, opens new lines of credit, or has unusual or sudden changes in financial transactions or financial institutions.

Someone who might be an abuser:

- ⊗ Is verbally abusive to the older adult while charming and friendly to others.
- ⊗ Says things like “she’s difficult,” “he’s just stubborn,” “she’s so stupid,” or “she’s clumsy” to convince others that the older person is incompetent or crazy.
- ⊗ Is overly attentive to the older person, which may mask controlling behaviors.
- ⊗ Controls the older person’s activities and outside contacts.
- ⊗ Talks about the older person as if she is not there or not a person.
- ⊗ Threatens suicide or homicide or both.
- ⊗ Stalks, or subjects the older person to unwanted pursuit, following, or harassment that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear or emotional distress and serves no legitimate purpose.
- ⊗ Sabotages the older person’s efforts to attend services, meetings, events, or appointments by refusing to provide transportation or by some other means.

Sometimes, you will not be able to observe any of these red flags or the indicators may be explained by other causes. No single indicator can be taken as conclusive proof. Look for patterns or clusters of indicators that suggest a problem. If you are concerned, please follow up with further questions to find out more.

“A test of a people is how it behaves toward the old . . . the affection and care for the old . . . [is] the true gold mine of a culture.”
-- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

How You Can Find Out More

If you are concerned that someone you know may be a victim of elder abuse, you will want to find out more. Lead into questions about abuse with a statement such as “People are sometimes hurt by family members, friends, neighbors, and others. For this reason, I always ask questions about relationships.”

Here are some questions you can ask to find out more:

- ⓪ Does anyone spend time with you, take you shopping, or to the doctor?
- ⓪ Are you helping to support someone?
- ⓪ Do you have enough privacy at home?
- ⓪ Are you sad or lonely? Why?
- ⓪ Do you feel uncomfortable with anyone in your family or in your care facility?
- ⓪ Has anyone taken things that belong to you without your OK?
- ⓪ Are you getting out with your friends?
- ⓪ Are you afraid of anyone?
- ⓪ Have you ever been hurt in any way by anyone? Are you being hurt by anyone now?
- ⓪ Does anyone threaten you or force you to do things you do not want to do?
- ⓪ Have you ever been touched in ways that made you feel uncomfortable? Is this going on now?
- ⓪ Who makes decisions about your life, such as how or where you should live?
- ⓪ Who controls your finances and makes financial decisions? How is that working?
- ⓪ Who helps you with personal care? How is that going?
- ⓪ You mentioned your son has a problem with his temper. What happens when he gets mad?

If the answers to these questions raise concern:

- ⊗ Ask for more information
- ⊗ Ask questions such as “how are you staying safe?”
- ⊗ Get more information (see p. 16)
- ⊗ AND connect the victim or survivor to resources and services.

Even if the answers to these questions do not raise concerns, tell the person that if an intimate partner, family member, caregiver (paid or volunteer), friend, neighbor, fiduciary, banker, lawyer, or anyone else ever does hurt her or she knows someone who is being hurt, there are people who can help, including you.

“The thing we want clergy to do is listen. It takes so much energy, strength, and courage to speak up. When a victim is ready to speak, clergy HAVE to listen. Clergy shouldn’t say, ‘we’re out of time,’ or ‘I have a meeting.’”
***-- Survivor of elder abuse,
Lynn, Massachusetts,
December 15, 2009***

How You Can Respond

Older adults are often firmly rooted in their faith communities. A faith community can be a place of refuge for a victim of elder abuse. It may be the first place an older adult turns for help. A faith community can be a place where a victim learns that the abuse is not her fault, that she doesn’t deserve the abuse, that others care about her, that there are service providers in the community who can help.

If a victim reaches out to you for help, you can:

- ② Listen with compassion and **without judgment**.
- ② Believe her! Usually, the initial description of the abuse is only the tip of the iceberg.
- ② Be available to hear the whole story, in the victim's own words. Give him time to think about what he wants to say next. You may be the first person he has confided in.
- ② Affirm her right to safety. Affirm that her safety is your first concern.
- ② Reassure her that the abuse is NOT her fault.
- ② Reassure him that the abuse is not part of a divine plan for his life.
- ② Respond to faith questions that she may be confronting. Point out ways that her faith may be a resource over the coming weeks and months as she makes decisions, responds to the crisis, and considers options for her safety.
- ② Offer spiritual and other needed forms of support. Reassure her that her faith community is with her during this crisis, and that you are supportive and will help.
- ② Help her connect to a domestic violence advocate, sexual assault service provider, or Adult Protective Services worker who can help plan for safety, provide needed services and support, and talk about options.
- ② Keep all information shared by the victim CONFIDENTIAL unless you have the victim's express permission to reveal information to a particular person for a particular purpose OR you are a mandated reporter and must report elder abuse. If you are a mandated reporter, begin all sessions by reminding the victim that you are a mandated reporter of elder abuse and explore what that could mean for the victim (see page 18).

Within your faith community, you and others can:

- ⊗ Talk about elder abuse so victims feel safe telling their stories.
- ⊗ Include resource information in your bulletin or newsletter.
- ⊗ Provide information and resources.
- ⊗ Put posters up in the bathrooms where they can be read in private.
- ⊗ Educate everyone in the congregation about the warning signs and where to get help.
- ⊗ Speak out. Preach a sermon about elder abuse. Name it as a sin.
- ⊗ Suggest ways that your faith tradition supports, honors, and respects older adults.
- ⊗ Get to know your local domestic violence and sexual assault service advocates, and adult protective or elder abuse services in your area. Know their work, and have brochures and other materials available.

PLEASE DO NOT . . .

- ⊗ Please do not tell the victim what to do. Instead, offer options and let the victim decide on her own next steps. Leaving or attempting to leave can be the most dangerous time for a victim.
- ⊗ Please do not blame the victim for the abuse. Abuse is never the victim's fault.
- ⊗ Please do not report the abuse without talking to the victim first. If you are a mandated reporter and you plan to make a report, tell the victim what you are doing and why. Listen to the concerns the victim has about reporting. If the victim has safety concerns, ask if she is connected to an advocate and has a safety plan. If there is no safety plan, connect the victim to a domestic violence or elder abuse advocate who can help build a safety plan and consider options (see page 18).

☺ Please do not break confidentiality by sharing information with the abuser, other family members, or anyone else.

☺ Please do not provide couple's, marriage, or family counseling, which can be dangerous and is not recommended. If the victim insists, please contact your local domestic violence service provider for more information.

☺ Please do not offer quick solutions or minimize the complexities and difficulties of the situation.

“*The ideal Muslim family is one that considers its elderly members worthy of great respect and honor. Gratitude toward God is based on gratitude toward people. The elderly should be engaged, not isolated; protected, not abused.*”
-Imam Magid

Where you can turn for more information and services . . .

Because elder abuse, domestic violence, and sexual abuse share some common elements, there are several places to go for help. However, it can be easy for older victims and survivors to “slip through the cracks,” or for their needs to be overlooked or not met. Service agencies vary in their staff, training, and capacity to respond to older adult victims. Please be proactive. Get to know these service providers in advance. Ask them what services they provide for older victims. Find out where there are services that welcome and accommodate older victims and survivors. Attend a Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse, and/or Elder Abuse Forum or Roundtable in your community to find out more about services that are available. Offer to help connect the victim to services and support.

Most domestic violence service agencies are nonprofit organizations that provide services for victims of domestic violence and their families. Many of these agencies have a 24-hour hotline that is answered by advocates. Usually callers do not have to give their names. Anyone (including you) can call to get information and/or referrals to other services. Services are free, and are available even if the victim is not in a shelter or safe home.

Advocates in domestic violence service agencies can help identify options that may be available in your community to help a victim stay safe. Some advocates may be required to report to the authorities if you disclose physical abuse and/or neglect of an elder. It is important to ask the advocates if they are mandated reporters before you discuss the abuse.

Domestic violence advocates can often assist with legal issues (including emergency restraining orders), emergency housing, and safety planning. They may accompany a victim to court, medical appointments, and other necessary appointments to provide emotional support. They may also offer individual counseling and often have a support group for victims. They may be able to help with finding permanent housing, finding an attorney, and referrals for food and other assistance.

Sexual abuse and assault services are also nonprofit organizations that provide services for victims of sexual assault and/or sexual abuse. Many have a 24-hour hotline that is answered by advocates. Anyone can call anonymously to get information and referrals. Services are free. Sexual abuse and assault advocates can provide support and information, help victims navigate law enforcement and medical institutions, and provide support for the victim during an investigation. Support groups are often available, and advocates can help the victim access needed services in the community.

Adult Protective Services (APS) or elder abuse services are governmental agencies that investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation against older adults and/or vulnerable adults (as defined by state statute). States vary in terms of the types of cases that are investigated and services that are offered. States also vary in terms of the ages at which an adult is considered an older adult. For more information about how to contact an elder abuse or social services agency, go to the National Adult Protective Services Association at www.apsnetwork.org or the National Center on Elder Abuse at www.ncea.aoa.gov.

Aging Network Services include programs such as Area Agencies on Aging, Senior Centers, and Councils on Aging that provide in-home and community services, support programs and assistance to older adults. Services available in most communities include nutrition services, transportation, caregiver support, employment and volunteer services, and adult day care services. Many also include in-home care coordination such as nursing services, home care and chore services, home delivered meals,

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personal care and Medicaid services. To locate services near you, contact the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging at www.n4a.org or the National Association of State Units on Aging at www.nasua.org.

Ombudsmen investigate, and when possible, resolve complaints made by or on behalf of older adults who are residents of long-term care facilities. For more information, contact the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center at www.ltombudsman.org.

Legal remedies may also be available to a victim because many of the behaviors that comprise elder abuse are also crimes. An attorney can help the victim think through civil and criminal remedies. A civil attorney can help with wills, restraining orders, or establishing a new power of attorney.

A Word about Mandated Reporting

As you learn more about elder abuse, including domestic violence and sexual assault in later life, you will become aware of situations where an older adult is being abused. If you are a faith leader, you need to be familiar with your state's mandatory reporting requirements. Please visit the National Center on Elder Abuse at www.ncea.aoa.gov for more information. Here are some helpful pointers.

- ② Always put the safety of the victim first.
- ② Mandatory reporting laws differ from state to state. Find out now if you are mandated to report elder or dependent adult abuse.
- ② If you are a mandated reporter, find out for whom reports are mandated (vulnerable, dependent, or at-risk adults? anyone over the age of 60 or 65?).
- ② If you are a mandated reporter, where do you report the abuse? What information will be needed?
- ② Learn your denomination's policy on elder abuse. If they do not have one, help them to develop one!

“*Our society must make it right and possible for old people not to fear the young or be deserted by them, for the test of a civilization is the way it cares for its [older] members.*”
-- Pearl S. Buck

Safety Planning

Ideally, the older adult you are assisting will be working with a domestic violence, sexual assault, or elder abuse services advocate or an Adult Protective Services worker to develop a safety plan. If not, encourage her to get help from such an organization (see p. 16), where the older adult will find experts who understand abuse, safety planning, and other issues.

Safety planning is critically important and best administered by an expert. Advocates can help a victim figure out how to be safer in a violent or dangerous incident, how to be safer while remaining in the abusive situation, how to leave in as safe a way as possible, and how to address the topic with children or grandchildren. If a survivor requests your help in thinking about her safety, please contact your area service providers and work with them to provide that assistance.

Sometimes, you may find yourself in a situation where you have to help a survivor think about safety. Below are safety-planning pointers. Remember that your definition of safety and the older adult's definition of safety may be different. Also remember to let the older adult make the decisions. She knows best what will work in her situation. For additional information on Safety Planning, please go to the NCALL website at www.ncall.us.

If a Violent or Dangerous Incident May Occur, the Victim Could . . .

- ① **Plan a safe place to go.**
- ① **Plan a primary and backup escape route** out of the home.

- ☉ **Practice getting out** of the home safely. **If the victim has a disability** that impacts his or her mobility, plan how best to escape or who to call for help.
- ☉ **Arrange a signal** with a trusted friend or neighbor.
- ☉ **Keep purse, keys, and/or wallet in a secure place** ready to leave suddenly.

During a Violent or Dangerous Incident, the Victim Could . . .

- ☉ **Try to avoid rooms** that have only one exit (like bathrooms), or have no phone or cell phone to call for help.
- ☉ **Be aware of items** in the home that could be used as weapons, such as guns, knives, and even cords, which could be used for strangulation.
- ☉ **If attacked**, curl up to protect head and heart.

After a Violent or Dangerous Incident, the Victim Could...

- ☉ **Call law enforcement or 911.**
- ☉ **Call a domestic violence hotline to discuss options, plan for safety, and locate accessible support.**
- ☉ **Get medical help**, if needed.
- ☉ **Consider seeking an order of protection.**
- ☉ **Take care of physical needs**, asking for assistance if necessary.
- ☉ **Get emotional support** from a women's or victims' support group or from a trusted friend.

☉ **Get spiritual support** from a faith leader or trusted friend. Read or listen to scripture, books, music, or poems that strengthen and encourage. Reconnect with grounding or sustaining rituals or traditions.

☉ **Build a safety plan** with a domestic violence or elder abuse advocate.

Important Phone Numbers

☉ Police: **911** or local: _____

☉ National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233),
TTY: 1-800-787-3224

☉ National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673)

☉ Local domestic abuse services provider: _____

☉ Local sexual assault services provider: _____

☉ Local Senior Center or Council on Aging: _____

☉ Local Ombudsman: _____

☉ Other Important Phone Numbers: _____

**For more information on safety planning,
please go to the NCALL website at www.ncall.us.**

Hotlines and Referrals

For immediate help, call:

☎ 911 or local police: _____

☎ National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (800-799-7233), 800-787-3224 (TTY), www.thehotline.org

☎ National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673), www.rainn.org

For more information:

National Center on Elder Abuse: information on state government agencies, state laws, state-specific data and statistics, and statewide resources, 302-831-3525, www.ncea.aoa.gov

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life: the nationally recognized leader on program and policy development, technical assistance, and training, 608-255-0539, www.ncall.us

Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence: national technical assistance on the response of faith communities to elder abuse, faith-based resources, and faith-based training, 617-654-1820, www.interfaithpartners.org

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Endnotes

1 Because elder abuse affects victims and survivors in all faith traditions, we have used broadly inclusive faith language. Whatever your faith and cultural background, we hope that you will take this broadly inclusive language and translate it into the specifics of your faith. Only you know what “works” within your faith tradition and setting. While honoring our many differences, we seek to focus on one thing faith communities share: the need to provide a safe, effective, faith-based response to victims and survivors of elder abuse.

2 Acierno, Ron, Melba Hernandez-Tejada, Wendy Muzzy, and Kenneth Steve, “National Elder Mistreatment Study,” U.S. Department of Justice, 2009, pp. 4 ff.

3 Helen P. Bradley is Director of the Victim-Witness Assistance Program in Chatham County, Georgia. Georgia Commission on Family Violence and Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2009 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Annual Report, p. 33.

4 Elder abuse survivor, Lynn, Massachusetts, December 15, 2009.

5 Elizabeth Podnieks, EdD, RN and Sue Wilson, PhD, “Elder Abuse Awareness in Faith Communities: Findings from a Canadian Pilot Study,” *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*, Vol. 15, No.3/4, 2003, p. 123.

6 Elizabeth Podnieks, EdD, RN and Sue Wilson, PhD, “Elder Abuse Awareness in Faith Communities: Findings from a Canadian Pilot Study,” *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*, Vol. 15, No. 3/4, 2003, p. 121.

7 Acierno, Ron, Melba Hernandez-Tejada, Wendy Muzzy, and Kenneth Steve, “National Elder Mistreatment Study,” U.S. Department of Justice, 2009, pp. 4 ff.

8 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, “Statistics on the Aging Population,” www.oao.gov/prof/Statistics/statistics.asp.

9 Acierno, Ron, Melba Hernandez-Tejada, Wendy Muzzy, and Kenneth Steve, “National Elder Mistreatment Study,” U.S. Department of Justice, 2009, pp. 4 ff.

10 Acierno, Ron, Melba Hernandez-Tejada, Wendy Muzzy, and Kenneth Steve, “National Elder Mistreatment Study,” U.S. Department of Justice, 2009, Document No. 226456, Executive Summary, p. 9.