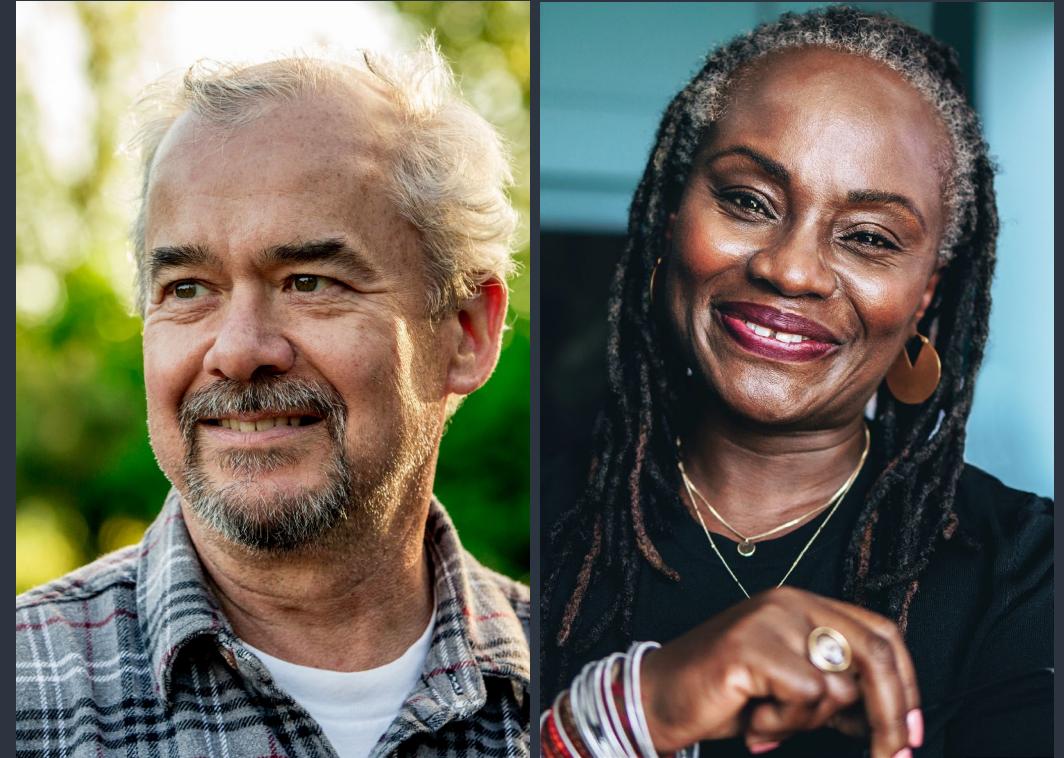

Identifying Safe and Secure Housing Options for Older Survivors



National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life

September 16, 2026

Disclaimer

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Presenter Introductions

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National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

NCALL is committed to creating a world that respects the dignity of older adults and enhances the safety and quality of life of older victims and survivors of abuse. We engage communities to foster a collaborative, inclusive, survivor-centered response to abuse in later life.



Housekeeping

- Please use the chat to ask questions or to share your comments throughout the webinar



Learning Objectives

As a result of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the common barriers older survivors face when seeking shelter and housing
2. Discuss ideas and options to increase shelter/safe house accessibility and long-term housing options for older adult survivors
3. Determine key partnerships to increase housing options for survivors
4. Identify national assistance programs and initiatives that can provide information on and solutions to housing challenges
5. Develop strategies to improve accessibility for older adults at their agency

Overview of Abuse in Later Life



What Is Abuse in Later Life?

Abuse in Later Life is the nexus between domestic violence, sexual violence, and elder abuse.

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life,
An Overview of Abuse in Later Life.



Abuse in Later Life

- Victims 50+
- Offenders could be an intimate partner, family member, caregiver, or any other trusted person
- Physical, sexual, financial, emotional, psychological, abandonment, neglect and stalking
- Types of abuse often co-occur
- May occur in any setting, including the community or long-term care facilities

Abuse Occurs Across the Lifespan



Addressing Shelter and Housing Access for Older Survivors



Why Address the Intersection of Older Survivors & Shelter/Housing?

11,400 Americans turn 65 every day.

Alliance for Lifetime Income, 2025



Why Else?

The 85 and older population is projected to more than double from 6.5 million in 2022 to 13.7 million in 2040 (a 111% increase).

2023 Profile of Older Americans, AoA, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services



Intersection of Aging and Housing

- The aging of the population has been accompanied by a significant increase in homelessness among older adults
- In the US, older adults make up almost half of the unhoused population, and there's a growing trend of older adults becoming homeless for the first time in later life.
- Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing age group of those experiencing homelessness, which is estimated to triple over the next decade

(Source: MacNeil, A., & Burnes, D. (2022). Bridging the gap between homelessness in older adulthood and elder abuse: Considerations for an age-friendly shelter system. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 34(3), 391–400.)

Intersection of Aging and Housing (2)

- Older adults are especially vulnerable to becoming homeless, as many live on fixed incomes that are insufficient to cover the cost of housing and other expenses.
- Although homeownership is higher among older adults compared with younger adults, the number of older homeowners that hold mortgages and are burdened by their housing costs have grown over the past two decades

Intersection of Elder Abuse & Housing Insecurity

- Along with increase of older adults experiencing homelessness, the aging population also brings an increase in the scope of elder abuse
- Housing insecurity is both a cause and a consequence of abuse in later life or elder abuse
 - Lack of secure housing may make fleeing abuse unrealistic
 - If housing is lost, survivors face increased risks and vulnerabilities to abuse

Intersection of Elder Abuse & Housing Insecurity

- Older adults living in unstable housing situations may experience a “tipping point” if they experience abuse and/or neglect
- **Financial abuse** is a common recurring factor for older survivors experiencing homelessness and is normally coupled with emotional abuse and manipulation
- **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)** and spousal abuse are also risk factors for older survivors

Common Barriers Older Adults Face in Seeking Shelter and Housing



Personal Barriers to Seeking Shelter or Safe Housing

- May not want to leave their family home
 - May have concerns about losing independence
- Many people believe shelters are not for them
- May not believe the abuse they experienced is severe enough
- May not want to leave pets

Programmatic Barriers in Seeking Shelter

- Lack of ADA compliance
- Unable to meet caregiving needs
- Older adults may not be able to complete physical chore requirements
- No programming specifically for older adults
- Some shelters or safe houses only serve victims of IPV

Programmatic Barriers in Seeking Shelter (2)

- The current system fails to provide an adequate shelter option for an older couple that may be fleeing an abusive situation together
- When shelters are not designed to consider the specific needs of older adults, neutral policies may result in age-based discrimination

Internal Barriers to Long Term Housing

Many may not want to leave their home for fear of:

- Isolation
- Going to a facility
- Loss of independence



Structural Barriers to Long Term Housing

- Too expensive/Rising housing costs
- Difficult to find a home that meets all their needs (accessibility, care needs)
- Isolation stemming from geographic or transportation barriers



Group Discussion:
What other barriers
are older adult
victims
experiencing?

Enter your replies in the chat



Ideas to Increase Shelter Accessibility and Long-Term Housing Options



Challenge Assumptions About Older Adults

Attitudinal Accessibility

- Examine assumptions about older adults before assuming services won't work.
- Older survivors have the same right to safety and shelter as survivors of any age.
- Avoid viewing age, disability, or health needs as reasons someone cannot be served. Replace "We can't" with "How can we?"
- Don't assume another program or service is better equipped simply because someone is older—many older survivors need the same safety, advocacy, and support as any other survivor.

Ideas and Options to Increase Shelter/Safe House Accessibility

Physical Accessibility

- Widen doors for wheelchair users
- Handlebars in showers
- Regular bed options in addition to only bunk beds
- First floor bedrooms

Ideas and Options to Increase Shelter/Safe House Accessibility ⁽²⁾

- Ensure language accessibility
 - Interpretation and translation for foreign languages, ASL, braille
- Identify staff age 50+ to work with older survivors
 - Consider hiring an elder abuse advocate
 - Have older adult staff or volunteers facilitate support groups for older adults or with survivors of all ages

Policy Adaptations to Improve Shelter Access for Older Survivors ⁽¹⁾

- **Review confidentiality policies** to allow a trusted caregiver or personal care attendant when requested by the survivor and necessary to meet care needs (personal care, medication support, communication, mobility).
- **Develop clear procedures** for admitting caregivers while protecting the confidentiality, privacy, and safety of all shelter residents.
- **Define expectations for caregivers** (e.g., confidentiality, resident privacy, shelter rules, safety protocols) through a written agreement or orientation.
- **Recognize that accommodating a caregiver may be an accessibility modification** that enables someone to safely access shelter services.

Policy Adaptations to Improve Shelter Access for Older Survivors ⁽²⁾

- **Expand eligibility of DV shelters to family violence** outside of IPV, recognizing the similar power and control dynamics and safety issues exist in these relationships.
- **Chore requirements:** Provide flexibility or alternatives for residents with mobility, health, or functional limitations.
- **House meeting schedules:** Offer accommodations if meeting times conflict with medication schedules, fatigue, medical appointments, or caregiving responsibilities.
- **Quiet spaces:** Designate calm, private areas for survivors who may be overwhelmed by noise, communal living, or children's activity.

When a Hotel Stay May Be Better Than Emergency Shelter

- The survivor requires privacy, rest, or a quieter environment.
 - Significant medical, mobility, or personal care needs cannot be adequately supported in communal shelter.
 - Cognitive changes make a busy shelter environment confusing or distressing.
 - The survivor needs space for medical equipment or frequent healthcare visits.
 - Safety concerns or family dynamics make communal living difficult.
 - Shelter policies cannot reasonably accommodate the survivor's needs despite best efforts.
-

Building Hotel Partnerships

- Develop relationships with local hotels before emergencies arise.
- Identify accessible rooms and ADA features in advance.
- Negotiate reduced rates or emergency agreements.
- Establish protocols for confidential registration and billing.
- Coordinate transportation, meals, and safety planning.
- Partner with aging services, healthcare providers, or victim assistance programs to provide on-site supports when needed.
- Maintain regular check-ins and advocacy services while the survivor is in the hotel.

Ideas and Options for Long-Term Housing

Partnering with your local AAA or CoC to assist with outfitting home with ADA compliance and to assist with identifying services for an older adult to remain in their home for as long as possible



Ideas and Options for Long-Term Housing ⁽²⁾

For Older Adults with Complex Care Needs

- Partnership with assisted living facilities and nursing homes could help to secure safe, affordable housing (if living at home is no longer an option)
- Advocates could work to secure permanent housing, if desired.
- Consider former assisted living or long-term care facilities for new shelter or safe housing for older survivors

Group Discussion

- Which ideas can you bring back to implement with your agency?
- What other ideas come to mind?



Key Partnerships & National Initiatives to Increase Housing Options for Older Survivors



Partnerships are Key

- No one agency can figure out housing challenges on their own
- For short term options:
 - Collaborate with local nursing homes, assisted living, transitional housing and retirement communities
 - Join the Spring Alliance
 - Connect with other agencies providing shelter to older survivors and more
- For Long-term options:
 - Connect with your local AAAs and CoCs
 - AAAs work with older adults; CoCs work with service provider

Partnerships to Increase Shelter/Safe House Accessibility ⁽³⁾

- For older adults who need nursing home care or have more complex care needs, consider local senior living centers, assisted living facilities and/or nursing homes
 - Long-term care settings are underutilized as an intervention in community-based elder abuse
 - For shelters/safe houses that are not yet able to make physical accommodations, partnering can allow for older survivors with complex care needs to have temporary housing with that care provided

Continuums of Care (CoCs)

- HUD-designated local or regional coalition responsible for coordinating housing services within a geographical area
 - CoCs are local planning and coordinating bodies that help to organize responses to homelessness community-wide
- Bring together housing agencies, shelters, non-profits, healthcare providers and local governments
- Work to move people quickly into permanent housing by reducing barriers to improve long-term housing stability

Who Participates in a CoC?

- Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
- DV/SA Shelters
- Homeless shelters
- Transitional Housing Programs
- Disability Organizations
- Faith Communities
- Affordable Housing Developers

How to Join your CoC

- Find your local CoC through the Housing and Urban Development (<https://www.hud.gov/findshelter>)
- Contact your local housing services agency
- Ask your local AAA
- Contact your city or county's housing department



Participation in a CoC

- Many CoCs hold regular multidisciplinary meetings where providers discuss individuals experiencing homelessness.
- With the survivor's permission, an advocate can participate to:
 - Coordinate services
 - Avoid duplication
 - Identify housing opportunities
 - Address barriers before they become crises

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

- AAAs ensure that older adults can age with optimal health, well-being and independence
 - Central focus is to support aging-in-place
- Ensures family caregivers have the support they need
- AAA Services provided:
 - Nutrition
 - Supportive Services
 - Caregiver Support
 - Health & Wellness
 - Elder Rights

AAAs & Assistance with Housing Stability

- One of an AAA's most important role is to help older adults understand and access housing options, including:
 - Assess housing needs
 - Screen for HUD program eligibility
 - Connect older adults with local Public Housing Authorities
 - Coordinate with landlords and housing providers
 - Assist with completing and submitting applications
 - Assist with wait list applications and follow-up

Connecting Older Adults to HUD Rental Assistance

AAAs usually help older adults apply for the following HUD programs:

- Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)
- Project-based Rental Assistance
- Public Housing
- HUD Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly

Partnering with Public Housing Authorities



AAAs work with PHAs to:

- Coordinate referrals
- Prioritize older adults with significant needs
- Help resolve tenancy issues
- Assist older adults at risk of eviction
- Identify affordable units that become available

Helping Older Adults Age-in-Place



AAAs often combine HUD housing resources to help older adults remain in their home safely by:

- Home-delivered meals
- Home modifications
- Transportation
- Home health care & Housekeeping
- Benefits counseling

AAA Aging-in-Place Assistance



AAAs can help older adults access funding or possibly contractors for the following:

- Grab bars
- Wheelchair Ramps
- Bathroom Modifications
- Widened Doorways
- Improved Lighting
- If funding allows, Stair Lifts

Ideas for Partnering with AAAs and CoCs

- Utilize the Eldercare Locator to identify AAAs in your area
- Get to know the staff to have a contact and for warm referrals
- Learn more about the specific services your AAA and CoC provide

Role of your CCR & Housing

- Coordinated Community Response (CCR) teams are essential in addressing systemic housing challenges in your community
- Consider the following:
 - Invite AAA and CoC staff to your CCR
 - Ensure that your housing partners are invited to your CCR
 - Determine other community leaders that may be helpful in improving housing solutions for older adults

National Assistance Programs & Resources

- USAging's Doors to Housing Resource Site
(<https://www.usaging.org/aaa-and-coc-partnerships-to-prevent-homelessness>)
- HUD Exchange (Resource Library)
<https://www.hudexchange.info/>
- National Alliance to End Homelessness (Toolkits and Training Materials)
<https://endhomelessness.org/>



Spring Alliance

- Spring Alliance is a national network of regional elder abuse shelters and those with similar service models to fill service gaps for older survivors
- Membership includes shared resources, monthly meetings, and technical assistance support
- Resources are on their website for starting an elder shelter
- <https://www.springalliance.org/>



Panel Discussion on Successful Shelter and Housing Strategies for Older Survivors



Panel Discussion with Service Providers

- LaTrice Buck, Inspire Consulting, Inc, WI
- Laura Guild, AZDES, AZ
- Julia Matthies, St. Vincent de Paul, AZ
- Melissa Elliott, Area Agency on Aging (AAA), AZ

Taking action to Improve Accessibility and Increase Housing Options



Questions to Consider for Shelter/Safe Housing

- What needs to improve for accessibility at your agency?
- What will it take to make that happen?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What are the next steps or actions?

Questions to Consider for Long-Term Housing

- What are the major challenges you're experiencing with locating or securing long term housing?
- Can the AAA or CoC help? How so?
- What are the next steps needed to increase housing options for the older adult victims in your community?

Questions?



Aim of the OVW Abuse in Later Life Program

The aim of this award is to address abuse in later life by:

- Providing training and cross training
- Establishing or supporting multidisciplinary collaborative
- Providing or enhancing victim services



Required MOU Partners

Each grantee must have multidisciplinary partnerships with four required MOU partners:

- Law enforcement agency
- Prosecutors' office
- Nonprofit program or government agency with demonstrated experience in assisting individuals in later life
- Victim service provider



Questions about the Abuse in Later Life Program?

- Please email the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) with any questions or for more information at the following email address:
 - **OVW.elder@usdoj.gov**



Resources



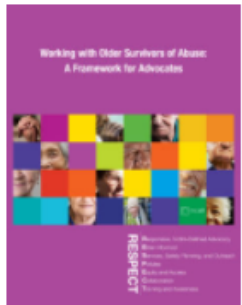
NCALL Website



www.ncall.us

NCALL Publications Library

Publications Library



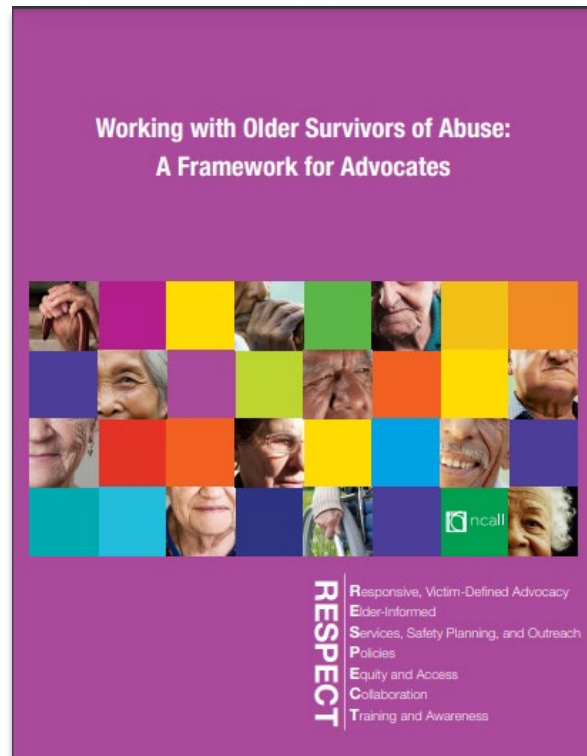
Our Publications Library is home to a number of written resources, toolkits, webinars, articles, and more, created by NCALL staff and through collaboration with various organizations and entities in the elder abuse field.

[Click here to be directed to the Publications Library.](https://www.ncall.us/resources/publications-library/)



www.ncall.us/resources/publications-library/

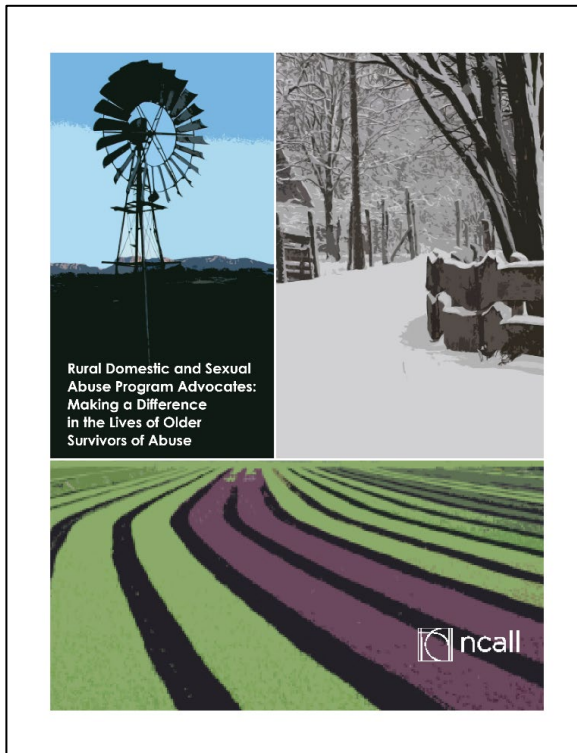
Guiding Principles for Advocates



Working With Older Survivors of Abuse: A Framework for Advocates



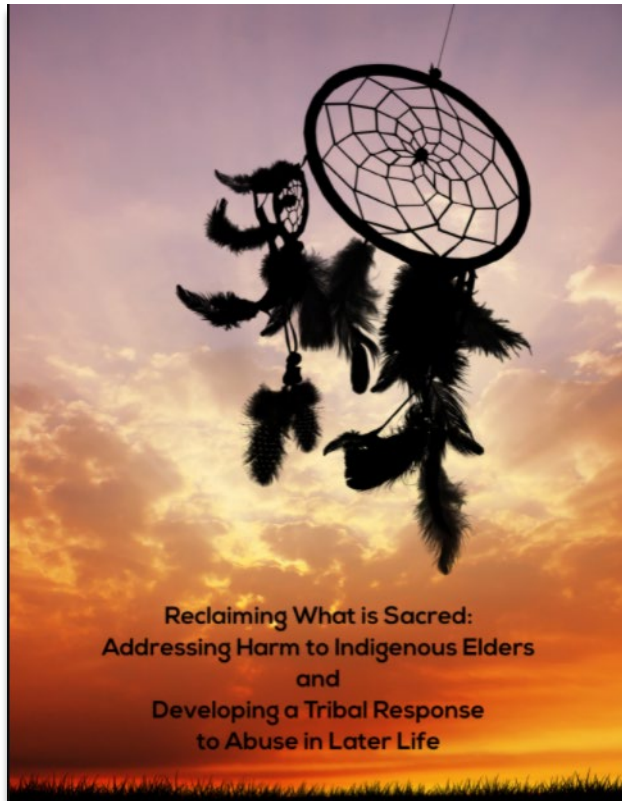
Advocacy in Rural Communities



Rural Domestic and Sexual Abuse
Program Advocates: Making a Difference
in the Lives of Older Survivors of Abuse



Advocacy in Tribal Communities



Reclaiming What is Sacred: Addressing Harm to Indigenous Elders and Developing a Tribal Response to Abuse in Later Life Paper



Advocacy in Tribal Communities (2)

Elder Abuse within Tribal Communities
Understanding Abuse

Elders are highly esteemed in our Tribal communities. They are the keepers of our cultural knowledge and the memories of our Tribe.

Elders kept Tribal languages and traditions alive. They carry these traditions for us and pass down our oral histories. Elders can often be referred to as libraries because of the vast Tribal knowledge they hold.

“Elders in our community deserve to live a safe and peaceful life they choose.”

Both men and women can be at risk of Elder abuse. Research indicates that 2/3 of the victims are female. (Lachs & Berman, 2011) People at any age can become victims of domestic or sexual violence.

Many older adults worry about the loss of independence or being sent to live outside of their Tribal community. Elders may believe if they tell someone about the abuse they will be institutionalized, abandoned, or killed.

- Every person is entitled to live their life free of harm.
- When an Elder is deprived of the basic necessities of life, the community must collectively respond to protect him/her.
- Elders have the right to make decisions that do not conform with others' expectations or beliefs, as long as they do not harm others.

Elder Abuse within Tribal Communities: Understanding Abuse



Elder Abuse within Tribal Communities
Tribal Coordinated Response

What is a Tribal Coordinated Response

Tribes have worked together cooperatively for many years. Native societies needed a high level of cooperation to survive (e.g., obtaining sufficient food, protection of the people). American Indians and Alaska Natives place value on the importance of the group rather than on the individual (SAMHSA, 2019), which is central to the role of a coordinated community response (CCR). The focus of change is not on the individual worker, it is about changing what organizes and coordinates workers to think and act. (Pence, 2001)

A Tribal Coordinated Community Response (TCCR) should be a blending of the Duluth-Model CCR while centering traditional ways of seeing the world, including how the Tribe practices their values and beliefs.

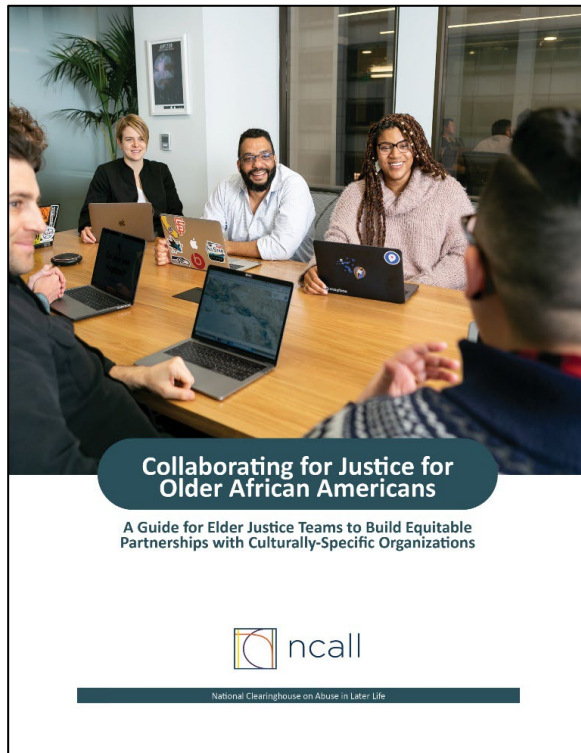
Tribal Values to Include in the TCCR Work

- **Respect for Elders and their autonomy:** Honor the value Elders have, their lived experiences and desire to be independent.
- **Cooperation and harmony:** Work together to address challenges and work together with shared understandings and effort.
- **Humility:** Recognize the knowledge and expertise of peers, and be open to learning new ideas and approaches.
- **Respect for tradition and spiritual practice:** Include practices to bring strength, healing, and caring to the work together.

Elder Abuse within Tribal Communities: Tribal Coordinated Response



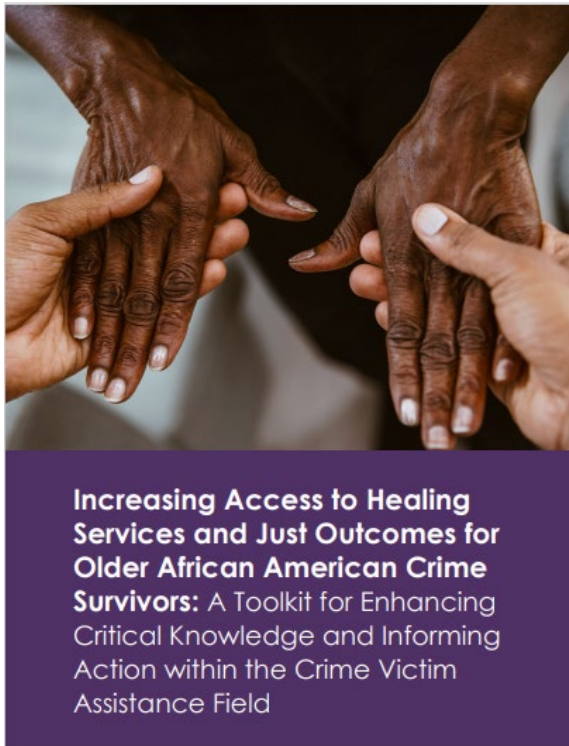
Advocacy in African American Communities



Collaborating for Justice for Older African Americans: A Guide for Elder Justice Teams to Build Equitable Partnerships with Culturally-Specific Organizations



Advocacy in African American Communities ⁽²⁾



Increasing Access to Healing Services and Just Outcomes for Older African American Crime Survivors



Systems Change Workbooks

- APS/Elder Abuse organization
- Courts
- Law Enforcement
- Prosecution
- Victim Services

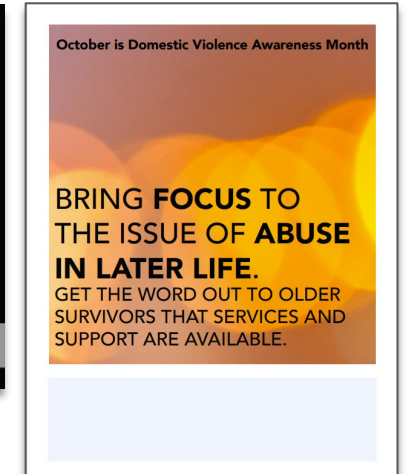


CCR Tools

- Coordinated Community Response Teams' Self-Assessment Tool
- CCR Resources

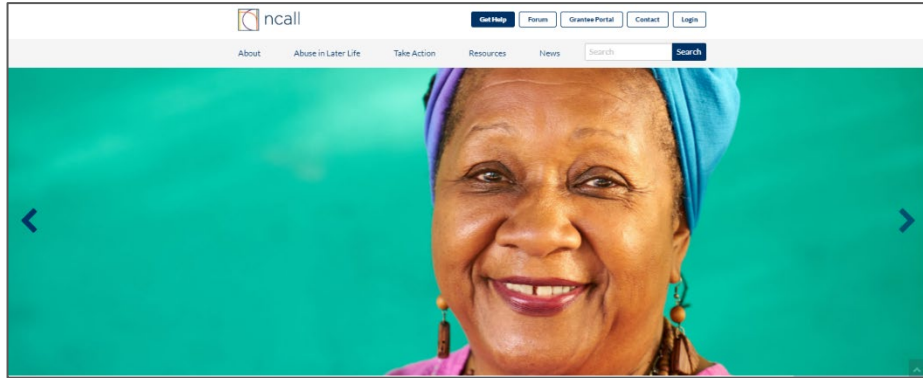


Awareness/Outreach Materials



<https://www.ncall.us/resources/graphics-library/>

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Thank You!

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