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*Building an evidence base for victim services*

# Elder Abuse

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## What Do We Know From Research and Practice?

June 30, 2020




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## Acknowledgements

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# CENTER for VICTIM RESEARCH

• CVR is a one-stop resource for victim service providers and researchers to connect and share knowledge

- ✓ User-friendly website
- ✓ Free research TA
- ✓ Library of victim research
- ✓ State-of-the-field syntheses
- ✓ Directory of researchers
- ✓ Fellowships, podcasts & more

• Partnership of researchers and practitioners



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## Presenters



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Raise your hand if...

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You work for a service provider




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Raise your hand if...

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You work for APS




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Raise your hand if...

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You are a researcher




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Raise your hand if...

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You are a student



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## Webinar Overview

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- Goals for CVR's evidence reviews
- Key findings on CVR's Elder Abuse review
  - Prevalence
  - Risk Factors
  - Harms and Consequences
  - Services and Prevention
  - Recommendations



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## Goals of CVR's Reviews

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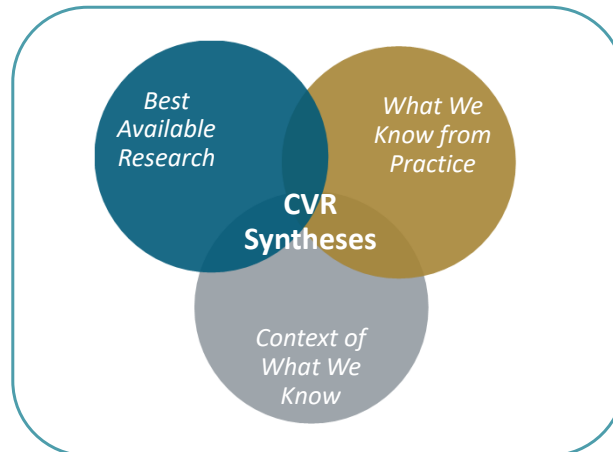
- Assess **state of the field** in victimization response for different victimization topics
- Systematically synthesize the **best available evidence** from research and practice
- Help service providers *and* researchers understand what the field needs



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## Framework for Evidence

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Modified from: Puddy, R. W. & Wilkins, N. (2011). *Understanding Evidence Part 1: Best Available Research Evidence. A Guide to the Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness*, CDC



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## Questions to Answer

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1. Number of victims (prevalence)
2. Risk factors
3. Harms and consequences
4. Prevention and intervention services
5. Recommendations for policy, practice, and research




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## Findings from CVR's Elder Abuse Review



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## Definition

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*Any intentional or negligent act that causes harm or serious risk of harm to an older person*

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial (or material) exploitation
- Neglect
- Abandonment



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## Scope

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- Abuse committed by a "person of trust"
  - "Person of trust" could be someone with a personal relationship, such as family or friend, or a legal/contractual relationship, such as caretaker or accountant
  - Excludes self-neglect and fraud/scams committed by strangers
- Search results
  - Yielded 300 research articles
  - Yielded 397 practice items



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## Prevalence and Detection



## National Estimates

Surveys of community-residing older Americans

- Measurement and definition challenges

**National Elder  
Mistreatment  
Study:**  
n = 5,777  
11%  
Self- report  
(Acierno et al., 2010)

**National Social Life  
Health and Aging  
Project (NSHAP)**  
n= 3,005  
Wave 1: 23.5%  
Self- report  
(Schafer & Koltai, 2014)



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## National Estimates (cont.)

Elder abuse reported to or detected by professionals

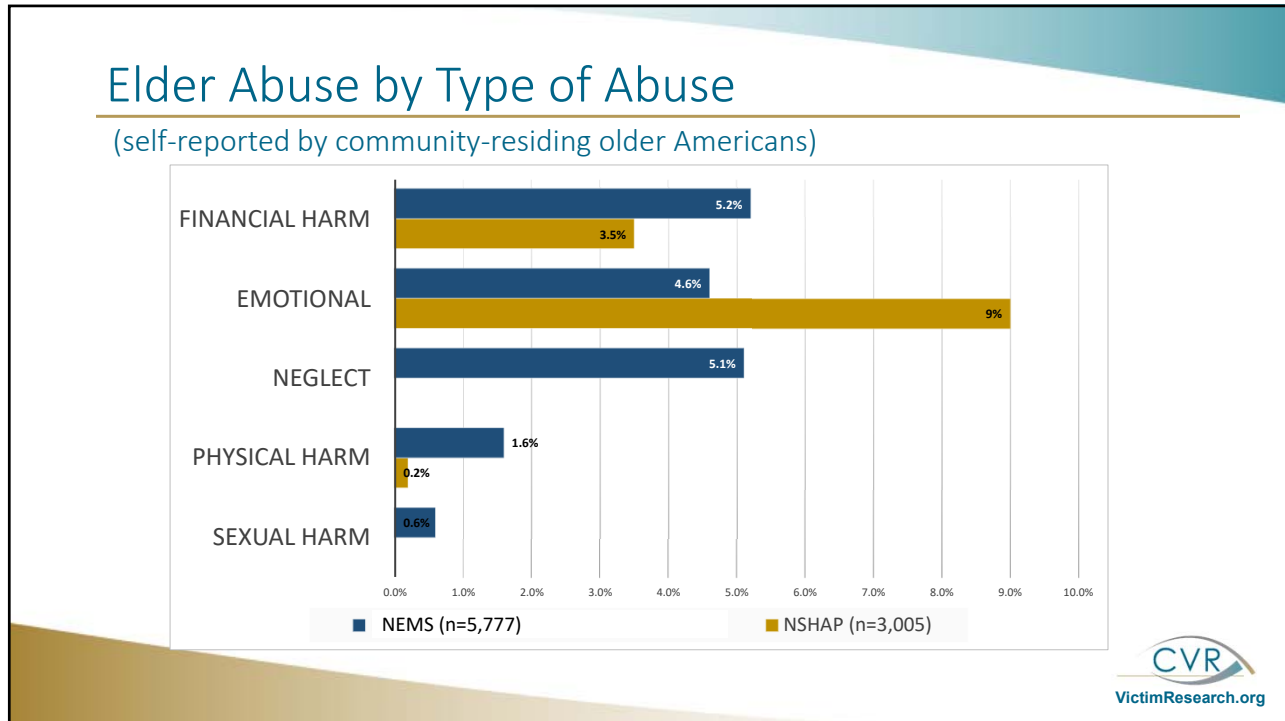
**2003  
Elder Abuse Report  
Rate in 17 states**  
0.86%  
Reported to social  
services  
(Jogerst et al., 2003)

**2012  
Nationwide  
Emergency  
Department Elder  
Abuse Diagnoses**  
N= 6,723,667

**.025%**  
\*using weighted prevalence  
(Evans et al., 2017)



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## Demographic Risk Factors

- Gender (women)
- Mixed evidence on age
- Minority sexual orientation and gender (LGBT)
- Race (people of color)



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## More Risk Factors

### Social

- Isolation and Loneliness
- Low Socioeconomic Status
- Dependency on others for care

### Physical/Mental

- Physical Health Impairment
- Cognitive Impairment (e.g. Alzheimer's dementia)
- Mental/ behavioral health issues (e.g. substance abuse)



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# Protective Factor

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## Social Support



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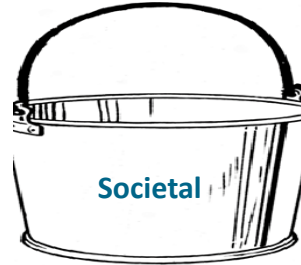
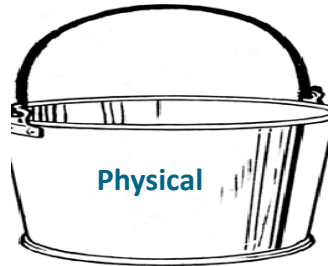
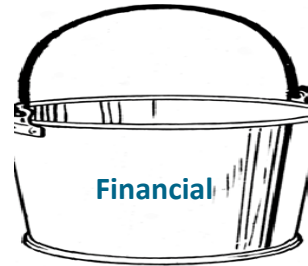
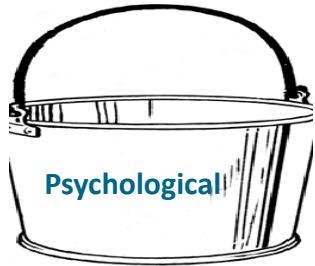
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# Harms and Consequences



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## Harms and Consequences



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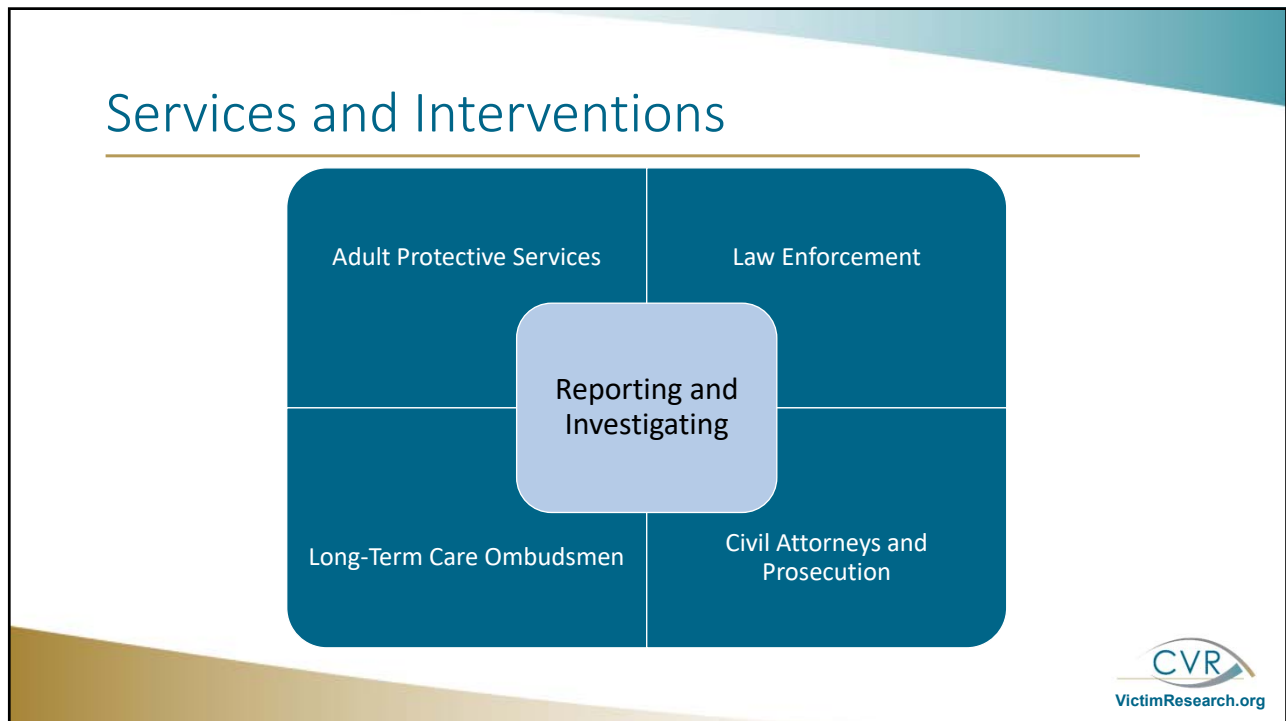
## Services and Interventions



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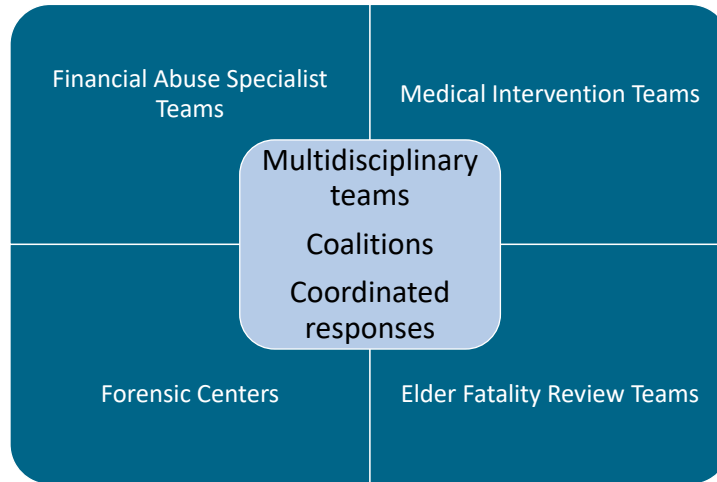


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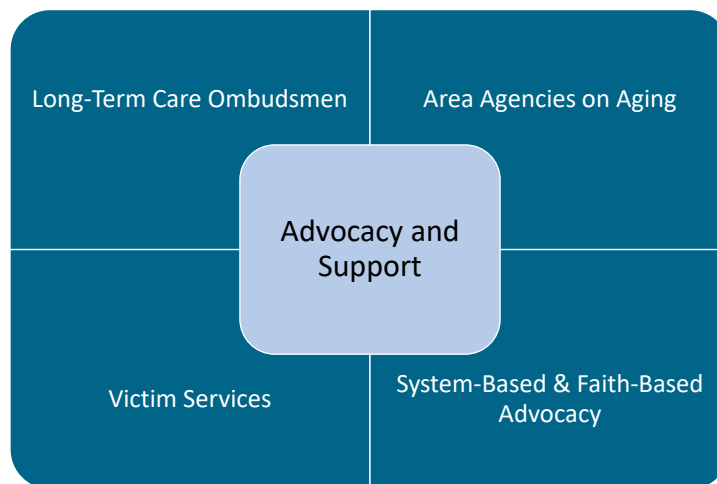
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## Services and Interventions



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## Services and Interventions



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## DOVES

- Created through the Agency founded Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance (MEAPA)
- Traditional community domestic violence services did not meet the needs of older adults
- Multi-faceted program for victims of late-life domestic violence, elder abuse and sexual assault age 50 and older
  - Agency owned transitional housing site (can stay up to 2 years)
  - Support groups
  - Interim housing
  - Emergency housing
  - Mobile advocacy
  - Public Awareness



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## APS Care Coordination

- Cooperative program between Adult Protective Services and the Area Agency on Aging.
- Created to reduce recidivism of APS cases, mostly self-neglect
- APS investigator refers to Agency for case management and home and community-based services
- Case managers visit within two days and implement services
- Reduced recidivism from 27% to 3%



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## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

- Annual campaign by the Agency
- Promoted through print media, email blasts, press releases, and agency website; advertisements in local Harkins movie theaters from mid May to mid June
- Reaches over 25,000 in Maricopa County



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## Barriers to Accessing Services



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- Physical and cognitive limitations
- Shame and embarrassment
- Fear of retaliation
- Dependence on abuser
- Self-blame
- Lack of awareness
- Cultural norms/responses

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## Services for Vulnerable Older Adults

LGBT	Native Americans	Latinx	Asian Pacific Islanders	African Americans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help and peer-based social support</li> <li>• Partnerships with LGBT service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restorative justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based advocates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious institutions</li> <li>• Community-based organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious communities</li> </ul>

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## Key Legislation

- Elder Justice Act (2010)
- Older Americans Act (1965)
  - Older Americans Reauthorization Act (2016)
  - Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020
- Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (2013)
- Mandatory Reporting Laws
- Power of Attorney and Guardianship Laws

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## Recommendations



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- Identify and evaluate effective interventions and programs
- Increase culturally relevant training and resources
- Increase attention to the needs of older adults who are cognitively impaired

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## Recommendations (cont.)

- Improve national prevalence estimates
- Continue working to find consistent definitions of elder abuse types and their measurement



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## Recommendations (cont.)



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- Adopt an intersectional lens that acknowledges older adults' diverse backgrounds
- Acknowledge and address polyvictimization in the lives of older adults

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