



# Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here

Focus on Underserved Populations of Older Adults

Black/African American • Latino/a • LGBTQ+ • Native American • New American/Immigrant/Refugee • Rural



## 2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit FINAL REPORT

2022



Convened by New York State Office of Victim Services and Lifespan of Greater Rochester.  
Prepared by Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc.

Every older person  
has the right to live free  
of abuse, neglect,  
and exploitation.

### ***Acknowledgements***

The 2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit was convened by Lifespan of Greater Rochester and New York State Office of Victim Services. The Summit was primarily supported and funded by the New York State Office of Victim Services, also by New York State Office for the Aging and Lifespan.

Special thanks are extended to the New York State Office for the Aging for their steadfast support of elder abuse prevention work and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Adult Services and local Adult Protective Services.

We also thank Assemblymember Sarah Clark (District 136) who was able to secure additional funding to complete the focus group work and other Summit activities.

Many people participated in the development of this Summit, in particular:

**Blake Kush**, Director of Training and Outreach, NYS Office of Victim Services

**Rachel Gentile**, Program Outreach Specialist I, NYS Office of Victim Services

**Paul Caccamise**, Vice President for Program, Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc.

**Kelly Zunner-Daniels**, Division Leader, Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan

**Tracey Siebert-Konopko**, Assistant Director, Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan

**Denise Shukoff**, Coordinator, NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse and Special Projects at Lifespan

**Art Mason**, Director, Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan (retired)

**Darlene Ward**, Executive Director, Welfare Research Inc.

**Ellen Unruh**, Associate Executive Director and Evaluation Lead, Welfare Research Inc.

**CaTyra Polland**, Founder of Polland Enterprises, LLC

**Amanda Jackson-Jacobs**, Founder of AJ Solutions

Their extraordinary efforts made this Summit possible.

# Executive Summary

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

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# Executive Summary

## ***Background***

In 2021 Lifespan of Greater Rochester and New York State Office of Victim Services cosponsored a third New York State Elder Abuse Summit. Like the previous two Summits convened in 2004 and 2010, the objective was to convene approximately 100 – 120 specialists and stakeholders in elder abuse to review and update New York’s statewide Action Agenda for elder mistreatment services. Like the previous Summits, the plan was to bring together the invited participants in an in-person event in Albany to dialogue, discuss, and vote on priority recommendations for the state.

Unlike the previous Summits, however, the focus of this Summit would be different owing to a growing realization that, despite the many advances and improvements in the infrastructure of elder abuse services in New York, significant populations of older adults, especially underrepresented and marginalized communities, were not being adequately reached and served. The focus of this Summit would then be Black/African American, Latino/a, LGBTQ+, Native American, New American/Refugee/Immigrant, and Rural older adults.

Planning for the Summit began in 2018 with an anticipated event in May 2020. The declaration of a global pandemic and the resulting lockdown of many sectors of economic and social life in the state in March 2020 put an in-person event out of the realm of possibility and placed plans for the Summit in jeopardy. An Advisory Committee that was assembled in 2019 helped the Summit organizers make the transition to a virtual Summit consisting of a series of events spread over several months.

The conversion to a virtual format brought with it many unanticipated advantages including the opportunity to hear the needs of each group separately in informational webinars and in surveys. There was then extensive dialogue among the Summit participants in workgroups, prioritization of needs and recommendations, and the very important organization of multiple focus groups across the state to hear from members of the six communities themselves.

The Summit process was designed to bring representatives of the six groups and those who provide services to the planning table so that culture, history, social structure, and values would inform the recommendations that emerged.

What follows is a summary of the 2021 process and the resulting plan, a set of recommendations which will guide future initiatives and allocation of resources around elder abuse services in New York State regarding underserved and underrepresented populations.

## ***Webinars***

To learn more about the underserved populations, six webinars were offered in March 2021. Panelists in each webinar included a national representative and others from New York State with extensive experience and insight into the culture, values, and service needs of older adults among each underserved population. Summit participants were asked to watch all the videos to learn more about all six populations and respond to online surveys to share their reactions to the

webinars and their thoughts on the significant issues facing underserved older adults. Availability of the webinars was widely publicized through the New York State Coalition on Elder Abuse and through the aging services network in New York. The public was also invited to view the webinars and complete the survey. (The webinar links are still available on the Coalition website: [www.nyselderabuse.org](http://www.nyselderabuse.org).)

## ***Workgroups***

The next phase of the Summit consisted of virtual workgroups in which the invited Summit participants chose to join one of six scheduled groups. Workgroups were organized around the topics: (1) Direct Service and Intervention; (2) Legislation, Policy, and Research; (3) Outreach and Prevention. The purpose of the workgroup sessions was to develop recommendations related to identifying and addressing the needs of elder abuse victims from the underserved populations. The goal for each workgroup was to develop consensus recommendations — ones that were ambitious, but doable. Participants were asked to address the barriers, problems, and issues that emerged from the webinars and from their own experiences.

## ***Plenary Session***

On May 19, 2021, Summit participants attended a scheduled plenary session online to vote for a set of priority recommendations. Participants were presented with the recommendations developed from the webinar surveys and the workgroup sessions. They also were reminded of the many cross cutting issues to consider as they voted for their top priority recommendations. In all the phases of the Summit, and in the final voting on May 19, the response to the question, “Who should we be bringing to the table?” was clearly older adults representing underserved groups. This repeated recommendation gave rise to a fourth phase of the Summit: community focus groups throughout the state in summer and fall 2021.

## ***Focus Groups***

During the summer of 2021, Lifespan convened a new Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from the six groups to help plan and implement focus groups of older adults from the six populations. A coordinator and focus group facilitation specialist were hired to lead this fourth phase of the Summit. The Advisory Committee helped to identify and recruit organizations across New York to hold the focus groups and assisted in constructing a set of structured interview questions to be presented to each group. A total of 17 organizations were recruited; 291 older adults participated in 41 focus groups. Their responses validated many of the issues and recommendations identified in the previous phases of the Summit. Their responses also highlighted priorities for an Action Agenda, such as the need to acknowledge the role of bias and discrimination in the history of marginalized communities, the centrality of family, the role of faith communities as trusted resources in times of trouble, as well as the need for accessible sources of help.



## ***New York State Elder Justice Action Agenda***

The Covid-19 pandemic led the Summit convenors into a process that resulted in much more robust information gathering, expansive dialogue, and rigorous analysis and prioritization of needs than the original plan of a single in-person event would have produced. In addition to the invited Summit participants, other service providers and the public statewide were able to comment and offer input. Their thoughts about barriers and their vision of an ideal service system are reflected in the major themes below from the webinar surveys, workgroups, and focus groups which will come to life as implementation of the updated New York State Elder Justice Action Agenda begins:

- Racism, especially systemic racism.
- Alternatives to the criminal justice system.
- Primary role of family and community, especially faith communities.
- Targeted outreach to underserved and marginalized communities.
- More extensive research about elder mistreatment in communities outside the majority culture.
- Underserved populations must be present at the planning table.
- Lack of knowledge about resources.
- Need for more culturally sensitive and affirming practices and practitioners.
- Need for a more diverse workforce.
- Accessibility for linguistically diverse groups.
- More locally accessible sources of help.
- More resources, including better technology, especially in rural areas.
- More education and training for professionals and the public.

Below are the major features of the Elder Justice Action Agenda adopted by Summit participants during the workgroup sessions. Additional information on the recommendations developed during the workgroup sessions, general cross cutting issues, themes and solutions related to each of the six underserved populations, results from the focus groups held around the state, and references to the many recurring ideas put forth during different components of this unique statewide Summit can be found in multiple sections of the full report.

### ***Direct Service & Intervention***

- Leverage research to support increased funding for programs that focus on underserved populations of elder abuse victims.
- Foster meaningful and equitable partnerships with organizations, programs, and individuals with diverse expertise.
- Train staff on elder abuse signs and symptoms, barriers they may face, and underserved populations/intersectionality.

### ***Legislation, Policy, and Research***

- Conduct focus groups with underserved populations — “Who do you trust?”
- Provide funding and training for community-based organizations in diverse communities.

- Research role of family in each underserved population to help with better intervention models.
- Expand the E-MDT model to include all forms of abuse/complex cases. (This recommendation was voted as one of the top three. However, E-MDTs across the state have already expanded beyond just financial exploitation cases to now include all forms of mistreatment.)

### ***Outreach and Prevention***

- Break down silos between formal service systems and faith communities, grassroots organizations, etc. Silo busting — increase collaboration.
- Include voice of victim in prevention strategies.
- Include representation from underserved groups among volunteers and in outreach efforts (including survivors of elder abuse).

## Next Steps

The 2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit, Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here, was designed to produce a roadmap for planning and resource allocation for several years into the future. Lifespan plans to hire a dedicated coordinator to partner with an Advisory Committee and stakeholders around the state to put the recommendations into action and to create a safe, accessible, and healing service system for older adults impacted by elder mistreatment with a special focus on those groups who have been historically underrepresented and underserved. One of the many comments from the Summit discussions, surveys, and online meetings stands out as a guiding principle for activities which proceed from the Summit recommendations:

**“Meet the community where they are,  
where they feel safe and comfortable,  
and let them lead.”**

# Introduction and Background

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

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## ***Convenors of the 2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit***

### **New York State Office of Victim Services**



“We’ve had to think very broadly about how we bring help to people in all areas of the state. This is not only a criminal justice issue, it’s a social issue and it’s a public health issue. I think COVID has really exposed the gaps and the challenges we have in serving people, older adults especially because they may be particularly vulnerable during this time. So I think having the Summit now really is timely and critical to how we face these challenges going forward. We need to collectively come together to better serve older adults.”

— *Opening remarks at the 2021 NYS Elder Abuse Summit*  
*Elizabeth Cronin, Director*

The New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS) was created in 1966 as one of the first independent state agencies established for crime victim compensation. In addition to providing compensation and direct services to innocent crime victims, OVS advocates for rights and benefits for innocent victims throughout New York State.

OVS has a three-tiered mission to:

- Provide compensation to victims of crime, their family members, and other eligible individuals in a timely, efficient, and compassionate manner.
- Fund direct services to victims of crime and their families through a network of programs across New York State.
- Advocate for the rights and benefits of all victims of crime.

The agency also funds the NYS Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams (E-MDT) Initiative which addresses all forms of elder abuse.

### **Lifespan of Greater Rochester**



“We know that elder abuse can happen to anyone. Cultural attitudes toward abuse, prevention, and treatment (including barriers) remain virtually unexplored. We need to come together to ensure all New Yorkers live free of abuse and mistreatment.”

— *Opening statement at the 2021 NYS Elder Abuse Summit*  
*Ann Marie Cook, President/CEO*

Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc. is an aging services nonprofit. The organization was founded in 1971 and provides over 30 services to help older adults take on the challenges and opportunities of longer life.

Lifespan’s services include elder abuse prevention and intervention services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, care management, health care navigation, caregiver education and financial management, among other programs. NYS Office for the Aging provides support for Lifespan’s statewide elder abuse prevention and intervention programs. Through funding from the NYS Office of Victim Services and the NYS Office for the Aging, Lifespan also oversees the statewide Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team Initiative addressing all forms of elder mistreatment.

## New York State Office for the Aging



“This is obviously very difficult work and it takes all of us together to make progress on an important issue such as this. I thank all of you for your passion and commitment. It really takes special people to do this type of work and do it so effectively. Partnerships are critically important. We always need to be able to look at what we can do better, how we can change things, and this Summit provides the opportunity to do that.”

— *Opening Remarks at the 2021 NYS Elder Abuse Summit*  
Greg Olsen, Director

The New York State Office for the Aging’s programs provide older persons access to a well-planned, coordinated package of in-home and other supportive services designed to support and supplement informal care. NYSOFA also has consistently supported elder mistreatment outreach, education, and prevention programs and services throughout New York State. NYSOFA’s goal is to improve access to, and availability of services that enable older New Yorkers to live, work and age in their community of choice.

# Introduction and Background

In New York State (NYS), as in every state in the country, elder abuse is a critical issue that lacks broad understanding. It is under-recognized, under-reported and under-prosecuted. Reports from professionals in the fields of adult protective services and aging services suggest that elder abuse in domestic settings is a widespread and escalating problem. As people live longer, and as frailty and vulnerability increase, there is greater potential for abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

- Elder abuse occurs more often in people’s homes than in nursing homes.
- Adult children and grandchildren are often the abusers; sometimes it is an acquaintance or other caregiver.
- Substance abuse is a factor in a large number of elder abuse cases.
- Financial exploitation is one of the most devastating forms of elder abuse. Experts believe it has the most far-reaching consequences in the lives of victims. When older victims’ money and resources are taken, they could potentially lose their homes, medical coverage, life savings, and their dignity.

## 2004 and 2010 Elder Abuse Summits

In 2004, Lifespan convened the first comprehensive, statewide Elder Abuse Summit in the nation to develop recommendations to address the increasing problem of elder mistreatment. The participants worked to develop recommendations to improve recognition, intervention, prevention, and prosecution of elder abuse. The 2004 Summit participants produced a New York State Elder Abuse Action Agenda that served as a roadmap for creating new services, legislation, and initiatives in subsequent years.

As one of the Action Agenda priorities, Lifespan immediately formed the New York State Coalition on Elder Abuse to implement the new Action Agenda. The Coalition is 1,900 people strong and is a multidisciplinary, statewide network of individuals, private organizations, and public agencies working together to protect older adults from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. It serves as a catalyst for change, raising awareness about issues related to elder mistreatment and offering solutions for prevention and intervention through education and research.

## Major Achievements of the 2004 Elder Abuse Summit

Formation of the NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse.	Support for changes to NYS law to protect older adults (e.g., NY’s 2008 power of attorney reforms).
<i>New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence and Incidence Study.</i>	Increased public awareness of elder abuse.
Increased statewide professional education & training.	Renewed efforts to work collaboratively across service systems to address the issue.

Although great progress had been made in all regions of NYS following the 2004 Summit, the 2010 *NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study* findings illuminated further gaps in the community response to elder abuse and uncovered the existence of a large population of older adults who experience mistreatment and exploitation but never come to the attention of authorities and organizations able to intervene. (*Under the Radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study Full Report*: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5851b8a715d5db7317addaca/t/591a12a8414fb522e98716a1/1494880941587/ElderAbusePrevalenceStudy2011.pdf>)

From the *NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study*, which was conducted by Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Weill Cornell Medical College, and NYC Department for the Aging with funding from the NYS Children and Family Trust Fund, we learned:

- Elder abuse has a 7.6% prevalence rate (**300,000 older adults in NYS are abused each year.**)
- For every one case that is reported, 23 go unreported.
- Financial exploitation is the most common form of abuse.

Because of this new information, Lifespan held a second multi-day Elder Abuse Summit in 2010 to review the recommendations, track progress, and develop a new set of strategies to combat elder abuse. Again, NYS developed a plan to lead in efforts to combat abuse and financial exploitation. The updated Action Agenda from the 2010 Summit focused on improved outreach and collaboration among service systems and providers.

One of the concrete achievements of the 2010 Summit was the establishment of Elder Abuse Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams (E-MDTs) throughout the state, an initiative that began in 2012 as a pilot, and has expanded to most of NYS.

### Major Achievements of the 2010 Summit

Establishment of Elder Abuse Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams (E-MDTs) throughout the state.	Focus on financial exploitation recognition and intervention.
As an extension of the work, a focus on preventing fraud and scams.	Trainings for health care providers and increase the number of statewide educational programs in general.
Development of relationships with financial institutions to intervene in financial exploitation.	Focus on better research and data collection methods.

New York State’s Elder Abuse Summits provided the roadmaps to address this serious issue in a coordinated fashion. It also catapulted New York State to a leader in elder abuse prevention.



### ***2020 Summit: A Need to Reconvene***

By 2018 leadership within Lifespan's Upstate Elder Abuse Center had begun to recognize the need to convene a third Summit to address changing demographics and traditionally underserved populations. This was discussed at the annual NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse Advisory Group meeting in September 2018. There was also recognition that diversity of staff in the field of elder abuse services was lacking, particularly in the upstate region.

Art Mason, director of the Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan (now retired), discussed a third Summit with Elizabeth Cronin, director of the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS). Director Cronin enthusiastically agreed to fund and support a Summit to develop a comprehensive plan to help older victims from underserved populations.

### ***Original 2020 Plan***

Originally planned as an in-person event in spring 2020, COVID forced first a postponement and eventually a reboot to a virtual gathering. Our plan called for 100 invited specialists, stakeholders, and representatives of underserved groups to develop a strategic, statewide plan.

An Advisory Committee, comprised of people in the field of elder abuse prevention assisted in the planning and included:

Raini Baudendistel, Executive Director, Crime Victims Assistance Center, Broome and Chenango Counties

Risa Breckman, LCSW, retired, former Executive Director, NYC Elder Abuse Center at Weill Cornell Medicine

Gary Brown, Assistant Attorney General-in-Charge, NYS Office of the Attorney General, Westchester Regional Office

Helen Gray, Akwesasne Elder Abuse Multidisciplinary Team, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging

Deborah Holt-Knight, Deputy Commissioner, Adult Protective Services, New York City HRA  
Department of Social Services

Alan Lawitz, Esq., retired, former Director, Bureau of Adult Services, NYS Office of Children &  
Family Services

Gabrielle Markle, Esq., Staff Attorney, Center for Elder Law & Justice, Western New York

Timothy Murphy, Adult Protective Services, Orange County Department of Social Services

Connie Neal, MPA, Executive Director, NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Martha Pollack, LCSW-R, Senior Director, Elder Abuse Prevention Services and Agency  
Training, JASA, New York City

Geoff Rogers, Director of Learning and Development, Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging of  
Hunter College, New York City

Jennifer Rosenbaum, Assistant Director, Division of Policy, Planning, Program, and  
Outcomes, New York State Office for the Aging

Joy Solomon, Esq., Director and Managing Attorney, Weinberg Center for Elder Justice at the  
Hebrew Home at Riverdale, New York City

David Vincent, PhD, Chief Program Officer, SAGE USA | Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders

### ***Additional Summit Development Support***

Jenny Ackley, Director, Abuse in Later Life Program, Vera House, Central New York

Karen Nicolson, Esq., Chief Executive Officer, Center for Elder Law & Justice, Western  
New York

Tristan Sullivan-Wilson, Esq., Staff Attorney, Weinberg Center for Elder Justice at the Hebrew  
Home at Riverdale, New York City

### ***Summit Population Focus: Marginalized/Underserved***

The Advisory Committee decided to focus on six (6) underserved populations and developed clear objectives for the work.

- Black/African American
- Latino/a
- LGBTQ+
- Native American
- New American/Immigrant/Refugee
- Rural



## ***Summit Objectives***

1. To enhance public and professional awareness of elder abuse in underserved populations.
2. To identify best practices for outreach and intervention strategies for diverse and intersectional populations.
3. To develop an action agenda to better serve elder abuse victims from underserved populations.
4. To develop strategies to provide outreach, education, and culturally validating programming and resources to underserved populations of elder abuse survivors in New York State.

## ***A Virtual Gathering***

Benefits were derived from switching from an in-person event to virtual; it allowed us to hear from a larger, more diverse group of people.

The virtual Summit had three components:

- Webinars followed by surveys with recommendations.
- Workgroups followed by input on recommendations.
- A Plenary session to vote on the top recommendations.

One recommendation from the above sessions changed the path of the Summit for the better — that was to include the voices of older adults themselves from the marginalized, target populations. After discussions with the Advisory Committee, **a fourth component was agreed upon and added — community focus groups throughout NYS with older adults from the underserved populations.**

The following sections describe each component of the Summit in more detail. (*See Appendix for list of Participants in Spring 2021 Summit Events.*)





# Webinars

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# Webinars

To learn more about the underserved populations, six webinars were offered with panelists including a national representative in each webinar along with others from New York State with extensive experience and insight into the culture, values, and service needs of older adults in the underserved populations.

Summit organizers sought input from the Advisory Committee regarding both New York State and national presenter recommendations. Other organizations and individual professionals were contacted for suggestions. Final decisions regarding panelists were based on several factors including:

1. Personal and professional connections to one or more of the six identified populations and their knowledge regarding elder abuse and aging services.
2. Desire to maintain a careful balance of both upstate and downstate practitioners to reflect cultural and resource differences.
3. Interest in including both national and statewide practitioners to offer a broader range of viewpoints and perspectives.
4. Availability of the panelists within the timeframe.

A discussion outline was created through a combination of support and input from the Advisory Committee and finalized by Lifespan and OVS staff. Drafted questions were given to panelists ahead of time to guide the discussions but did not limit the panelists' conversations.

Numerous topics and themes emerged from the webinar discussions including attitudes toward and understanding of elder mistreatment and exploitation, cultural values that impede reporting of elder abuse or seeking help outside the family, reluctance to turn to the legal and criminal justice systems, service gaps, barriers to accessing formal services, and remedies to reduce risk of mistreatment. To facilitate comprehension for those who would have difficulty understanding some of the audio portion of the webinars, Lifespan transcribed each of the webinars, performed the final editing of the video recordings, and inserted captions for the dialogue.

Notifications about the webinars went to Summit participants and other aging services professionals, key stakeholders, and the broader public through the Coalition on Elder Abuse website, multiple news bulletins, Lifespan's website, social media, NYSOFA and NYS OVS Summit communications.

A survey link accompanied each webinar which allowed viewers to provide their assessment of service needs for each of the six populations. The survey asked viewers to respond to questions about each of the populations regarding access to services, recognition of signs of elder abuse, legislation/policy, and interventions. Respondents were asked to comment from their personal and/or professional experience, and to suggest ideas for improving service delivery based on research, practices, or policies they had seen, heard of, or wished to see pursued. Although the webinars continue to be available for viewing on the NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse website ([nyselderabuse.org](http://nyselderabuse.org)), the survey link is no longer available. (See *Appendix for Sample Webinar Survey Form.*)

The surveys produced 64 pages of written comment responses in addition to answers to specific multiple-choice questions. Major themes focused on the lack of culturally sensitive or specific services for individual groups and the lack of overall services in the case of rural populations. Many comments highlighted the distrust marginalized groups feel about seeking help from institutional resources, and about the fear that involving service systems, including law enforcement, would result in negative consequences for older adults and their families. Many families would rather attempt to deal with the issue on their own because of their negative life experiences with some of the systems currently in place.



In response to the question, “Who should we be bringing to the table?” the answer clearly was older adults representing underserved groups. This suggestion was repeated during the virtual Summit workgroup sessions held in April 2021 and in the plenary session convened in May 2021. Emphasis on the value of going directly to older adults themselves to hear their voices and to get their input was thought to be a crucial step by the Summit organizers from the very beginning and was a major consideration in organizing focus groups throughout the state in summer and fall 2021.

## Major Themes from Webinar Survey Responses

### *Black/African American Summit Survey Themes*

**Racism** — Clearly most prevalent comments.

Lack of trust with the system.

Don't feel safe because of historic and systemic racism.

Need to understand concepts of trauma-informed care.

Systemic racism.

### **Fear of the Criminal Justice System**

Do not want perpetrator in criminal justice system.

Do not want any interaction with system.

They don't want anything to happen to perpetrator who is a family member.

Calling 911 may jeopardize future jobs, opportunities. Getting help for the perpetrator is often the only way to help the victim and keep them safe.

### **Role of Family/Community**

Need to understand strong family.

Role of church and faith-based institutions.

Black families would rather attempt to deal with the issue on their own.

The thought of hitting or abusing an elder is inconceivable. These thoughts do not occur to us which is a barrier in recognizing abuse.

### **Need for Research**

Need research on family-centered solutions.

E-MDT-type model with people from the community involved.

### **Outreach**

Outreach materials need to look like the community.

Take it to the churches; educate the religious leaders.

Education and outreach about services are needed for the target population, and they need to be culturally informed.

### **Current Social Service System/Legislation/Outreach**

People don't feel heard.

Do not do mandatory reporting — a form of oppression to the Black community.

Fear of being placed — not being able to keep cultural ties or be with people who look like them.

Black Americans are seeking guidance in other places like church or within the family system to stop abuse.

Funding is both inadequate and too focused on the criminal justice system. Flexible funding is needed.

Not enough legislation to support elders staying in their homes/getting in-home support.

Need for person-centered, trauma-informed approaches to assistance with consideration of the family.

Real conversation on intersectionality and oppression needs to take place in the Summit work groups.

Working with and seeking input from folks in the African American/Black community about what resources would be useful.

Finding alternatives to the Criminal Justice System as a remedy for elder abuse of African American older adults.

Interventions that focus on the family, not just the victim.

Making access to technology easier and less costly for communities of color to stay connected and thrive within their community.

Utilize a consensus workshop model to develop a research agenda focusing on the needs/priorities of this population.

Ask Black individuals what healing would look like. Ask Black individuals what sort of services they need to make them feel safe. Alternatives to policing.

Expand the funding of the E-MDT program to build innovative programs.



Expand the use of restorative practices within communities.

Focus on primary prevention of abuse vs. interventions.

Research the implicit biases of frontline staff who are investigating abuse in the Black and brown communities.

Meet the community where they are, where they feel safe and comfortable, and let them lead.

Elder abuse should be talked about more at doctor's visits.

Partner with organizations that are comprised of people of color.

### **At the Table**

The African American/Black community and those who help them.

African American/Black survivors of abuse.

Professionals who are representative of the African American and Black communities, faith-based organizations, police, community non-profits, legislators, and health care professionals who need to hear from the victims and understand the unique experience of being a Black victim of abuse.

Definitely pastors who may be looked up to as leaders within the Black community.

Juanita Davis; Isabel Wilkerson (author of *Caste*); Kimberle Crenshaw (intersectionality).

Black Death Doulas, Black social workers experienced in completing advance directives and Black Hospice social workers and any Black nursing home providers that can be found.

### ***Latino/a Summit Survey Themes***

**Role of Family** — Clearly most prevalent comments.

Need more work on the role of family to intervene and prevent.

Holistic approach by heavily involving the family of residence.

Research on role of family members' dynamics.

Explore relationships within the family.

### **Need for Research**

Need family research. How do you use the family to help/intervene/prevent?

Better understand family dynamics.

Research about listening and engaging Latino/a survivors.

### **Intervention Methods**

Using the E-MDT model, use staff from different agencies who have relationships with and/or are from Latino/a communities to strategize how clients can most effectively be served and supported.

Need additional immigration support to reduce stress for Latino/a families.

Use faith-based communities better.

Need alternatives for perpetrators. They will not trust the criminal justice system. Deterrent to call for help.

Training professionals on not being so criminal justice-centric.

Work with perpetrator if that's what it takes to keep the Latino/a senior safe at home and in the community.

Historical trauma leading to distrust.  
Fear of deportation – immigration policies/deportation.

### **Cultural and Language Matters Throughout the Entire Process**

Service providers who speak Latin American Spanish are important for building confidence that service providers can help victims of elder mistreatment.

Language and cultural barriers.  
It may look and sound different for this population.  
Differences in what is seen as abusive.

### **Outreach**

Faith-based networking.  
Peer-to-peer component and/or mechanisms for survivors' voices to be shared.  
APS state-level helpline access by email, in addition to via phone.  
Build out education and outreach materials. Meet people where they are.

### **Legislation/Policy**

Mandated reporting in NYS should be considered.  
Fear of government.  
Structural racism and discrimination.  
Those who understand Latino/a culture and the community should be included in policy discussions.

### ***LGBTQ+ Summit Survey Themes***

#### **Fear**

Fear of estrangement; losing only support.  
Continued discrimination.  
Violence and harm.  
Isolation/ostracizing/excommunication.  
Do not want to feel shame again.  
Reluctance to identify significant other/partner – can't get Order of Protection.

#### **Not Understanding Historical Perspective**

Used to not telling the whole story.  
Used to keeping my identity guarded.  
Violence and harm are normalized in our society.



### **Lack of Knowledge about LGBTQ+ Friendly Services**

How do I trust service providers?

How do I know they will treat me with respect? Believe me?

### **Education & Training**

Need to include someone from the community.

Need to know there are safe options.

Won't be just put somewhere.

Don't want to be isolated again.

### **Different Communities Face Different Issues**

Rural vs. urban.

Options for safe care.

### **Lack of Resources**

Lack of organizations to call — especially in rural areas.

Organizations are not LGBTQ+ friendly.

### **LGBTQ+ Specific Services**

Adapt effective interventions as needed for the LGBTQ+ population.

Representation of marginalized communities is incredibly important at every level within agencies and organizations.

A targeted — not general — mandatory reporting law needs to be implemented in NYS.

More people to be trained on working with the LGBTQ+ older adult population.

Need trusted messengers.

### **Alternative Service Models**

E-MDTs — build bridges to other community organizations. The E-MDT is much too criminal-justice heavy and could use more diversity in its approach.

Existing service system to be more decentralized to community organizations — less APS and criminal justice intervention.

### **Other: Research, Policy, Practice Ideas**

Layers of complexity in being an older adult and LGBTQ+.

Conduct elder abuse incidence and prevalence study with a focus on LGBTQ+ population.

Include statement of inclusivity in E-MDT ground rules.

Mandatory reporting of suspected elder abuse needs to be put into law, immediately.

APS needs to intervene on behalf of victims of abuse/exploitation even when they are institutionalized.

Ensure NYS Coalition reflects the overall population of the state, including adequate representation from LGBTQ+ survivors and service providers.

Is a reduction in social isolation or an increase in social connectedness truly protective?

Focus groups with LGBTQ+ individuals.

Enhanced relationships between LGBTQ+ agencies and Area Agencies on Aging.

More training of law enforcement on LGBTQ+ issues.

Consensus workshop with practitioners, advocates, researchers, and others to develop a research agenda for LGBTQ+ elder abuse.

LGBTQ+ representation in our program catalogues and using identifying pronouns.

More written laws or legislation to protect this group; protect lifelong partners as beneficiaries.

Bring representatives of the LGBTQ+ community to the table, along with LGBTQ+ service providers, police chiefs, district attorneys, NYS OCFS, and NYS OFA.

Intersectionality: more thought about the intersection of race, class, and demography; a more diverse picture of LGBTQ+ elders.

## ***Native American Summit Survey Themes***

### **Jurisdictional Issues**

Jurisdictional issues stemming from tribes being sovereign entities.

Tribes cover multiple counties.

Too much red tape.

Unique and complex structure.

### **Racism — Trust is Low**

Mistrust of the system.

Do not trust government.

Historical trauma.

### **Culture**

Elder abuse not recognized.

Need to understand respect/disrespect in the culture.

Need to understand culture in general.

Need to understand culture, norms, and practices.

Traditional non-native service providers may not be trusted.

### **Education and Training**

Professionals need to be educated on best practices and guidelines for engagement.

Education on the history and trauma of elder Native Americans needs to be learned.

### **Services not Available on Tribal Lands.**

- Lack of knowledge — Where do people get services?
- Lack of services and understanding about how to get help.
- Lack of funding for culturally specific services.
- Too difficult to access services.

### **Need to Encourage Relationship Building**

- Need to understand the role of leaders in the community.

### **Need Better Data**

- Need data on Native American elder abuse/disrespect of elders.
- More inclusive study of prevalence of elder abuse which will include Native American victim data.

### **Other: System Improvements**

- Access to services difficult for people who don't reside on a recognized reservation; needs and availability of programs need to be identified for those not living on a reservation.
- Situation for Native Americans is unique and complicated with the existence of reservations and jurisdictions.
- The values and attitudes of the Native American population should be a model of best practices for working with older adults.
- Shadow program to observe a Native American service provider to learn about assisting in the tribal community.
- Alternatives to the criminal justice system to address the abuse and exploitation.
- Consensus workshop with researchers, practitioners, etc. to develop a NYS research agenda regarding this underserved population in NYS.
- How do we assist without taking over?
- MDTs available to more tribes.
- Monitoring and social support of Native American elders as a preventive measure using tribal community resources.
- Peer support as an effective practice for engagement.

### **At the Table**

- The Native Americans themselves **MUST** be present along with Indigenous groups such as Women's Circles, Tribal Mother's Councils, Three Sisters.
- Survivors of elder abuse who are Native American/Indigenous.
- Representatives from Adult Protective Services, Office for the Aging, local departments of social services, law enforcement and community-based agencies.
- Leaders and community providers from both tribal lands (reservations) and urban settings who work closely with Native Americans.





## ***New American/Immigrant/Refugee Summit Survey Themes***

### **Language & Culture**

*Most prevalent comment.* Need people who not only speak the language but understand the culture of the victim.

Need to understand cultural norms around family.

American definition of abuse may be different in other cultures. May not feel like a victim. Why are you trying to help?

### **Role of the Family**

Need more work on the role of family to intervene and prevent.

Holistic approach by heavily involving the family.

Explore relationships within the family. Secrets may stay in the family.

### **Lack of Knowledge about Services**

People are not aware of services/help.

Need cultural brokers to get people help.

Outreach practices using people from the neighborhood/culture.

Current nonprofit staff need different training in the use of cultural brokers.

Need ambassadors to immigrant communities.

### **Fear of Deportation/Government**

Immigration worries at the forefront.

Most people will not talk if it is the government. They will not seek help.

Need other interventions — not judicial. Not the police.



## **Need for Research**

Do another NYS Elder Abuse Study on underserved populations.  
Research what other states/communities are doing. Can we learn?

## **Outreach**

Use people from the community to help with outreach plans.  
More outreach and training specific to the population.  
Support Groups and educational workshops for New Americans.  
In-person education to communities.  
Hire more community ambassadors who are New Americans.

## **Other: System Improvements, etc.**

Barriers are multidimensional: systemic, organizational, professional, and client level (true of all underserved groups).  
Racism is a barrier.  
Outreach campaigns along with cultural ambassadors who could bridge the gap between immigrant communities and the official service structure.  
National language line.  
Multigenerational programs mentioned by Miyoung would be a best practice regardless of ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic, cultural, or religious background.  
Reluctance to use banks may lead to financial exploitation.  
Make the education and outreach materials culturally competent and determine the best way to disseminate them.  
What are other states/communities doing with underserved populations and what have been the results?  
Regular meetings with service provider after arrival in the US to monitor progress and problems.  
Ongoing, sustainable, recurrent funding for cross-systems outreach, education, prevention, and intervention work.  
Policy framework and infrastructure for cross-disciplinary services and supports.  
Keep older immigrants socially connected to their own communities and the community at large.

## **At the Table**

Older adults who are New Americans/Immigrants/Refugees.  
Arab-American Family Support Center.  
Trusted community leaders including elders and religious organizations.  
Social workers, community leaders, faith-based leaders, legislators, law enforcement, physicians, senior center workers, community center representatives.

## ***Rural Summit Survey Themes***

### **Lack of Services**

Lack of home care.  
Workforce shortage. HOME CARE needed.  
Lack of agencies/services in general.  
Few options for help.  
Lack of geriatricians/healthcare professionals.

### **Lack of Transportation**

Cannot easily access health care/providers.  
Cannot access other services.

### **Lack of Internet/Technology Access**

Technology is spotty at best.  
Need broadband access.  
Technology desert.

### **Isolation**

So isolated that people are unaware of services.  
Do not know who can help.  
Population is invisible; no one advocates.

### **Belief that There are No Options.**

Unaware of options.  
Lack of awareness of the problem.

### **Independent/Self-Reliant**

Reluctance to interfere in people's lives.  
A feeling of nothing can be done.  
Stigma of getting help when should be self-reliant.

### **Concern about Current Services**

Inadequate funding for rural communities.  
Inadequate access to benefits.  
Lack of coordination between providers — APS/OFA.  
Inconsistent quality of APS.  
Registry for home care workers; inadequate pay for home care workers.

### **Overcoming Barriers**

Expand role of E-MDTs — great model to solve problems.  
Build wider network of collaboration.

Option for online reporting, including referrals to APS.

More training about what APS can do/can't do.

Need more outreach to understand services.

Learn from other states.

Overcome inter-departmental barriers.

Service providers should be part of the actual community (people they know and trust).

Make better use of existing community resources.

Interdisciplinary in-home assessment team.

Address interdepartmental barriers and lack of communication.

Bring to the table: public utility companies, older rural survivors, people and agencies who know rural communities.

Engage Nina Glasgow (social gerontologist) who focuses on rural aging.

Solutions outside the criminal justice system.

Multiple government and human service entities should also be invited to the table.



## Webinar Presenters

Tracey Siebert-Konopko led the facilitated discussion for each of the six webinars. She also edited the videos. Tracey, Paul Caccamise, and Sandra Caccamise worked on editing the transcripts for each of the six videos to ensure they were accurate representations of the dialogue and to make them clear and easy to follow. Elizabeth Cronin introduced each of the webinars; Ann Marie Cook gave the closing remarks.



**Tracey Siebert-Konopko**, LMSW has worked with survivors of elder abuse for over a decade. In addition to direct case management, she is the coordinator for the Monroe County Elder Fatality Review Team and the Assistant Director of the Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan for Education, Training, and Research Initiatives. She received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from SUNY Brockport and a Master's in Social Work from the Greater Rochester Collaborative Program, where she completed specialized course work and a field practicum focusing on the development of social work competencies for work with older adults.

## *Black/African American Webinar Panel*



**Juanita Davis**, JD is an Abuse in Later Life consultant. She provides nationwide leadership and training to professionals across the country on diverse topics related to abuse in later life, including advancing equity principles and enhancing responses to survivors from marginalized communities. She also develops training resources, materials, and publications related to abuse in later life. In her past work, Davis represented survivors of domestic violence in family law cases and coordinated leadership development opportunities for survivors and advocates of color in Wisconsin. She has also assisted domestic violence programs enhance their outreach and services to marginalized populations. She received her law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School, cum laude. Davis has a Master of Arts in Special Education from San Francisco State University.



**Takai Forde**, LMSW received her Master's in Social Work from New York University. Takai has made it her mission to serve the older adult population. Her core foundation began in 2013 as an intern working with older adults. It was there she realized the urgent need to advocate and serve the older population with dignity and respect to promote quality of life. Presently, Takai is the social work supervisor at the Jewish Association Serving the Aging for their Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program (JASA LEAP) in Queens. She serves as a vital component in elder justice-related issues and demonstrates her expertise through staff trainings and her work with student scholars. Her desire to promote educational field experience in the evolution of elder justice is one of the many gifts she receives from her profession.



## ***Latino/a Webinar Panel***



**Katherine Martinez**, LMSW has been working with older adults for over 25 years in the areas of mental health, senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes, community care, elder abuse, crisis intervention, senior centers, family caregiving, and advocacy. She is a strong leader in New York City's nonprofit aging services who encourages and promotes diversity and cultural competence to ensure that the needs of all older adults are met despite any barriers and/or challenges. In 2018, Katherine was named President and CEO of Neighborhood Self Help by Older Persons Project Inc. (SHOPP) — a non-profit social service organization founded in 1980 serving over 10,000 older adults and families annually

through its various service initiatives located throughout the Bronx. Katherine earned her BSW and MSW from New York University School of Social Work. She is a member of the NYC Department for the Aging Senior Advisory Council; serves on the board of the Bronx Regional Interagency Council on Aging (BRICA) and served as a Delegate-at-Large on the National Council on Aging (NCOA), National Institute of Senior Centers.



**Eden Ruiz-Lopez**, MPA serves in several roles relating to elder abuse prevention and education-oriented projects located at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, Department of Family Medicine. She is the Assistant Deputy Director at the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), an Elder Abuse Educator for the USC Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program, and a Technical Assistance Advisor for the National Elder Abuse MDT Training and Technical Assistance Center. Eden has an acute passion for socio-demographic and geographic trends, as well as issues of aging, public housing transformation, human rights, and homelessness. In former roles, Eden directed a home

modification and housing advocacy program for adults with disabilities and managed finances for adults who were adjudicated incapacitated and placed under guardianship, both located in New York City. Eden earned her bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Studies and a minor in Psychology at Pennsylvania State University, as well as a master's degree in Public Administration at University of Southern California.

## ***LGBTQ+ Webinar Panel***



**Christopher J. Phillips**, Esq. is an attorney at the Center for Elder Law & Justice (CELJ) in Buffalo, New York, where he serves as a Borchard Fellow and Project Director for the agency's Silver Pride Partnership. The Silver Pride Partnership is an initiative that provides free civil legal services to eligible LGBTQ+ individuals, age 50 years young and up, in areas including advance planning, name and gender marker changes, employment and housing discrimination, and long-term care advocacy. Prior to his work with the Silver Pride Partnership, Chris worked with the MedLaw Partnership of Western New York, a medical-legal partnership between CELJ, the Erie County Medical Center, and Kaleida

Health, with the mission of improving health outcomes and quality of life through access to free

civil legal services. Chris has a B.A. degree (summa cum laude) from Canisius College and a J.D. (magna cum laude) from University of Buffalo School of Law.

**Eden Ruiz-Lopez, MPA** — Please see information above under Latino/a webinar panel.



**Sherrill Wayland** is Director of National Education Initiatives at SAGE where she directs the operations of programs such as SAGECare, National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (NRC), and the SAGE/HRC Foundation Long-term Care Equality Index. Sherrill began work with SAGE at the local level in 2008, founding the SAGE Affiliate in St. Louis, MO and became a certified trainer with SAGE in 2011. Prior to joining SAGE at the national level, she successfully led the merger of SAGE in St. Louis with the Missouri Statewide Equality Organization, PROMO Fund. Sherrill earned a Master of Social Work degree from the Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis and has over 25 years of professional experience in the fields of education, disability, and LGBT older adult advocacy.

### ***Native American/Tribal Webinar Panel***



**Helen Gray Konwaseniio'stha** is a proud member of the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation located on the border of Upstate New York and Canada. She has been working in the elder abuse field since 2017, spearheading elder abuse services on the Akwesasne Mohawk Territory. Helen has made prevention and education for the community her highest priority to help stop the disrespect of tribal elders and give them their voice back. With help from the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative and the University of North Dakota, she was able to collect baseline data for elder maltreatment and create the Akwesasne Elder Abuse Multidisciplinary Team. Helen's unique team is comprised of multiple American and Canadian agencies within the Akwesasne Territory, making it a complete picture of all programs advocating for elders.



**Victoria Ybanez, MPA** is Diné, Apache, and Mexican and has been working to end violence against American Indian/Alaskan Native peoples for 35 years. She is Executive Director of Red Wind Consulting Inc., coordinating and providing Tribal Technical Assistance (TTA) for the Office on Violence Against Women. Current projects include the development/implementation of Tribal specific shelter and transitional housing programs; addressing children impacted by domestic violence and teen dating violence; working with Tribal college and university campuses developing holistic responses to sexual assault; and responses for urban Native programs. Through the Office for Victims of Crime, she works in partnership to provide TTA on Elder Abuse to multidisciplinary teams. She developed the National Tribal Advocate Center, developed the curriculum for each training and serves as lead faculty.



## *New American/Immigrant/Refugee Panel*



**Miyoung Kim**, MS, MA, L-CAT, BC-DMT is a New York licensed creative therapist and a doctoral student of Expressive Therapies at Lesley University. She has a deep interest in incorporating dance as a healing mechanism for women impacted by violence. Miyoung is currently working as a Later in Life Advocate at Womankind, an organization in New York City serving gender-based violence survivors. She integrates arts and movement into her therapy with older adults and advocates for the use of creative arts as a potent tool for social change.



**Margaret Slotnick**, MPA is the Coordinator of the Services to Older Refugees Program at the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) Field Office in Albany, New York. She has worked for 25+ years for a variety of local government and non-profit agencies in different capacities. Margaret has a B.A. from St. John's University and an M.P.A. from Syracuse University.

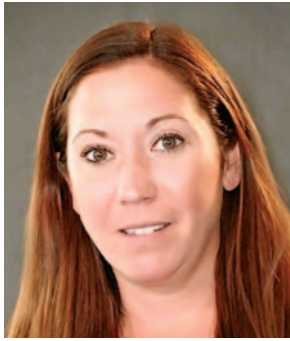
## *Rural Webinar Panel*



**Krissy Leerkes** is the Director of the Essex County Office for the Aging in New York. She has worked with the office for the past 14 years in various titles, including the last four years as the Director.



**Maggie Morgan** is an Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (E-MDT) Coordinator at Lifespan of Greater Rochester. Maggie coordinates seven E-MDTs in the Finger Lakes region. Her primary role is to provide support in the development and implementation of interventions in elder abuse cases. Since 2018, she has focused on helping older adults who are victims of financial exploitation and other forms of elder abuse. Maggie graduated with her Master's in Social Work in Interdisciplinary Health with a focus in geriatrics from the Greater Rochester Collaborative (GRC) sponsored jointly by SUNY Brockport and Nazareth College.



**Becky Preve** is Executive Director for the Association on Aging in New York, a member organization representing the 59 area agencies on aging in New York State. The mission of the Association is to support and enhance the capacity of New York’s local area agencies on aging and to work in collaboration with the aging network to promote independence, preserve dignity, and advocate on behalf of aging New Yorkers and their families. Prior to joining the Association, Becky was Director of Franklin County Office for the Aging. Prior to her tenure in the aging network, Becky was an acute care social worker at Alice Hyde Medical Center in Malone, New York. She earned her Bachelor of Science from Clarkson

University and received certification from the Institute for HealthCare Improvement and Boston University School of Social Work.



**Christina (Chrissie) Sherman** has a BS in Psychology. Since 2006, she has been with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Senior and Disability Services. She answered hotlines for six years and was promoted to supervisor in 2012. Currently, Chrissie supervises a team of eight Adult Protective Services specialists. The team covers eight counties in the middle of Missouri.



# Workgroup Sessions

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

Focus on Underserved Populations of Older Adults  
Black/African American • Latino/a • LGBTQ+ • Native American  
New American/Immigrant/Refugee • Rural



### **2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit FINAL REPORT**

2022



Convened by New York State Office of Victim Services and Lifespan of Greater Rochester.  
Prepared by Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc.

# Workgroup Sessions

The webinar phase of the Summit was followed by a series of workgroups for Summit participants to review the themes and recommendations that emerged from the webinars and the webinar surveys in order to start formulating specific recommendations for system, policy, and practice improvements. During registration for the virtual Summit, invited participants each selected a workgroup session. The sessions were scheduled for April 2021 and were capped at 20 participants each.

There were three workgroup topics with two sessions for each topic to provide enough flexibility to accommodate people's schedules and form groups small enough to give everyone an opportunity to participate in the discussions. The six individual workgroups each met virtually for three hours in mid-April 2021. Workgroup topics were: (1) Direct Service and Intervention; (2) Legislation, Policy, and Research; (3) Outreach and Prevention.

Sessions began with introductory remarks from Lifespan. Darlene Ward and Ellen Unruh explained their roles as facilitators and described the interactive brainstorming process. The purpose of the workgroup sessions was reinforced – to develop recommendations related to identifying and addressing the needs of elder abuse victims from the underserved populations for a statewide five-to-ten-year plan. The goal for each workgroup was to develop three consensus recommendations – ones that were ambitious, but doable.

## *Considering the Barriers*

To connect the information learned from the webinars with the task of beginning to develop the updated New York State Elder Justice Action Agenda, workgroup participants were asked to call out some of the barriers, obstacles, or issues they hoped to address with a focus on their specific workgroup session topic. These responses reflect a combination of the two workgroup sessions covering each of the three topics.

### **Direct Service and Intervention Barriers**

Lack of staff training

Lack of access – fear of accessing services

Lack of inclusion – white people discussing how to serve minorities

Not knowing what services are available – how to get connected

Trusting providers

Not knowing abuse is not normal

Lack of follow through

Digital divide, technology

Isolation – loneliness, lack of social interaction

Lack of preventive resources

Diminished capacity

Fear, fear of reaching out

Lack of trust

Fear of consequences — alienating loved ones or those you depend on, abandonment

Health issues, needing family to care for them

Historical discrimination

Lack of awareness of options

Language barrier

Ageism

Embarrassment, guilt, and shame

Lack of safe placement or temporary relocation

Mistrust of government

Systemic racism

### **Legislative, Policy and Research Barriers**

Shame and trust, lack of trust — relationship building

Feeling invisible

Language issues

Trauma

Systemic racism — lack of trust in systems because of racism

Cultural barriers

Helpers/leaders not representing those served

Lack of knowledge of group's history

Lack of hopefulness for change

White leadership thinking has answers for everyone

History of rejection by providers

Lack of technology

Addressing historical trauma for underserved

Concrete way to implement policies we develop

Lack of research about underserved populations

Policy/legislation developed by those not in touch with the population

Lack of coordinated advocacy efforts

### **Outreach and Prevention Barriers**

Digital divide — Wi-Fi — Internet skills & lack of access — financial barriers

Lack of resources, lack of access

Need variation in programs

Fear of reaching out

Funding

Messaging not aligned to needs

Lack of existing, trusted relationships

Lack of free legal support



Reluctance to access support from criminal justice system  
Communication and training between service providers and police  
Lack of patience — give folks time to respond  
Lack of funding for language assistance/bilingual staff  
Not recognizing generational differences can be huge  
Lack of cultural understanding of marginalized communities/education for providers  
Lack of understanding of root causes of abuse  
Complex system that is not person-centered  
Building trust  
Actually getting to people  
Letting people know help exists; spreading the word broadly; should never be “best kept secret”  
Systemic racism  
Isolation (geographic and other)  
Education  
Language access/barriers  
Services may not match help needed  
Definition of elder abuse too narrow — broaden lens and assessment instruments to be more inclusive  
Collaboration  
Ageism — broaden definition of ageism to be more inclusive  
Aligning system goals with person’s goals  
Decision makers need to be more diverse



## ***Brainstorming Ideas***

During each workgroup session, participants separated into smaller groups for two breakout discussions. They were asked to discuss big picture recommendations, but not so huge that they were vague and difficult to translate into action steps. Breakout groups brainstormed ideas and decided how to start addressing the barriers identified previously by the workgroup members. Some of the recommendations discussed in one workgroup may have been moved to a different, more appropriate workgroup topic area for final voting purposes when creating the priority recommendations. A spokesperson for each breakout group reported back to all workgroup participants.

What follows is the abundance of ideas that emerged from the breakout sessions.

## ***Direct Service and Intervention Ideas***

### **Addressing diverse needs**

- Establish and enhance trusting relationships with underserved groups and with those they already trust — invite them in. Learning from communities' important issues. What are their aspirations, and how providers could support that?
- Give people multiple options for steps they can take to counter the abuse.
- Provide holistic approach to responding to abuse that includes survivor and perpetrator.
- Exploring off-hours services to meet diverse needs.
- Preparing front-line staff to meet diverse needs. Allocate resources to front-line training, preparing, having the tough conversations, providing safety plans to explore. Cultural competency training. Allocate resources to staffing in general. Compensation should match demands of the job.
- Addressing language barriers, disabilities; providing supportive decision making.
- Use community groups to help elders with technology issues (e.g., high school students).

### **Educate professionals**

- Assure other agencies have a clear understanding of what APS can and cannot do and its role — worry that APS is a threat; goal is to keep you in the community, not take you out of the community.
- Leverage E-MDTs to educate professionals about the approach of other disciplines to addressing elder abuse.
- Utilize technology to capture client's story so they don't have to tell the story over and over again to each professional to get services.
- Getting a clear understanding of what agencies can do, including police (varying jurisdictions) — full picture of available resources and what agencies cannot do. Not just what elder abuse is but what you can do.
  - > Criteria and goals of programs.
  - > What resources there are for perpetrators. Educating providers already serving perpetrators about elder abuse — alternatives to law enforcement.
  - > What supports provision of help — being in the know.

- Connecting with advocacy groups to learn about new initiatives — e.g., alternatives to law enforcement.
- Educating providers about readability factors, language accessibility.

### **Build baseline understanding — seek client input**

- Assess how what we offer meets the needs of people we bring in the door, including those from underserved groups.
- Survey clients to find out how they feel about our services.
- What would help you feel safe? Looking at the place of family in all of this; law enforcement.
- Focus groups, one on one, surveys, etc. as tools.
- Using that process as an engagement tool.
- Could do a subsequent survey after outreach to see how things have changed.
- Welcoming environment — meet where they are, represent the communities you seek to serve, messages/office are welcoming and inclusive.

### **Tap into community resources**

- Use familiar community settings for service provision (offers comfort and confidentiality from perpetrator scrutiny).
- Use survivor stories to encourage others to seek help.
- Use community groups to help elders with technology issues (e.g., high school students).
- Following up on community outreach — was message clear? Any clients who could benefit? We're here! Relationship focus.
- Do relationship building on multi-dimensional basis.
- Conduct outreach to underserved communities about what we offer — faith community, PSAs, existing outreach conduits.
- Targeted outreach — looking for groups in certain areas that you most need to reach.
- Social media for sharing stories, offering services.

### **Community and court outreach/education**

- Family treatment approach to support coordination between criminal and family court.
- Guardianship/end of life options.
- Assure consents signed by perpetrators at start of process — specific to the perpetrator so elder can follow up on whether treatment is being completed/engaged.
- Include housing court.
- Alternative justice responses, e.g., restorative justice model.
- Goal of having the court system be more representative of the elder populations served.

### **Partnering with community organizations with cultural expertise**

- Bring older adults to the table to plan.
  - > Advocates within the community/integration.
- Partnering with other community-based groups and faith communities to help connect and respond to older adults — including non-aging service providers as they are part of a family system.

- Better outreach and education in the community.
  - > Tailored for each subgroup and all underserved populations.
    - E.g., end of life — rituals and practices within diverse cultures.
- Partnering with community advocacy groups.

### **Diverse staff and leadership**

- Staff and leadership represent the clientele.
- Cross cultural training and education (mandated).
- Develop universal language to combat “isms” and be relevant to and respectful of each culture.
- Give tools to all to be sure they are effective staff and leaders — e.g., equipment/technology.

### **New approaches to justice response**

- Alternative justice models, e.g., restorative justice.
- Peer leadership response — something apart from the criminal justice system.
- Peacemaking model (at times in collaboration with law enforcement) — like mediation, based on Native American approach.
  - > Specialty training on mediation specific to working with elders — needs to be developed and implemented.
- Layer with cultural needs of those being served.

## ***Legislation, Policy, and Research Ideas***

### **Needs assessment**

- Measure Access:
  - > Goal to increase access to transportation — look at it from a regional point of view; look at affordability — Who is going to pay for it?
  - > Goal to increase access to Internet; look at affordability.
    - Not just access, but ability to learn how to use the technology.
    - Broader accessibility.
    - Necessary infrastructure.
  - > Equitable access to technology for underserved individuals.
    - Training, hardware, Wi-Fi/broadband.
    - To reduce isolation and connect to services.
- Research on feeling safe to report — who would you report to?
  - > Law enforcement — reluctance to report.
  - > Any government source.
  - > Social worker / therapist / pastor
  - > Feeling like it’s only happening to you.
  - > Reference to new discovery laws.
  - > Need to be mindful about potential negative impact of mandated reporter law.

- > Be sure when doing research, we are mindful of language access.
- > Identifying minorities' cultural norms, which may impede service provision.

### **Policy**

- Making the service industry look more like those it serves.
  - > Hiring people from underserved populations into agencies.
  - > Incentivizing collaborations with underserved populations.
- Build elder abuse education into curriculum for health care, human services, law, and law enforcement.
- Advocating for funding for diverse community-based providers.
- Native American — jurisdictional issues (research/policy).
- Restorative justice model — community comes together to address rather than outside entity.

### **Cross-cutting**

- Engage members of underserved groups to build trust and plan policy, research, and legislation.
- Utilizing community members from underserved populations to assist with outreach to elders.
- Funding to engage underserved populations.

### **Recruiting for the field and legislation**

- Reach higher education programs to develop elder abuse/geriatric issues in curriculum.
- Recruit individuals from underserved groups to enter career in elder abuse.
- Expand staffing resources within underserved populations.
  - > Utilize service providers that reflect underserved populations.
  - > There must be jobs available for this recruitment — workforce shortage. Not enough professionals focused on elder populations.
  - > Funding to recruit to bring underserved populations into this career path.
  - > See more diversity in leadership.
  - > No mandates for dedicated adult protective services workers in rural areas — they share tasks with child protection.

### **Research and legislation**

- Mandatory reporting — benefits/pros/cons.
  - > Learning from other states what works, what doesn't, how that impacts outcomes.
    - Has mandated reporting made underserved populations less likely to report?
    - To whom would you report?
  - > Defining vulnerable populations for mandatory reporting.
- Identify alternatives to guardianship.
  - > Research supported decision making model for elder population.
- Caseload study specific to the field of elder abuse.

- Identify outcome measures, particularly in regard to underserved populations (different populations might find one outcome measure successful and others not — customize for populations).
- Updated prevalence study with focus on underserved.
- Study implementation of new 2021 power of attorney (POA) law changes.
  - > Removal of gift rider is harmful and made without input from elder abuse field.
  - > Role of banks — impact of POA changes — has abuse increased?
  - > People of color do not have access to POA forms.
  - > Coordinated advocacy efforts.
- Expand remote orders of protection in courts beyond Family Court.

## ***Outreach and Prevention Ideas***

### **Silo-busting — Collaboration**

- Broad ownership at community and societal level of responding to vulnerable older adults — including underserved populations and individuals with disabilities.
  - > Assess how broad or narrow the term of elder abuse should be.
  - > Develop commonly understood terms broadly for aging.
    - Elder abuse and then test with underserved populations (e.g., disrespected).
  - > Stop thinking of it as beginning at a certain age, but as aging as a lifelong activity, continuum — engaging all in this effort. Healthy living, healthy aging.
  - > How to identify older adults who are under the radar.
- Break down silos between service providers/government agencies and others not considered part of the system, including sharing funding — families, faith communities, grassroots organizations.
  - > Leverage E-MDTs (individual E-MDTs and E-MDT system) to bust silos.

### **Expanding language access**

- Language access.
- Language assistance.
  - > Languages from NYS language line may not include those used upstate.
- Asking groups to create and review materials, that the meaning translates appropriately, dialect is appropriate for designated population — will increase buy-in.
  - > Plain language.
  - > Not the words in many cultures to describe elder abuse — make sure the concept translates appropriately.

### **Training**

- Survey as pre-work for training.
- Focus groups.
- Include self-reflection to identify bias.



- Buy-in from leaders of these systems — train them first.
- Focus on reasons why people in underserved populations are reluctant to get help, and why the systems have not been helpful to them.
- Worker-by-worker training to address elder abuse issues in underserved groups.
  - > Strengthening sensitivity and trust.
  - > Metrics of what it means to be successful in this area.
  - > Need the right people to do the training.

### **Outreach and prevention**

- Decision-makers must reflect the populations you are serving.
- Engaging cultural brokers to build trust and provide educational outreach and provide services.
- Intergenerational/peer approach to education about elder abuse.
- Use data to know how to serve those not yet reached.
- Penalties for perpetrators as a prevention tool — be sure to include voice of victims/survivors.
- Specific tools:
  - > Physically meeting people where they are at, e.g., cultural events/centers.
  - > PSAs to warn about scams/frauds (use celebrities).
  - > Ambassadors/brokers.

**Final appreciation activity** — At the end of each workgroup session Summit participants were asked to say a few words to express their thoughts about the entire Summit process, the strategic planning process, and anything else they would like to share.

### **A sample of the words expressed:**

- Excited and motivated.
- Commitment to meeting the needs.
- Webinars were fantastic.
- So much work has gone into preparing the whole process — so appreciative and hopeful.
- Awesome.
- Great learning experience.
- Very grateful that in the middle of a pandemic we were able to get together and do this — share ideas and move forward.
- The power of collaboration.
- I'm so grateful to be part of this sharing of ideas.
- Everyone's time and dedication.
- All the expertise shared by everyone.
- Appreciate everyone's enthusiasm for looking into these issues and coming up with some goals and plans for the future.
- Ability to see the big picture but also to pay attention to details and nuances, particularly between different communities.
- Openness in the room — commitment to bringing forward new opportunities.

- Bringing attention to often hidden and difficult topics to discuss.
- Diversity of backgrounds and views.
- People sharing their life's work with people who are much less experienced was great.
- Hopeful for what's to come.
- All the collective knowledge shared during the discussions.
- Thank you to everyone for taking on this huge challenge — so excited about the future.
- Willingness to listen to each other.
- Pleasantly surprised how well we were able to navigate these conversations in this virtual environment.
- Very energizing for me to be thinking about what I can do in my local community.
- Skillful facilitation throughout — keeping everyone focused and on track.
- Enjoyed the diversity of perspectives, including meeting new people from across the state.
- Informative and empowering.

### ***Preparing for the May Plenary session***

Following the Summit workgroup sessions and prior to a May plenary event, the ideas developed by the workgroups were synthesized into recommendations for consideration by the Summit participants. Below is the list of recommendations presented during the May 19 plenary session.

#### **Direct Service and Intervention**

- A. Training for staff on elder abuse signs and symptoms, barriers they may face, and underserved populations/intersectionality.
- B. Reviewing and supporting alternative justice responses such as restorative justice, mediation.
- C. Leveraging research to support increased funding for programs that focus on underserved populations of elder abuse victims.
- D. Intentional efforts to make the field of elder abuse prevention more diverse.
- E. Increase access to civil legal services for survivors to discuss advance directives.
- F. Fostering meaningful and equitable partnerships with organizations, programs, and individuals with diverse expertise.
- G. Create safe spaces for service provision by ensuring that materials and programming are reflective of the community's needs.
- H. Reviewing and implementing interventions that include the family and natural support systems of elder abuse survivors.
- I. Improve infrastructure to support staff efforts, such as technology, policies, transportation, and compensation.
- J. Bring services to survivors in their communities.
- K. Build baseline understanding of client needs and wants.

## **Legislation, Policy, and Research**

- A. Focus groups with underserved populations – “Who do you trust?”
- B. Investigate pros/cons of mandatory reporting.
- C. Research supportive decision making – alternatives to guardianship.
- D. Expand the E-MDT model to include all forms of abuse/complex cases.
- E. Expand remote orders of protection.
- F. Advocate for greater access to internet/technology.
- G. Advocate for changes to new (2021) power of attorney law.
- H. Provide funding and training for community-based organizations in diverse communities.
- I. Intentional efforts to make the field of elder abuse prevention more diverse.
- J. Promote/develop restorative justice model.
- K. Research role of family in each underserved population to help with better intervention models.
- L. Update New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study.

## **Outreach and Prevention**

- A. Break down silos between formal service systems and faith communities, grassroots organizations, etc. Silo busting – increase collaboration.
- B. Expand language access – make sure language used is culturally appropriate.
- C. Train leaders of underserved groups as well as those personnel who work with and those who represent underserved groups.
- D. Decision makers need to reflect populations served.
- E. Engage cultural brokers to build trust and provide educational services.
- F. Collect/use data to know how to reach underserved groups.
- G. Include voice of victim in prevention strategies.
- H. Build a network of trusted people and fund it: less centralized funding.
- I. Leverage statewide entity plans and needs assessments (public health, aging, mental health, etc.).
- J. Advocate for and provide resources for internet access (including hardware).
- K. Include representation from underserved groups among volunteers and in outreach efforts (also survivors of elder abuse).
- L. Develop tailored outreach plans to reach specific populations. (Market in ways and in places that will attract target audiences.)
- M. Provide cultural competence training for all including antiracism and anti-oppression.
- N. Promote collaboration among agencies to identify gaps in outreach.
- O. Provide training to law enforcement, medical personnel.

## ***Lead Facilitators for Workgroup Sessions***



**Darlene Ward** has been the Executive Director of Welfare Research, Inc. (WRI) since 2017. WRI provides creative, flexible, and frugal solutions to government and not-for-profit organizations in the areas of strategic planning, fiscal and project management, training, publications, and evaluation. Prior to joining WRI, Darlene Ward was the Assistant Coordinator of the NYS Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) within the New York State Unified Court System (NYS UCS). Darlene had previously served as the State Director for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs, and originally moved from that position to NYS UCS to oversee state funding of those programs. Darlene

holds a Master's in English from the University at Albany and in Community Psychology from Sage Graduate School. She is the recipient of the Mastering the Key Connection Award from MHANYS for commitment, perseverance, and respect on behalf of survivors of sexual trauma; the Mary Rich Distinguished Service in Child Advocacy from CASANYS; and the John Beaudoin Compassion Award for significant contributions in the area of homelessness presented by the St. Paul's Center.



**Ellen Unruh**, MSW, serves as Associate Executive Director and Evaluation Lead for Welfare Research, Inc. (WRI). She has over 20 years of experience in human services, with expertise in project management, research, and evaluation, as well as statewide cross-systems change initiatives. Prior to coming to WRI, she served as a research scientist at the University at Albany Center for Human Services Research. She is trained in program evaluation, quality improvement principles, and data-driven strategic planning. Ms. Unruh has conducted focus groups and facilitated leadership training for clients and consumers of state systems to build capacity for adding their voice to the design of those

systems. She currently oversees projects devoted to victims of child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, and mental illnesses.

# Plenary Session

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

Focus on Underserved Populations of Older Adults  
Black/African American • Latino/a • LGBTQ+ • Native American  
New American/Immigrant/Refugee • Rural



### **2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit FINAL REPORT**

2022



Convened by New York State Office of Victim Services and Lifespan of Greater Rochester.  
Prepared by Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc.

# Plenary Session — May 19, 2021

Following the conclusion of the workgroup sessions in April 2021, 87 Summit participants attended a plenary session on May 19, 2021 to review the results of both the webinars and workgroups and to vote on priority recommendations which would form the basis of a new Elder Justice Action Agenda for New York State. The plenary session attendees also heard brief comments from a presenter from each of the six webinars about the issues under consideration from the perspective of the marginalized groups.

## Panel Reflections:

Webinar panelists were asked to provide a few key takeaways they would like the group to consider during the voting process.

Key Points from the webinar panelists present at the plenary:

- Education is vital. We need to build capacity for community education.
- It is important for all service providers, no matter what kind of service is provided, to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- A person-centered approach is the best approach.
- Systemic racism is real and is still an influential force; it may affect people's comfort level in reaching out for services.
- Meet older adults where they are — each approach with each client has to be different.
- Culturally specific, culturally connected services — staff are needed who understand the culture we are serving. Cultural sensitivity as part of the conversation is important.
- Language access is crucial.
- Continued or expanded funding for innovative programs that are working needs to be provided.
- We need to learn from our clients, the survivors of elder abuse.

**Cross Cutting issues and recurring major themes that came out of the April 2021 Summit workgroup sessions were not voted on but were presented for consideration during the voting process:**

### Access

- Physical access is important.
- Social isolation prevents people from getting access to services.
- Digital Divide — infrastructure improvements, improved internet access and training in use of technology for older adults (relates to isolation too) are needed.



## **Fear and Perceived Lack of Safety**

- Fear of reporting maltreatment and accessing services.
- Mistrust of traditional service providers.
- Fear of law enforcement/criminal justice system involvement.
- Majority culture is in charge of serving minorities.
- Need for safe ways and safe spaces for underserved groups to receive help.
- Acknowledge and address the effects of systemic racism.

## **Alternative Justice Responses**

- New approaches to traditional criminal justice response.
- Justice outside law enforcement/criminal justice system.
- Remote orders of protection beyond Family Court.
- Supported decision making model.

## **System Collaboration**

- Ways to break down system silos.
- E-MDTs as vehicle for professional and multisystem collaboration.
- Agencies should work together with a shared goal of identifying gaps in outreach to underserved populations.

## **Targeted Outreach to Underserved Communities**

- Bring diverse voices, including older adults, from underserved groups to the table to find out needs.
- Research prevalence of maltreatment among groups and how they would feel safe to report.
- Partnership with community organizations with cultural experience.
- Make use of representatives of underrepresented groups as cultural ambassadors.
- Target and customize outreach campaigns for specific populations.
- Provide funding for outreach activities.
- Use language and terms which are understandable and resonate with subcultures.
- Use data to identify groups; research how best to serve them.
- Explore intergenerational and peer approach to outreach.
- Use celebrities as advocates and as spokespersons in PSAs.
- Use technology to capture stories of abuse.

## **Diversity of Staff and Leadership/Addressing Diverse Needs**

- Linguistic competence.
- Training in cultural understanding for providers.
- Recruit/hire/train staff and administrators from underserved populations.
- Train in antiracism.
- Diversity training should be incorporated into professional education programs.



**Workgroup session recommendations were reviewed, and Summit participants were asked to choose their top three priority items. The voting process produced the basis for a statewide Elder Justice Action Agenda. What follows is the collection of recommendations that were voted on by the participants.**

### **Legislation, Policy, and Research**

- A. Conduct focus groups with underserved populations – “Who do you trust?”
- B. Investigate pros/cons of mandatory reporting.
- C. Research supportive decision making – alternatives to guardianship.
- D. Expand the E-MDT model to include all forms of abuse/complex cases.
- E. Expand remote orders of protection.
- F. Advocate for greater access to internet/technology.
- G. Advocate for changes to new (2021) power of attorney law.
- H. Provide funding and training for community-based organizations in diverse communities.
- I. Engage in intentional efforts to make the field of elder abuse prevention more diverse.
- J. Promote/develop restorative justice model.
- K. Research role of family in each underserved population to help with better intervention models.
- L. Update New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study.

## **Direct Service and Intervention**

- A. Train staff on elder abuse signs and symptoms, barriers they may face, and underserved populations/intersectionality.
- B. Review and support alternative justice responses such as restorative justice and mediation.
- C. Leverage research to support increased funding for programs that focus on underserved populations of elder abuse victims.
- D. Engage in intentional efforts to make the field of elder abuse prevention more diverse.
- E. Increase access to civil legal services for survivors to discuss advance directives.
- F. Foster meaningful and equitable partnerships with organizations, programs, and individuals with diverse expertise.
- G. Create safe spaces for service provision by ensuring that materials and programming are reflective of the community's needs.
- H. Review and implement interventions that include the family and natural support systems of elder abuse survivors.
- I. Improve infrastructure to support staff efforts, such as technology, policies, transportation, and compensation.
- J. Bring services to survivors in their communities.
- K. Build baseline understanding of client needs and wants.

## **Outreach and Prevention**

- A. Break down silos between formal service systems and faith communities, grassroots organizations, etc. Silo busting — increase collaboration.
- B. Expand language access — make sure language used is culturally appropriate.
- C. Train leaders of underserved groups as well as those personnel who work with and those who represent underserved groups.
- D. Decision makers need to reflect populations served.
- E. Engage cultural brokers to build trust and provide educational services.
- F. Collect/use data to know how to reach underserved groups.
- G. Include voice of victim in prevention strategies.
- H. Build a network of trusted people and fund it — less centralized funding.
- I. Leverage statewide entity plans and needs assessments (public health, aging, mental health, etc.).
- J. Advocate for and provide resources for internet access (including hardware).
- K. Include representation from underserved groups among volunteers and in outreach efforts (including survivors of elder abuse).
- L. Develop tailored outreach plans to reach specific populations. (Market in ways and in places that will attract target audiences.)
- M. Provide cultural competence training for all, including antiracism and anti-oppression.
- N. Promote collaboration among agencies to identify gaps in outreach.
- O. Provide training to law enforcement, medical personnel.

## Priority Voting Process

Each participant was asked to vote on their top three priorities from the Workgroup Recommendations to begin the process of better serving underserved populations throughout New York State. They were asked to consider strategies that were actionable and doable.

### *Results of the voting:*

#### Direct Service & Intervention

- Leverage research to support increased funding for programs that focus on underserved populations of elder abuse victims.
- Foster meaningful and equitable partnerships with organizations, programs, and individuals with diverse expertise.
- Train staff on elder abuse signs and symptoms, barriers they may face, and underserved populations/intersectionality.

#### Legislation, Policy, and Research

- Conduct focus groups with underserved populations — “Who do you trust?”
- Provide funding and training for community-based organizations in diverse communities.
- Research role of family in each underserved population to help with better intervention models.
- Expand the E-MDT model to include all forms of abuse/complex cases. (This recommendation was voted as one of the top three. However, E-MDTs across the state have already expanded beyond just financial exploitation cases to now include all forms of mistreatment.)

#### Outreach and Prevention

- Break down silos between formal service systems and faith communities, grassroots organizations, etc. Silo busting — increase collaboration.
- Include voice of victim in prevention strategies.
- Include representation from underserved groups among volunteers and in outreach efforts (including survivors of elder abuse).

## Underserved Populations — Themes and Solutions

**Plenary participants were also asked to discuss and vote on the themes and solutions that were extracted from the webinar phase survey responses. The voting results from this plenary activity, organized by target population, will serve as guidelines for implementing the major Action Agenda recommendations to meet the needs of each population.**

Darlene Ward and Ellen Unruh, the WRI facilitators, compiled the strategies, barriers, and related cross-cutting issues for each of the six underserved populations from webinar survey comments and discussions during the work group sessions. During the presentation and voting process on May 19 they invited the webinar presenters to share any additional thoughts and read the participant chat comments to provide additional input.

### *Black / African American Themes and Solutions*

Strategy	Barrier this solution addresses	Cross-cutting issues
Seek input from and partner with organizations comprised of people of color.	Services and outreach materials not reflecting the community.	Systemic racism.  Lack of trust of current systems; fear of not being heard or being harmed when seeking help.
Educate stakeholders regarding concerns among Black/African American communities about reporting to criminal justice system and police; provide alternatives where possible.	Fear of criminal justice system and the police; concerns for risk perpetrators who are family members face interfacing with the police.	
Build understanding among professionals of generational racism and trauma, and its impact on the Black community.	Lack of understanding by professionals of the reality of generational racism and trauma; lack of awareness on part of those delivering services.	
Collaborate with organizations such as faith-based communities to provide trusted places of healing for families impacted by elder abuse.	Not feeling safe or comfortable in the community.	
Research the needs and priorities of the Black community, including how and where victims are seeking services and effective approaches.	Lack of current research on the needs and priorities of the population, and effective intervention approaches.	

**Latino/a Themes & Solutions**

Strategy	Barrier this solution addresses	Cross-cutting issues
Expand professionals’ understanding about the importance of strong family relationships in Latino/a culture.	Lack of understanding about the central role of strong family relationships in Latino/a culture.	Historical trauma/mistrust; structural racism and discrimination.
Support research into lived experiences and family dynamics critical to addressing elder mistreatment.	Dearth of research on effective assessment and intervention with Latino/a survivors.	
Identify alternatives to criminal justice approaches for addressing family member perpetrators.	Concerns about risk of deportation of loved ones; feelings of victim/survivor’s embarrassment or shame.	
Raise awareness of cultural norms, the place of language, and varied ethnic identities within the Latino/a community.	Professionals not fully informed about culture, language, and different ethnic identities.	
Validate and expand upon existing help-seeking strategies through outreach materials and expanded collaborations.	Distrust of government institutions; inclination is to reach out first to family, friends, community organizations instead.	
Create partnerships, connections, and collaborations with faith-based communities.	Historical mistrust of governmental organizations.	

**LGBTQ + Themes & Solutions**

Strategy	Barrier this solution addresses	Cross-cutting issues
Raise education and awareness of historical treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals.	Fear and lack of trust of systemic and societal responses, based on history of violence against LGBTQ+ persons.	Fear of violence, isolation, and lack of compassion based on historical and systemic oppression.  Invisibility of LGBTQ+ population when training and services are developed.
Raise awareness and availability of services for LGBTQ+ individuals.	Gaps in services, particularly those tailored to LGBTQ+ individuals.	
Build safe and accessible support systems to provide care and community.	Social isolation.	
Develop inclusive education and training that involves LGBTQ+ community.	Current education and training options are not developed with the voice of LGBTQ+ community.	
Build awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse.	Victims and caregivers may not recognize abuse of LGBTQ+ elders.	
Provide training opportunities for essential frontline staff, including law enforcement.	Frontline staff not adequately prepared to interact with LGBTQ+ elders.	



## *Native American Themes & Solutions*

Strategy	Barrier this solution addresses	Cross-cutting issues
Educate all stakeholders on jurisdictional reach of tribal, state, federal entities.	Complexity and confusion over jurisdictional reach.	Lack of access to services and lack of services.
Build knowledge and understanding of Native American culture, norms, practices, and role of leaders/elders among elder abuse professionals.	Lack of cultural knowledge and understanding – norms and practices; respect/disrespect; role of leaders.	Need to address historical and systemic racism.
Train elder abuse professionals on Native American culture and how to discuss elder mistreatment.	Lack of cultural sensitivity.	Fear of being disrespected or misunderstood.
Clarify and identify terms for elder mistreatment that are meaningful within Native American tribes and nations.	Language barriers – understanding elder mistreatment; describing victimization.	
Encourage relationship building across systems – involve tribal leaders, advocates, service providers, community members.	Silos among providers and systems.	
Find alternatives to criminal justice approaches for addressing mistreatment.	Mistrust of the system; historical and systemic racism; fear of being disrespected or misunderstood.	

## *New American/Immigrant/Refugee Themes & Solutions*

Strategy	Barrier this solution addresses	Cross-cutting issues
Identify professionals who speak needed languages and understand the cultures of the population; use translators.	Language and cultural barriers.	Fear of deportation; mistrust of government.
Expand understanding of the role of the family in immigrant and refugee cultures.	Lack of knowledge about how to effectively approach victims within the family system; shame of victims reporting abuse.	Isolation leads to increased risk.
Increase professionals' knowledge of culturally specific services; develop and provide culturally specific outreach materials.	Lack of knowledge about culturally specific services; lack of culturally specific outreach materials.	

## ***New American/Immigrant/Refugee Themes & Solutions (continued)***

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Barrier this solution addresses</b>	<b>Cross-cutting issues</b>
Expand outreach methods to include partnerships with religious organizations and other community organizations serving the population.	Current outreach approaches aren't engaging this audience.	Fear of deportation; mistrust of government.  Isolation leads to increased risk.
Support research on culturally specific intergenerational programs.	Lack of research on effective intervention models.	
Include members from culturally specific communities, and the professionals who serve them, when developing new policies and guidelines.	Many cultures with varied and differing needs.	

## ***Rural Themes & Solutions***

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Barrier this solution addresses</b>	<b>Cross-cutting issues</b>
Expand and adequately fund services and service providers.	Lack of sufficient services; service providers are overwhelmed and understaffed.	Lack of sufficient services and technology.  Lack of transportation.
Expand affordable, reliable transportation for older adults and service providers, such as increasing the use of mobile units.	Lack of transportation for older adults and service providers in rural areas.	
Create more opportunities for contact and community.	Isolation which reduces ability to discover mistreatment and minimizes opportunities to advocate for elders.	
Empower rural elders and present options for addressing abuse.	Independent, self-reliant culture. They have feelings of shame, privacy concerns, and fear of losing control of their lives. Rural elders may not recognize signs of abuse and may be dependent on the abuser.	
Provide affordable and reliable internet access and equipment, with adequate training to use it.	Lack of reliable internet, computers and smart phones, and lack of technical knowledge.	
Educate service providers about signs and symptoms of elder abuse.	Rural service providers are often doing multiple jobs and may lack awareness of key symptoms and signs.	

For each underserved group, the Plenary Session participants voted on their top three recommendations.

### ***Results of the voting:***

#### **Black/African American:**

- Build understanding among professionals of generational racism and trauma, and its impact on the Black community.
- Seek input from and partner with organizations comprised of people of color.
- Collaborate with organizations such as faith-based communities to provide trusted places of healing for families impacted by elder abuse.

#### **Latino/a**

- Raise awareness of cultural norms, the place of language, and varied ethnic identities within the Latino/a community.
- Identify alternatives to criminal justice approaches for addressing family member perpetrators.
- Create partnerships, connections, and collaborations with faith-based communities.

#### **LGBTQ+**

- Build safe and accessible support systems to provide care and community.
- Raise awareness and availability of services for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Develop inclusive education and training that involves LGBTQ+ community.

#### **Native American**

- Build knowledge and understanding of Native American culture, norms, practices, and role of leaders/elders among elder abuse professionals.
- Encourage relationship building across systems — involve tribal leaders, advocates, service providers, community members.
- Train elder abuse professionals on Native American culture and how to discuss elder mistreatment.

#### **New American//Immigrant/Refugee — (includes two tie votes)**

- Include members from culturally specific communities, and the professionals who serve them, when developing new policies and guidelines.
- Identify professionals who speak needed languages and understand the cultures of the population; use translators.
- Increase professionals' knowledge of culturally specific services; develop and provide culturally specific outreach materials.
- Expand outreach methods to include partnerships with religious organizations and other community organizations serving the population.

## **Rural Communities**

- Expand and adequately fund services and service providers.
- Expand affordable, reliable transportation for older adults and service providers, such as increasing the use of mobile units.
- Provide affordable and reliable internet access and equipment, with adequate training to use it.

While the voting and priorities were established, participants were assured that none of the ideas would be lost. They were advised that we would continue to revisit the priorities at a minimum annually and adjust them as needed.

## ***Setting the stage for the Focus Group phase of the Summit***

Participants unanimously agreed that the voice of the older adult from the targeted underserved populations was necessary and critical if this plan was to be relevant and effective. The group endorsed the idea of community focus groups as a process to hear from older adults directly. While everyone grappled with the challenges of holding focus groups during a pandemic, the benefits were too great not to try.

Many participants shared:

- Telling the story helps people transition from victim to survivor.
- Cultural nuances can only be properly expressed by those from that race/ethnicity.
- Situational examples will help highlight the problem/solutions.
- Listening to the lived experience will enrich the data/work already done.
- Finally, we all agreed listening to the stories of older adults is a powerful way to help people heal and to get connected to help.





# Focus Groups

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

Focus on Underserved Populations of Older Adults  
Black/African American • Latino/a • LGBTQ+ • Native American  
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# Focus Groups

## **Description and Results**

The workgroups produced recommendations organized around the three cross cutting themes:

- Legislation, Policy, and Research
- Direct Service and Intervention
- Outreach and Prevention

A common theme of the recommendations was to implement strategies to integrate the voice of underserved communities in the design of services for those communities and to conduct culturally appropriate outreach to each population.

The Direct Service and Intervention workgroup recommended, “bringing diverse voices, including older adults from underserved groups to the table to find out needs.” The group also suggested, “creating **safe spaces for service provision** by ensuring that materials and programming are reflective of the community’s needs.” The Outreach and Prevention group highlighted the need for decision makers to **reflect populations served**. Members of that group suggested, “engaging **cultural brokers** to build trust/provide educational services” and developing **tailored outreach plans** to reach specific populations. A core recommendation was to form focus groups with underserved populations to ask the critical question: “*Who do you trust?*”

In addition, one critique in the comments in the Summit process was that a truly representative survey of the needs of underserved populations and an Action Agenda which places them in the center of resource allocation and service planning in New York cannot take place without adequate involvement of members of each group. It was pointed out in comments that the process would lack legitimacy without involving those whose lives it intended to improve.

The result was a decision by Summit partners following the May plenary meeting to organize a fourth component of the Summit: focus groups of older adults from across the state representing the six underserved populations.

## **To implement the focus groups, the following steps were taken beginning in June 2021:**

- A new Advisory Committee was constituted consisting of representatives of organizations serving older adults in the six target populations. (*See Appendix for Summit Focus Group Advisory Committee.*)
- A project coordinator and focus group facilitation consultant, both representatives of the underserved populations, were hired as subcontractors to coordinate focus group planning and implementation and to train subcontractor organizations to conduct effective focus groups.
- The Advisory Committee assisted in the development of multiple iterations of a focus group interview protocol and in the identification and recruitment of organizations. The interview protocol was designed to elicit community understanding and attitudes toward elder abuse, their understanding of community resources, and recommendations for a community response to elder mistreatment which is culturally sensitive and accessible to all older adult groups.

- The focus group interview script, questions, and forms for participants were translated into Spanish and Chinese. (See *Appendix for the Focus Group Scripts and Questions.*)
- Subcontracts with 17 nonprofit organizations were executed to recruit persons 60 and older to participate in groups of about eight participants. Each organization was asked to recruit at least 15 participants. Group sessions were held in community centers, parks, virtually, in homes, by phone, or in faith-based and other meeting locations.

### ***Focus Group Consultants***



**CaTyra Polland**, MA is a nine-time published author, entrepreneur, certified editor, statewide speaker, and CEO of the MWBE (Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise) certified editing boutique, Love for Words. CaTyra earned a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice from the State University at Albany and a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology/Spanish) from the State University of New York at Buffalo, graduating cum laude. Her ambition garnered her recognition as a 2018 Rochester Business Journal Forty Under 40 honoree and a national Point of Light honoree. CaTyra, a service leader and community pillar, founded the Literacy Love Scholarship for high school students in Rochester, New York. As a

professional committed to supporting and creating platforms for Black authors and writers, she launched Editor Knows Best, an international podcast for literary creatives. CaTyra’s mission is to promote literacy, empower others, and see that her wildest dreams come to fruition.



**Amanda Jackson-Jacobs**, MBA has over 20 years of corporate leadership experience with Fortune 500 companies in the technology, health, academia, and manufacturing industries. She is an experienced executive manager who has led internationally located teams for software development and product commercialization. Amanda holds an MBA from Rochester Institute of Technology, as well as other industry-recognized certifications. She has coached aspiring entrepreneurs, junior program managers and trained cross-functional leaders in applying methods learned while gaining certification in the Project Management Institute (PMI), Carnegie Mellon, Software Engineering Institute, Software

Capability Maturity Model (CMM) and Six Sigma PMI. Amanda graduated from leadership programs such as United Way African American Leadership Development Program, Leadership America, and Kodak Leadership Development Program. Her contributions to Rochester Institute of Technology Alumni Board, Great Works Collaboration Board of Directors, Tech Savvy for Girls Executive Board, and other non-profits (American Association for University Women, National Black MBA, Black Women Leadership) prove her passion to establish business-community partnerships, and loyal commitment to uplifting economically underserved individuals and societal groups.

## ***Summit Focus Group Agencies***

### **Black / African American**

Common Ground Health (over half from rural area)  
JASA Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program (LEAP)  
Liberty Temple Ministries COGIC  
New Progressive COGIC  
STAAR Leaders of Rochester

### **Latino/a**

Ibero-American Action League  
Neighborhood SHOPP  
VIBS Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center

### **LGBTQ+**

Niagara Pride  
Rainbow Seniors ROC  
Rainbow Seniors Visible & Proud

### **Native American**

Native American Community Services

### **New American/Immigrant/Refugee**

Catholic Family Center (five different ethnic groups)  
CPC Nan Shan Senior Center

### **Rural**

Cattaraugus County Department of Aging  
Essex County Office for the Aging

### **Mix of underserved populations**

St. Peter's Crime Victim Services

- The focus group facilitation consultant conducted multiple training sessions between August and November for the organizations about conducting effective focus groups and how to elicit feedback from participants to meet the goals of the group activity.
- Each organization designated a group facilitator and a recorder. *(See Appendix for list of Facilitators and Recorders.)*
- The organizations were supplied with templates to record participant comments, gather demographic information, and to acknowledge receipt of a gift card.
- Most focus groups were held in person, but some were convened remotely because of transportation, mobility, or pandemic restrictions.

A safety protocol was designed by Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan (UpEAC) staff for organizations to identify and respond to any participants who might be triggered by discussion of elder mistreatment matters or who might disclose active mistreatment. UpEAC made itself available for consultation about how to respond to disclosures of ongoing mistreatment and about available resources. *(See Appendix for Safety Protocol document.)*

## Focus Group Results

Seventeen organizations throughout NYS agreed to host focus groups. Recruitment was limited to organizations whose members, participants, or clients were from one of the six target underserved populations. Each target group was represented by one to five organizations and geographic distribution ranged from the Niagara Frontier to the Capital Region and from the North Country to New York City and Long Island.

CaTyra Polland and Amanda Jackson-Jacobs organized goal-setting training sessions between August and November 2021 and provided guidance about the expectations of each contractor as a focus group convener, how to recruit participants, run the groups, and complete the reporting requirements. Each organization designated a group facilitator and recorder.

The Advisory Committee reviewed several iterations of a focus group script/set of questions before reaching consensus on a final, statewide version. Each organization convening groups was asked to find at least 15 participants over age 60 from their organization's target group. Since the ideal focus group size was described as six to eight participants, each organization was asked to convene a minimum of two groups. (One organization was unable to recruit 15 participants.) Focus groups took place between August 2021 and December 2021.

## Demographics

A total of 291 participants were recruited for 41 focus groups. What follows is a demographic profile of the participants. Note that focus group members were invited to check more than one racial/ethnic category if applicable. Also, the demographic data show the intersection of target group categories, e.g., Latinos living in rural areas or LGBTQ+ African Americans. Because intersecting characteristics or identities resulted in some participants checking more than one field in some categories and because participants left some fields blank, statistics in the table will not always equal 291. *(See Appendix for the Demographic forms.)*

## Focus Group Participants N = 291

Residence	
City	185
Rural	58
Suburban	45
Prefer Not to Answer	2

Race/Ethnicity	
Asian	30
Black/African Amer.	108
Hispanic/Latino/a	50
Native American	20
White	86
Other	2
Prefer Not to Answer	

Move to US as Refugee or Immigrant?	
Yes	52
No	224
Prefer Not to Answer	13

How do you describe your sexual orientation?	
Bisexual	1
Gay	22
Lesbian	22
Straight	225
Other	6
Prefer not to answer	14

Gender Identity	
Female	196
Male	88
Non-binary	2
Transgender	4
Other	
Prefer not to answer	1

Annual Income	
Less Than \$15,000	74
\$15,000 - \$24,999	60
\$25,000 - \$44,999	58
\$45,000 - \$74,999	29
\$75,000 or greater	20
Prefer Not to Answer	49

Age Range	
60-64	56
65-74	146
75-84	68
85+	13
Prefer not to answer	7

Following is a summary of the themes expressed by the focus group participants in response to the questions posed by the facilitators. Acronym guide: Office for the Aging (OFA), Department of Social Services (DSS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

### **Black/African American Focus Group Themes**

- General theme: People would turn to close family, friends and their faith community first.
- Centrality of faith community including pastor, church elders, church community as source of not only spiritual support but guidance in times of crisis, emotional support, and source of reliable information is a recurring theme.
- People would like services for older adults accessible and close by.
- Trust of institutions, agencies, others is a major issue. Some agencies are seen as trustworthy sources of help.
- Many respondents recommended calling the police, but distrust of law enforcement was also expressed repeatedly.
- Readily available resource information is needed.

### **Latino/a Focus Group Themes**

- General theme - Family is very important. People felt they would rely on family, friends and their faith community.
- Focus on helping the perpetrator because they are family.
- Mixed comments about law enforcement. Most people said to involve them.
- Many said to confront the perpetrator.
- Strong sense that social workers are trusted and will help.
- Community-based organizations need to explain how they can help. Not clear.
- Most people don't know where to turn for help.
- The focus groups were really helpful to people.

### **LGBTQ+ Focus Group Themes**

- Mistrust was a major theme.
- Social isolation is a huge issue in the LGBTQ+ community; strategies to address social isolation, improve social connectedness; LGBTQ+ Senior Community Centers.
- Those often mentioned as trusted people or places for sharing concerns or seeking help: family, friends, well-known agencies, spiritual group, medical professionals.
- Need specific agency resources and services that address unique needs and past experiences of LGBTQ+ older adults; retrain medical staff.
- Information is very hard to find for LGBTQ+ older adults living in rural areas.
- Prioritize finding a safe place, a safe shelter, and safe, secure housing.
- Service providers/caregivers who understand and are competent to serve our community.
- Case managers/navigators from LGBTQ+ community who connect with LGBTQ+ older adults.
- Make LGBTQ+ older people more visible to mainstream organizations and services; importance of seeing Pride flags and other shows of support.



- Some barriers to seeking help: fear of negative reaction, privacy/independence, embarrassment, concerns about confidentiality.
- LGBTQ+ supportive police departments.
- See the focus group as a beginning to bringing people together.
- Worried about impact of continuation of current political environment.

### **Native Americans Focus Group Themes**

- Rely on family for intervention, guidance, and support.
- Neighbors, tribal members need to check on each other.
- There aren't enough resources.
- Reservation needs more resources.
- Can turn to trusted Native American service organizations and some Offices for the Aging.
- Resources need to be available for police, hospitals, Native American centers, legal service centers, also on the Internet.
- Information about elder mistreatment and about resources should be widely available via technology, newspapers, get togethers, various media (television, radio, pamphlets), also in senior centers and anyplace older people go.

### **New Americans/Immigrants/Refugees Focus Group Themes**

- First source of help is family and friends.
- Church is also source of help.
- Fear, language barriers prevent seeking help.
- Mother (in case scenarios) bears responsibility for not raising perpetrator son properly.
- Keep matter within family; family should help family.
- Would want help from social worker, agency such as Catholic Family Center, senior center, police.
- Media (radio, TV) should broadcast info on elder abuse including in languages other than English.
- Need more knowledge and information about social supports.
- A list of places to go. Knowledge of what services are available to help.
- More training for elders needed.

### **Rural Focus Group Themes**

- Would trust OFA, or persons in close social network: family, friends, neighbors, pastor, God, healthcare professionals, senior center groups.
- Would turn to pastor/faith community, family, friends, professionals, and agencies like DSS, APS, OFA for help.
- Embarrassment, shame, denial, desire to be independent and avoid being a burden, pride, unsure where to turn, lack of privacy in small communities would be barriers to seeking help. Privacy was an underlying theme.
- Police intervention and mediation were repeated recommendations (a different kind of mediator – not formal law or agency official – something less threatening).

- Participants would seek help from state police, OFA, APS, local police, lawyer, mediator, Victim Services from Community Action. There was concern expressed about police contacting APS but, seemingly, more openness to law enforcement involvement than in other groups.
- Fraud and scams were also a concern of the group.
- Would like to see safe place to go, bail reform go away, medical services, counselors, hotline, support groups, meetings, and workshops to learn about and discuss scams; send information from trusted source to seniors about scams, fraud, and mistreatment.
- Service system is confusing. There are too many phone numbers and papers (pamphlets). Have just ONE list of all resources, phone numbers, and what they do. Call it SSS (Senior Safety Site). List everything like auto repair, errands, home repairs, etc. with reliable, trustworthy vendors.

### **Mixed Focus Group Themes**

- Would trust family, friends, doctor, minister, social worker, landlord.
- Would turn to family, friend, police, EMS, Unity House for help.
- EMS cited several times as source of help.
- Embarrassment, uncertainty about resources are barriers to seeking help.
- Regular welfare check ins are needed.
- Would want help through police, hospital, legal resources.
- Information to public about mistreatment, fraud and scams should be distributed through bulletins, senior centers, the news.
- More help from younger generation with technological barriers is needed.
- Better communication, education, PSAs would help protect older adults.



# Recommendations

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

Focus on Underserved Populations of Older Adults  
Black/African American • Latino/a • LGBTQ+ • Native American  
New American/Immigrant/Refugee • Rural



### **2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit FINAL REPORT**

2022



Convened by New York State Office of Victim Services and Lifespan of Greater Rochester.  
Prepared by Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc.

# Recommendations

## ***An Updated Elder Justice Action Agenda for New York State: New Paradigms for Service to Underserved/Marginalized Older Adult Populations***

The first three phases of the Summit produced an abundance of recommendations which were discussed and prioritized in the workgroups, then voted on at the Plenary Session of Summit participants in May 2021. During the fourth phase of the Summit community focus groups were conducted during the summer and fall months of 2021; they too produced a large number of recommendations which endorsed many of the themes identified by professionals. Focus group participants also identified innovative and more detailed changes in the community response to elder abuse for marginalized older adult communities in New York.

The recommendations detailed below represent a workplan for the delivery of services and for the allocation of future resources in the aging network and, specifically, in the elder abuse services sphere. Unlike previous Action Agendas that emerged from NYS Elder Abuse Summits, this Action Agenda is less a list of prescriptive pronouncements but more a set of critical themes, principles and concepts which should guide any future planning for the six groups that were the focus of this Summit. Many of the themes can be generalized to other underserved, marginalized populations as well.

We need to recognize that implementation of this Action Agenda will require focused and consistent attention and advocacy for the recommendations to be actualized and integrated into the elder abuse service system throughout the state. The task is enormous but promises to be transformative for the safety, health, and healing of elders at risk of abuse and those who have experienced mistreatment and exploitation. Lifespan intends to hire a coordinator(s) with the exclusive task of overseeing implementation throughout New York. To ensure the voice of those communities the plan is intended to benefit remains relevant and heard, an Advisory Committee will be formed for consultation on implementation, outreach, training, and education initiatives to ensure that New York State remains on the right track toward the goal of culturally appropriate and affirming services for all older adults in the state.

The older adults of New York and those who serve them have outlined the path; it is now our duty to ensure that we make progress on the journey toward a coordinated and responsive service system that best suits their needs.





## Final Recommendations

### *Results of Plenary Session Action Agenda Voting*

#### **Direct Service & Intervention**

- Leverage research to support increased funding for programs that focus on underserved populations of elder abuse victims.
- Foster meaningful and equitable partnerships with organizations, programs, and individuals with diverse expertise.
- Train staff on elder abuse signs and symptoms, barriers they may face, and underserved populations/intersectionality.

#### **Legislation, Policy, and Research**

- Conduct focus groups with underserved populations – “Who do you trust?”
- Provide funding and training for community-based organizations in diverse communities.
- Research role of family in each underserved population to help with better intervention models.
- Expand the E-MDT model to include all forms of abuse/complex cases. (This recommendation was voted as one of the top three. However, E-MDTs across the state have already expanded beyond just financial exploitation cases to now include all forms of mistreatment.)

#### **Outreach and Prevention**

- Break down silos between formal service systems and faith communities, grassroots organizations, etc. Silo busting – increase collaboration.
- Include voice of victim in prevention strategies.
- Include representation from underserved groups among volunteers and in outreach efforts (including survivors of elder abuse).

The Plenary group also voted to prioritize the themes and solutions to barriers to service for marginalized populations that were expressed in the webinar survey process. Following are the top recommendations voted on by the group.



## ***Voting Organized by Population***

### **Black/African American**

- Build understanding among professionals of generational racism and trauma, and its impact on the Black community.
- Seek input from and partner with organizations comprised of people of color.
- Collaborate with organizations such as faith-based communities to provide trusted places of healing for families impacted by elder abuse.

### **Latino/a**

- Raise awareness of cultural norms, the place of language, and varied ethnic identities within the Latino/a community.
- Identify alternatives to criminal justice approaches for addressing family member perpetrators.
- Create partnerships, connections, and collaborations with faith-based communities.

### **LGBTQ+**

- Build safe and accessible support systems to provide care and community.
- Raise awareness and availability of services for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Develop inclusive education and training that involves the LGBTQ+ community.

### **Native American**

- Build knowledge and understanding of Native American culture, norms, practices, and role of leaders/elders among elder abuse professionals.
- Encourage relationship building across systems — involve tribal leaders, advocates, service providers, community members.
- Train elder abuse professionals on Native American culture and how to discuss elder mistreatment.

### **New American/Immigrant/Refugee — (includes two tie votes)**

- Include members from culturally specific communities, and the professionals who serve them, when developing new policies and guidelines.
- Identify professionals who speak needed languages and understand the cultures of the population; use translators.
- Increase professionals' knowledge of culturally specific services; develop and provide culturally specific outreach materials.
- Expand outreach methods to include partnerships with religious organizations and other community organizations serving the population.

### **Rural Communities**

- Expand and fund services and service providers.
- Expand affordable, reliable transportation for older adults and service providers, such as increasing the use of mobile units.
- Provide affordable and reliable internet access and equipment, with adequate training to use it.



The Focus Groups also produced numerous recommendations that to a great extent echo the themes and ideas produced in the other phases of the Summit. They provide an in depth understanding of how members of the six groups view elder mistreatment and how they envision a welcoming and helpful service system.

## ***Major Themes and Recommendations from Focus Groups***

### **Alternatives to criminal justice response**

- In cases where law enforcement/criminal justice involvement is chosen by victim or is unavoidable (e.g., egregious felony crimes), training of police/ criminal justice personnel in culturally sensitive responses to victims and their families.
- Service options for perpetrators.
- Alternatives to criminal response to elder mistreatment such as restorative justice approaches.
- Client-centered service planning by those involved in investigation and intervention in elder abuse cases including in the statewide E-MDT system.

### **Outreach**

- Specialized outreach and publicity designed for specific populations; linguistic competence for those whose primary language is not English.
- Outreach campaigns and strategies that acknowledge barriers to access.
- Promote broadband service for rural populations and urban groups without resources or skills to access high tech sources of information (technology deserts).

### **Better education and training**

- Education and training for professionals and the public that is linguistically accessible, take into account technological barriers for some groups, and that is culturally appropriate and affirming.

### **Accessibility to services**

- Provide readily available and accessible information about elder mistreatment and, in particular, local resources (a recurring theme).
- Decentralization of services to neighborhood level; funding for more local organizations.
- Involvement of existing community response system, including APS and current not-for-profit service providers, as well as new providers in the implementation of Action Agenda principles and strategies.
- Outreach to and involvement of faith communities in messaging about elder mistreatment and as locus for service provision (recurring theme).

### **Peer education, mutual support**

- An unanticipated outcome of the focus group approach was the extent to which participants reported the focus group themselves were useful outlets for addressing elder abuse. It was anticipated that older participants might find discussions of elder mistreatment difficult and even triggering. Facilitators were provided with techniques for stimulating discussion among reticent participants. Instead, members of the groups were for the most part very forthcoming and reported that they would like the groups to continue.

- Consideration should be given to piloting small discussion groups as ways to raise awareness about elder abuse and about available resources, to provide peer education as well as mutual support.

### ***General principles/directions articulated by focus group members***

- Explore use of cultural ambassadors.
- Need for person-centered, trauma-informed approaches to assistance with consideration of the family.
- Focus on family, not just on victim.
- Attention to intersectionality and oppression.
- Meet the community where they are, where they feel safe and comfortable, and let them lead.
- Promote more ethnic and linguistic diversity in elder abuse service systems.
- Recognize unique situation of Native Americans with the existence of reservations and jurisdictions.
- Be cognizant of different cultures.
- Engage in effective advocacy for “invisible” populations.
- Diversify E-MDT membership; expand role of E-MDTs.

During this process, we amassed an enormous number of recommendations, ideas, and insights from both professionals in the elder abuse field and from older New Yorkers. None of this information will be lost. All of the information will be used to continue implementing an action agenda.

The recommendations and themes are our starting point. We are convening people from across the state to begin the work of developing actionable steps.

We know we can tailor our public awareness information, training, and interventions to meet the needs of underserved populations. We believe that ALL older adults have the right to live free of abuse and mistreatment. This ambitious process has not been done anywhere else in the country. Once again New York has shown itself to be a pioneer in the area of protecting older adults from mistreatment and exploitation. We trust that the multi-phase NYS Summit of 2021, involving professionals and older adults throughout the state, will contribute to New York becoming an age friendly and safe place for residents to grow older. We also hope that other states will use the events and structure of the Summit as a template as they too develop plans to address elder mistreatment in underserved populations.



# Appendix

## **Seeking Solutions: Elder Abuse — Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here**

Focus on Underserved Populations of Older Adults  
Black/African American • Latino/a • LGBTQ+ • Native American  
New American/Immigrant/Refugee • Rural



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## Documents included in the Appendix

Participants in Spring 2021 Summit Events	A2
Sample Webinar Survey Form	A9
Summit Focus Group Advisory Committee	A15
Focus Group English Introduction Script and Questions	A16
Focus Group Spanish Introduction Script and Questions	A17
Focus Group Chinese Introduction Script and Questions	A18
Summit Focus Group Facilitators and Recorders	A19
Safety Protocols for Elder Abuse Focus Groups	A21
Focus Group English Demographic Information Form	A23
Focus Group Spanish Demographic Information Form	A24
Focus Group Chinese Demographic Information Form	A25





# Participants in Spring 2021 Summit Events

Please note – agency affiliations are from Spring 2021.

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Association on Aging in New York  
Albany, NY

**Erin Purcell**  
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**Sarah Reckess**  
Center for Court Innovation  
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US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants  
Albany, NY

**Joy Solomon**

Weinberg Center for Elder Justice  
New York City – Riverdale, NY

**Kim Spoonhower**

Retired, NYS Office of Victim Services  
Latham, NY

**Lisa Stern**

FCA (Family & Children's Association)  
Garden City, NY

**Kasey Stewart**

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Albany, NY

**Lindsey Vaval**

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**Kelly Zunner-Daniels**

Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan  
Rochester, NY







Office of  
Victim Services

**Sample Webinar Survey Form – There was a separate form for each underserved population.**

## 2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit Webinar Survey: Native American Survivors of Elder Abuse Webinar

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please fill out this survey to the best of your ability. If you need more space, you may e-mail additional comments to [summit@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:summit@lifespan-roch.org).

This survey collects basic demographic information, much of which is optional. All demographic information will be de-identified and only aggregated data will be shared outside of Lifespan and the Office of Victim Services.

We are also capturing your experience of the webinar and most importantly, are seeking your input on how we can progress New York State's Elder Abuse Action Agenda to be more inclusive of underserved populations.

Your voice is critical for this process. Thank you!

\* Required

### Basic Demographics

The majority of these questions are optional. Your answers are important to us, and your personal information will not be shared outside of Lifespan and the Office of Victim Services. All demographic information will be aggregated for reporting purposes.

1. Name (optional)

2. E-mail address (optional)

3. Organization (optional)

4. Your age group (optional)

Under 40

41-54

55-59

60-64

65-74

75-84

85+

5. Race/Ethnicity (optional)

6. Rural Experience (check all that apply, optional)

I live in a rural community.

My agency serves people in rural areas.

Neither of these apply to me.

7. Does your agency receive funding from the NYS Office of Victim Services (OVS)? \*

Yes

No

Unsure

8. What region(s) represents the county(s) served by your program/organization? \*

NYS – all counties

Central New York (Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego)

- Finger Lakes (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates)
- Long Island (Nassau, Suffolk)
- Mid-Hudson (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester)
- Mohawk Valley (Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie)
- New York City (Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond)
- North Country (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence)
- Southern Tier (Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins)
- Western New York (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara)
- Other

9. Why is this topic important to you? (check all that apply, optional)

- I have a loved one who identifies with this population.
- I identify with this population.
- My organization serves this population.
- Other

### NYS Elder Abuse Summit Action Agenda Questions

Please fill out these questions as thoroughly as you can. You may submit additional information to [summit@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:summit@lifespan-roch.org).

10. In your persona and/or professional opinion, what is the greatest barrier to accessing services for elder abuse victims who are Native American/Indigenous?

- People don't know where to call.
- Feelings of embarrassment or shame.
- People do not believe they will be helped.

Ageism

Other

11. If other – please describe below.

12. In your persona and/or professional opinion, what is the greatest barrier to recognizing the signs and symptoms of elder abuse for Native American/Indigenous elder abuse victims and their caregivers?

They don't see themselves in outreach materials.

The right community ambassadors are not trained.

Additional level-setting education is needed for the general public.

Feelings of embarrassment or shame.

Other

13. If other – please describe below.

14. In your personal and/or professional opinion, what are the greatest Legislative and Policy barriers preventing Native American/Indigenous elder abuse victims from accessing equitable justice?

Insufficient legislation to specifically address elder abuse.

No comprehensive mandatory reporting law.

Inadequate funding to address elder abuse of people who are Native American/Indigenous.

Not enough representation by people who are Native American/Indigenous where decisions are made.

Other

15. If other – please describe below.

16. In your personal and/or professional opinion, what is the greatest barrier to intervention of elder abuse victims who are Native American/Indigenous.

- Insufficient funding and resources for culturally specific programs/agencies.
- Decision makers are not asking people who are Native American/Indigenous what they need for services.
- Inadequate resources to specifically engage with folks who are Native American/Indigenous.
- Lack of representation among service providers.
- Other

17. If other – please describe below.

18. Please add any additional comments or thoughts on the preceding questions here. You can also email [summit@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:summit@lifespan-roch.org).

19. The Summit’s goal is to progress NYS’s strategic plan to combat elder abuse. We need your input to ensure that we have a broad range of voices and ideas to cultivate and hone this agenda.

Please provide us with your ideas for research, policies, and best practices that would benefit victims of elder abuse who are Native American/Indigenous. These may be aspirational or things you have seen done elsewhere.



20. Who should be at the table for future efforts and discussions?

## Webinar Experience

21. Rate your knowledge of this topic BEFORE watching this webinar (1 being not at all knowledgeable, 5 being extremely knowledgeable). \*

1 2 3 4 5

22. Rate your knowledge of this topic AFTER watching this webinar (1 being not at all knowledgeable, 5 being extremely knowledgeable). \*

1 2 3 4 5

23. Would you recommend this webinar to a colleague or friend? \*

Yes

No

Maybe

# Summit Focus Group Advisory Committee –

*provided advice and guidance during the early development of the focus group process*

**CaTyra Polland**  
Project Coordinator

**Amanda Jackson-Jacobs**  
Facilitation Consultant

## Committee Members

**Maribel Acosta**  
Neighborhood SHOPP

**Vel Caldwell**  
Retired, Monroe County Adult Protective  
Services

**Peter Cheng**  
CPC Nan Shan Senior Center

**Linda Clark**  
Common Ground Health

**Takai Forde**  
JASA/Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program  
(LEAP)

**Helen Gray**  
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging

**Miyoung Kim**  
Womankind

**Heather La Forme**  
NYS Office of Children and Family Services –  
Bureau of Native American Services

**Katherine Martinez**  
Neighborhood SHOPP

**Thomas Mahoney**  
Common Ground Health

**Jennifer Morgan-Burt**  
ACCORD

**Christopher Phillips**  
Center for Elder Law & Justice

**Becky Preve**  
Association on Aging in New York

**Gavin Reynolds**  
Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY)

**Micah Schneider**  
VIBS Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center

**David Vincent**  
SAGE USA | Advocacy & Services for LGBTQ+  
Elders

## Summit Focus Group Lifespan Support Staff

**Paul Caccamise**

**Ann Marie Cook**

**Penny Lee**

**Denise Shukoff**

**Tracey Siebert-Konopko**

**Kelly Zunner-Daniels**



## Introduction Script

**Thank you for being here and participating in this focus group. As some older adults age, they often become more vulnerable. We need your help and advice. We want to talk to you to get your input about vulnerable situations older adults face, including situations in which people are financially exploited or experience other forms of elder mistreatment.**

**Thank you for participating and please know that you will be given a gift card for your time today.**

## Focus Group Questions

1. In general, who do you trust to talk to about your problems or concerns?
2. Who might you contact if you needed help?
3. What might prevent you, or someone you know, from reaching out for help?
4. For this project, we are trying to learn more about what type of supports people need when they are being harmed or disrespected. For the next few questions, I want to describe a situation to you and get your thoughts about what is happening.

**Imagine a close friend tells you her son (or close family member) recently moved into her home after they lost their job. Since her son (or close family member) moved in, she has found money missing from her wallet several times, and her ATM card is now gone. Your friend has started hiding her wallet at night. She is worried she may not have enough money for groceries this week.**

- a. What are your thoughts about this situation?
- b. Is there anything you would recommend to your friend?
- c. Are there sources of help in the community you would recommend?

**I want to go back to the situation with your friend. Imagine a few weeks later she calls you and says her son (or close family member) is angry that she is hiding her wallet at night. He (or they) is yelling at her and demanding she give him/them money. He/they is threatening to put her in a nursing home if she doesn't give him/them access to all her financial information.**

- a. What are your thoughts about this situation?
  - b. Is there anything you would recommend to your friend?
  - c. Are there sources of help in the community you would recommend?
5. If you or someone you know was being harmed in any way, what kind of help would you want available?
  6. What types of information would be helpful to make people aware of elder mistreatment, scams, and fraud; and how to seek help?
  7. What else should we be thinking about to help protect older adults?

## Guión de Introducción

**Gracias por estar aquí y participar en este grupo de enfoque. A medida que algunos adultos mayores envejecen, a menudo se vuelven más vulnerables. Necesitamos su ayuda y consejo. Queremos hablar con usted para obtener su opinión sobre las situaciones vulnerables que enfrentan los adultos mayores, incluidas las situaciones en las que las personas son explotadas económicamente o experimentan otras formas de maltrato a las personas mayores.**

**Gracias por participar y sepa que recibirá una tarjeta de regalo por su tiempo hoy.**

## Preguntas del Grupo de Enfoque

1. En general, ¿en quién confía para hablar sobre sus problemas o inquietudes?
2. En general, ¿en quién confía para hablar sobre sus problemas o inquietudes?
3. ¿Qué podría impedirle a usted o a alguien que conozca pedir ayuda?
4. Para este proyecto, estamos tratando de aprender más sobre qué tipo de apoyo necesitan las personas cuando están siendo perjudicadas o irrespetadas. Para las siguientes preguntas, quiero describirle una situación y obtener sus pensamientos sobre lo que está sucediendo.

**Imagínesse que una amiga cercana le dice que su hijo se mudó recientemente a su casa después de perder su trabajo. Desde que su hijo se mudó, ha encontrado que faltaba dinero en su billetera varias veces, y su tarjeta de cajero automático ya no está. Su amiga ha empezado a esconder su billetera por la noche. Le preocupa no tener suficiente dinero para comprar alimentos esta semana.**

- a. ¿Qué piensa de esta situación?
- b. ¿Hay algo que le recomendaría a su amiga?
- c. ¿Hay fuentes de ayuda en la comunidad que recomendaría?

**Quiero volver a la situación con su amiga. Imagínesse que unas semanas después le llama y le dice que su hijo está enojado porque ella esconde su billetera por la noche. Él le grita y le exige que le dé dinero. Amenaza con ponerla en un asilo de ancianos si ella no le da acceso a toda su información financiera.**

- a. ¿Qué piensa de esta situación?
  - b. ¿Hay algo que le recomendaría a su amiga?
  - c. ¿Hay fuentes de ayuda en la comunidad que recomendaría?
5. Si usted o alguien que conoce sufriera algún daño, ¿qué tipo de ayuda desearía tener disponible?
  6. ¿Qué tipo de información sería útil para que las personas conozcan el maltrato, las estafas y el fraude a las personas mayores y como buscar ayuda?
  7. ¿En qué más deberíamos pensar para ayudar a proteger a los adultos mayores?

### Introduction Script

感谢您来到这里参加本次焦点小组访谈。一些老年人随着年龄的增长，往往会变得更加脆弱或易受伤害。我们需要您的帮助和建议。我们想与您交谈并了解您对老年人所面临脆弱状况的看法，包括人们在经济上受到剥削或经历其他形式的虐待老年人行为。

感谢您的积极参与，请注意，您今天将获得一张礼品卡。

### 焦点小组讨论问题

1. 一般来说，如果要谈论您的问题或顾虑，您会相信谁？
2. 当您需要帮助时，您会联系谁？
3. 哪些因素可能会阻碍您或您认识的人寻求帮助？
4. 在这个项目中，我们希望深入了解当人们受到伤害或不受尊重时需要什么样的支持。对于接下来的几个问题，我想向您描述某个情况，并了解您对所发生事情的看法。

设想一下，一位好友告诉您，她的儿子最近在失业后搬进了她的家。自从儿子搬来后，她多次发现钱包里的钱不见了，ATM卡也不见了。您的这个朋友开始在晚上把她的钱包藏起来。她担心本周她可能没有足够的钱来购买食品杂货。

- a. 对于这个情况，您有什么看法？
- b. 您会向这个朋友提出相关的建议或推荐吗？
- c. 社区中是否有您会推荐的帮助资源？

回到您朋友的情况。设想一下，几周后她打电话给您，说她的儿子很生气，因为她晚上把钱包藏起来了。他冲她大喊大叫，要求她给他钱。他威胁说，如果她不让他掌握她的所有财务信息，就要把她送进养老院。

- a. 对于这个情况，您有什么看法？
  - b. 您会向这个朋友提出相关的建议或推荐吗？
  - c. 社区中是否有您会推荐的帮助资源？
5. 如果您或您认识的人受到任何形式的伤害，您希望能有什么样的帮助？
  6. 哪些类型的信息有助于让人们意识到虐待老年人、诈骗和欺诈行为，以及如何寻求帮助？
  7. 我们还应考虑从哪些方面来帮助保护老年人？

# Summit Focus Group Facilitators and Recorders –

*Group sessions were held in community centers, parks, virtually, in homes, by phone, or in faith-based and other meeting locations*

**Maribel Acosta**

Neighborhood SHOPP

**Jude Banahene**

STAAR Leaders of Rochester

**Heather Borden**

Essex County Office for the Aging

**Tamu Brown-Hutchinson**

Liberty Temple Ministries COGIC

**Leianna Burke**

Catholic Family Center

**Matt Burton**

St. Peter's Crime Victim Services

**Ashley Carlos**

Neighborhood SHOPP

**Roberta Carter**

Common Ground Health

**Colleen Casali**

Native American Community Services

**Peter Cheng**

CPC Nan Shan Senior Center

**Cory Cummings**

Rainbow Seniors ROC

**Sherri Darrow**

Rainbow Seniors Visible & Proud

**Mike Fonda**

St. Peter's Crime Victim Services

**Takai Forde**

JASA/Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program (LEAP)

**Susan Frawley**

Niagara Pride

**Lauren Frye**

Catholic Family Center

**James Hart**

Rainbow Seniors Visible & Proud

**Mandi Hemphill**

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**Lisa Hoyt**

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**Marjani Hutchinson**

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Common Ground Health

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Essex County Office for the Aging

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**Meiling Liu**

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**Emma Miller**

STAAR Leaders of Rochester



**Ronald Piaseczny**

Niagara Pride

**Martha Pollack**

JASA/Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program  
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**Sacha Rios**

Ibero-American Action League

**Melissa Schindler**

Native American Community Services

**Raquel Serrano**

Ibero-American Action League

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**Kimberly Jackson Sweigman**

New Progressive COGIC

**Anne Tischer**

Rainbow Seniors ROC

**Kelly VanAppledorn**

St. Peter's Crime Victim Services

**Emily Wilson**

St. Peter's Crime Victim Services

## Safety Protocols for Elder Abuse Focus Groups

<i>During Recruitment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask folks about any <b>accommodations</b> they may need, such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hard of hearing/deaf</li> <li>○ Blind/low vision</li> <li>○ Mobility concerns</li> <li>○ Translators</li> <li>○ Other accommodations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Before the Group Starts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Have backup</b> – someone to call/on call to assist in case someone experiences re-traumatization or another crisis situation.</li> <li>• <b>Know your local resources</b> – understand who the crisis lines are in your area:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 911</li> <li>○ 211 or another Lifeline</li> <li>○ Domestic Violence hotline</li> <li>○ Sexual Violence/Rape Crisis hotline</li> <li>○ Adult Protective Services</li> <li>○ Non-crisis – NY Connects or the Office for the Aging</li> <li>○ *Lifespan can help to locate these resources for your community</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Be prepared</b> – anyone in the room may be triggered by the conversation, including the facilitator and scribe! Read the script and questions thoroughly prior to the start.</li> <li>• <b>Ready the room:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduce noises and distractions</li> <li>○ Ensure privacy</li> <li>○ Ensure that there is enough seating and that other safety accommodations are met</li> <li>○ Have bottled water available. Consider having snacks available</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Starting the focus group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welcome</b> folks in.</li> <li>• <b>Describe</b> what will happen today:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How long you have.</li> <li>○ How many questions there are.</li> <li>○ That folks are not required to answer all questions; however, participation is strongly encouraged.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Do housekeeping:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where are the exits?</li> <li>○ Where are the restrooms?</li> <li>○ Where are the refreshments?</li> <li>○ Are any areas of the facility “off limits”?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Add a <b>trigger warning/self-care statement</b> (make it your own):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Today we will be talking about how older adults are sometimes harmed and disrespected. This topic may be sensitive to some people. If you need to take a break and leave the room for any reason, please feel free to do so and take care of yourself. My colleague _____ is standing by to assist you further.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Establish group norms/rules.</b> This should be done <i>with</i> the group, giving them an opportunity to add their own preferred rules/norms. Here are some basic rules:</li> </ul>

- **Avoid** - going into depth with personal details; they may be disturbing to others in the room.
- **Trust** – establish a circle of trust; do not repeat what is said outside of the group.
- **Respect** – keeping positive and allowing people to share without judgment.
- **No blame** – believe in each other. \*
- **Ask** – what other rules the group things should be added.
- **Accountability** – the facilitator’s role is to keep everyone accountable to respect the group norms.

\*Victim blaming includes, but isn’t limited to: saying/implying that they caused the mistreatment, saying implying that they deserved the mistreatment, asking why they didn’t leave the situation, etc.

*During the group*

If a participant shows signs of distress, or says that they are in distress, here are some immediate steps to stabilize the situation:

1. **Pause the conversation/questioning.** Ask if the group would like a break and try to pull the individual who appears distressed to the side to check in.
  - a. If the person can self-regulate, let them decide if they would like to continue or not.
  - b. If the person is unable to self-regulate, utilize your backup worker to attend to them while you continue with the rest of the group.
  - c. If the person needs to be excused from further participation, thank them and let them leave the group.
2. **Redirect.** If the conversation is stagnating and causing distress, progress the conversation further by saying something such as, “You make an excellent point. Thank you so much. As we move on...”; “In the interest of everyone’s time, I want to move along in our agenda for the day;” or similar statement. You can also invite the participant to discuss their situation or concerns after the group meeting: “I’d be glad to talk to you further about that when we are done with the group discussion.”
3. **Stop.** Ultimately, the health and well-being of the participants is the most important aspect of all of this. If safety (emotional, health, or other) cannot be maintained, then stop the focus group until safety can be achieved.

*As the group ends*

- Provide participants with **referral information** for services available to them.
- Do a final “**check in**” to see how everyone is doing.
- Remind participants that they are **essential and the work that they did today is invaluable. Thank participants.**
- Ensure that participants sign off for their gift cards and receive them.
- Have materials ready for them with resource information.
- NOTE: Lifespan’s Upstate Elder Abuse Center staff are available to help you identify resources or to consult on any participant situation that may come up in the groups. Please contact Kelly Zunner-Daniels at [kzunner-daniels@lifespanrochester.org](mailto:kzunner-daniels@lifespanrochester.org) or Tracey Siebert-Konopko at [tsiebert@lifespanrochester.org](mailto:tsiebert@lifespanrochester.org) for assistance.



## Seeking Solutions:

*Elder Abuse – Creating a Clear Vision of Where We Go from Here*

*Thank you for participating in this important discussion.*

*We want to hear directly from older adults throughout New York State.*

**Please tell us a little about yourself for statistical purposes required by our project funders:**

### Where do you live?

- City
- Rural area
- Suburban area
- Prefer not to answer

### Race/Ethnicity – you may select one or more

- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Native American
- White
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

### Did you move to the United States as a refugee or immigrant?

- No
- Yes
- Prefer not to answer

### Age Range

- 60-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+
- Prefer not to answer

### How do you describe your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Straight
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

### Gender Identity

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

### Annual Income Level

- Less than \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$44,999
- \$45,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000 or greater
- Prefer not to answer

*Thank You!*





**Buscando soluciones: Abuso de personas mayores -  
Creando una visión clara de hacia dónde vamos a partir de aquí**

*Gracias por participar en esta importante discusión. Queremos escuchar directamente a los adultos mayores en todo el estado de Nueva York.*

**Cuéntenos un poco sobre usted con fines estadísticos requeridos por nuestros financiadores del proyecto:**

**¿Dónde vive?**

- Ciudad
- Área rural
- Área suburbana
- Prefiero no responder

**Raza/Etnia:** puede seleccionar uno o más

- Asiático
- Negro/Afroamericano
- Hispano/Latinx
- Nativo americano
- Blanco
- Otro
- Prefiero no responder

**¿Se mudó a los Estados Unidos como refugiado o inmigrante?**

- No
- Sí
- Prefiero no responder

**Grupo de edad**

- 60-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+
- Prefiero no responder

**¿Cómo describe su orientación sexual?**

- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbiana
- Derecho
- Otro
- Prefiero no responder

**Identidad de género**

- Femenino
- Masculino
- No binario
- Transgénero
- Otro
- Prefiero no responder

**Nivel de ingresos anual**

- Menos de \$ 15,000
- \$ 15,000- \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000- \$ 44,999
- \$ 45,000- \$ 74,999
- \$ 75,000 o más
- Prefiero no responder

*¡Gracias!*





## 寻求解决方案：虐待老年人 —— 为我们的未来创造清晰愿景

感谢您参加此次重要的讨论。我们希望直接听取纽约州老年人的想法。

出于项目资助者所要求的统计目的，请告诉我们一些关于您本人的信息：

### 您住在哪里？

- 城市
- 乡村
- 郊区
- 不愿回答

### 您的种族/族群 —— 您可以选择一项或多项

- 亚裔
- 黑人/非裔美国人
- 西班牙裔/拉丁裔
- 美洲原住民
- 白人
- 其他
- 不愿回答

### 您是作为难民或移民移居美国的吗？

- 否
- 是
- 不愿回答

### 您的年龄区间

- 60-64 岁
- 65-74 岁
- 75-84 岁
- 85 岁及以上
- 不愿回答

### 您会如何描述您的性取向？

- 双性恋
- 男同性恋
- 女同性恋
- 异性恋
- 其他
- 不愿回答

### 您的性别认同

- 女性
- 男性
- 其他/非二元性别
- 变性人
- 其他
- 不愿回答

### 您的年收入水平

- 低于 \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$44,999
- \$45,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000 或以上
- 不愿回答

谢谢您！











## 2021 New York State Elder Abuse Summit

