

## **NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE (NIEJI) : Interviewer's Guide to the Native Elder Maltreatment Survey**

### **ABOUT THE NATIVE ELDER MALTREATMENT SURVEY**

The National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) Program is providing assistance to tribes and tribal organizations to gather tribal data about elder abuse in Indian Country. NIEJI is focused on the development of innovative ways to address the issue of elder abuse among American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian programs. It is funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The Native Elder Maltreatment Survey provides tribal communities throughout the United States an opportunity to collect elder maltreatment information for those age 50 years and older.

NIEJI Program will provide assistance with the following:

- Scanning of surveys
- Technical and training assistance via email or phone call
- Compiling your tribal data
- Interviewer's guide for data collection
- Guide on how to use the data
- Tribal Resolution sample

NIEJI Program in cooperation with ACL offers the Native Elder Maltreatment Survey and other services at no cost to participating tribes. An aggregate file is maintained by NIEJI to document issues of elder maltreatment among American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians.

### **INTERVIEWERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As the tribal interviewer collecting vital information, you are representing your community and agency in conducting the Native Elder Maltreatment Survey. While gathering information, interviewers should not pry for specific names or incidences when asking survey questions as cooperation from the elder being interviewed for this survey is completely voluntary and should be viewed by the elders as a positive experience.

It is recommended that the interviewer spend some time chatting and establishing rapport with the elder prior to beginning the survey. Some questions being asked are similar to those asked in a variety of national surveys that will allow us to compare your tribal data with national data to determine whether disparities exist between the elders of your community and the nation.

Due to the sensitivity of some questions, it is important for you as the interviewer to know how to appropriately handle any adverse circumstances according to your local and state laws. It is recommended that you get clarification to determine if you are a mandated reporter of elder abuse. A mandated reporter is a person who is as a result of their profession, more likely to be aware of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable population (i.e. elders). If you are a mandated reporter, you and your tribal agency may report suspected elder abuse to the appropriate authorities such as law enforcement or Adult Protective Services for action as needed. As the interviewer for your tribal site please understand your interview or researcher role. You are there to collect answers to the questions on the survey. Your role is not to investigate, probe, or

gather additional information about potential abuse or neglect while you are gathering this data. If the participant voluntarily provides additional information about a specific person and incident you are mandated to report. If you do not have a specific person's name disclosed you should provide information at the end of the interview on how the participant may report, but you have no obligation to report.

If the participant has a negative reaction due to the question reminding them of an abusive event, provide support and determine if the participant would like to speak to someone about what happened to them. Make sure the participant has a supportive family member, caregiver, or friend with them before you leave. Provide that person with information about community resources available to the participant.

As the researcher and/or interviewer who lives in the community, you may offer services depending on the degree of danger. Services may be through another agency or community resource. Participants also have the right to refuse services. Participants who do not have the capacity to understand their circumstances should not be completing the survey.

Clients have the right to self-determination. Competent adults have the right to make decisions about their own lives, including the right to refuse help from adult protective services. In some states, competent adults may refuse an investigation as well as services.

The interviewer should clarify whether the information is required to be reported about alleged, probable, or known sexual or physical abuse of elder that may have been disclosed during the research. Again, the interviewer should not probe or ask for specifics about the event.

If any researcher or interviewer is given information about abuse or neglect, he or she may be required to report it to the authorities if he or she is a mandated reporter. It is the interviewer's sole responsibility to follow through with appropriate local and state procedures.

The interviewer should describe any conditions under which confidential information might be disclosed, should specify what information will be reported to the authorities, and describe the procedures which will be followed according to each tribal and local laws/procedures (i.e. who will make the report, to whom will the report be made etc.).

**REMINDER:** The interviewer and tribal program must familiarize themselves with their own local resources.

Interviewers are reminded that state law periodically changes and does vary from state to state. Interviewers conducting the interview should familiarize themselves with the applicable local reporting requirements.

**IMPORTANT:** If you report suspected abuse or neglect of an elder as a result of the survey interview, contact NIEJI as soon as possible to provide information necessary for reporting to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as an adverse incident.

The survey should not be bent or folded and answers should be marked within the space provided. Extra marks, creases, or spills on the survey can delay processing the form. Once all

surveys have been completed, return them to your representative community or agency, so they can be sent to NIEJI for processing.

In this packet you will find:

- How to get started
- Interviewers guide
- Verbal Consent form
- Frequently Asked Questions

Please take time to familiarize yourself with the survey and guide prior to interviewing. Please contact us via email or phone call with questions or needed technical support.

Thank You for your participation. We hope the interviewing experience is pleasant and positive for you and the elders you interview.

**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE**

Attn: Peggy Jo Archer

Center for Rural Health

University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Suite E231

1301 North Columbia Road, Stop 9037

Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037

Website: <https://www.nieji.org/>

Email: [info@nieji.org](mailto:info@nieji.org)

Telephone: (855) 834-1572

Fax: (701) 777-6779