Defining and Assessing Elder Abuse in Indian Country

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Description: The Knee center is a partner in collaboration with The Southern Plains Indian Adult Protection Team. The team works to protect the interests of tribal elders. In service to the tea, the KCSF conducted a two-round Delphi study to examine factors which contribute to adult abuse as defined by the National Center for Elder Abuse. Members of the Southern Plains team, as well as other professionals who provide services to elderly tribal members were surveyed. The survey examined physical, sexual and emotional abuse, exploitation, neglect and abandonment. These were examined at the family, tribal and societal levels. Tribal strengths that might reduce the likelihood of abuse from occurring were also examined. This study found that “substance abuse by perpetrator” was the first key area contributing to adult abuse, followed by “lack of financial resources” and a “history of violence in the perpetrator/offender”. Following this survey, the Knee Center conducted a focus group with the Southern Plains team, to present findings and to identify what needs to be done to prevent abuse, discuss tribal strengths that can help prevent abuse, and identify areas for future research.