Creating an Elder Abuse MDT

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AGENDA

• About the EJI and the MDT TAC
• Starting an MDT in your Community
  ➢ Important things to consider
• The Benefits of Elder Abuse Case Review MDTs
WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND?

- Administrative
- Financial
- Law Enforcement
- Legal
- Medical
- Mental Health Services
- Research
- Social Work
- Victim Services
- Other (please specify)
The **mission** is to support and coordinate the Department of Justice’s enforcement and programmatic efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud and scams that target older adults.

The Initiative does so by—

- Promoting justice for older adults.
- Helping older victims and their families.
- Enhancing state and local efforts through training and resources.
- Supporting research to improve elder abuse policy and practice.
Elder abuse is a complex issue that intersects with many disciplines.

Elder abuse can happen to anyone. It affects people of every ethnic background, gender, and financial status.
ABOUT THE MDT TAC

Our mission is to provide tools, resources, and individualized consultations to facilitate the expansion of elder abuse case review multidisciplinary teams across the nation.
SERVICES

• Responding to requests for materials (e.g., toolkits or research)

• Phone consultations to discuss problem solving (e.g., confidentiality issues)

• In-person consultations for communities needing a more hands-on approach

• Educational opportunities such as webinars

• MDT Guide and Toolkit
The Multidisciplinary Team Technical Assistance Center (MDT TAC) has chosen to focus on elder abuse case review MDTs due to their direct impact on the lives of abuse victims. Case review MDTs work collaboratively to investigate and prosecute cases, and to ensure victims receive the services they need to recover from abuse. Through regular, face-to-face meetings MDT case review teams discuss cases, share information, and develop a plan for moving each case forward.
Chapters & Toolkit Items

**How to Use this Guide**
Understanding the purpose and design of this guide
- Glossary
- How to Use this Guide (with Citations)

**1: Introduction to Multidisciplinary Teams**
Understanding MDT models, including the need for and benefits of MDTs.
- Chapter 1 (with Citations)

**2: Meeting the Needs of your Community**
Crafting a needs assessment, choosing an MDT model, and defining your purpose
- Additional Foundational Activities
- Additional MDT Activities
- Needs Assessment Planner
- Needs Assessment Worksheet
- Statement of Need Planner
- Statement of Need Worksheet
- Chapter 2 (with Citations)

**3: Selecting Team Members**
Choosing and recruiting members for your team
- Member Roles and Contributions
- Sample: Recruitment Invitation - Denver
- Sample: Member Roles and Responsibilities - Lifespan
- Chapter 3 (with Citations)
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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Toolkit Items

• Glossary
• How to Use this Guide (with Citations)

How to Use this Guide

The goal of this guide is to encourage and facilitate the development and growth of elder abuse case review Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs). In this guide, you will find information about MDT structures and functions, along with common issues with which a team will need to grapple in developing a case review MDT. There is no one way to create or maintain an MDT. Therefore, this guide offers a variety of ideas, sample materials, resources, and tools intended to guide the development and sustainability of an MDT.

Any community can start an MDT. The form and function of your MDT will depend on the community in which it is developed. It may at times be frustrating as you face obstacles in your community. This guide can assist you in anticipating and planning for challenges and applying the knowledge and experience of other MDTs to the development of your team.

Currently, the elder abuse MDT approach has received little empirical evaluation, although there are exceptions. However, there are no published studies that provide clear direction on how to create and maintain high-functioning MDTs in any discipline, although work in this direction is burgeoning. Therefore, this guide draws heavily upon MDTs in other disciplines (child abuse, education, business, medicine).

This is a living document designed to be updated with new information, research, and Toolkit items as they become available. When new material is added, we intend to notify our colleagues of changes as best we can, through email blasts. Check back to our webpage often to view and download the latest materials. You may also sign up to be on our MDT TAC distribution list by emailing Talitha Guinn-Stavater, MDT Technical Advisor at talitha.j.guinn-stavater@usdoj.gov.
Chapter 2: Meeting the Needs of Your Community

Meeting the Needs of Your Community

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Chapter 2: Summary

Conducting a needs assessment will provide your community with the evidence it needs to demonstrate to stakeholders that a need exists for an MDT. Other important decisions your community will need to make concern the organizational structure of the MDT, the organization with which the MDT is affiliated, and the primary purpose of the MDT. There are no right or wrong decisions but rather will depend on the needs of and resources within your community. They are important decisions. However, all other decisions will flow from these three initial decisions. For more about foundational activities, see our Toolkit Area. Other Activities to Build the Foundation for an MDT.

Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment

There are many reasons to perform a needs assessment. A needs assessment can provide that evidence.

A needs assessment is the systematic effort to gather information from various sources that will identify the needs of victims in your community and the resources that are available to them. It will have your community action decision.

Visit Existing MDT Models

Throughout this process, take field trips to visit other communities that utilize MDT. It may be easier to find a state-by-state Advocacy Center that can model the MDT approach, as they are far more prevalent than older abuse MDTs. Most Directors are willing to share their knowledge and experience with others. An added benefit is that Advocacy Centers vary in size and scope, and you may find one that has comparable demographics to your own community. If you are unable to physically visit the MDT, most Directors would be willing to speak with you on the phone.
STARTING A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM IN YOUR COMMUNITY
Rooted in the biopsychosocial model, MDTs are defined as representatives from three or more disciplines who work collaboratively, bound by a common purpose.

MDTs have a shared goal and shared definition of the problem they are addressing.
COMMON MDTS SERVING OLDER ADULTS

- Elder fatality review teams
- Hoarding teams
- Mental illness teams
- Elder abuse teams
- Guardianship teams
- Financial abuse specialist teams
- Code enforcement teams
CHOSE A STRUCTURE

What type of team will work best for your community? What agencies and organizations should be involved in starting your team?

https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/2-meeting-needs-your-community

(See Organizational Structure paragraph)
What is the purpose of your team? What do you hope to accomplish together? Having a clear mission and agreed upon goals early on in the process of developing your team will help to keep everyone on track, working toward the same outcomes and clear about how to measure success.

https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/4-building-strong-foundation
RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

- Be as collaborative and open to a wide variety of participants as possible. Think about who is needed to resolve elder abuse cases effectively and efficiently.

- Understand the needs of your community. Understand local systems issues and politics. Propose solutions to problems.

- Clearly communicate the benefits of collaboration – “What’s in it for me?”

- Identify influencers and leaders within organizations and build relationships.

- Empower others.

https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/selecting-team-members
SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS

**Shared Decision-Making**
The entire team participates in the decision making process, sharing information, and sharing successes.

**Partnership**
MDTs are characterized by a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or an Interagency Agreement (IAA).

**Interdependency**
Group and individual outcomes are influenced by the team.

**Balanced Power**
All members of the MDT have equal input and prohibit a single member from dominating the group.

**Process**
The development and use of protocols to introduce predictability and accountability into the case review process, including protocols for conflict resolution.
DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

- Clearly understand and agree upon interpretations of your state laws and statues
  https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/file/960791/download

- Identify someone to serve as the coordinator
  https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/6-mdt-coordinator

- Create MOUs for participating agencies
  https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/5-ethical-legal-considerations

- Write protocols

- Learn more about building a strong foundation here
  https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/4-building-strong-foundation
The heart of your MDT is the case review meeting itself. Ensure that presenters have the support they need to bring their case to the meeting by providing clear information about intake policy and procedures, presentation guidelines and by providing emotional support as needed.

https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/8-case-review
Create mechanisms to evaluate team performance and make adjustments as needed.

Managing an MDT requires ongoing commitment and resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Ongoing joint training</th>
<th>Staff (and staff turnover)</th>
<th>Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing trust and team building</td>
<td>Regular review of policies and procedures</td>
<td>Conflict management</td>
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• Build into the MDT protocols periodic and ongoing training, both formal and informal, particularly as new members arrive and protocols and policies change, and the political landscape shifts.

• Attend to your team’s cross-training needs https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/7-professional-development

• EJI has many educational resources and webinars that may help your team https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/webinars
WHAT ARE WE GROWING?
STRUCTURE AND BENEFITS OF
ELDER ABUSE CASE REVIEW MDTs
 COMMON CORE MEMBERS

- Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Aging services network personnel
- Geriatricians/physicians
- Law enforcement
- Prosecutors (District Attorneys)
- Psychologists/neuropsychologists
- Victim-witness advocates/victim service providers
Multiple agencies and/or organizations review cases of elder abuse

Each agency maintains their professional role while collaborating with multiple agencies – each agencies’ work complements the other and lends an important perspective to the work

The burden of investigating and responding to complex cases of elder abuse is shared

Better case outcomes are often noted for the client, the community and the participating agencies
Conducting various evaluations in-home as a team lessens the burden of multiple interviews for the alleged abuse victims, while simultaneously gathering information on needed services for older victims as well as evidence for possible prosecution.

An MDT enhances the probability that no matter where victims enter the system, they have access to coordinated services.

As victims may receive concurrent services by many disciplines, coordination of these services may reduce the number of systems victims have to navigate.

Collaboration promotes greater awareness of available services, and improves access to and receipt of services for victims.
• Coordination creates an integrated array of services tailored to the victim’s multifaceted needs that build upon the family’s strengths.

• Collaboration produces creative solutions that no one agency could produce on its own.

• Working as an MDT provides informal social support for victims, enhanced monitoring and follow-up beyond the crisis period, potentially reducing the recurrence of elder abuse.

• Collaboration facilitates more effective and positive outcomes for clients. For example, if health care professionals need to spend time being social workers, then fewer medical needs may be attended to, but if someone else can do the social work, then health care professionals can focus on the medical needs of the client.
BENEFITS TO TEAM MEMBERS

- Responsibility for a case (ensuring safety, permanency, and well-being) is shared among the MDT members. This not only lends greater confidence to team members regarding case planning, but it may reduce liability risks due to the input of high-level agency representatives and qualified medical and legal consultants brought in when appropriate. Decisions regarding the client are better informed and reviewed prior to implementation.

- Every agency has legal and policy restrictions on their response to elder abuse that other agencies may be able to fill if the need is known.

- MDT members may back each other up, pointing out the importance of various MDT disciplines to victims.
BENEFITS TO TEAM MEMBERS

- Through exposure to different disciplines, team members:
  - Learn each other’s mandates and jargon
  - Broaden and enrich their understanding of elder abuse
  - Sharpen their professional skills to better manage and build cases
- MDT members can access the pool of experts on the MDT to obtain assistance in resolving difficult cases.
- Learning how other professionals in the community handle similar situations can bolster MDT member’s confidence.
- MDTs can instill confidence that the case is being handled the best way possible by obtaining validation from other team members.
BENEFITS TO TEAM MEMBERS

- MDTs can enhance job satisfaction by promoting collegiality and motivation, while supporting one another by providing a safe place to vent frustration, relieve tension, and share feelings of helplessness.

- MDTs extend and leverage interagency resources in part by reducing the financial and staff burden on individual agencies.

- If one agency does not have the resources a victim needs, someone else on the MDT likely does.

- MDTs can identify service gaps and make system changes.

- MDTs improve the ability of agencies to share information and track families across agencies.

- Through group decision-making, fewer errors are made.
BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

› Providing a forum for balancing the interests and perspectives of professionals from diverse disciplines, clients, and society.

› Enhancing relationships among public and private service providers.

› Creating community responsibility for victim safety.

› Strengthening families, which strengthens communities.

› Extending the reach of limited resources within a community.
CONTACT THE MDT TAC

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