

Sentinels: Reaching Hidden Victims

PROJECT FINAL REPORT

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National Center on Elder Abuse Sentinel Projects

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sentinel Project was developed by the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) in 1999. The overarching goal of the Sentinel Project was to identify and assist isolated elders who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. Sentinels, individuals trained to spot signs of elder abuse and refer cases, were the critical actors in this project. Several objectives were developed to meet the Project goal, including: identifying and developing partnerships with key national organizations and enlisting their local members and/or state affiliates as sentinels; exploring innovative methods for identifying and training sentinels at the local level; and assisting state, regional and local coalitions in raising public awareness of elder abuse.

At the national level NCEA established partnerships with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Meals on Association of America (MOWAA) and the National Association of Retired Senior Volunteer Program Directors (NARSVPD). These organizations were chosen because many isolated elders are seen or observed in their homes by individuals such as Meals on Wheels (MOW) delivery volunteers, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteers working as Friendly Visitors or Companions, and HSUS affiliates working in local animal protection efforts, making these organization's members ideal as sentinels.

The collaborations resulted in a number of positive actions. HSUS expanded its First Strike Campaign (a national initiative showing the connection between animal abuse and human violence) to include elders. MOWAA and NARSVPD encouraged collaboration between their state and local affiliates and local elder abuse coalitions to assist in identifying and training local affiliates as sentinels. Once trained, affiliates of MOWAA and NARSVPD proved essential to the success of several of the sentinel projects.

In the local sentinel projects several significant outcomes were realized, including the training of approximately 1280 sentinels (professionals and volunteers). All of the six coalition projects noted an improvement in communication and cooperation among the agencies and an increase in their responsiveness to elder abuse cases. There was also an increase in referrals to APS in the communities where sentinels were utilized. More than 20 products were developed by the local coalitions (brochures, grocery bags, placemats, poster, a video, etc.). Materials including PowerPoint presentations, were developed for training specific professional audiences such as law enforcement, legal staff, and postal workers. Outreach materials were distributed to over 7,650 individuals. In addition, project managers noted an increase in the satisfaction level of sentinel volunteers who, as a result of being in the project, were enabled to assist persons whom they believed might be victims or potential victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The project uncovered several issues of importance for policy and program development. For example, misconceptions by both professionals and the public as to how and to whom to report abuse/neglect and what APS can and cannot do by law suggest that both professionals and community volunteers need better information on the roles, responsibilities and authorities of APS. Providing cross training opportunities between

APS and other service systems (aging, financial, legal, medical, social services) is essential in creating a comprehensive system of response to elder abuse. On-going funding is needed to support special abuse prevention efforts organized under the auspices of elder abuse coalitions. Finally, future sentinel initiatives would benefit from including as sentinels, representatives from the faith communities, senior housing, long-term care facilities, civic organizations and schools.

INTRODUCTION

Utilizing sentinels to help gather information, the National Elder Abuse Incidence Study (NEAIS) published in 1998, found that for every identified case of abuse or neglect, five cases went undisclosed. Many elders are isolated and, as a result, no one observes or reports possible cases of abuse or neglect and victims do not self-report. Therefore, they remain hidden from the community and do not receive the assistance necessary to live their lives free of abuse.

To identify and assist vulnerable elder, the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), with approval from the U.S. Administration on Aging, designed a project entitled “The Sentinel Project.” The cornerstone of the Project depended on the use of “sentinels,” identified as individuals in the community who come in contact with isolated elders at risk of abuse and neglect. The Sentinel Project utilized a two pronged approach to reach hidden victims. First, NCEA staff engaged national organizations whose members or state affiliates come in contact with elders to provide special outreach for hidden victims. Second, a national effort was made to identify local elder abuse coalitions and enable the coalitions, through small grants, to develop model and/or innovative sentinel training and outreach at the local level.

In summary, the three goals of the sentinel Project were to: 1) identify and assist isolated elders who may be at-risk of abuse and/or neglect; 2) recruit and train individuals in the community as sentinels, to recognize signs of abuse and neglect, make referrals to adult protective services (APS), and assist victims to seek help; and 3) raise awareness of professionals and the public about elder abuse and neglect.

To accomplish the goals, the Project developed and implemented partnerships with three national organizations whose members or state and local affiliates are in contact with isolated elders. Second, the Project conducted a nationwide search to identify and contact state, regional and local coalitions whose primary concern is elder abuse. National data about the coalitions was developed and published as the *National Directory of State, Regional and Local Elder Abuse Coalitions*, a major inventory covering structure, membership, goals, activities, funding and technical assistance needs. Finally, in an effort to identify, train and mobilize sentinels, a small grant program was initiated and assisted in providing training and technical assistance for sentinel projects designed by six local coalitions. Each project developed evaluation methods and outcome measures to help compare and assess the effectiveness of various methods and materials. Evaluation models developed by the Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly (CANE) were employed in the final evaluation of each projects program. A guide based

on the experiences of the sentinel projects is being prepared to assist coalitions to replicate sentinel efforts.

PROJECT DESIGN

The project design utilized a two-tiered approach. The first tier entailed outreach to national organizations who have not traditionally been involved in elder abuse but whose members or affiliates at the state or local level may come in contact with elders at risk of abuse or neglect. The goal was to create a top down, bottom up approach that would link national organizations with the outreach efforts of state and local elder abuse coalitions. With knowledge and encouragement from their national leadership, the goal of the Project was that members of these organizations would become involved with local coalitions as trained sentinels and support coalition activities and outreach.

The second tier was composed of state, regional and local elder abuse coalitions. The coalitions were identified through a national outreach to state units on aging, state adult protective services and area agencies on aging. Coalitions were defined as any alliance formed by individuals or organizations whose primary concern is elder abuse. A survey was sent to each coalition in order to gain a better understanding of their membership base, structure, needs, and activities, and to inquire if the coalition wanted to be listed in the *National Directory of State, Regional and Local Elder Abuse Coalitions*. The *Directory* would be a tool for sharing strategies, ideas, information and resources among peers in addressing elder abuse prevention and intervention.

A notice of a request for proposals (RFP) was then disseminated to the coalitions. They were invited to submit proposals for a competitive award of up to \$5,000 to fund model outreach projects. The funding would assist the coalition to identify, train and mobilize sentinels who could then reach out to isolated elders and help those suspected of being abused or neglected. A panel of reviewers with the ability to judge potential effectiveness of the proposed projects (and who did not have a conflict of interest with any applicant) selected six model projects from the proposals submitted. They were:

- Cayuga County Coalition Against Elder Abuse, Auburn, NY
- LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium, Rochester, NY
- Orange County Elder Abuse Mistreatment Coalition, Chapel Hill, NC
- Six County RSVP, Richfield, UT
- Sonoma County Human Services Elder Abuse Prevention Council, Santa Rosa, CA
- Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force, Yuma, AZ

Once selected, NCEA staff worked with each of the six project managers to provide technical assistance to assist the coalition in implementing their project.

The coalition projects focused on two target groups. The first group was elders at risk of abuse or neglect, primarily elders isolated from the community who were unaware of available services and assistance. The elders may live alone or with family members or caregivers who may be neglecting or abusing them. The second group was sentinels

(individuals from community agencies and organizations who have frequent contact with at-risk elders). They were recruited through existing members of the elder abuse coalitions or through outreach such as newspaper articles, advertisements or public service announcements.

Each of the six coalitions identified specific categories of elders who would best represent their at-risk target population (e.g., low-income, minority, ethnic, rural, part-time residents). Then, each coalition identified and trained sentinels who would be most effective in interacting with that specific elder population, e.g., sentinels who represented the same ethnic or minority background, managers and staff from low-income senior housing, bi-lingual individuals, etc.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

NCEA developed partnerships with three national organizations: Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA), and the National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors, Inc. (NARSVPD). Collaboration was developed through meetings, conference calls, emails and letters between NCEA and national representatives of HSUS, MOWAA and VARSVPD. Letters from NCEA were sent to state, regional and local elder abuse coalitions to encourage them to contact state and local members of each of the three national organizations to promote collaboration at the local level. In addition, information about the partnerships was highlighted in the *NCEA Newsletter* and on the NCEA Website.

Methods to reach and utilize membership varied within the three national organizations, in part, because of differences in how each national organization was structured. HSUS was the only one of the three organizations that had staff at the national level who could devote dedicated time to the NCEA partnership.

Humane Society of the United States (USUS)

The Humane Society of the United States was identified as a partner because animals are often significant companions to elderly persons, especially if they are isolated from the community. Neglect or abuse of a pet may be the first visible indication that an elder is being abused or neglected. Perpetrators may intimidate an elder by threatening to harm the elder's pet. Self-neglecting elders often neglect their pets. Concerned neighbors may alert local animal control officers. Thus, animal safety and control officers are in an ideal position to be trained and utilized as sentinels. In addition, HSUS already had a national program, called First Strike, that showed the connection between domestic abuse and animal abuse. Therefore, the connection between elder abuse and animal abuse seemed a natural extension of the First Strike Program.

HSUS also developed and distributed a survey to state adult elder abuse contacts, including state protective services administrators, to assess the prevalence of animal cruelty in cases of elder abuse. HSUS received 160 responses from 37 states.

Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA)

Meals on Wheels Association of America worked with NCEA to strategize how sentinel projects could effectively identify and utilize local MOW volunteers as sentinels. MOWAA promoted the partnership through local Meals On Wheels (MOW) programs administered through the area agency on aging, churches or other community organizations. In addition, MOWAA wanted to build on a previous curriculum that had been developed for Florida MOW volunteers who would cross train with domestic violence service providers. To achieve this, MOWAA requested that NCEA assist the Institute for Family Violence Studies at Florida University, to refine its existing MOW training manual to include elder abuse. NCEA is currently working with Florida State in an advisory capacity. The revised MOW training manual is scheduled for distribution in 2002.

National Association of Retired Senior Volunteer Program Directors (NARSVPD)

The National Association of Retired Senior Volunteer Program Directors endorsed the Sentinel Project as a natural extension of NARSVPD's partnership with the TRIAD program, which involves sheriffs, police chiefs and seniors working together to reduce crime against the elderly. Recognizing that RSVP volunteers know the community and are familiar with programs that serve the elderly, NARSVPD was enthusiastic in promoting the partnership with NCEA. The NCEA-NARSVPD partnership was highlighted on NARSVPD's Website and in their Newsletter. In addition, NARSVPD co-sponsored a letter to promote the use of RSVP volunteers as sentinels and as members of state and local elder abuse coalitions. The letter was sent to the states that had and RVP State Director. (Appendix D)

BENEFITS AND RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

- HSUS expanded its First Strike Campaign to show the connections between elder abuse/neglect and animal abuse/neglect. As a product for the Campaign, HSUS developed a new brochure entitled, *Making The Connection: Helping Vulnerable Adults and Their Pets* and the *HSUS National Survey on the Connection Between Animal Cruelty and Elder Abuse*. (Appendix C) HSUS promoted the partnership in presentations at regional and national elder abuse conferences; on the HSUS Website; through letters to HSUS state program administrators. HSUS will continue to promote the partnership with NCEA at elder abuse, domestic violence and HSUS regional conferences.

Both MOWAA and NARSVPD encouraged affiliates to: 1) educate local members to raise awareness of elder abuse, 2) be trained as sentinels to identify and help hidden victims of elder abuse and neglect, 3) play a key role in promoting activities that raise awareness of elder abuse within the community, 4) collaborate with law enforcement, legal, financial, medical and mental health systems to build a comprehensive community response to elder abuse, and 5) work closely with adult protective services to assist victims of elder abuse.

Two of the sentinel projects, those sponsored by the Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council and Six County RSVP worked closely with local MOW programs to train MOW volunteers as sentinels. Two products that were developed for the MOW sentinels to distribute to elders were placemats and grocery bags that contained information about elder abuse and referral information.

Two of the NCEA-funded sentinel projects relied heavily on RSVP staff and volunteer leadership. The Six County RSVP Sentinel Project, in Utah, focused on training RSVP volunteers as sentinels who would reach out to isolated elders living in rural areas. LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium of Greater Rochester, NY, trained RSVP volunteers to recognize the warning signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation when working as companions to homebound elders and providing respite for caregivers. In addition, RSVP sentinels provided outreach to managers of low-income minority housing.

COALITION DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Summary

Approximately 1280 sentinels were trained, including a diversity of professionals and volunteers. (Appendix A) Over 20 products were developed throughout the course of the Project. (Appendix B) Outreach materials were distributed to over 7,650 individuals.

Coalition members identified benefits in several areas. First, the project provided an opportunity for members to increase their own individual knowledge of elder abuse and the APS referral process. It also provided a venue for each member agency to share information about their particular services and how to access them. Finally, each project noted an increase in collaboration among participating agencies. All six coalitions did a remarkable job of maximizing funding by getting contributions, donations, discounts and services from local businesses; utilizing a variety of agency resources, staff and volunteers; obtaining media coverage; and creating opportunities for community organizations to assist in implementing the project.

Six Counties RSVP was able to measure an increase in elder abuse awareness. A baseline telephone survey was conducted at the beginning of the project to determine the respondent knowledge of elder abuse. A follow-up survey of the same respondents conducted at the end of the project showed an increase in knowledge of the indicators of elder abuse and neglect and where and how to refer vulnerable elders. Other projects had difficulty specifically measuring any increase in public awareness. This was due to a number of reasons including; lack of development of a baseline and follow-up assessment tool; lack of staff to follow-up; inability to track the distribution of outreach material; staff and volunteer time constraints; and lack of funding for follow-up. Anecdotally, however, there appeared to be an increase in the number of cases referred to APS in areas where outreach efforts were initiated, which suggests an increase in awareness of elder abuse and neglect.

All six projects suggested future sentinel initiatives would benefit from including additional categories of professionals as sentinels and coalition members. These would include representatives from banking/financial, business, domestic violence, elected officials, the faith community, hospice, long-term care facilities, the courts (including judges), medical professions (emergency medical, hospital, physicians, nurses), notaries and other civic organizations.

Although tracking increases in referrals to APS was not always possible, three of the projects were able to track increases in referrals to APS that resulted in assistance for elders who had not been previously identified as being at-risk. The projects were Six County RSVP, Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council and Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force. Tracking of reports in the remaining projects presented a challenge due to a lack of tools to determine the origin of the report and dedicated staff to follow-up with APS.

Several gaps in services were uncovered during the course of the coalition projects. They included: mental health services for vulnerable adults; emergency and transitional housing for victims of elder abuse and neglect; emergency response teams to work with APS on complicated cases; access to a telephone for isolated elders; access to transportation for elders needing services especially in rural and low-income areas; respite for family members and caregivers; and day care for elders. In addition, effective methods of tracking referrals to APS and other agency providers need to be developed and utilized. Finally, providing training opportunities closer to where the volunteers lived would have increased the participation of potential sentinels.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT BRIEFS

Cayuga County Coalition Against Elder Abuse
Auburn, NY

The goal of the Coalition is to educate the community about elder abuse, thereby increasing public awareness, and aiding vulnerable elders. The objective was to assist service providers and community members in identifying the population of elders in Cayuga County who may be at risk of abuse and/or neglect. Training was accomplished through the development of a tool that could be used for training service providers as sentinels and educating the public.

The tool was a video that offered the viewer a brief description of the various types of abuse/neglect; the indicators of abuse /neglect; and where to call for assistance. The intent was that by keeping the video short, agencies with little time available for training would be able to share it with staff and on an “as needed” basis to train new agency staff and reinforce understanding of elder abuse and neglect. The video featured actual representatives from a number of agencies and disciplines including: adult protective services, banking, domestic violence, law enforcement, medical, and mental health. The coalition enlisted the help of Stephen Gage, of Stephen Gage Productions, to assist in the development of the video.

FINDINGS

- “Seeing local people in the video makes all the difference in the world” was a frequent comment from those who viewed the video. Using actual representatives from the various agencies lent a credibility and authenticity to the film that might not have been achieved had paid actors been used. In addition, it emphasized the teamwork necessary in responding adequately to a report of elder abuse and assisting the elder at risk of abuse or neglect.
- The video was not only a tool for providing information about elder abuse and neglect, but also, effective in demonstrating the complexity of many elder abuse and neglect cases.

OUTCOMES

The tangible outcome was *Sentinels: Reaching Hidden Victims*, a 14 minute video. It has been aired on the local Public Broadcasting station and has been shown to a variety of community agencies and organizations. It will be used by agencies for training purposes and in outreach presentations.

An intangible outcome was the enthusiastic collaboration of agencies, not only in the production of the video, but in the desire to address elder abuse issues.

Information on ordering the video is included in the “Dissemination of Products” section.

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

The greatest challenge was in designing a video that could provide enough information in a short period of time while holding the attention of the viewer. Also, scheduling a time to tape professionals shown on the video required a longer time than anticipated. This often required juggling taping times to accommodate the producer’s and “actors” schedules.

LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium Rochester, NY
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The goal of the project was to decrease the prevalence of elder abuse within Monroe and Livingston Counties. The major objectives were to identify and train sentinels who come in regular contact with elders to help them identify and elders at risk of abuse and neglect. Potential sentinels were identified from a variety of disciplines and sources including: home health aides; law enforcement officers; staff and care managers of senior housing apartment buildings; emergency medical technicians (EMT); legal staff; postal workers; RSVP volunteers; hospital interns; and Meals on Wheels volunteers.

FINDINGS

- The postmaster was reluctant to use the terms “abuse” and “mistreatment,” therefore, the term “elder watch” was utilized in training postal workers and for any training materials. The postmaster offered the use of the post office print shop to reproduce posters and other materials displayed in the post offices and for laminated information cards distributed to elders by the post office.
- There was interest on the part of The United Way of Greater Rochester to provide funds for LIFESPAN to develop a ten minute video for use in training postal workers, per agreement with the postmaster.
- The project identified a need for specially trained law enforcement investigators to determine criminal vs. civil cases.
- The project also identified the need to include nurses in any respite services, especially for elders with more complex medical problems.

OUTCOMES

The program had a number of outcomes including:

- A postal worker saved the life of an elderly man after noticing that the man had not picked up his mail for several days. The postal worker had attended a sentinel training program and was concerned about the elder. He called his supervisor to ask him to call 911. The elder was found by firefighters in a coma on his kitchen floor. A primary Rochester newspaper and two local news stations covered the story.
- After training postal workers, five cases of abuse were reported by postal workers. The production of a short video for postal workers was in the final stages of editing by the end of the project year.
- LIFESPAN social workers trained as sentinels interceded in 39 cases.
- Dissemination of over 1000 elder abuse informational pocket cards and brochures.

A total of 945 sentinels were trained including:

- 8 respite workers who work with elders diagnosed with Alzheimers Disease
- 19 home health aides
- 15 staff and care managers from five senior apartment buildings
- 40 Irondequoit Citizens Police Academy seniors and police
- 71 emergency medical technicians
- 6 hospital interns
- 18 volunteer financial managers
- 35 members of Police and Citizens Together Against Crime (PAC TAC)
- 13 long term care Ombudsmen

- 7 police lieutenants who are community liaisons
- 522 postal workers
- 6 Emergency Housing workers
- 23 students from the Criminal Justice and Social Work class
- 131 Finger Lakes area professionals at the June Elder Abuse Prevention Conference
- 19 probation officers
- 12 Assistant District Attorneys

PRODUCTS

Brochure *The Sentinel Project*

Laminated pocket card

Poster

Video for postal workers

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

Revisions to the original plan were required due to a number of reasons:

- The inability to train postal workers, emergency medical technicians and law enforcement during the holiday season postponed training until January 2001.
- Developing the training for sentinels took more time than initially expected.
- Having the Visiting Nurse Association oversee the local MOW program presented a challenge in being able to reach MOW volunteers to train and mobilize as sentinels.
- Difficulties in accessing public transportation prevented some sentinels from reaching elders in need, especially in the suburbs and in rural areas.
- Some postal workers were very resistant to the idea of being sentinels and thought what happens in their elderly customers' lives was none of their business.
- Competing responsibilities of staff, prevented the follow-up of elders who had been reached by sentinels.

<p>Orange County Elder Abuse Mistreatment Coalition Chapel Hill, NC</p>
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The goal of the project was to reduce the number of elders whose abuse and/or neglect was hidden. The objectives for the project included: increasing community awareness of elder mistreatment by identifying and training individuals who could act as sentinels in assisting vulnerable elders. Outreach focused on first responders and other professionals

who came in contact with elders through the course of their jobs and volunteers who interacted with elders and their families on a regular basis.

Other objectives included the development of: two training programs, one for the public and one for professionals; an Elder Mistreatment Emergency Response Team; a television program; articles for medical journals and local newsletters; and elder abuse signs, posters, and brochures.

FINDINGS

There were a number of findings concerning the training of sentinels:

- Community members, professionals, students and organizations that were approached were very receptive to receiving and sharing printed materials that had been produced by the coalition.
- The majority of seniors who were involved in community organizations serving seniors were very receptive to being trained as sentinels.
- Most of the medical professionals and professional students (nurses) responded favorably to the sentinel training that was provided.
- Coalition trainers had to be adaptable to do the training at various times of the day or evening, often at a group's previously set training day.
- The formation of an elder mistreatment emergency response team to respond to complicated cases of elder abuse had a nurse and a social worker "on board" by the conclusion of the project year. A geropsychiatrist, psychiatrist and a second nurse are still being recruited as well as a "backup" social worker.

A number of gaps in services were identified including:

- Elder mistreatment emergency response teams composed of a geriatric nurse, geriatric social worker and geropsychiatrist or geriatrician are needed in every county to assist APS workers in cases in which the elder's cognitive, legal or mistreatment status is unclear, or when the elder is in imminent danger.
- Funding is needed at the local level for interim services (emergency housing, food, medical care) for elders who have been abused or neglected.
- Emergency shelters designed for the unique needs of elders must be available.
- The difference in definitions of elder abuse and neglect among experts, North Carolina state statutes, and other state statutes act as a barrier to effective detection of victims of elder abuse.

- collegial commitment, communication, and cooperation among agencies serving older adults are essential to the detection and intervention in elder mistreatment cases

OUTCOMES

The project-written article, “Elder Mistreatment: a Guide for Medical Professionals”, featured in the September issue of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*, was an effective method of reaching a number of physicians and informing them about elder abuse.

Sentinel training sessions were conducted for approximately 200 individuals including:

- 15 educational sessions for the public (approximately 150 trained)
- health care and human services professional students through formal classes, the Program on Aging lecture series, the certificate in gerontology program and presentations to student organizations
- home health nurses
- emergency room nurses and one physician
- social workers
- hospice staff
- nurses who staff the geriatrics unit in UNC Hospitals
- members of the Orange County Agencies Network on Aging
- Orange County Advisory Board on Aging
- Orange County Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee
- Orange County Domicillary Home Community Advisory Committee
- 25 staff at area nursing and rest homes
- peer counselors and shelter staff at the Women’s Center
- county firemen
- 12 law enforcement (sheriff and police departments)
- emergency medical technicians

Informational materials were distributed as follows:

- Flyers distributed to 300 elders through AARP of Orange County.
- Flyers given to 350 people at Apple Chill Street Fair.
- Notices posted in all UNC Hospital & Family Practice Clinics, emergency room, social work departments, and at the Prospect Hill Clinic in Northern Orange County.
- Flyers posted in most physicians’ offices, drug stores, grocery stores.
- Flyers posted in all county transportation vehicles that transport older adults.
- Brochures distributed to the 6 assisted living facilities in the county, and some rest homes.

PRODUCTS

Two formal training programs were developed in both PowerPoint and colored overhead transparencies, one for the public and another, more extensive one for professionals. Both were utilized in appropriate training venues.

Other products included:

Flyers	Signs	Medical Journal article
Posters	Brochures	

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

The following challenges required a revision in the original workplan:

- Recruiting and training MOW volunteers presented a challenge due to competing volunteer responsibilities.
- Although training and outreach materials were developed in the first quarter of the Project, the printing of the materials was delayed until the second quarter, which in turn, caused a delay in the training of sentinels until the second quarter.
- Due to scheduling difficulties, Dr. William Friday was unable to address elder mistreatment on his television show, “North Carolina People.”

Six County RSVP Richfield, UT

The goal of the project was to raise public awareness of elder abuse in individuals living in the six county area and assist them to understand their obligation to report abuse to law enforcement or APS. This was achieved through a community outreach program utilizing trained volunteers as sentinels acting in a train the trainer capacity.

The three primary objectives of the outreach program were:

- To provide Central Utah (Six County) area seniors and the public with pertinent information about APS and Six County Area Agency on Aging programs as well as other community resources that may reduce elder abuse
- Increase awareness of elder abuse as a critical community problem within the Six County region
- Identify and assist elders at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation

FINDINGS

Despite the challenge of conducting the program over such a wide rural area, volunteers who were trained as sentinels were extremely enthusiastic about the program. Other findings included:

- Volunteers reported that very few people really understand that there is more to elder abuse than physical abuse. The general consensus is that elder abuse is not a problem in their neighborhood, but, as they learn more about all forms of elder abuse, their attitude changes dramatically, e.g., “You know, I really think my neighbor fits into the self-neglect category.”
- Involvement by APS workers from the beginning of the project contributed to the success of the program and has been crucial to keeping other service providers interested.
- Some Sentinel volunteers are expanding their assistance to seniors by taking them on errands, doing chores that the elder can no longer do, and teaching the elder how to use email to keep in touch with their family.

OUTCOMES

A number of outcomes caught the attention of the State APS Director:

- APS documented a substantial increase in the number of elder abuse cases reported during the first quarter of the project, with 3 out of every 5 cases reported being substantiated. However, APS cautioned that a three month period was not sufficient to document a true impact.
- In the last three-quarters of the project, APS saw a decrease in the number of serious cases and an increase in more “preventive” types of cases in the areas covered by sentinel volunteers. This may be an indication that sentinels were able to identify situations where abuse can be prevented.
- The State APS Administrator was so encouraged by the Sentinel Project, he has recommended that the model be used as a blueprint for APS areas throughout the state.
- The Sentinel Program was highlighted at the Utah State APS training in St. George. Jerry Howell, APS worker, was honored for his “outstanding and innovative work in helping to bring the Sentinel Grant project to the Six County area.” For this, he received the first “Community Innovation Award.” In addition, Kathy Erickson, RSVP Director and Manager of the Sentinel Project, was presented with the “Outstanding Achievement Award.” The Award was given for her “personal commitment to ensure that the abused, neglected or exploited or disabled elder adults of the State of Utah, and the Six County Area, were provided with the necessary protective services to keep them from harm and for her work with APS in implementing and administering the Sentinel Program.”

Other outcomes:

- 100 telephone surveys to assess baseline knowledge of elder abuse and 100 follow-up calls to assess the difference in awareness were conducted.
- One sentinel volunteer translated all materials into Spanish for dispersion in areas with large Hispanic populations.
- One fast food restaurant, Little Caesar, gave discounts to seniors who displayed the elder abuse information card.
- A local printing company donated the paper for placemats.
- 600 placemats were distributed at senior center meal sites.
- A local display company donated a portable lighted display board for use in exhibits and presentations.
- Sentinel Director worked with APS, Area Agency on Aging and law enforcement to address fear and panic at three senior centers following the rape and murder of a 78 year old local resident.
- Volunteers reached 99 elders and distributed information packets on elder abuse at a booth at the Elsinore Danish Heritage Days.
- Volunteers knocked on every door in a low-income housing development in Millard County to give out flyers.
- Over 1000 flyers were distributed at local and regional conferences.
- Volunteers gave presentation in senior centers in Sevier County, contacting approximately 250 individuals.
- 10 training sessions were provided for Sentinel volunteers (4 covered topics of domestic violence, Medicare Waiver, and strategy brainstorming in addition to elder abuse).
- 8 sheriff staff members were trained.
- 13 attended training at the Tri-County Adult Interagency Council.
- Volunteers met with elected city and county officials to provide information about elder abuse.

PRODUCTS

- 3 ring binder for Sentinel volunteer orientation training that includes: information on the grant; the purpose of the Sentinel Project; time and mileage forms; incident report forms; referral information to other agencies; a contact list of all Sentinel volunteers; RSVP volunteer handbook and forms; and a contact list of APS agencies.
- telephone survey form
- Volunteer Background Screening Form
- Volunteer Activity and Mileage Form
- Incident Report Form
- 5 posters
- flyers
- elder abuse awareness materials in Spanish

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

Most of the barriers concerned the large rural area sentinels would need to travel for training and to assist elders who may be at risk. This presented the following challenges:

- Due to the huge rural area (17,000 miles) and significant distances volunteers would need to travel for initial training, recruiting volunteers as sentinels was extremely difficult (to compensate for this, APS staff, who were part of the coalition, traveled to potential sentinels to recruit and train.
- Providing money to volunteers for reimbursement of mileage consumed much of the funding for the project.
- The number of trained volunteers were insufficient to cover the whole area.
- A few volunteers were self-conscious about speaking formally to large groups, which curtailed their ability to increase public awareness about elder abuse (later in the project year, there was a growth in confidence among the volunteers). One exceptional volunteer had to withdraw from the project because of health problems and another lost the use of her car, making it difficult for her to participate.

<p>Sonoma County Human Services Elder Abuse Prevention Council Santa Rosa, CA</p>
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A major goal was to increase public awareness about elder abuse. The anticipated results were a short-term increase in reporting of abuse and a long-term reduction in incidence of abuse. Objectives included the training of MOW volunteers and Brown Bag volunteers to be utilized as sentinels and developing placemats and grocery bags that MOW and Brown Bag volunteers would distribute to isolated elders.

FINDINGS

Findings centered on two issues: lack of knowledge regarding the role of APS and production and use of outreach materials:

- Many volunteers were aware of “red flags,” but were unclear as to what resources were available once abuse or neglect had been identified.
- Volunteers learned that even though it may not appear that APS was involved, especially in cases where an elder had refused services, APS was indeed continuing to monitor the case.
- Many volunteers were relieved to know they had a place to go to find help for clients that were living in filth and unhealthy environments.
- A case of financial abuse was identified during a presentation and a report was filed.
- The cost of producing quality training materials was much higher than anticipated which necessitated a search for different options for producing the training materials.
- The article, “APS and Public Relations: Why Isn’t Someone Doing Something?” featured in the March, 2001 *NCEA Newsletter* and written by Shari Robinson, Sonoma Sentinel Project Manager, triggered many phone calls from other states requesting copies of Sonoma’s information and materials.

OUTCOMES

Several outcomes were realized, including:

Sentinel training sessions were provided for 82 sentinels including:

- 35 Meals On Wheels volunteers
- 13 Meals On Wheels coordinators
- 21 Paratransit (senior transportation) drivers
- 13 Friendly Visitors

Other outcomes:

- Disseminating Sentinel training materials to elder abuse prevention programs in 13 states including: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Hawaii (2 agencies), Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon and Wisconsin (2 agencies).
- Disseminating 2200 placemats, 1150 grocery bags, and 82 training packets.
- Writing an article about the APS system for the March, 2001 *NCEA Newsletter*.

PRODUCTS

training program for volunteers (2 versions)
grocery bag (for home delivered meals)
placemat (for home delivered meals)
press release
article for *NCEA Newsletter*
elder abuse information card

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

The major challenges focused on sentinel training sites and the development and production of outreach materials:

- Finding a time and place for training that would be convenient for most sentinel volunteers was a challenge, especially for those potential sentinels that lived in outlying rural areas.
- The original plan to hold centralized training meetings for volunteers had to be revised because Brown Bag volunteers could not get to a centralized place and training would need to be taken out to outlying areas.
- Finding the right message for the placemats and grocery bags for elders who received home delivered meals proved a larger challenge than first anticipated --- in the end, one message, “Guidelines For Keeping What’s Yours” was put on one side of the placemat and “Most Caregivers Are Qualified and Caring People . . . Some Caregivers Are Unscrupulous And Will Take Advantage of You” was put on the other side. The resource number for the Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council (707) 565-5900 was placed on both sides of the placemat.
- In developing the placemats and grocery bags, knowing what types of abuse to focus on was a challenge (two elements of elder abuse --- financial abuse and appropriate boundaries for caregivers (chosen because they represented the types of abuse most seniors in Sonoma County remained most in denial of).
- The quality of the placemats was not acceptable and a new vendor needed to be found, causing a small delay in the distribution of the placemats.

Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force

Yuma, AZ

The Task Force focused on educating the community about elder abuse to reduce the incidence of elder abuse. There were four objectives for the project:

- to identify and train potential sentinels
- to select an Educational Seminar Format; one for professionals and one for community sentinels
- to disseminate information to educate the public about elder abuse
- to incorporate elder abuse education into the existing training manual for home delivered meals volunteers.

In order to educate both “working” sentinels and professional members of the community, two seminars were presented.

FINDINGS

Educational seminars need to have goals for participants that match their needs, e.g., professional or public education.

At the local level, there has been a need for legal representation for Ombudsmen who are subpoenaed in cases where a family has filed suit against a skilled nursing facility.

Additional categories that can be trained as sentinels include:

- businesses: pest control, air conditioning, recreational vehicle park personnel, RV supplies and maintenance, restaurant personnel, sanitation personnel
- faith community (Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers Program)
- health industry: hospital emergency room, hospital continuing education programs to reach doctors, physician offices, and outpatient clinics
- community college: nursing programs, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), orientation and education programs for certified nursing assistants

OUTCOMES

Approximately 40 individuals were trained at two educational training seminars:

- The first seminar focused on the needs of professional members of the community (fiduciaries, APS, Sheriff’s Department, Police Department, County Attorney’s office, Area Agency on Aging, and clerical support staff from the local court house). This was an in-depth overview of abuse, investigation, and prosecution. A nationally known attorney, experienced in elder abuse cases, was enlisted as the presenter. This responded to attorneys’ interests and provided the opportunity for professional, peer-to-peer education.
- The second seminar was an educational seminar for “working” sentinels (Ombudsman, health care provider, fiduciaries, volunteers, MOW volunteers, and case managers). The seminar focused on identifying abuse, understanding the culture of the older adult, where they have been, and things they have experienced in their lifetime. The intent was to educate, inform and increase public awareness of warning signs of abuse, and how to report it.

Additional outcomes included:

- 10,000 brochures in English and Spanish were developed and distributed.
- Speaker's Bureau was developed and a time frame for speaking forums outlined.
- Presentations were made by Task Force members to skilled nursing facilities, toastmaster clubs, service groups and seniors at the local senior center.
- PowerPoint presentation was developed for use by members of the Speaker's Bureau
- Placemats for home delivered meals and congregate meal sites were developed, printed and distributed to all four meal sites in Yuma County.
- In-service sheet was developed and disseminated for insertion into current training manual for home delivered meals volunteers.
- The number of referrals APS made to law enforcement during the year of the project totaled 47. This represented 12 abuse, 8 neglect, and 27 exploitation cases.
- Although it was unclear as to the percentage of increase over the previous year, the number of intakes Yuma County APS personnel logged in during the grant year was 248 reports.
- Advertisement was placed for one year in the *Health Connections* magazine published by the Yuma Daily Sun and Yuma Regional Medical Center.
- Task Force members delivered elder abuse information to 20 RV parks.

PRODUCTS

PowerPoint presentation
 Placemats (English and Spanish)
 Speaker's Bureau List
 Brochures

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

A change in Area Agency on Aging personnel affected starting time for project.

Attracting representatives from the County Attorney's office to become members of the Task Force was a challenge.

The influx of winter residents presents an additional challenge to adult protective services and aging service providers. Many live in RV parks or out in the desert with minimal amenities. The amount of time available to get information to the winter residents who may be at risk of abuse and/or neglect is condensed into a shorter time period.

Confidentiality laws inhibit Ombudsman, APS workers, County Attorney, and other service providers to share information about elder abuse cases. This presents difficulties in the ability to identify and track perpetrators.

DISSEMINATION OF PRODUCTS

Information about how to obtain materials developed by the six Sentinel Projects are available by contacting the Manager of each individual Project or by contacting the designated individual for that particular product. Each Project is listed below with contact information and the list of products developed by that Project.

Cayuga County Coalition Against Elder Abuse

Karen Stewart, Supervisor, APS
Cayuga County Health and Human Services
160 Genesee Street
Auburn, NY 13021
(315) 253-1377
fax: (315) 253-1298
email: stewartkj@yahoo.com

Product: Video: *“Sentinels: Reaching Hidden Victims* (14 minutes)

The video can be ordered from Stephen Gage at the cost of \$10.00 per video:

Stephen Gage Productions
6410 E. Lake Rd.
Auburn, NY 13021
(315) 252-4443

LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium

Art Mason, Director
LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Prevention Program
LIFESPAN of Greater Rochester
1900 South Clinton Ave.
Rochester, NY 14604
(716) 244-8400
fax: (716) 244-9114
email: ebmpm@aol.com

Products:

Brochure: *The Sentinel Project*

Poster: *It Shouldn't Hurt To Be Old*

Laminated card: *Elder Abuse Indicators (one side)*
Elder Abuse Resources (other side)

Orange County Elder Mistreatment Coalition

Margaret Hudson, Project Director
503 Brandywine Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 967-6994 or (919) 966-3614
fax: (919) 966-7298
email: rhudson@email.unc.edu

Products:

North Carolina Medical Journal article “Elder Mistreatment: A Guide for Medical Professionals”
Elder Abuse and Neglect Training for Professionals (PowerPoint)
Elder Abuse and Neglect Training for the Public (PowerPoint)
Sign: *Honor Our Elders Stop Elder Abuse and Neglect*
Article in *A Touch of Gray* Newspaper “Abuse and Neglect Form the Core of Elder Mistreatment”

Six County RSVP

Kathy Erickson, Program Coordinator
Six County RSVP
250 North Main Street, Suite 5
Richfield, UT 84701
(435) 896-9222 x 28
Fax: (435) 896-6951
email: kerickso@sixaog.state.ut.us

Products:

Brochure: *Senior Sentinel Program*
Flyer: *The Golden Years Shouldn't Be Tarnished*
Poster: *The Golden Years Shouldn't Be Tarnished*
5 posters, each showing a different photograph: *Break the Silence on Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation*
Elder Abuse Information Wallet Cards
Telephone Survey Form
Volunteer Background and Screening Form
Incident Report Form
Volunteer Activity and Mileage Form

Sonoma County Human Services Elder Abuse Prevention Council

Shari Robinson, Planner

Sonoma County Human Services Department- Area Agency on Aging

2250 Northpoint Parkway

Santa Rosa, CA 95407

(707) 565-5991

Fax: (707) 565-5957

email: srobinso@sonoma-county.org

Products:

Training Program: *Opening the Door Reaching Out to Sonoma County's Isolated Seniors*

Placemat (one side): *Most Caregivers Are Qualified and Caring People . . . Some Caregivers Are Unscrupulous and Will Take Advantage of You*

Grocery Bag for home delivered meals (one side): *Most Caregivers Are Qualified and Caring People . . . Some Caregivers Are Unscrupulous and Will Take Advantage of You*

Placemat (one side): *Guidelines For Keeping What's Yours*

Grocery Bag for home delivered meals (one side): *Financial Abuse Is The Misuse Of Your Money, Property, Or Assets By Another Person*

Article for *NCEA Newsletter* "APS and Public Relations: Why Isn't Someone Doing Something?"

Elder Abuse Information card

Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force

Jill Harrison, Director Area Agency on Aging

Western Arizona Council of Governments-Area Agency on Aging

224 South Third Avenue

Yuma, AZ 85364

(520) 782-1886

Fax: (520) 329-4248

email: JillH@wacog.com

Products:

Training Program for Volunteers (PowerPoint)

Placemat (English and Spanish) (one side) *Keeping What's Yours*

(other side describes either): *Physical Abuse, Financial Abuse or Psychological Abuse*

Advertisement in *Health Connections* "Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force."

APPENDIX (A)

CATEGORIES OF SENTINELS TRAINED	
(coded by the specific sentinel project):	
CC = Cayuga County Coalition Against Elder Abuse	
LS = LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium	
OC = Orange County Elder Abuse Mistreatment Coalition	
SCR= Six County RSVP	
SC = Sonoma County Human Services Elder Abuse Prevention Council	
YC = Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force	

Banks/Financial	(CC, LS, YC)
Criminal justice	(LS, YC)
District attorney/private attorney	(LS, YC)
Domestic violence	(CC)
Emergency medical technician	(LS, OC)
Firemen	(OC)
Home delivered meals	(SC, SCR)
Home health	(LS, OC)
Hospice	(OC)
Hospital staff	(LS, OC)
Housing	(LS, OC)
Law enforcement	(CC, LS, OC, SCR, YC)
Long term care facility staff	(LS, OC, SCR)
Long term care Ombudsman	(LS, SCR, YC)
Mental health	(CC, LS, OC)
Nurses and nursing students	(OC)
Physicians	(CC, OC)
Postal workers/managers	(LS)
Probation	(LS, YC)
RV park staff	(YC)
RSVP volunteers	(LS, SCR)
Seniors	(LS, OC, SC, SCR, YC)
Senior meal sites	(SC, YC)
Shelter staff	(CC, OC)
Social workers	(CC, LS, OC, SCR)
Transportation (senior)	(SC)
Women's Center	(OC)

APPENDIX (B)

LIST OF PRODUCTS DEVELOPED

Business cards

Brochures

Flyers

Grocery bags

Indicator pocket cards

Journal articles

National Directory of State, Regional and Local Coalitions

Newspaper articles

Placemats

Posters

PowerPoint training programs

Press release

Signs

Telephone survey

Training programs

Video

Volunteer activity and mileage form

Volunteer background and screening form

Volunteer incident report form

APPENDIX, CONT.

- (C) Initial Outreach Letter to State Elder Abuse Contacts, State Units on Aging, Area Agency on Aging
- (D) Overview of Sentinel Project
- (E) Coalition Survey
- (F) National Directory State, Regional and Local Elder Abuse Coalitions
- (G) Meals on Wheels (MOW) Partnership Letter
- (H) Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Partnership Letter
- (H-2) *HSUS National Survey on the Connection Between Animal Cruelty and Elder Abuse*
- (H-3) *HSUS Brochure Making the Connection: Helping Vulnerable Adults and Their Pets*
- (I) National Association of Retired Senior Volunteer Program Directors (NARSVPD)
- (I-2) NARSVPD Newsletter Article
- (J) NCEA Request for Proposal (RFP)
- (K) RFP Review Form
- (L) Grantee Letter of Award
- (M) Grantee Quarterly Report Form
- (N) Analysis of Coalition Technical Assistance Needs
- (O) Cayuga County Coalition Against Elder Abuse
Video: *Sentinels: Reaching Hidden Victims*
- (P) LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium
Brochure: *The Sentinel Project*
- (P- 2) LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium
Poster: *It Shouldn't Hurt to Be Old*

APPENDIX, CONT.

- (P-3) LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium
Laminated Card: *Elder Abuse Indicators and Elder Abuse Resources*
- (P-4) LIFESPAN Elder Abuse Consortium
Article *Rochester News* “Postal Carrier Saves Life of Elderly Man On Route”
- (Q) Orange County Elder Mistreatment Coalition
Article: *North Carolina Medical Journal* article “Elder Mistreatment: A Guide for Medical Professionals”
- (Q-2) Orange County Elder Mistreatment Coalition
Elder Abuse and Neglect Training for Professionals (PowerPoint)
- (Q-3) Orange County Elder Mistreatment Coalition
Elder Abuse and Neglect Training for the Public (PowerPoint)
- (Q-4) Orange County Elder Mistreatment Coalition
Sign: *Honor Our Elders Stop Elder Abuse and Neglect*
- (Q-5) Orange County Elder Mistreatment Coalition
Article in *A Touch of Gray* Newspaper “Abuse and Neglect Form the Core of Elder Mistreatment”
- (R) Six County RSVP
Poster: *The Golden Years Shouldn't Be Tarnished*
- (R-2) Six County RSVP
Flyer: *The Golden Years Shouldn't Be Tarnished*
- (R-3) Six County RSVP
Telephone Survey Form
- (R-4) Six County RSVP
Five Posters (each showing a different photograph)
- (R-5) Six County RSVP Volunteer Background Screening Form
- (S) Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council
Training Program: *Opening the Door Reaching Out to Sonoma County's Isolated Seniors*

APPENDIX, CONT.

- (S-2) Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council
Placemat: (one side) *Most Caregivers Are Qualified and Caring People . . . Some Caregivers Are Unscrupulous and Will take Advantage of You*

Placemat: (second side) *Guidelines for Keeping What's Yours*
- (S-3) Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council
Grocery Bag for home delivered meals (one side) *Most Caregivers Are Qualified and Caring People . . . Some Caregivers Are Unscrupulous and Will take Advantage of You*

Grocery Bag for home delivered meals (second side) *Financial Abuse Is The Misuse Of Your Money, Property, Or Assets By Another Person*
- (S-4) Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council
Article for *NCEA Newsletter* "APS and Public Relations: Why Isn't Someone Doing Something?"
- (S-5) Sonoma County Elder Abuse Prevention Council
Elder Abuse Information Card
- (T) Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force
Elder Abuse Training Program for Volunteers (PowerPoint)
- (T-2) Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force
Placemat: (English and Spanish) for congregate meal sites (one side) *Keeping What's Yours*

Placemat: (second side describes either) *Physical Abuse, Financial Abuse or Psychological Abuse*
- (T-3) Advertisement in *Health Connections* "Yuma County Elder Abuse Task Force"