

# Working with Adult Protective Services (APS) During the Pandemic

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B'nai B'rith  
International Center  
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Where You Are, USA

# Elder Abuse: National Data



# Elder Abuse Data

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- By 2030, seniors aged 65+ will account for 18% of the nation's population.
- One study found 10% of elders are abused.
- 37% of active caregivers said the elder in their care had experienced financial exploitation with a loss.
- Reports to APS are increasing: +15% from FY 17 to 18 (NAMRS); +48% 2011-2018 (NAPSA & NAMRS)



# About NAPSAs

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Formed in 1989 as a national association for adult protective services (APS) professionals.

Strengthen APS via:

- Education
- Research
- Advocacy

Also the home to **NIEFE**  
(National Institute on Elder  
Financial Exploitation)



# About APS

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- Carries out civil investigations of reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults
- Purpose is to intervene to protect the victim to the extent possible
- APS is the statutorily authorized entity under each state's laws to receive and investigate reports of vulnerable adult abuse

# About APS

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- 64% of APS are state-administered, 15% are county-administered, and 21% are administered various other ways, including NPOs on contract
- Serves as a victim-focused, social services response
- Receives abuse reports and attempts to remedy or reduce abuse
- Works with law enforcement, criminal justice, area agencies on aging, other aging services AND service coordinators

# APS ≠ APS – Variations among States

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- No common national definition of who is served nor what services they receive
- Residence of victim — APS investigates in:
  - Community: 100% of states
  - Nursing Homes: 50% of states
  - Assisted Living: Nearly all states
- Eligibility for APS response:
  - 42 states: all adults with disabilities age 18+
  - Some states: age 60+ only, or must be age 60+ and meet the state definition of “vulnerable”



# APS Code of Ethics

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## Guiding Value of APS:

“Every action taken by Adult Protective Services must balance the duty to protect the safety of the vulnerable adult with the adult’s right to self-determination.”

## Principles of APS:

- Adults have the right to be safe.
- Adults retain all their civil and constitutional rights.
- Adults have the right to make decisions that do not conform with societal norms, as long as these decisions do not harm others.
- Adults have the right to accept or refuse services.

# What APS **CAN** Do

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- Examine all aspects of reported maltreatment
- Collaborate with adults to maintain their independence (as much as possible):
  - Develop a case plan
  - Advocate with other agencies
  - Arrange in-home services

# What APS **CANNOT** Do

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APS **CANNOT** force services on a person who has capacity to consent.

APS **CANNOT** involuntarily remove someone from their home.

APS **CANNOT** provide services for which there are no available resources.

APS **CANNOT** enforce the law.

APS **CANNOT** reveal identity of reporter.

# Myths and Facts

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**Myth #1:** Referrals to APS usually result in nursing home placement.

**Fact:** APS focuses on the least restrictive intervention possible. Whenever possible, services are provided in the victim's home.

# Myths and Facts

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**Myth #2:** The APS worker who investigates a report of abuse can force both the victim and perpetrator to do whatever the APS worker deems necessary.

**Fact:** Unlike children, adults are assumed to be able to make their own decisions unless a court determines otherwise.

# Myths and Facts

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**Myth #3:** When an abuse report is made, the main responsibility of the APS worker is to “fix” the situation to the reporter’s satisfaction.

**Fact:** When any report of abuse to APS is investigated, the alleged victim—not the reporter—is the APS client.



# APS Services & Resources

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## Intake

- Receive reports of abuse (by phone or online)

## Investigation

- Typically begins within 1 hour-5 business days, depending on seriousness and urgency
- Typically lasts 30-60 days

## Intervention

- Direct or community services
- Protective orders
- Guardianship – when absolutely necessary

# Mandatory Reporting

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- 49 states mandate reports to APS by certain professionals, usually including:

**Social workers**

**Mental Health**

**Physicians**

**EMTs**

**Nurses**

**Police**

**Home Health**

**Firefighters**

- 15 states require **all persons** to report abuse.
- At least 11 states require at least some financial professionals, including bankers, to report financial exploitation.
- States may provide training for mandatory reporters (in-person or online).

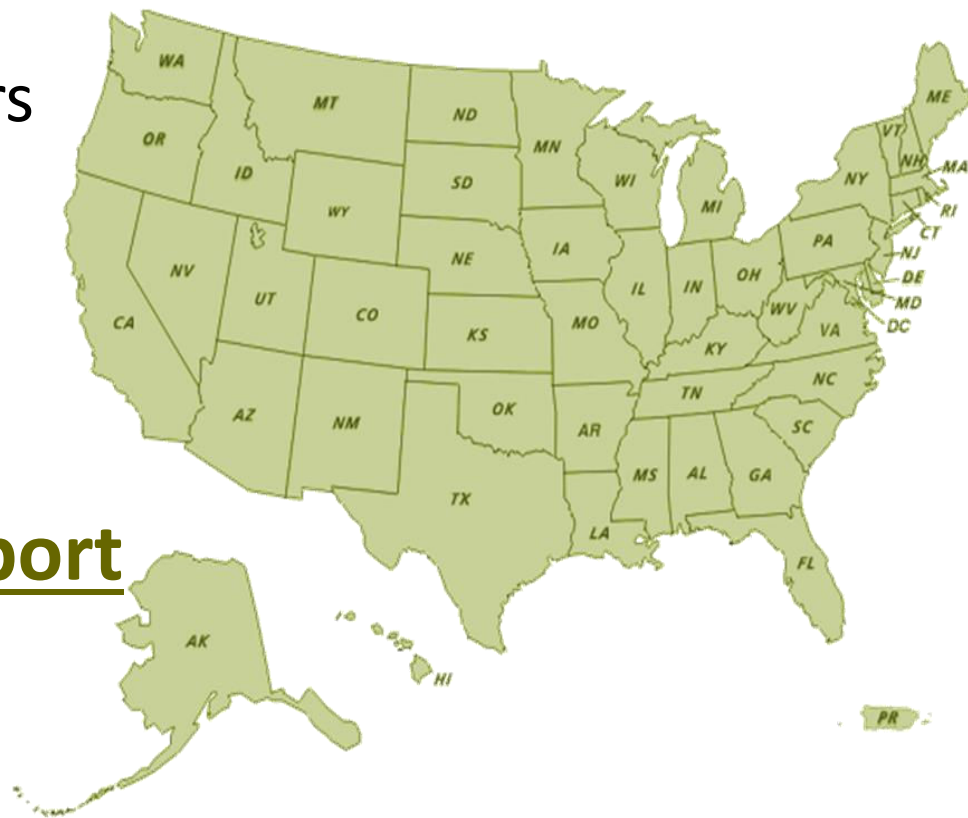
# To Report Abuse to APS

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State/local reporting numbers

Some states have online reporting

[www.napsa-now.org/report](http://www.napsa-now.org/report)



# APS Nationwide

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- APS clients are remarkably similar in every location. Based on the home visits conducted, APS clients seem to be very much alike although in different parts of the country.
- APS services are also fundamentally similar, although they may be provided through different administrative structures with varying levels of resources.
- All rely on highly skilled social workers and others, are client-focused, resourceful in problem-solving, persistent, and trying to provide the most effective services in the most efficient manner possible.

# Multidisciplinary Approach

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- Faced with ever increasing caseloads, as well as increased case complexity, APS staff work hard to ensure services to clients are as minimally affected as possible.
- Means multidisciplinary cooperation is at the heart of APS work, whether through formal multidisciplinary teams or informally across community agencies and colleagues.
- APS works closely with law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and courts, as well as community-based aging services and victim services.

# Building Bridges with APS

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- Be proactive in building a bridge with your local APS **BEFORE** you need to make a report.
- Find out where APS is housed in your community.
- Find out what types of vulnerable adult abuse should be reported to APS under your state laws.
- Find out where/how to report abuse to APS in your community.

***APS in your community looks forward to working with you in serving vulnerable adults!!***



# *Thank You!*

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