Taking the Guess Work Out of APS Findings
Presented by

- Mary Twomey, MSW
- Mary Counihan, MSW
- Kris Brown, MSW
- Krista Brown, BA
- Lori Delagrammatikas, MSW
Research questions:

- What is the size of the problem of elder abuse in California?
- Can APS data be used as elder abuse incidence/prevalence data?
- How can APS findings be made more consistent?
In order to tailor programs and policies to adequately serve the target population of abused vulnerable adults, accurate incidence and prevalence data on elder abuse are needed.

The goal of UCI’s research was to provide knowledge and recommendations that would help APS agencies provide consistent and reliable information across the state on the monthly report to the CA DSS;

In real life terms, should the same event of abuse happen (hypothetically) in two different counties and the social workers are able to gather the same information, the two agencies should record the same findings for that event.
Methodology

- **SOC 242 on-line data**
  January 2006, downloaded the most recent year’s worth of SOC 242 data available from the CDSS website;

- **Telephone interviews**
  54/58 county APS offices participated in these interviews. Questionnaire covered the items for which there was a lot of variation on the SOC 242 data along with general questions about the local APS agency’s organization, staff, and practices.
On-site interviews: Selected 18 counties to learn more about how different case management and organizational procedures might affect how abuse and neglect are reported.

Vignettes: Created stories that addressed line items from the SOC 242 that were subject to the greatest reporting variability. Asked APS to record or count the vignette as if it was a real case and a real form. Received 47/58 responses.
A short quiz

1) Which of the following ranges is the correct one for showing how often the “Confirmed” category is used throughout the state APS program?
   a) 0%-68%   b) 25%-45%   c) 75%-80%   d) 20%-25%

2) Which of the following ranges is the correct one for showing how often the “Inconclusive” category is used throughout the state APS programs?
   a) 70%-100%   b) 8%-100%   c) 25%-50%   d) 30%-80%

3) Which of the following ranges is the correct one for showing how often the “Unfounded” is used throughout the state APS programs?
   a) 30%-67%   b) 0%-80%   c) 25-50%   d) 65%-80%
Different operational definition: For example, terms like “Health and Safety Hazards” mean different things in different counties, and some reports of abuse get “misplaced” as Information and Referral.

Institutional or organizational differences, different kinds and levels of automation, differences in screening and referral. An example of an organizational effect would be differences in how reports are screened and referred.

Human elements are, such as case workers’ skill-level, education, training, previous social service experiences, etc.
Forming the Work Group

- Representative
- Stable
- Met regularly
- Commitment to accept product
Inconsistency Causes

- Practices that based findings on things other than the facts of the case such as county policies, political pressures, concern for possible repercussions, etc.
- Lack of clarity in definitions, understanding of relevant information, and mistaken beliefs about what was required.
Road to a Solution

Initial ideas
- Address the practice of basing findings on things other than the facts of the case
- More clearly define the categories of findings, i.e., Confirmed, Inconclusive, and Unfounded and
- Provide more guidance on the level of proof necessary to satisfy each of those categories
- Looked at practice in other states
- Looked for best practice models and regulations as a guide
Tools Developed

Guiding Principles
Focuses workers on relevant information

Matrix
Outlines standards to improve the consistency of how cases are approached and understood
Guiding Principles

- Defined the basis for findings
- Identified extraneous information which may be important in formulating the plan of action but was not relevant to the determination of findings
- Focused workers on what was important
- Recommended good casework practices
- Outlined types of evidence
- Defined standards for findings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse or Neglect Category</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Essential Defining Elements</th>
<th>Evidentiary Issues to Consider</th>
<th>Signs of Neglect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Neglect W&IC 15610.57 (a)(b) | Neglect is defined as the refusal or failure to fulfill any part of a person’s obligations or duties to a client. | 1. Negligent failure to take action, whether intentional or unintentional. 2. Could be: Caretaker Care Custodian* Person providing services (e.g. home health nurse) Person in a position of trust or fiduciary (e.g. POA) 3. Level of care or service is what a reasonable person would provide.  
*: “Care custodian” means an administrator or an employee of a public or private facility or agency, or persons providing care or services for elders or dependent adults (for full definition, refer to WIC 15610.17) | **Examples include, but are not limited to:**  
**General Considerations**  
- What are the indications, if any, that the client is being or has been neglected because:  
  - A person who has a fiduciary responsibility to the client has failed of to insure the client is receiving adequate care  
  - An in-home service provider has failed to provide the client with necessary care.  
  - The client is not being provided with necessities of life such as food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medicine, comfort personal safety and other essentials by an individual who has an implied or an agreed-upon responsibility to the client.  
  - A care custodian is not providing the client with the goods or services that are necessary to avoid physical harm or mental suffering.  
- Have issues of neglect resulted in physical or emotional harm or hospitalization (e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, con bit s lce s  
| Examples include, but are not limited to:**  
- Client has bad hygiene and smells of foul odor.  
- Client has long, dirty, and unkempt finger and toe nails.  
- The suspected abuser is creating a risk to the client’s health by  
  - not providing the prescribed medication properly (e.g. diabetes  
  - not providing transportation to medical/mental health visits  
  - not complying with the client’s medical appointments  
- Client’s home is in dilapidated condition.  
- Client is living in hoarding conditions.  
- Client has been living with no running water, heat, or electricity.  
- Client is found soiled and the house smells of feces.  
- The suspected abuser refuses to dress the client or dresses the client inappropriately.  
- The suspected abuser protect the client from health and safety hazards (e.g. allowing pets to defecate and urinate in the home).  
- Deprivation by care custodian: W&IC 15610.35. “Goods and services necessary to avoid physical harm or mental
Matrix

- Lists the types of abuse
- Creates operational definitions that are in common, everyday language
- Distills the definitions into their key components
- Suggests areas to be explored and raises questions as a prompt for information gathering necessary to assess client safety, risk, develop a case plan, and evaluate allegations
- Provides a structure for evaluating the relative strength and integrity of that information through examples of how the abuse might manifest itself.
Chang Vignette

A doctor’s office called to report that Mr. and Mrs. Chang need help. They are in their mid-eighties. Mrs. Chang is very demented and needs total care. Mr. Chang is her sole caretaker. The MD has tried to convince Mr. Chang to accept in-home help because his wife needs more care than he can give her, but he refuses. Mrs. Chang’s condition is worsening. She is losing weight, looking more disheveled and dirty, and has decubitus ulcers forming. Mr. Chang is bringing her late to appointments and increasingly missing them altogether.

You interview Mr. and Mrs. Chang. Mrs. Chang is non-verbal and is non-ambulatory. She smells of urine and her clothes are stained with food. Mr. Chang confirms he does not want anyone to come into the home. He says he and his wife have been married for 60+ years and he will care for her until the end. You notice that Mr. Chang is very thin, ambulates slowly, is also unkempt, and the house is not clean. You suspect that Mr. Chang may have some cognitive decline and that his judgment is being affected.
Essential Elements for Neglect

- Negligent failure to take action
- Someone has taken responsibility for the victim’s care
- Level of care being provided is not what a reasonable person would provide
What are the indicators that Mrs. Chang is not receiving needed care?
Has the level of care being provided resulted in physical harm?
Does Mrs. Chang have the cognitive capacity to protect her own self-interest?
Is Mr. Chang physically and mentally capable of providing care?
Is the care Mr. Chang is providing for his wife what a reasonable person would provide?
Did he seek needed medical care for his wife as promptly as a reasonable person would?
Signs of Neglect

- losing weight
- disheveled appearance
- smells of urine
- clothes stained with food
- decubitus ulcers forming
- missing MD appointments
Why does a consistent, standardized approach to determining case findings matter in APS practice?
Organizational Support

- Adults Committee support
- Director’s support
- Materials posted on CWDA website
County Perspective

Using & Implementing Information

Training Budgets

Compliance & Mandates
APS Training Project/Academy for Professional Excellence:

- Works closely with multiple stakeholders to ensure that curriculum development and training delivery for Adult Protective Services staff is appropriate and responsive to national, state and county needs and reflects evidence-informed practices.
California Adult Protective Services Standards for Consistency in Determining Findings Part 1 – Introduction and Guiding Principles

Developed by Mary Counihan, MSW in collaboration with Protective Services Operations Committee, Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect, and Statewide APS Training Project

Funding for this training was provided by the Archstone Foundation and...
Statewide Attendance: As of July 25, 2012, a statewide total of 477 participants completed the training module with 42 out of 58 counties participating. It is anticipated that the training completion rate will continue to grow as the training module will be available for completion in FY 12–13 and beyond.
Patel Vignette

A visiting home nurse called APS to report that Mrs. Patel, a 76 year old female, was self-neglecting. The nurse said that Mrs. P lives alone with three cats. The home is dirty, smells of animal waste, and is cluttered with old newspapers and trash. You visit the home and find that it is indeed dirty and cluttered. There are three litter boxes but it does not appear that they are regularly cleaned and the animals have defecated outside the box. However, you do not think it poses a fire danger or a health and safety risk.

Click on the blue arrow at the top to learn more.
Whose point of view would you consider when determining if Mrs. Patel is self-neglecting?

- The nurse’s assessment of the condition of the home.
- The social worker’s opinion of the condition of the home.
- The client’s perspective of the condition of the home.
- All of the above.
Evaluation Questions

- Did the training transfer to the job? If so…
- Did the tool increase consistency of findings?
Evaluation Plan

- Two Cohorts

Nov 1, 2011 through Feb 29, 2012

March 1, 2012 through August 1, 2012
Pre-test before starting Part 1
As the result of this training I have developed new skills.
### APPLI–33 after Part 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Potential of Professional Learning Inventory – APPLI 33</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. As a result of the training, I substantially increased my knowledge on this topic.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As a result of the training, I have developed new skills.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The training has affected some of my attitudes concerning this topic area.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. As a result of this training, I have a better conceptualization of what I already do on the job.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am motivated to put this training into practice on the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I will meet with my supervisor to discuss application of this training on the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My supervisor expects me to use this training on the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Even if no one notices, I will use knowledge learned from this training on the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The trainer helped me see how the training can be applied on the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c c c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The information I received from this training can definitely be used with my clients.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c c c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have already made a plan with a co-worker to use this training.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c c c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. There is at least one co-worker who will be supportive of my application attempts.</td>
<td></td>
<td>c c c c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My supervisor expects me to use this training on the job.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I will have sufficient opportunities to practice the new ideas/skills/techniques on the job.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>My organization expects me to use the training on the job.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>When I look back to other training I have attended, I can say that I have used the training on the job. I can even think of specific examples.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I have a plan to implement this training.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I am very confident that I will use the training on the job.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I will have the time to review materials and make an implementation plan.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Prior to the workshop, I was motivated to attend.</td>
<td>C C C C C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. During the training, I was thinking of ways I could apply the training.

21. The trainer/training provided sufficient opportunities to practice new information/skills.

22. I can think of specific cases/clients to which (with whom) this training can be used.

23. My supervisor helped to prepare me for this training by discussing my learning needs and potential applications.

24. The trainer provided some practical ideas that can be used on the job.

25. The trainer gave examples of when to use ideas/skills/strategies on the job.

26. The trainer helped motivate me to want to try out training ideas on the job.

27. The workshop objectives were adequately addressed.

28. This training content is consistent with my agency's mission, philosophy and goals.

29. This training content is consistent with my agency's policies and my individual responsibilities.

30. This training will help me to continue learning in this topic area.

31. As a result of the training, I will be a more effective worker.

32. The information I learned today can help make a difference with my client(s).

33. Overall, I am very satisfied with this training.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I will have sufficient opportunities to practice the new ideas/skills/techniques on the job.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My organization expects me to use the training on the job.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When I think back to other training I have attended, I can say that I have used the training on the job. I can even think of specific application examples.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I have a plan to implement this training.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am very confident that I will use the training on the job.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I will have the time to review materials and make an implementation plan.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Prior to the workshop, I was motivated to attend.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. During the training, I was thinking of ways I could apply the new ideas.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The trainer/organization provided sufficient opportunities to practice new information/skills.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I can think of specific cases/clients to which (with whom) this training can be used.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My supervisor helped to prepare me for this training by discussing my learning needs and potential applications.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. The trainer provided some practical ideas that can be used on the job.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. The trainer gave examples of when to use ideas/skills/strategies on the job.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The trainer helped motivate me to want to try out training ideas on the job.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The workshop objectives were adequately addressed.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. This training content is consistent with my agency's mission, philosophy and goals.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. This training content is consistent with my agency's policies and my individual responsibilities.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. This training will help me to continue learning in this topic area.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. As a result of the training, I will be a more effective worker.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. The information I learned today can help make a difference with my client(s).</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Overall, I am very satisfied with this training.</td>
<td>c c c c c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am very confident that I will use the training on the job.
Overall, I am very satisfied with the training. 
During the training, I learned a substantial amount of information. 
I have used the knowledge/skills I learned from this training on the job. 
As a result of using the knowledge/skills from the training, I have observe progress with people I serve. 
As a result of training, I am a more effective worker.

Please list factors which HINDERED your application of learning on the job.
Post-test at 3 and 6 months
SOC 242 data at 6 months

- Confirmed ?
- Inconclusive ?
- Unfounded ?
Full Circle

- Research
- Subject-Matter Experts
- Policy
- Training
Contact Information

- Mary Twomey, mtwomey@uci.edu
- Mary Counihan, m.counihan@hotmail.com
- Kris K. Brown, kris.brown@countyofnapa.org
- Krista Brown, krbrown@projects.sdsu.edu
- Lori Delagrammatikas, ldelagra@projects.sdsu.edu

To access materials discussed, visit http://theacademy.sdsu.edu/programs/Project_Master/consistency_in_determining_findings.html