



DIVISION OF AGEING

Under the Auspices of Senator The Honourable Donna Cox

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD) ONLINE Webinar Series: 15, 22, 23 & 30 July 2021

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Elder Abuse and the Family in Trinidad and Tobago

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Date: July 23, 2021
Location: Port of Spain, Trinidad W.I.





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Family Elder Care in T&T

- Risk & Protective Factors for Elder Mistreatment
 - The Good
 - The In-Between
 - The Dark Side
- Solutions / Way Forward



RISK FACTORS & CAUSES OF EAN

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor physical & mental health of elder/carer• High stress levels / Caregiver strain (no. of care hours a day; care duration)• Lack of training in how to care for older people• Financial / Emotional dependence on elder• Lack of funds to pay for care• Substance / alcohol abuse by carer; exposure to / witnessing abuse as a child• Beliefs & attitudes about aging, kingship & caregiving obligations
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Poor family relationships; past family conflict○ Difficulty establishing / maintaining positive social relationships○ Shared living situation○ Erosion of bonds between shared generations of a family○ Systems of inheritance affecting power distribution in families
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social isolation & lack of social support
Socio-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ageist stereotypes○ Migration of children - leaving older parents alone
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of specific legislation



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Pic 1. Granny Luces celebrates her 90th birthday with her family

Pic. 2 Granny Luces running a marathon

The Good



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1. Mrs. Flora (Caring for Husband)

“Well, one, he was a good husband. Two, even if he wasn’t a good husband, I think it is my duty to take care of him.”

Protective Factors: early experience providing care; beliefs/values; extensive social support; daughter in separate house on same property.

Care Challenges: caregiver health





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2. Sheila (Caring for Mother)

“My mother was always a sweet person, generous, kind, lookin’ out for her children, making sacrifices for them... (I care for her) because of Love.”

Protective Factors: extensive social support; financial means.

Challenges: only daughter/child in Trinidad (migration); small family size; lived in separate home (15 minutes away); sandwich carer; employed full time.





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Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

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The In-Between



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1. Rebecca (Caring for Mother)

- “She’s ah very strong personality: very difficult to deal with. She’s always been over de years.”
- Why do I look after my mum? she’s the one who brought me into the world. She looked after me, and I think is only fair now that I [care for her]. So it’s ah matter of being dutiful.

Protective Factors: income; paid carers; support from extended family

Care Challenges: only child; grief / depression; physical health of carer





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2. Samantha (Caring for Father)

- “Before he got sick... I was the spoilt one, he’s doing everything...But then, he started to get sick so the roles reversed, so I don’t have a problem with [caring for him].
- There was a point where, before he started getting his medical treatment ... he was starting to get violent ... he would lash, hit you for nothing... or you might tell him something innocently and he would get mad and start shouting. You would give him something to eat and he would throw it away ... But then I noticed that after he started his treatment it kinda broke off..”

Protective Factors: trained in geriatric care; beliefs / values; social support; inheritance; relatives nearby: lived in same home with elder

Care Challenges: mental / physical health of elder; exited formal employment



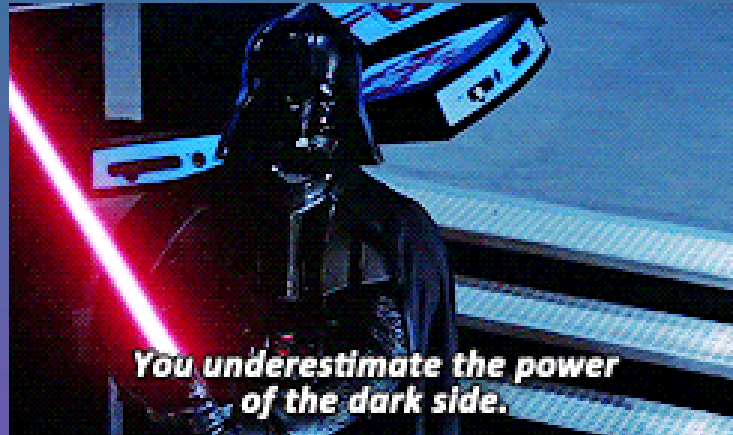


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The Dark Side



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CASE 1

NEGLECT

Tanty Edna - Trinidadian Elder

“I fail having these two (2) children. Because de boy [tearful voice] on drugs ... but Eleta being as ah GIRL! ... she shoulda be more close to me! ... [Eleta] shoulda be de one to be here wit’ me!”

Risk Factor: Substance abuse; Family Conflict





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CASE 1

Protective Factor: Extended Family Support

Tanty Edna's Niece / God-daughter (Adelina)

“Tanty was the one who would do everything for the brothers and sisters. If one is ill she would make sure, get up whatever time, go and see the person ... so it's no big thing [for us to care for her]... you just want to know that there is a sense of comfort for her, that she's ok.”





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CASE 2

FINANCIAL ABUSE / NEGLECT / VERBAL ABUSE

Gaitri – Caring for Mother

“Well when my brother got what he had to get from my mother ... he got land and he sold [it, then] he stop coming... [Some time afterwards] he came and quarrel for the jewellery and my mother said, ‘No ... I have a granddaughter’. (She was referring to) my daughter. He came and carry-on with his wife and my mother said, ‘No. Sorry’.”

Protective Factor: Elder’s Assertiveness





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CASE 3

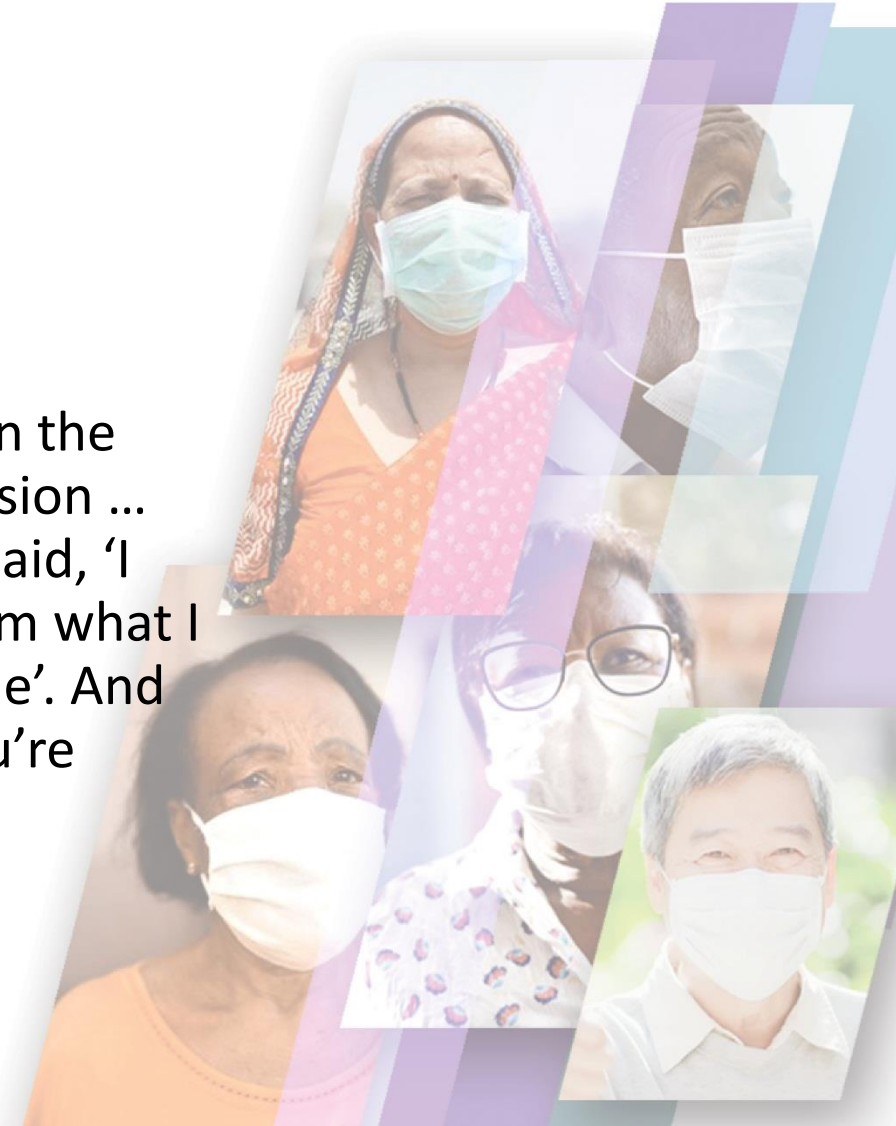
FINANCIAL ABUSE

Professor Brenda - Overseas Family Carer

I have an uncle ... he sees to her affairs ... [S]he used to have money in the bank [but] when I came ... all the money was gone ... she get her pension ... and sometimes I send money. When I asked her what happen... she said, 'I don't know: they take me to the bank, the teller comes out, I tell them what I want ... and time I get home here I don't know where the money gone'. And she's afraid to accuse anybody because these are the people that you're depending on to [care] So it's really ... really hard.

Risk Factor: Migration of adult children

Protective Factor: Check-in; Tell someone you trust.





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So What Do We Do?



1954 - 2021

CRUCIAL DECISION - Brother Resistance – Rapso Lyric

“Those who trust in oppression and become boastful in robbery as their riches increase, the act of violence is in their hands.”





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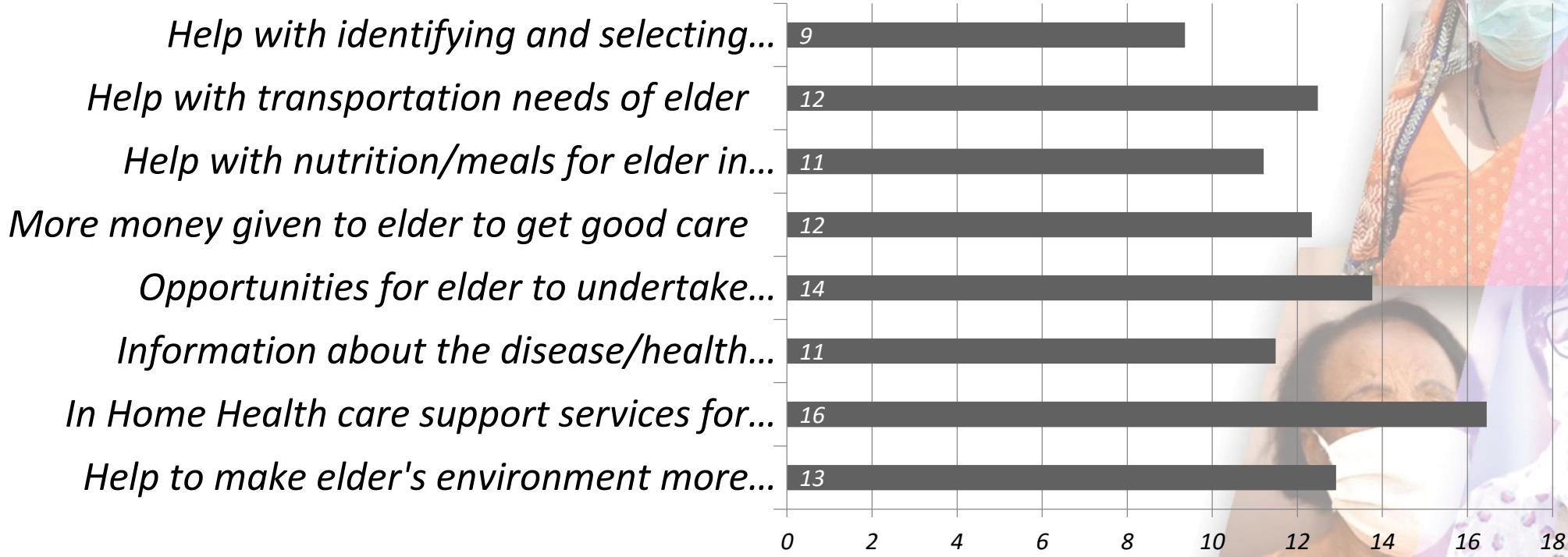
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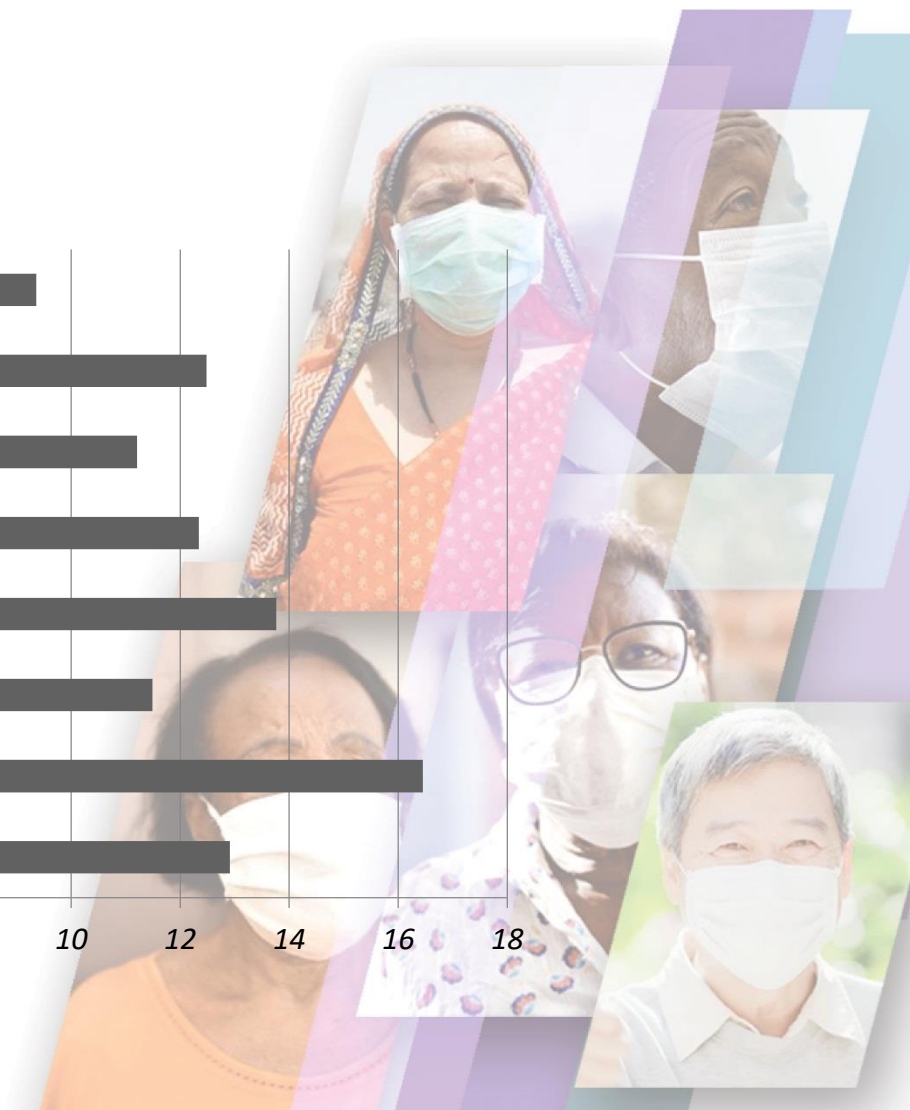


Elder's Needs as Identified by Family Caregivers

Older Relative Service Needs



■ Response (%); n = 179





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Family Caregiver Service Needs

Help with planning for future care 13

Help to deal with family disagreements 8

Training to help me develop skills I need to care 13

The opportunity to talk over my problems as... 8

More money to meet my own needs as a... 7

Opportunities for me to enjoy activities... 7

Support with my own health problems 7

The possibility to combine my caregiving... 10

Opportunities to spend more time with other... 8

Information and advice about the type of... 20

Caregiver Service Needs



■ Response (%); n = 192





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What Do We Do?

ELDERS

- Stay connected to family & friends
- Learn about your rights
- Use professional services for support
- Make sure financial & legal affairs are in order

FAMILY / INFORMAL CARERS

- Get help from family &/or friends
- Take planned breaks
- Get support from health & social service agencies

THE PUBLIC

- Watch for signs of elder abuse
- Learn how to get help
- Report abuse





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What Do We Do?

SERVICES

- Support groups & counselling services for Family Carers
- Respite services for Family Carers
- Certified Professional Caregivers to provide In-Home support to Elders
- Training for Family Carers

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- Elder Abuse Protection & Elder Justice
- National Family Care Policy

RESEARCH / MONITORING





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ONE FAMILY - Lord Nelson – Calypso Lyric

“Old time people will know how we come to be so
Bound together, one another....

When he building, or she planting,
Everybody helping, no money ent passing

When we working or we loving
...Is so whole day long.... Poopa, gangan, tanty, macomere, pickney
.... All ah we is one family!



Lord Nelson