



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

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

Elder Abuse Prevention: Policy Approaches and Programmatic Steps



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The mistreatment of the elderly can take many forms, including *physical, emotional, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, and neglect*, the majority of which goes unreported for many reasons.

Elder abuse can have numerous **physical** and **emotional** effects on victims:

- Victims become fearful and anxious - they experience issues with trust;
- Victims suffer physical injuries- cuts, scratches, bruises, head injuries, broken bones, pain and soreness which contributes to long term disabilities; and
- Victims are exposed to premature death.





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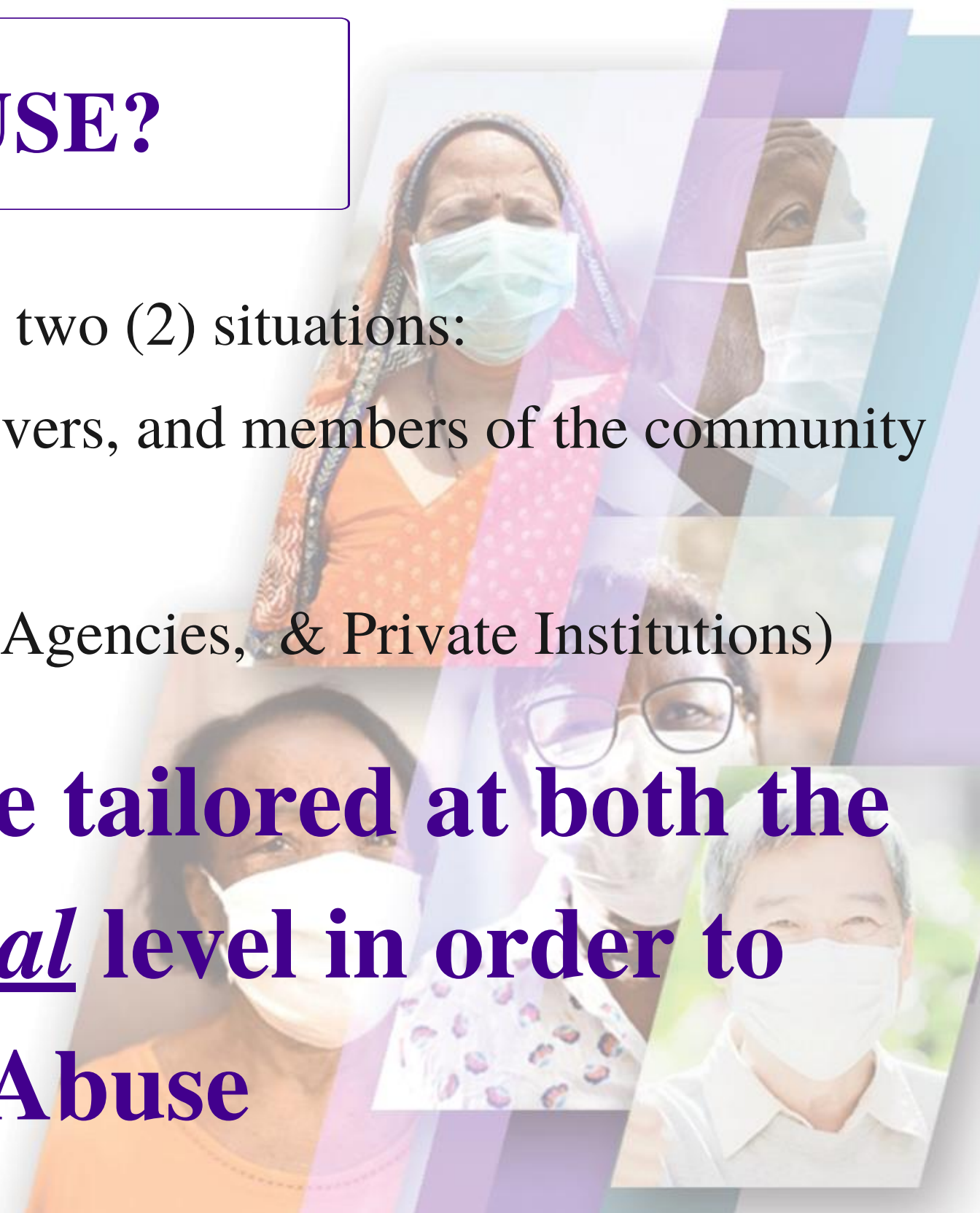
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HOW CAN WE PREVENT ELDER ABUSE?

The World Health Organization outlines Elderly Abuse that occurs in two (2) situations:

- 1) **Elderly Abuse in Community Settings** (family members, care givers, and members of the community - students, employees & residents)
- 2) **Elderly Abuse in Institutional Settings** (Hospitals, Government Agencies, & Private Institutions)

Therefore, prevention measures must be tailored at both the community level and at the institutional level in order to effectively reduce Elder Abuse





Solutions: Pragmatic Steps



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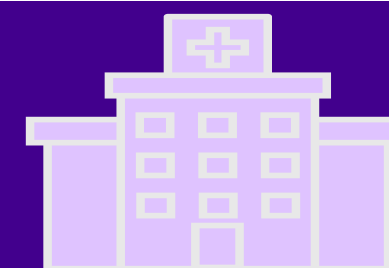
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COMMUNITY LEVEL

- **Have a Community Registry** so that authorities are aware of the older persons within the community and their unique circumstances which aids in monitoring
- **Host public forums** to sensitize & educate the community, older persons and their guardians on ageing issues
- **Encourage intergenerational approaches** by encouraging school children & adults to volunteer at Senior Activity Centres



INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

- **Introduce Financial Literacy & Retirement Planning seminars** for older persons & public officers to reduce financial exploitation
- **Have Public-Private Partnerships** with local security firms to provide an alert system/ panic button which alerts authorities of elderly abuse
- **Accredit & standardize caregiving training courses** at local/regional educational institutions
- **Develop safe houses and emergency shelters** for the elderly



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Solutions: Policy Approaches



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- **Ensure policies operate in the interest of the target group rather than the institution**
- **Set up an organization tailored towards providing support to elders like the Children's Authority i.e., revamping the Senior Citizens Bureau**
- **Institute a mandate that trained authorities be proactive and check up regularly on the elderly within communities**
- **Further review of the Homes for Older Persons Act 2007 and ensure proper implementation of the Community Care Programme by the MSDFS**



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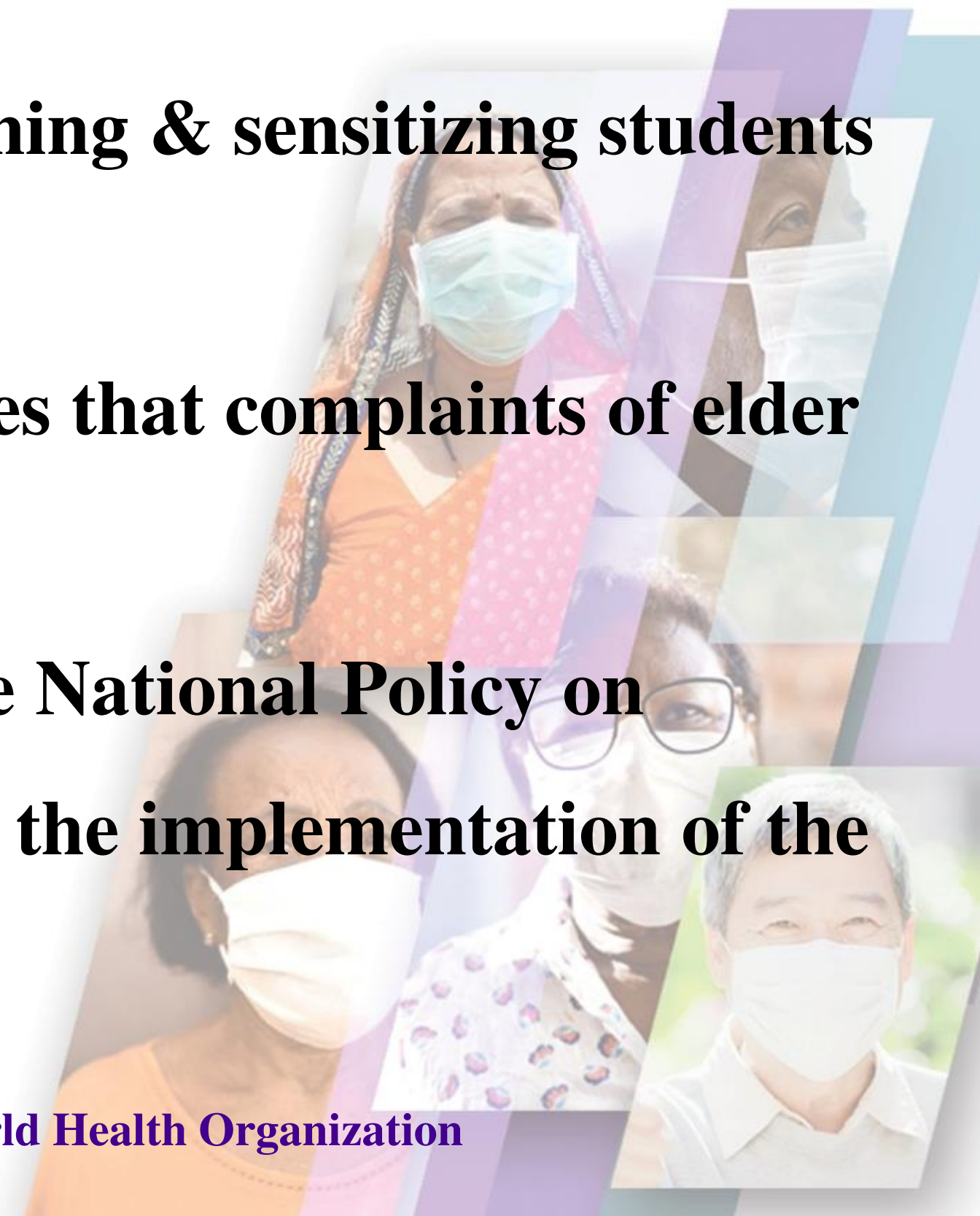
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Solutions: Policy Approaches



- **Ensure that all schools conduct the necessary training & sensitizing students on nationwide ageing issues**
- **Ensure via the TTPS and other relevant authorities that complaints of elder abuse are investigated thoroughly**
- **Monitor and coordinate the implementation of the National Policy on Ageing and ensure Public-Private Partnerships in the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Ageing**





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Solutions: Individual Approaches



- **Listen to older adults and their primary caregivers to understand their challenges**
 - **Educate yourself on recognizing the signs of elder abuse**
 - **Check-in on older adults who may have few friends and family members.**
- **Provide assistance where possible, to over-burdened caregivers (e.g., assisting with meal preparation or volunteering to spend time with the older adult)**
 - **Speak up when you see an elderly person being abused**
 - **Report cases of abuse or suspected abuse to the TTPS**
 - **Start at home by caring for your elders**



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No matter how old we are, we deserve to be treated justly and as full members of our communities!

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