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Elder Abuse Prevention: Emerging Trends and Promising Strategies

Lisa Nerenberg MSW MPH

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I found this book to be informative, well-researched, and well-thought out...The book is an asset to students, scholars, and seasoned practioners alike.

--International Perspectives in Victimology

Lisa Nerenberg provides the first comprehensive look at elder abuse prevention trends and strategies. Drawing from existing models and examining salient factors, she outlines approaches to intervention that consider victims and perpetrators and engage communities and service systems. She also offers meaningful response to the many challenges endemic to elder abuse work. As a result, Lisa gives hope to the field."

Beginning as a grassroots advocate a quarter century ago in San Francisco, Lisa developed and tested many viable elder abuse prevention programs herself through the local elder abuse network before exploring best practices elsewhere. This unique evolution and perspective gives her the depth and breadth of understanding needed to write a book like this, able to resonate equally with adult protective service workers struggling to manage caseloads of vulnerable elders, law enforcement personnel trying to prosecute abusers, and academics searching for effective responses to the problem."--
--**Georgia J. Anetzberger**, PhD, ACSW
Assistant Professor of Health Care Administration at Cleveland State University
and Editor of the *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*

Recipient of the Legal Assistance for Seniors' "Leading the Fight for Seniors' Rights" annual award for 2007!

Drawing from over twenty years of experience helping communities improve their response to elder abuse, Lisa Nerenberg describes what agencies, communities, tribes, states, and national organizations are doing to prevent abuse, treat its effects, and ensure justice. She further explores what remains to be done and offers a plan for the future. In doing so, she addresses the broader challenges of fortifying the long-term care, protective service, and legal systems to meet the new and imminent demands of a burgeoning elderly population. In short, the book is about making communities safer places to grow old.

Ms. Nerenberg begins by exploring trends that have shaped or defined practice in the field of elder abuse prevention including the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision; a shift in focus from protecting to empowering victims; an increasingly multicultural elderly population; the "globalization" of the field; and heightened understanding of the "psychology of victimization" (or why victims do what they do and perhaps more importantly, why they often don't do what professionals think they should). She further describes eight models and theories on which practice has been based ranging from the widely recognized adult protective service and domestic violence prevention models to lesser-known approaches such as the family preservation and restorative justice models. She describes specific interventions and approaches that each model has contributed, their benefits and limitations, what is known about their impact, and factors that dictate what responses are appropriate to specific settings and situations.

In addition to describing techniques used by individual practitioners, the author outlines strategies and

services that agencies, communities, states, tribes, courts, and national organizations have designed, which include elder forensics centers, elder courts, family justice centers, elder shelters, "hybrid" multidisciplinary teams, fraud prevention programs, support groups, restorative justice programs, and culturally specific outreach campaigns. She details progressive public policy initiatives, which range from statutes that provide for the mandatory reporting of deaths in nursing homes, to efforts to improve the collection and distribution of restitution, to laws that address the role of undue influence in elder abuse.

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