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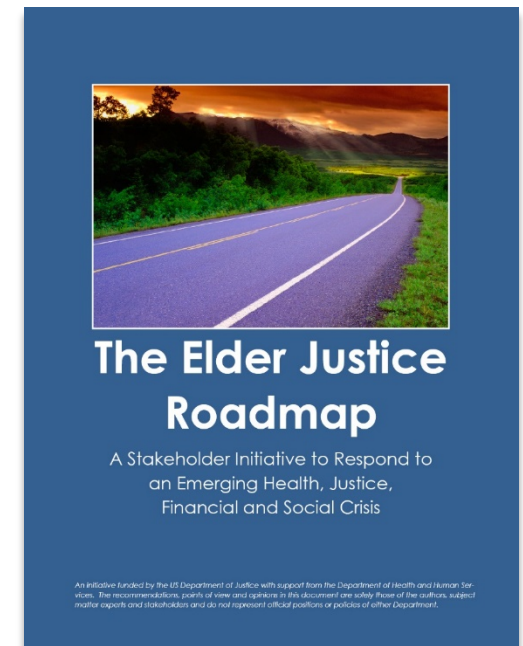
# ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life

# Elder Abuse

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“Abuse, neglect, abandonment, or financial exploitation of an older individual by another person or entity who has a trust-based relationship with the older adult or, any harm that occurs because an older person is targeted by a stranger based on their age or disability” (DOJ, 2013).



# Why Address Elder Abuse



Disclaimer: Persons depicted in this presentation are models and are used for illustrative purposes only.



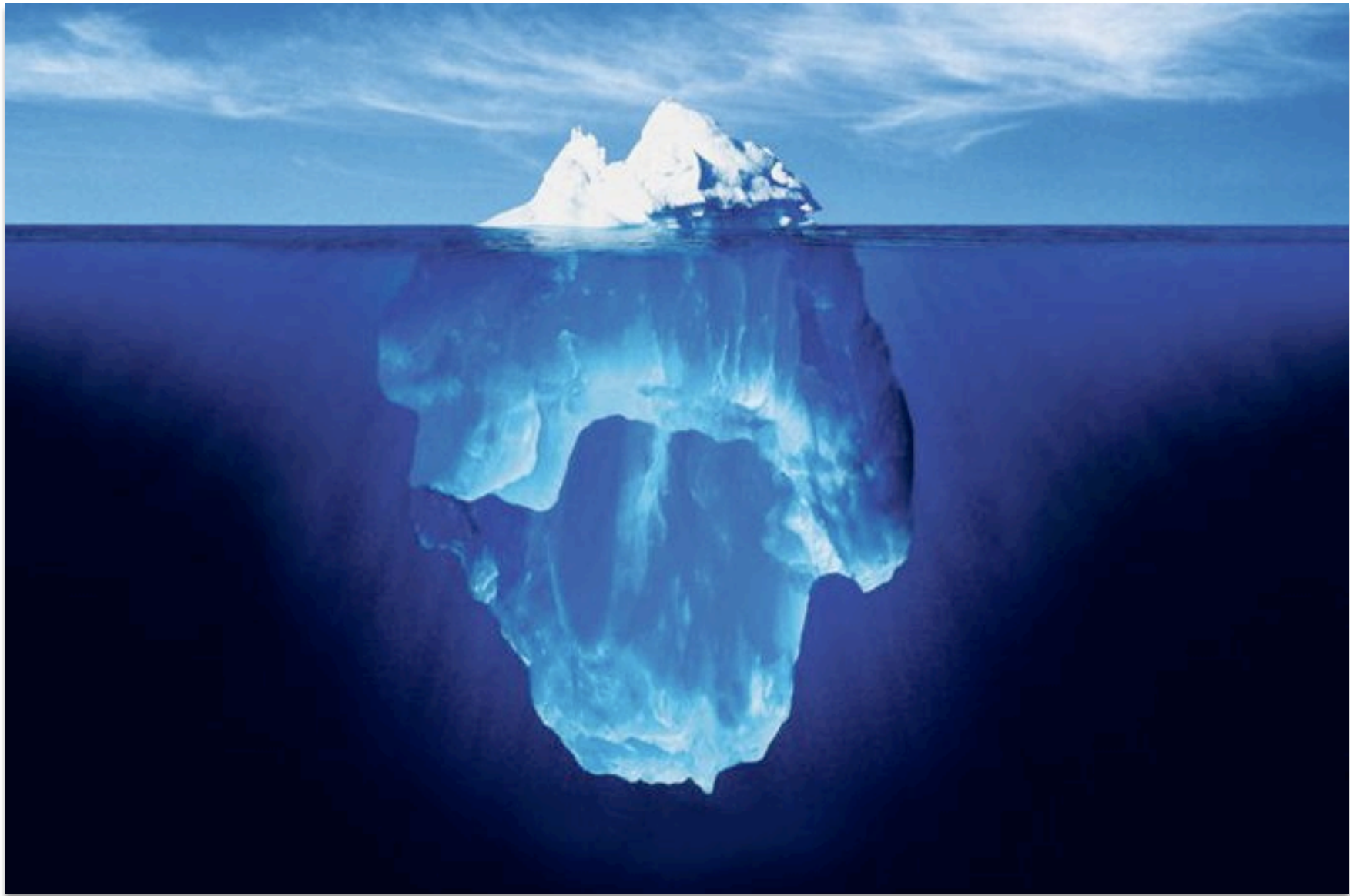


1 in 10 community-residing older adults reported experiencing elder abuse in the past year.

Acierno et al. (2010). Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse and potential neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(2), 292-297.



# Elder Abuse is Mostly Hidden





For every 1 case of financial exploitation that comes to light, 44 do not.

For every 1 case of neglect that comes to light, 57 do not.

Under the Radar NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study.  
<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/Under%20the%20Radar%2005%2012%2011%20final%20report.pdf>

Studies have consistently shown that the majority of elder abuse cases involve female victims with spouses as perpetrators.

Lane et al., (2013).







In the community, older victims of sexual abuse were violated most often by spouses/partners.

Acierno, et al., (2010).

In facilities, employees responsible for care (43%) or other residents (41%) were most likely offenders.

Ramsey-Klawnsnik, H., Teaster, P. B., Mendiando, M. S., Marcum, J. L., & Abner, E. L. (2008).



Often financial exploitation co-occurs with other forms of abuse.

Family, friends, caregivers and trusted others may be the offenders.



Nearly 80% of household wealth in the US is held by individuals age 50 and over.

[http://erickson.umbc.edu/files/2015/05/2016 Longevity Economy AARP.pdf](http://erickson.umbc.edu/files/2015/05/2016%20Longevity%20Economy%20AARP.pdf)





Older adults lose  
approximately \$36  
billion/year.

On average, victims  
lose \$120,300.

AARP BankSafe Initiative: A Comprehensive Approach to Better  
Serving and Protecting Consumers (Jan 2016) p.2



Gina Bower

Nearly 1 in 5 older adults has been the victim of financial abuse.

Investor Protection Trust

[http://www.investorprotection.org/downloads/IPT\\_EIFFE\\_Medical\\_SurveyNews\\_Release\\_03\\_22\\_16.pdf](http://www.investorprotection.org/downloads/IPT_EIFFE_Medical_SurveyNews_Release_03_22_16.pdf)



Nearly half of all victims  
have a physical  
impairment.

About one-third of  
victims have mental  
impairment or dementia.

The New York State Cost of Financial Exploitation Study, 2016.  
Yufan Huang, PhD, New York State Office of Children and Family  
Services Bureau of Research, Evaluation, and Performance  
Analytics and Alan Lawitz, Esq., New York State Office of Children  
and Family Services Bureau of Adult Services.



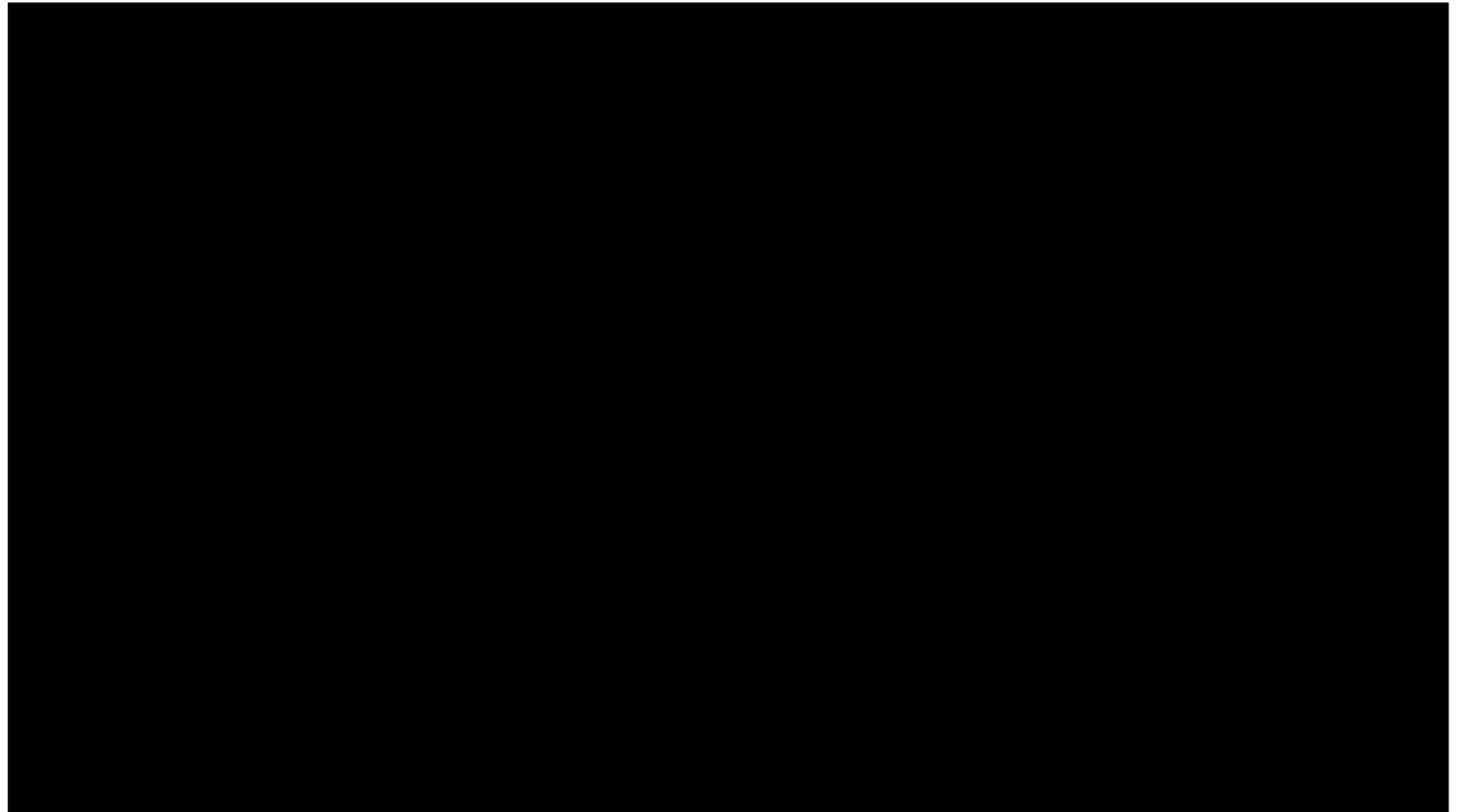


Elders who experienced abuse, even modest abuse, had a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been abused.



# Lois, Miss Mary, Sam, Anne and Pat

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# Recognize and Respond to Elder Abuse



# Recognize Potential Signs of Abuse

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## ☐ Victim:

- ☐ **Story does not match injuries**
- ☐ Shows unexplained or sudden changes in behavior
- ☐ Is afraid to speak in the presence of the offender
- ☐ Is isolated
- ☐ Shows signs of being restrained
- ☐ Has infections, pain, or bleeding in genital areas

# Recognize Potential Signs of Abuse #2

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## □ Potential Person Causing Harm

- Provides conflicting explanations about the older adult's injuries
- Isolates older adult
- Controls and dominates the older adult
- Portrays self as victim or the only caring person in older adult's life
- **May be charming and helpful toward professionals**



# Recognize Potential Signs of Neglect

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- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Over- or under-medication
- Extreme weight loss
- Decayed teeth
- Overgrown nails
- Matted, infested hair
- Repeated falls
- Lack of assistive devices (e.g., hearing aids, glasses, dentures, mobility aids)
- Pressure ulcers

# Recognize Potential Signs of Exploitation

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- ❑ Important possessions, documents, or credit cards are missing
- ❑ Older adult does not have basic needs met, but perpetrator has lavish expenses
- ❑ Forged signature on documents
- ❑ Use of ATM card or credit cards on items that are not for older adult
- ❑ “Gifts” or “loans” out of character for older adult
- ❑ Misuse of powers of attorney or guardianships

# What Can You Do If You Suspect Elder Abuse?

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# Understand the Victim's Potential Reluctance to Report

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- Shame and embarrassment
- Fear
- Autonomy
- Family values and commitments – love person harming them
- Health
- Economic

# If Concerned About an Older Adult

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- Initiate conversations
- Listen – be present
- Gently ask questions
- Compassionate messages - not alone/help available
- Focus on strengths and resiliency
- Refer to hotline or DV/SA program or other services
- Report if mandated

# Reporting Abuse

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- **Local Law Enforcement:** Call the police or 9-1-1
- **Adult Protective Services**
- **Long-term Care Ombudsman:** (long-term care facilities)



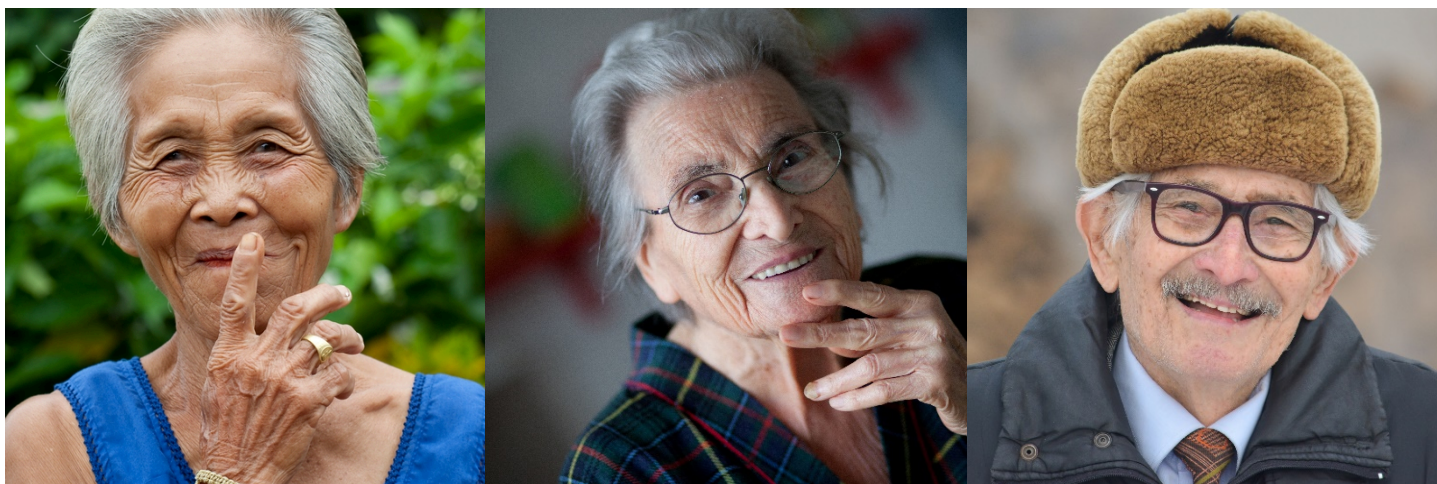




Studies have shown that social support can reduce the effects of abuse, particularly in terms of depression and generalized symptoms of anxiety and poor health.

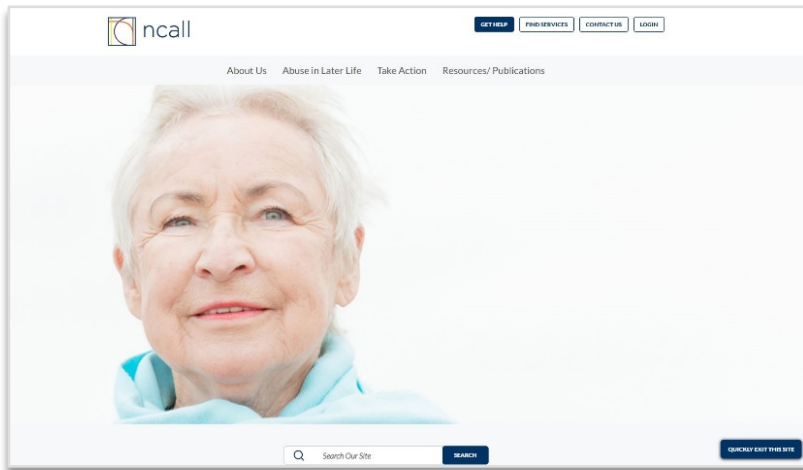
Acierno R, Henandez Tejada M, Anetzberger G, Loew D, Muzzy W (2017)

# Resources



# NCALL Online

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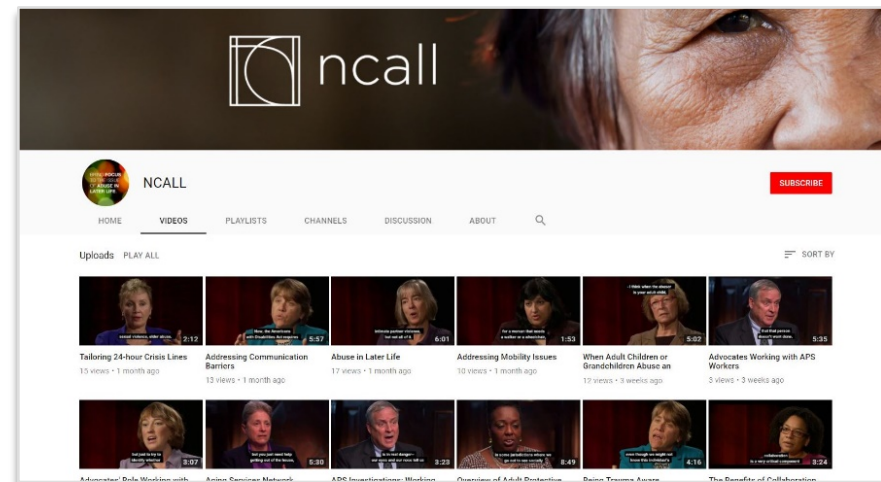
NCALL website: [www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us)



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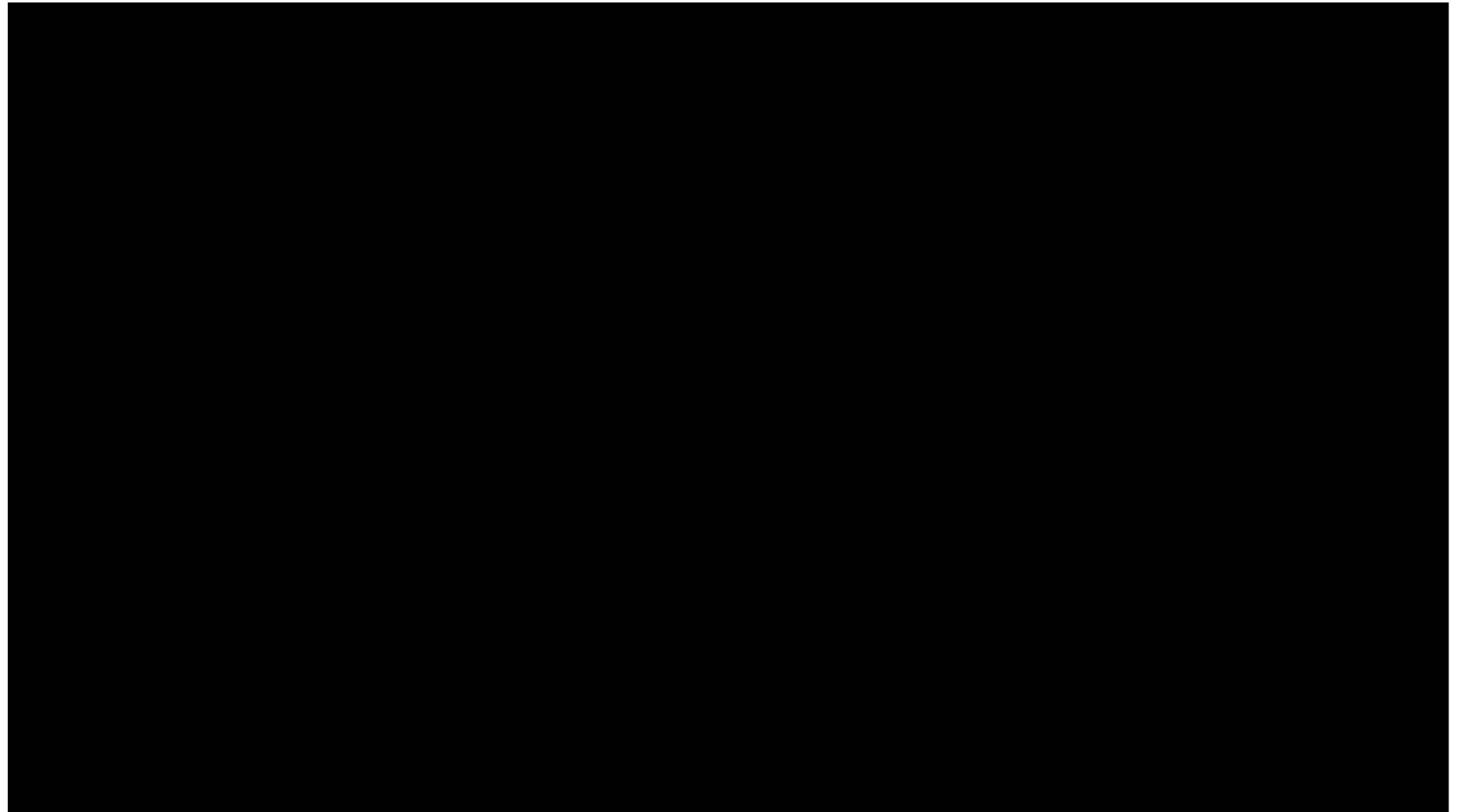
NCALL eNews Update



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# Lois, Sam, and Pat – What Happened Next

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“None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”

Mother Teresa

# Thank You

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