

Tribal Elder Protection Team Coordinator



The Tribal Elder Protection Team (EPT) Coordinator

To make sure an EPT is managed appropriately, and to increase accountability of team members, it is recommended to designate an EPT Coordinator or Director. This individual may have dual roles on the EPT as the coordinator, and as a representative for a tribal agency (e.g. Title VI Director). This team member has an important role on the EPT. They will facilitate a group of professional community members in the unification of collaborative efforts to assist elders who may be experiencing elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Some tribes may choose to have a coordinator and a director to share the responsibilities and work load. For many Tribal EPTs, the director of an Elderly Services Program will serve as the EPT Coordinator. Each EPT is as different as the tribal communities in which they serve. A EPT Coordinator is primarily responsible for administrative tasks, which may include:

Coordinating team membership: sending meeting alerts; creating the meeting agenda; setting up the meeting room; recording meeting minutes; receiving and reviewing completed case summaries; gathering of elder information; facilitating discussions among team members, arranging trainings and agency overviews, case follow-up and client tracking, and EPT meeting follow-up.¹⁻⁵

The Tribal EPT Coordinator's Role

1. The EPT Coordinator is responsible for enhancing communication between tribal agencies and programs; more specifically:
 - Scheduling meetings and follow-up with reminders
 - Coordinating with all case presenters in the week prior to each meeting and ensure that representatives involved in the case are prepared for the meeting
 - Supplying EPT representatives with approved forms for documentation
 - Developing a sign-in sheet to be used on the day of each meeting
 - Recording meeting minutes using an approved method of information collection (audio recording devices, or a paper document form)
 - Coordinating food and drink for meetings/events
 - Facilitating discussions during meetings
 - After meetings, following-up with presented cases in a timely manner to ensure resolution of client concerns, and ensuring the elders' needs are being addressed^{1,3}
2. The EPT Coordinator insures that confidentiality agreements are maintained and rules are followed by all EPT representatives. All collaborating agencies will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the EPT. The MOU will clearly state the agency representative's responsibilities and privileges. EPT participants who are not regular representatives from the collaborating agency will sign a monthly confidentiality agreement at the EPT meeting (this can happen when an alternate for a regular EPT representative is needed).¹ The MOU should include:
 - Length of commitment (e.g., 2-year rotation of selected agency representatives)
 - Time commitment, including meeting times and any other travel
 - Mandatory meeting requirements
 - Confidentiality requirements
 - EPT training requirements
 - Participation requirements for EPT evaluation, and
 - Case summary submission requirements for case presentations²⁻³

3. Each team member, including the EPT Coordinator, can be assigned “on-call” duties during nights and weekends to respond to crisis situations. “On-call” EPT members will manage and coordinate client intake procedures, such as:
 - Responding to emergency personnel to assist an elder in need of EPT interventions
 - Coordinating community services available to elder
 - Managing daily functions of the EPT
 - Reviewing case summaries prior to EPT meetings⁴⁻⁵
4. The EPT Coordinator assists and supports team members, helps organize case summaries presented at meetings, and encourages the involvement of interagency assistance for team members. With the creation of the EPT, the coordinator works to increase appropriate team membership and improve attendance from team member agencies. The coordinator, along with other team members, reach out to community partners who do not currently attend the EPT and invite them to attend.^{1,3-4}
5. The EPT Coordinator reviews confidentiality rules and discusses meeting ground rules to ensure a safe environment for group discussion of difficult cases, including situations where agencies disagree or where their mandates require differing approaches. EPT members will not permit the blame or public shaming of any member or participant. Most importantly, the coordinator will manage interpersonal dynamics among team members to insure appropriate communication, and for conflict resolution.^{1,3}
6. At the start of each meeting, the EPT Coordinator facilitates member “check-ins” addressing issues or resolution of previous meeting client discussions. The coordinator checks in regularly with all team members to ensure that EPT needs and expectations are being met. The coordinator continues to outreach to agencies/programs for commitments of support for the EPT, and building collaboration with all tribal programs. The coordinator will also be responsible for orienting new team participants from agencies by providing them with an EPT fact sheet and answering any questions that may arise.¹
7. Additional activities may include but are not limited to:
 - Removal of any identifying information of elders before EPT meetings
 - Collecting and shredding meeting case summaries and other documents as necessary to maintain confidentiality procedures
 - Arranging for team trainings to facilitate professional development for team members
 - Gathering community feedback on the effectiveness of the EPT within the tribal community
 - Presenting information about the EPT roles and functions to the tribal council and other community members
 - Representing the EPT at community meetings, gatherings, and other events

Some tribal communities are able to hire a full-time EPT Coordinator as they may have funding to sustain this position, where other tribal communities many not have funds available. In these cases, this would require a highly motivated individual who would volunteer their time to this position.

References

1. Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect, Human Service Department, County of Sonoma (2012). *A collaborative approach to multidisciplinary teams in Sonoma County*. Retrieved on May 30, 2017 from www.centeronelderabuse.org/docs/A-Collaborative-Approach-to-Multidisciplinary-Teams-in-Sonoma-County.092812.pdf
2. Department of Justice, Elder Justice Initiative (2017). Chapter 3: selecting team members. Retrieved on May 30, 2017 from www.justice.gov/archives/elderjustice/file/961006/download
3. Department of Justice, Elder Justice Initiative (2017). Chapter 6: MDT coordinator. Retrieved on May 30, 2017 from www.justice.gov/elderjustice/file/961021/download
4. Content for this document was adapted from correspondence with Wilson Wewa of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs from November 2016 through May 2017.
5. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Wilson Wewa (2014). *Multidisciplinary Team Approach on Elder Abuse*. Retrieved from www.nieji.org/pdf/multidisciplinary-team-approach-elder-abuse-presentation-121014.pdf

“This (report/ document/ etc.) was completed for the National Center on Elder Abuse and is supported in part by a grant (No. OI-901E0001) from the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Grantees carrying out projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Therefore, points of view or opinions do not necessarily represent official Administration on Aging or DHHS policy.”

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