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USING A “TEAMING” (ENHANCED SOCIAL SUPPORT) APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RISE ELDER ABUSE AND SELF-NEGLECT INTERVENTION

Andie MacNeil¹, M.T. Connolly², Erin Salvo³, Patricia Kimball⁴, Geoff Rogers¹, Stuart Lewis⁵, and David Burnes⁴, ¹. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, United States, 3. Department of Health and Human Services, Augusta, Maine, United States, 4. Elder Abuse Institute of Maine, Brunswick, Maine, United States, 5. City University of New York, New York City, New York, United States, 6. Dartmouth College, Lebanon, New Hampshire, United States

Our understanding of what intervention strategies are effective in improving the well-being of older adults experiencing elder abuse and self-neglect (EASN) is severely limited. However, data consistently demonstrate that social support is a protective factor. As a component of a larger community-based EASN intervention, RISE, this study examined the use of a method called “teaming,” a wrap-around approach to establish sustained formal and informal social supports surrounding victims and alleged harmers in EASN cases. Qualitative interviews and a focus group were
conducted with the original pilot cohort of RISE “advocate” caseworkers (n = 4). A descriptive phenomenological approach involving two independent assessors was used to code transcripts into themes. Three domains were identified: (1) team and support forming process, which describes the development of a supportive network based on each client’s needs; (2) techniques, which refers to the specific strategies advocates utilized to promote collectivity and shared responsibility around the client; and (3) implementation challenges, which discusses the difficulties advocates encountered when using teaming with people experiencing EASN. The experiences of advocates suggest that teaming is a beneficial approach to support the individualized needs of each client, and to promote improved and sustainable case outcomes for clients. This study represents the first in-depth exploration of teaming in the context of EASN intervention.