**ELDER ABUSE ENHANCED MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS**

**FAQS**

These FAQs answer questions about elder abuse Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) in general and the NYC Elder Abuse Center’s EMDTs (Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams) specifically.

**1. What is elder abuse and how prevalent is it?** Over 120,000 older adults in NYC are abused, neglected, or exploited every year. Abuse cuts across all demographic groups, and causes untold suffering. Many of these victims live their last years impoverished, injured, neglected, and in fear - with little effective protection, attention, or help from any system. Indeed, a staggering 1 in 24 older victims are not reported or known to any service network. Many situations that come to light are complex, involving co-occurring abuse types requiring responses from multiple systems.

**2. What are MDTs and why do we need them?** MDTs bring professionals together from across disciplines and systems to problem solve complex cases of elder abuse. Those responding to elder abuse often operate in silos, unaware of parallel investigations and unable to access the knowledge and resources needed to respond effectively. Professionals working in isolation are often hampered by the limits of their own expertise and authority. Thus, gaps in care or service duplication often occurs. In contrast, MDTs are a powerful person-centered, highly coordinated intervention. Members carefully consider each older victim’s situation and individual strengths, needs and preferences when creating a response.

**3. Where are NYCEAC’s teams located?** NYCEAC has teams in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx. All of these teams are “enhanced” by the presence of a forensic accountant, – a specialist in applying accounting concepts and practices to financial exploitation cases – geriatricians and geropsychiatrists. Thus, they are called Enhanced MDTs (“EMDTs”).

**4. Who are the members of the EMDTs?** EMDTs are comprised of professionals, many working directly with victims. Together EMDT members and specialists assess and prioritize the myriad issues involved in the cases, determine what services and interventions are needed, and what additional experts might be consulted to improve outcomes for vulnerable older adults. To effectively accomplish this, teams require a broad range of expertise at the table. NYCEAC’s EMDTs have specialists from many fields, including medicine, law, mental health, social work, protective services, elder abuse, aging, banking, law enforcement, criminal justice and forensic accounting.

**5. Who do the EMDTs currently serve?** NYCEAC’s EMDTs serve elder abuse victims residing in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

**6. How do NYCEAC’s EMDTs work?** An elder abuse case is initially referred to an EMDT when a professional contacts the EMDT Coordinator (EMDTC). The EMDTC then triages the case, evaluating its overall eligibility and the capability of the referring professional to resolve the case without team intervention. Once accepted for case review, the EMDTC works with the referring professional to prepare a case presentation for team discussion, and schedules it for team review. The team hears the presentation and then works together to problem solve, develop an action plan, and coordinate responses. The EMDTC synchronizes the assessment and interventions of team members and schedules follow-up team reviews.

**7. What are the evidence-based benefits of MDTs?** Research on MDTs suggests that they significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of response to cases of elder abuse. Professionals are able to establish relationships with colleagues in different offices and systems, the team can design individualized interventions to accommodate the unique needs of each victim, and the coordination creates accountability. Additionally, research has demonstrated MDTs improve the rate of prosecution in financial exploitation cases, increase the rates of elder abuse reporting in general, and are cost effective.

**8. Are consultation resources available for cases not heard by the full team?** NYCEAC EMDTs cannot hear every case of elder abuse, so they necessarily focus on the most complex ones. The EMDTC triages cases and determines whether the case requires EMDT services. For other cases, NYCEAC offers case consultation services for professionals. These consultations connect professionals with specialists from a range of fields, including medicine, psychiatry, social work, law, and forensic accounting. Also, supportive counseling is provided at the NYCEAC Helpline for concerned non-professionals in the lives of NYC-residing elder abuse victims (212-746-6905).

**9. Who funds the EMDTs and consultation services?** The NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) and Office Of Victim Services (OVS) fund NYCEAC/WCM EMDTs.

For more information, go to **www.nyceac.org**.

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