



KERN COUNTY ELDER NEWS

Monthly Information Article | Kern County DEAR/EDRT TEAM*

*(Dependent/Elder Abuse Review) Team/EDRT (Elder Death Review Team)

JUNE 2026

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



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Designed and Managed By:
Kern County District Attorney's
Office - Victim Services Unit

Elder Abuse Prevention

Our department often hears frustrations from community members when they report a vulnerable adult to Adult Protective Services (APS) only to see no immediate change. We are often asked, "Why isn't APS doing anything?" This often stems from two foundational principles: the right to self-determination and the legal presumption of capacity.

Capacity is rarely "all or nothing." An individual may possess the capacity to make simple daily choices, such as meal selection, while lacking the ability to manage complex financial affairs. Furthermore, capacity can fluctuate throughout the day, making it vital to avoid snap judgments. Legally, every adult is presumed to have capacity until their rights are removed formally through a court process.

In addition, our perceptions are often shaped by our own upbringing. Consider a home with dishes in the sink, clutter on the countertops, and clutter along the walls: three different observers might describe this environment as either "habitable," "cluttered," or "unacceptable." Unless a situation is objectively unsafe, we must respect the individual's perspective and their right to live as they choose.



Agency Partners

- Bakersfield Police Department
- California Dept. of Financial Protection & Innovation
- California Dept. of Insurance
- CSUB
- Dept. of Social Services Licensing
- GBLA
- Independent Living Center of KC
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kern Co. Aging & Adult
- Kern Co. BHRS
- Kern Co. Coroner
- Kern Co. District Attorney
- Kern Co. DA Victim Services
- Kern Co. Family Law Facilitator
- Kern Co. Public Health
- Kern Regional Center
- Kern Co. Sheriff's Office
- Kern Co. Veterans Service Dept.
- Social Security Admin.
- Strata Credit Union

APS is a voluntary service that requires the client's consent and participation. There is no immediate mechanism to force change upon those who are "set in their ways" if they do not wish to adapt. The objective of APS is to ensure long-term safety, a process that frequently requires significant time and rapport-building rather than overnight intervention.

Furthermore, even when an individual is suspected of lacking capacity, APS does not have the authority to summarily remove them from their home. These situations involve complex legal protections designed to balance safety with civil liberties.

This overview only briefly touches upon the nuances of capacity as it relates to potential self-neglect. To explore these complexities in depth, please join us at the 27th Annual Elder Abuse Prevention Conference on June 11, 2026.



27TH ANNUAL ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

Theme: Between Independence and Intervention: The Capacity Dilemma

JUNE 11, 2026
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM



THE LUX EVENT CENTER
4203 GOSFORD ROAD
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93313



KNOW ABUSE REPORT ABUSE
ELDER AND DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

Speakers:

Kendra Kuehn
*International Association
for Indigenous Aging*

Emily Lyles
*Kern County Behavioral
Health & Recovery Services*

Tony Chicotel
*California Advocates for
Nursing Home Reform*



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\$55.00 EARLY REGISTRATION THROUGH MAY 22, 2026
\$65.00 REGULAR REGISTRATION THROUGH JUNE 3, 2026

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