



NEWS RELEASE

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Archstone Foundation Grant Funds New WISE & Healthy Aging Program Providing Psychotherapy for Victims of Elder Abuse

SANTA MONICA (August 5, 2011) – Victims of elder abuse in the City or County of Los Angeles will be able to receive individual psychotherapy sessions under a new project of WISE & Healthy Aging, the result of a \$90,000 grant from the Archstone Foundation.

Victims will be referred to the program through the county's Adult Protective Services, law enforcement officials, the Los Angeles Elder Abuse Forensic Center and WISE and Healthy Aging's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. The project initially will serve clients older than 65 years of age. Until now, psychotherapy routinely was available only to elders with persistent mental health issues.

"In addition to assisting current victims of elder abuse, the Archstone Foundation grant supports our effort to change the way the mental health community views and cares for elder abuse survivors by increasing awareness among professionals and integrating mental health services into the elder abuse intervention network," said Molly Davies, MSW, vice president of Elder Abuse Prevention and Ombudsman Services at WISE & Healthy Aging.

She said the project is designed to accomplish three major goals: help elder abuse survivors process their feelings and deal with the trauma they have experienced; help victims protect themselves from becoming re-victimized; and share the project design and client treatment outcomes with other professionals. In fact, clinical, organizational and financial data from this pilot project will be analyzed to identify ways to improve these services and provide a blueprint for other agencies contemplating the introduction of a similar program.

In its grant proposal, WISE & Healthy Aging identified several areas of exploration: "Currently, it is unknown if elder abuse survivors will be open to therapeutic interventions, or if this mode of one-on-one treatment will have positive therapeutic outcomes. This project will provide quantitative and qualitative data reporting on those unknowns, including: treatment outcomes, types of abuse that have occurred, and clients' willingness to engage in treatment."

Jennifer Levine, PsyD, clinical director of Mental Health Services at WISE & Healthy Aging, said the project will make individual psychotherapy available to victims of any type of elder abuse, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and financial abuse, as well as neglect and self-neglect.

"To make this service as convenient as possible for victims of elder abuse, a client may be seen in their own home in the community, in a nursing home or assisted living facility, or at a place of their choosing, such as a park, senior center or church. Therapy also will be available at the WISE & Healthy Aging clinic in Santa Monica," Levine said, adding that it is expected that each client will receive about 10 therapy sessions.

Therapists, all of whom are in post-doctoral fellowship programs, will use standardized tests to measure pre- and post-treatment levels of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Archstone Foundation is a private grant-making organization whose mission is to contribute toward the preparation of society in meeting the needs of an aging population. Its leadership in the field of aging is the result of two decades of operation and awarding over 800 grants, representing more than \$73 million; surpassing its initial endowment.

WISE & Healthy Aging is the result of the 2007 merger of WISE Senior Services and the Center for Healthy Aging. With a combined 70 years' experience serving older adults, the nonprofit organization brings together a synergy of services, information, programs and support for seniors, those who care for them and the professionals who work with them.

The agency's Mental Health Services employs highly qualified mental health staff, psychiatrists and clinical interns who provide psychotherapy, psychiatry, psychosocial assessment, several group programs, and mental health case management for adults 55 and older. Programs include:

- Field-Capable Clinical Services Program for Older Adults (FCCS), which provides psychotherapy and care management for people who may be reluctant to seek mental health services, including the homeless or those at risk, those who are isolated and/or homebound, or those who have a history of mental illness.
- Peer Counseling, which has become an international model for the delivery of counseling services to older adults dealing with a difficult period in their lives.
- Caregiver Support, which offers free support groups for caregivers of all ages to address the stresses of caring for a loved one with dementia.
- Information and Referral, which helps connect older adults and their families with appropriate resources in a wide network of programs and services.

For media information and to arrange interviews, please call 800-396-1002.