

H.E.L.P.[®] Is Here

Information and advice for older adults and families

Spring 2021

Successful Aging: Finding Ways to Counter Ageism, Especially During the Pandemic.

Excerpted and updated from an article by Helen Dennis

Older adults are getting attention. The pandemic has raised our profile, drawing national attention to the subject of ageism; the discrimination against older people because of their age.

Ageism is worldwide. A study by the World Health Organization of 83,000 people in 57 countries assessed attitudes toward older people. Sixty percent reported older people are not respected. The lowest levels of respect were reported by countries with high incomes.

Ageism, a public health crisis: In America, ageism is broad and deep. Paul Irving, Chairman of the Milken Institute, Center for the Future of Aging, noted that it is a public health crisis “and deserves to be confronted and called out.” It affects the physical and mental health of older people and has significant impact on older adults who have ageist views about themselves. Older persons who absorb negative age stereotypes often believe they are a burden and are undervalued. Such feelings often lead to increased risks for depression and social isolation, placing them at high risk for physical and mental health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, cognitive decline, Alzheimer’s disease and even death, according to the National Institutes on Aging. So yes, ageism is a public health crisis.

Ageism and clinical trials: Older adults frequently are underrepresented in studies for diseases that disproportionately affect them such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. Dr. Louise Aronson, Professor of Medicine, at the University of California, San Francisco, Division of Geriatrics said, “This has sadly been the tradition in the United States with the typical trial population consisting of middle-class male medical students.” She adds that only in



2019 did the National Institutes of Health (NIH) mandate that older adults should be included in medical research. The NIH reported some encouraging news; a promising clinical trial for an experimental vaccine was expanded to enroll adults older than age 55 years.

Ageism and advertising: Advertisers are missing the mark. An AARP report indicates older adults have trillions of dollars of spending power, yet this “demographic is shunned and caricatured in marketing images, perpetuating unrealistic stereotypes and contributing to age discrimination,” according to the New York Times. We know that 46 percent of the U.S. adult population is over 50; yet only 15 percent of images containing adults include people in that age segment, the study finds. There’s more; 30 per cent of the U.S. labor force is age 50 or older, yet only 13 percent of images of 50-plus adults involve a work setting. Visual representations matter. They affect attitudes, expectation and behaviors of people of all ages. In a sense, the recent increased attention on article continues on pg.3

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Insider

H.E.L.P. in the Year of Cautious Optimism

by Britt Huff, Ph.D., Executive Director



Greetings from all of us at H.E.L.P. We are cautiously optimistic that the worst of the pandemic has passed and that our doors and lives will soon be reopening to a better future. We are grateful that vaccines for the Covid-19 virus have been FDA-approved and becoming more readily available for everyone. Thank you to all of you who have supported H.E.L.P. during this difficult time; a challenge much longer than any of us anticipated. As a result of your generosity, we have continued providing our programs and services to seniors, including food delivery support, telephone counseling, and virtual educational classes by Zoom. We are particularly grateful for the generous emergency pandemic grants from The McMillen Family Foundation and The Ahmanson Foundation, with more details provided on page 8 in our grant article.

We have had some leadership changes this year, as Dr. Tom Paulsen, M.D., our longtime Board Chair, has transitioned from that position to Immediate Past-President. We are so grateful for his leadership and that he continues to lend his expertise to our Executive Council. Scott Donnelly, C.P.A., a partner in the PDM accounting firm, has stepped into the Chair position, previously having served as Board Vice-Chair and Treasurer. Pete Pettler, Esq., formerly our Board Clerk/Secretary, is our new Board Vice-Chair. Pete has a long history with H.E.L.P., having served on H.E.L.P.'s early Board of Directors. We thank Michael Barth, Esq., for continuing as Board Treasurer and Board member Debbie Richardson for stepping in as Board Clerk/Secretary. Thank you also to all of our other Board members for their continuing commitment to H.E.L.P.

Our lead article in this issue is very timely, as author Helen Dennis examines the impact of ageism on the wellbeing of older adults. H.E.L.P. has long been an advocate for seniors, highlighting their valuable role in our society and promoting the concepts of life-long learning and service as a way to stay active and vital. We hope you enjoy this and the other articles in this issue of Help Is Here and that you will use the enclosed envelope to give generously to our mission. Thank you for your support.

Successful Aging continued from page 1.

aging and the pandemic gives us a glimpse of society's perspectives on aging and provides an opportunity to challenge the declining narrative. Fortunately, we are seeing positive responses of increased empathy, interest and more engagement in age issues, noted Dr. Aronson. People are reaching out to one another; they are caring for each other; friends and family are reconnecting and acts of loving-kindness are daily occurrences.

But that's not enough. Irving said what is needed to counteract ageism is action, a movement beginning from the bottom up that includes companies rethinking aging and, of course, leadership at the top.

Anti-ageism activist Ashton Applewhite is catalyzing such a movement called Old School. It is a clearinghouse of vetted resources to educate people about ageism and how to dismantle it, consisting of blogs, books, articles, videos and workshop materials accessible to the general public. Her goal is to create a movement to make ageism as unacceptable as any other prejudice. Reframing aging is another anti-ageism endeavor. It is an initiative designed to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and the many ways older people contribute to society. It also includes webinars, technical assistance and other educational materials.

And there is one more – Changing the Narrative, CO, a strategic and communications and awareness campaign to increase understanding of ageism and how to shift Coloradans' thinking about aging.

Yet, what also is needed are our voices. When we hear or see something that depicts aging or older persons inaccurately, we need to step up and bring it to the attention of the speaker, author, journalist, advertiser, policymaker – or a family member, friend or neighbor. Of course, politeness and tact are key. In most cases, people are not aware of their ageist thinking or language. We all have a role to play in the anti-ageism movement, if for no other reason than self-interest.

Helen Dennis is a former H.E.L.P. Board Chair and is a specialist in aging, with academic, corporate, and nonprofit experience. She writes a regular column at the Press Telegram and The Daily Breeze.

Note: This article refers to a special report from the Longevity Project, a Zoomcast on Ageism in America with panelists Dr. Louise Aronson, Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, Division of Geriatrics; and Paul Irving, Chairman of the Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging.

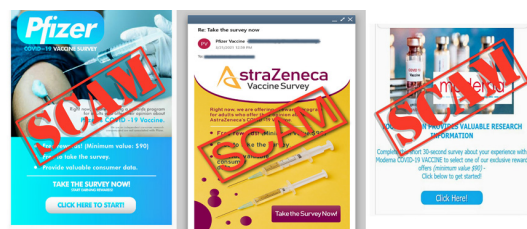
This issue is based on law in effect in California on January 1, 2021. H.E.L.P. provides referrals to help older adults obtain care, social, and other services. H.E.L.P. does not refer to any private attorney or private law office; all legal service referrals are to legal aid and similar free legal service organizations, or to attorney referral services operated by bar associations or similar organizations. H.E.L.P. does not request or accept referral or similar fees or compensation from any person or organization. To request a copy of H.E.L.P. Is Here, change your mailing address or be removed from the mailing list, call us at 310-533-1996 or e-mail us at ktropp@help4srs.org.

Ignore Bogus COVID Survey

Colleen Tressler
Division of Consumer and Business Education, FTC

Scammers are using a new trick to steal your money and personal information: a bogus COVID vaccine survey. People across the country are reporting getting emails and texts out of the blue, asking them to complete a limited-time survey about the Pfizer, Moderna, or AstraZeneca vaccine. (And no doubt, there may be one for Johnson & Johnson, too.) In exchange, people are offered a free reward, but asked to pay shipping fees.

If you get an email or text like this, STOP.
It's a scam.



No legitimate surveys ask for your credit card or bank account number to pay for a “free” reward. If you get an email or text you're not sure about:

- Don't click on any links or open attachments. Doing so could install harmful malware that steals your personal information without you realizing it.
- Don't call or use the number in the email or text. If you want to call the company that supposedly sent the message, look up its phone number online.
- Don't give your bank account, credit card, or personal information to someone who contacts you out of the blue.
- You can filter unwanted text messages on your phone, through your wireless provider, or with a call-blocking app.
- If you get an email or text that asks for your personal information and you think it could be a scam, tell the Federal Trade Commission FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. To learn more about COVID-related frauds and scams, visit ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams.

Are There Alternatives to Using an Attorney?

Have you ever been in a position where you needed to prepare legal documents and did not have the funds to confer with an attorney? Twenty years ago, you had the option of looking for an Independent Paralegal who could assist you and you would be certain that you would meet the legal requirements and language to prepare those documents. Unfortunately, those days are gone.

Much to the surprise of many people, the public professional category of Independent Paralegal no longer exists thanks to California AB 1761, which became effective on January 1, 2000. When the law went into effect, only those paralegals working directly for attorneys could retain the title of paralegal. Under the regulations put forth by this bill, a paralegal can only advertise as a paralegal to prospective contracting attorneys and can never work directly for members of the public for a fee except under the direct supervision of an attorney.

At the same time this bill was enacted, another bill, SB 1418, was also enacted which created a new profession that opened an avenue for many independent paralegals who did not wish to work under the supervision of an attorney. That bill created the position of Legal Document Assistant.

What is a Legal Document Assistant (LDA)?

An LDA is an experienced professional who is authorized to prepare legal documents for a client, but only at the direction of the client. In other words, an LDA is there to assist the "self-help" client handle their own legal matters without the cost of an attorney. For the first time, SB 1418 authorized non-lawyers to prepare legal documents for people doing their own legal tasks.

Under SB 1418, to qualify as a Legal Document Assistant, a person must register in the County in which they work, post a \$25,000 Bond, and establish that he or she has a minimum level of experience and/or education. To be eligible to apply for registration under the bill as a Legal Document Assistant, the applicant shall possess at least one of the following:

- A high school diploma or general equivalency diploma, and either a minimum of two years of law-related experience under the supervision of a licensed attorney, or a minimum of two years experience, prior to January 1, 1999, providing self-help service.

- A baccalaureate degree in any field and either a minimum of one year of law-related experience under the supervision of a licensed attorney, or a minimum of one year of experience, prior to January 1, 1999, providing self-help service.

- A certificate of completion from a paralegal program that is institutionally accredited but not approved by the American Bar Association, that requires successful completion of a minimum of 24 semester units, or the equivalent, in legal specialization courses.

- A certificate of completion from a paralegal program approved by the American Bar Association. Every Legal Document Assistant is required to use a contract for services provided. The contract will provide appropriate notice to the LDA's customers regarding the scope of the customers' rights and the LDA's duties.

What does an LDA do?

Legal Document Assistants may distribute legal materials to their customers that have been published or approved by a lawyer; prepare the customers' legal documents under the direction of their customers; and file the customers' legal documents in the appropriate courts.

Since even the best legal self-help books can be confusing and overwhelming, an LDA can provide invaluable assistance with routine legal tasks such as typing and filing the paperwork for uncontested divorces, bankruptcies, wills, and many other types of documents. Again, because an LDA is forbidden to practice law of any sort, they cannot make suggestions as to what the client needs done for a particular matter or what forms the client must file with the state or the other party to the action. For example, to file an uncontested divorce in California, there are approximately 6 different forms which must be filled out exactly. Naturally, the average client doesn't know what forms he or she needs. The LDA is not allowed to suggest to the client what forms would be necessary for an uncontested divorce. That requires legal know-how and legal judgment and it constitutes UPL (unauthorized practice of law). The LDA is, however, allowed to have a pre-printed instruction sheet or list, prepared by a licensed California attorney, which specifies what forms are needed for an uncontested divorce. The LDA can merely hand over the sheet and tell the client: "Would you like me to fill out these forms for you?" The LDA is not allowed to use his or her judgement.

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Chairman's Circle

The Chairman's Circle membership category, is available with a minimum cumulative annual donation of \$5,000; or you can join the Gold level, with a \$10,000 annual donation. Our Circle members will be highlighted on the Chairman's Circle page of our website, and also enjoy additional special recognition. Your membership year will run from the date that your donations reach one of these levels, which includes gala sponsorships and auction item purchases. We hope you will consider including H.E.L.P. in your giving so that we can continue to assist seniors in our community. Of course, any level of giving is always greatly appreciated and means so much.

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The CLIENT must know what he or she wants, and what forms to use (or decide on the forms based on the attorney-approved instruction list), and the LDA is there to fill in the forms. An experienced LDA can help you avoid the pitfalls and also make sure every important detail on a form is accounted for. The advantage of hiring a LDA is to provide a low-cost alternative to hiring an attorney for routine paperwork. In many cases, one visit will usually be sufficient for you to be able to handle most matters. LDAs will provide you with top-quality legal typing assistance.

Why should an individual consider an LDA?

If you already have decided on a course of action, but are uncertain about how to fill out the paper work, you may need an LDA. If you recently bought a legal self-help book, an LDA may be especially helpful in helping you finish and file your legal paperwork. Potential clients should always ask the LDA if he or she is bonded and registered in their county. Requesting a referral is always a wise suggestion as well. If a person is acting as an LDA, but is not registered and bonded, then they are operating illegally in California.

For more information about Legal Document Assistants or to locate one in your area, go to: California Association of Legal Document Assistants, www.calda.org County of Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, <https://lavote.net>

This issue of "H.E.L.P. is Here" is made possible by a grant from
The Ahmanson Family Foundation.

Remembrances 2021

In Honor Of

Mr. & Mrs. David and Ann Buxton
Mr. Charles R. Holmes

Ms. Diane Sheehy
Mr. & Mrs. Noble and Lorraine Hancock

Mr. J. Scott Donnelly
Mr. Michael Tramontin

Ms. Doris Herzog
Ms. Debra Frank

In Memory Of

Mrs. Gloria Walton
Mr. & Mrs. Rick Moton

Ms. Lela York
Mrs. Mary Murphy

Ms. Mary Bateman
Ms. Barbara Ann Sepeda

Mrs. Chiyo Fukunaga
Ms. Barbara Carlson



St. Vincent's Medical Center is the headquarters for meal preparation for the Los Angeles area.

Meal Delivery to Seniors Continues

As the pandemic appears to be winding down, H.E.L.P. continues to support meal delivery to seniors in the South Bay. We extend a special thanks for all of those volunteers who continued to help deliver meals throughout the past year. H.E.L.P. staff was pleased to be able to work with the local Torrance-Lomita Meals on Wheels program to pick up prepared meals at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Los Angeles and bring them back to the South Bay for individual delivery. We are grateful to Toyota Motor Co. USA, for their donation many years ago, of the H.E.L.P. van which makes this effort possible.

We are all looking forward to the reopening of municipal senior centers where many older adults can participate in daily local lunch programs, but are grateful for coordination with Meals on Wheels, the YMCA, the Salvation Army, and other programs that stepped up to meet that extra need during the pandemic.



Mike Nakawatase, Board member of Torrance-Lomita Meals on Wheels, and volunteer Stu Smith load up the H.E.L.P. van at St. Vincent's with meals for the South Bay.



Britt Huff, H.E.L.P. Executive Director, with volunteer Stu Smith, who drives the H.E.L.P. van up to St. Vincent Medical Center in Los Angeles to load up prepared meals and bring them back to the South Bay, where they are delivered to local seniors.



Laura Bohn, Director of the Torrance/Lomita Meals on Wheels office, center, thanks Stu, Mike, and other volunteers for helping with packaging and distribution.

If you would like to receive meals delivered to your home for a nominal fee, please call 310-542-3434 to arrange for service with Meals On Wheels

Share Financial Data with Care

What Do You Need to Know about how FinTech Apps Work

This guide was created as part of Consumer Action's Share Financial Data with Care Educational Project, with input from The Clearing House. © Consumer Action 2021

Financial technology—FinTech—makes it possible to accomplish all sorts of financial tasks quickly and easily from a computer, smartphone or tablet. From paying a friend to updating your budget, these tools can save you time and money, and even help you achieve your financial goals.

But before you put FinTech to work for you, it's important to understand how these apps and tools work so that you can get the most out of them while also protecting your personal and account information.

Types of FinTech tools

FinTech refers to any technology that is used to digitize, streamline or enhance financial services. For consumers, this generally means mobile apps, computer software and online (website) platforms.

There are FinTech tools for viewing and managing your financial accounts, sending and receiving money, paying bills, tracking and analyzing your spending, creating and updating a budget, working toward financial goals, paying off debt, saving and investing, planning for retirement, getting a loan, receiving reminders and alerts, and even more. Some tools are developed specifically for use by an institution's customers and account holders to help with such tasks as loan applications or track filings and refunds.

Many apps and tools are standalone (not created by or for a specific institution). For example, there are apps that enable users with an account at virtually any financial institution to transfer funds to just about anyone else, regardless of where they do their banking.

Many consumers use a combination of FinTech tools—for example, the apps and online platforms provided by their banks and credit card issuers that enable them to manage their accounts, along with separate tools for budgeting, transferring money, tracking their investments, and so on.

How FinTech tools work

To accomplish the various tasks that they are created to do,

FinTech tools access users' accounts. For example, a money transfer app would need access to the account from which the funds are to be pulled.

Some apps require access to multiple accounts in order to pull together data from different sources into one spot (your "dashboard") such as a budgeting app that tracks income and expenditures might need access to multiple accounts. The benefit of gathering data from your various financial accounts is the ability to assess, monitor and manage your finances quickly and easily, in one spot.

When you download a FinTech app or sign up for an account, the tool typically will request your financial institution account login credentials. Often, you are presented with a login screen that looks very much like a page on your bank's website, even though you are actually providing your username and password to the app (to store for future use) or an intermediary working with the app. Once the company has your account login information, it may log in to your account, via an automated process, at any time to gather any data it wants (called "screen scraping")—your name, address and other personally identifying information, account numbers, transactions, balances, etc.

Some apps use an intermediary system that patches your login credentials directly through to your bank, without storing it themselves. This provides an added measure of safety, and can offer greater control over what data the app can collect.

Typically, FinTech tools can store, share and sell the data they collect about you. This is how many "free" apps make money. Sometimes the third-party intermediaries that receive your data are middlemen that help the apps work. Sometimes they are marketing companies that use the data to promote products and services.

Data privacy and security:

Reputable FinTech developers take measures to protect users' accounts and data from outsiders. One way they do this is to limit what



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the tool can do with account access. For example, one popular budgeting app is designed as “read-only,” which means the tool (or an outsider who has hacked it) can’t initiate a transaction (such as a transfer from your account). Another way is to encrypt user data so that, even if it’s exposed, it isn’t readable to outsiders.

But intruders are not the only threat to FinTech users’ privacy and security. Once the app or tool has your login credentials, it may have unlimited access to your data, for an unlimited time, to be used for unlimited purposes. For example, depending on its privacy policy, the company might be allowed to gather data beyond what is needed to deliver the intended services, store your data indefinitely, and sell it to any number of third parties for marketing or other purposes.

There also is always the possibility of a data breach—the intentional or unintentional exposure of confidential information. Security breaches and hacking have become common. The more places your information is stored, the greater the risk of exposure.

Financial institutions have been taking steps to give their FinTech-using customers more control over data shared with third parties. For example, a number of major banks have created dashboards where customers can see which apps are accessing which data, limit access to a particular account or particular information, or even rescind a tool’s access entirely.

App developers are also being asked to design their apps so that they don’t store users’ login credentials. Instead they access an anonymous unique code, or “token,” from a trusted third party that completes the “handshake” between the app and the financial institution.

And there are steps that you, as a FinTech consumer, can take to reduce potential risks. These include vetting FinTech tools before using them, limiting the data they can access (when possible), and changing your passwords, as a way to cut off access, when you no longer use the tool.

For more about the specific steps you can take to protect your data, read Consumer Action’s companion guide, *Share financial data with care: Privacy and security when using FinTech apps* (https://consumer-action.org/english/articles/privacy_fintech_apps) and visit *Share financial data with care* web-page (<http://bit.ly/fintech-privacy>).

**We want to thank
The McMillen Family Foundation
for their generous support.**

HELP Receives Covid-19 Relief Grants

Two of our grantors offered H.E.L.P. emergency relief funds during the pandemic, which made it possible for H.E.L.P. to continue to provide programs for seniors and also take on more essential services during this time.

The McMillen Family Foundation

In recent years H.E.L.P. has had the opportunity to partner with the McMillen Family Foundation in developing a program for seniors who are confronting substance abuse issues. Problems with opioids often start with the use of pain medicine after surgery without follow-up or monitoring, or being erroneously prescribed opioids for chronic pain rather than a less addictive alternative. Likewise, cocktail hour alcohol use can spiral out of control with depression or loneliness experienced after losing longtime friends or spouse.

Just when it was needed most, the McMillen Family Foundation provided an additional generous emergency pandemic relief grant to H.E.L.P. in support of continued staffing of our substance abuse awareness program for seniors and their families. During the pandemic, when most people spent many months isolated in their homes, drug and alcohol use was seen to increase exponentially. The Thelma McMillen Center for Chemical Dependency Treatment was established in 2003 at Torrance Memorial Medical Center with a \$5.3 million grant by Karl B. McMillen Jr. in memory of his wife, Thelma McMillen. This gift allowed a significant expansion to Torrance Memorial’s successful chemical dependency program. Dr. Morris Gelbart, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Center, said, “We are in the business of changing lives. Our goal is to treat the whole person, not just the addiction.” Their caring counseling services can help seniors find renewed meaning in their lives and guide them to better choices. Through our McMillen partnership, H.E.L.P. can direct those who need it to substance abuse counseling and additional treatment when needed. We are grateful for this generous grant.

The Ahmanson Foundation

In addition to the generous grant received from the Ahmanson Foundation in 2019 for infrastructure and capital improvements, which also helped fund this issue of *Help Is Here*, H.E.L.P. also received an additional emergency Covid-19 pandemic grant in 2021 for staffing and office support. This emergency grant

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Ask H.E.L.P

**I can't afford to pay the rent...
I am a widow now. Richard
was the one who use to deal
with all the paperwork...**



Susan's situation is not unique. It is prevalent to have only one of the spouses involved in dealing with bills, banks, and legal papers. Let's find out about the overall situation regarding Susan's inability to pay for her rent: is it temporary or perhaps related to the circumstances we all are under during Covid-19?

Research and discovery: There are several income options that may be available for her. Was her husband still employed? she should contact the Human Resources department at his company. Perhaps her husband was receiving a pension, VA benefits, maybe money from a 401K?

In all of these cases it should be established if there is going to be a continuation of benefits based on how long they were married, and if he was retired or still employed when they got married. Did he include her as a beneficiary?. Social security payments are often adjusted after the death of a spouse, so she may qualify for government assistance.

Inventory of Bank Accounts and Trusts: Joint accounts may need to be closed, and a new account set up in her name. If they had children in common, Susan should set them up as beneficiaries or have a co-account with them. . What if she can't find a copy of a trust? If he set up a trust, she should contact Richard's attorney (attorneys retain client copies up to 7 years). If there was a mortgage, reverse mortgage, (TOD), or refinance, she may be able to get a copy of the trust at the [County Recorder Office](#). Susan may need an attorney that deals with estate planning matters. These are the organizations that Susan could contact to help her resolve these matters:

CANHR 1-800-474-1116

California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform

NAELA www.naela.org

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

LACBA 213-627-2727

Los Angeles County Bar Association

South Bay Bar Association

310-787-9405

Please ask for H.E.L.P. 's

“ When Someone dies CHECKLIST”

The purpose of this case study was to provide basic guidance; this article is not meant to replace the situation's proper assessment by a government authority or an attorney. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need a particular referral.

H.E.L.P. Referrals Elder Care



The Call Box

L.A County Consumer & Business Affairs. (Consumer protections/complaints)	800-593-8222
www.dcba.lacounty.gov	
Adult Protective Services (Elder abuse)	877-477-3646
www.wdacs.lacounty.gov	
Alzheimer's Greater LA	844-435-7259
www.alzglia.org	
California Department of Aging (Information and assistance)	800-510-2020
www.aging.ca.gov	
Center For Health care Rights (HICAP) (Medicare and insurance counseling)	800-434-0222
www.cahealthadvocates.org	
Home Ownership Preservation Foundation (Foreclosure Assistance)	888-995-4673
www.995hope.org	
In-Home Supportive Services (LA County only)	888-822-9622
www.dpss.lacounty.gov	option #2
Long Term Care Ombudsman (Mediation for those living in licensed facilities in L.A County)	800-334-9473
Social Security	800-772-1213
www.ssa.gov	
California Association for Adult Day Services (Adult day care answers)	916-552-7400
www.caads.org	
USC Family Caregiver Support Center (For caregivers of adults with cognitive impairment)	855-872-6060
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization	800-658-8898
www.nhpc.org	

Legal

Beth Tzedek Legal Services (Free legal services for low income seniors in L.A County)	323-939-0506
www.bettzedek.org	
California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform Advocacy and lawyer referrals	800-474-1116
www.canhr.org	
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)	800-399-4529
www.lafla.org	
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys	703-942-5711
www.naela.org	

South Bay Resources

Beach Cities Health District (Provides support services)	310-374-3426 ext.256
www.bchd.org	
Focal Point on Aging (Information and Referral Service)	310-320-1300
www.torranceca.gov	
Redondo Beach Senior and Family Services	310-318-0650
www.redondo.org	
Independence at Home (Health-related and case management services)	866-563-7380
www.independenceathome.org	
VA Caregiver Support Line	855-260-3274

Hoarding

How Can We Help?

Hoarding can be a lifelong struggle since this behavior may start to develop during the teenage years. This problem is present in at least 1 in 50 people. Based on research done by Dr. Christiana Bratotiis and her team at the Boston University Department of Social Work and Dr. Randy Frost of the Smith College Department of Psychology, compulsive hoarders commonly have symptoms of OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). It may also develop along with other mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and dementia later in life. A traumatic event or the loss of a loved one may lead to a worsening of hoarding behavior. Medicine alone does not appear to reduce hoarding behavior. However, medication can treat conditions that may make hoarding worse, like depression and anxiety.

Forcing hoarders to remove all the piles and mounds can have negative consequences. Shortly, they may start building again. If they are living in their own space that does not impact others, and are not creating a fire hazard that would endanger their neighbors and their own lives, family and friends may decide to let them make their own choices. For those who seek assistance, therapy shows the best results in taking the initial steps toward recovery. The following are good resources to receive the necessary support:

A worldwide organization called Clutterers Anonymous (www.clutterersanonymous.org) follows a similar format to the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 steps to recovery. Participants are paired with fellow hoarders over the phone (due to COVID-19 restrictions there aren't in-person meetings) and guided by a therapist. They discuss the issues that affect them and set up goals to help themselves recover from their situation. As participants progress, they can help others who are just starting to work through their problems. For the seniors whose physical deterioration or mental state does not allow them to visit a therapist's office or receive help remotely from peers, the LA County Department of Mental Health has a specific unit called Project Genesis 1-800-854-7771.

A book that might help to support a family member or friend who is struggling with hoarding is "Digging Out: Helping Your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding, and Compulsive Acquiring", written by psychologists Michael A. Tompkins and Tamara Hartyl.

H.E.L.P. can provide you a guide with step by step instructions on how to act when dealing with a hoarding situation, and available resources. Please call us at 310-533-1996 or email us at ktropp@help4srs.org

Current Research on Alzheimers Disease
May 19th @10:30am-11:30am

Medical Update: Macular Degeneration
May 27th @10:30am-11:30am

Caregiver Training Series
"Caregiving in the Time of Covid"

May 10, 17, 24 and June 7th
(pre-registration is required through www.torrancememorial.org/classes or call 310-517-4711 H.E.L.P. will be participating during part of the series)

"Too Much Stuff"

Learn strategies to organize, downsize, and how to be of help when a dear one is hoarding"
July 22nd @ 2 pm -3 pm

For more classes and information visit www.help4srs.org
Please call 310-533-1996 to register and receive a link and instructions for joining the zoom presentation.

Continues from page 8, Covid Relief Grants. came at a crucial time as H.E.L.P. was working on expanding our services to more low-income areas of the South Bay, as well as confronting the growing problem of homelessness among seniors. Although we have a remarkable volunteer base, staff support is needed to oversee our programs and services. This grant enabled H.E.L.P. to retain key staff through the pandemic.

The grant also enabled H.E.L.P. to move ahead on a much-needed update of our Strategic Plan, which is vital in qualifying for major gifts that sustain our work. By re-examining our mission and setting new goals for the future, we were able to re-energize the commitment of our Board of Directors and Advisory Board, as well as our wonderful supporters.

We are very fortunate to benefit from the vision of the late Los Angeles financier Howard F. Ahmanson and his wife Dorothy, founders of The Ahmanson Foundation. Their dedicated extended-family and visionary community members now carry on his work to support organizations that strive to enhance the quality of life of the Los Angeles community.

**A special thank you to
The Ahmanson Family Foundation
for their continued support.**

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