

Serving ALL Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking


Abuse in Later Life: Collaborative Responses to Domestic Violence towards Older Adults

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Today's Objectives:

- Definitions and dynamics of domestic and family violence of older persons
- Myths and assumptions that distract from accurate assessment or effective case planning with older persons
- Key Principles and best practices in working with older adult survivors
- Resources for connecting older adult survivors with appropriate services for safety




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Definitions

Domestic Violence

- **Social** Definition - pattern of behavior in which one partner uses physical, sexual, financial, and/or emotional abuse to maintain power and control over their partner.
- **Legal** Definition - (A) No person shall knowingly cause or attempt to cause physical harm to a family or household member. (B) No person shall recklessly cause serious physical harm to a family or household member. (C) No person, by threat of force, shall knowingly cause a family or household member to believe that the offender will cause imminent physical harm to the family or household member. (Section 2919.25 | Domestic violence)



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Dynamics


Domestic Violence (DV)

- Family members, roommates, caregivers, current or former spouses/partners
- Physical, sexual, financial, neglect, emotional, psychological
- Often gets categorized as "assault" if relationship can't be established

VS

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- Current or former spouse
- Current or former intimate partner
- Dating relationship
- Do not have to live together
- Physical or sexual violence and/or financial, emotional/psychological, cultural, spiritual, and reproductive abuse




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DV and IPV Prevalence in Older Persons

- Around 1 in 6 people 60 years and older experienced some form of abuse in community settings during the past year.
- Rates of abuse of older people are high in institutions such as nursing homes and long-term care facilities, with 2 in 3 staff reporting that they have committed abuse in the past year.
- Rates of abuse of older people have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Abuse of older people can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences.
- Abuse of older people is predicted to increase as many countries are experiencing rapidly ageing populations.


(World Health Organization, June 2022)




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Tactics of Abusers to older persons:





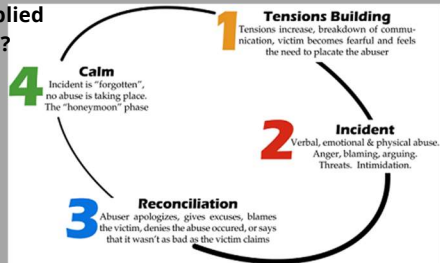
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The Cycle of Abuse: How can this be applied to older persons?



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Barriers to Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Logistical Barriers

- Finances
- Housing
- Healthcare

Intangible Barriers

- Love
- Fear
- Psychological responses to trauma such as PTSD, Depression
- Predicament of survivors

Social Barriers

- Blame
- Disbelief
- Lack of Support Systems
- Family
- Religion
- Shame
- Guilt

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Risk Factors

- Functional cognitive decline/disability
- Poor physical health
- Cognitive impairment
- Poor mental health
- Financial Dependency
- Reliance for access to healthcare
- Isolation

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Myths

- Violence toward older persons only happens in nursing homes
 - More likely to happen at home, by family members and people they trust
- It will be obvious
 - Most people experiencing domestic violence never show signs
- Abuse of older persons is only about physical harm or stealing
 - A lot of abuse is done through neglect - not providing access to food
- Stress from caregiving causes abuse of older persons
 - This is victim blaming and is not cause for the action(s)

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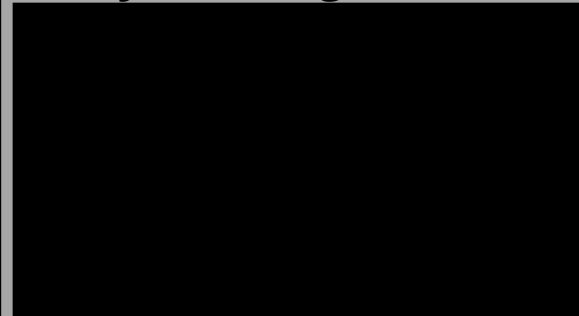
Accurate Screening and Identification

- Unexplained bruises, marks, broken bones or abrasions that could be indicative of physical abuse or any bruises or injuries to the breasts or genitalia
- Withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities, sudden change in alertness or unusual depression
- Sudden changes in financial situation
- Poor hygiene, bedsores, unusual weight loss or unattended medical needs
- Belittling, threats or frequent arguments between patient and caregiver

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Safety Planning



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Intervention Reporting through Empowerment Model

- Listen without making judgments
- Acknowledge and support the individual for talking
 - Let them lead the conversation
- Let them know the abuse is not their fault
 - Express concern for their safety
- Connect with resources and support

Encourage the survivor to be an active participant!



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Resources To Utilize

- Local DV/SA Programs
 - Women Helping Women - 513-381-5610
 - YWCA - 513-872-9259
 - Talbert House Victim's Services - 513-221-4357
- 2. State Coalitions
 - ODVN (Ohio Domestic Violence Network) - 614-781-9651
 - OAESV (Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence) - 888-886-8388



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Questions ?



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Thank you!

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