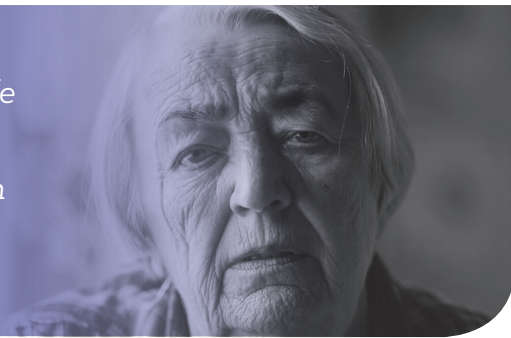


Aging adults may be at greater risk for domestic violence because they may be:

- More isolated;
- More dependent on others;
- Less able to defend themselves or escape from the abuse;
- Afraid they are not going to be taken seriously if they tell someone;
- Afraid of what could happen to them if they report the violence to the authorities;
- Living with cognitive-related or dementia-related illness.

Domestic violence in later life is most often inflicted by a spouse or intimate partner in the victim's own home.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Signs of domestic violence or relationship abuse in aging adults can include:

- Sadness, anxiety, depression, confusion, guilt or shame, self-blame;
- Isolation and withdrawal from people and activities;
- Fear or agitation around their spouse or intimate partner;
- Trying to change their behavior to stop the abuse or violence;
- Unexplained bruises, burns, injuries, broken bones;
- Changes in appetite, or unusual weight loss or gain;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Lack of information on personal finances or the inability to buy food or personal items, or inability to pay bills.

HOW TO HELP OTHERS

If you suspect an older adult friend or loved one is being abused in their relationship:

- Take time to listen and offer caring support.
- Don't downplay the abuse or criticize the victim's choices.
- Remind them the domestic violence is not their fault. In spite of what they abuser says, nothing the older adult victim said or did caused the relationship abuse.
- Offer to help with transportation to or phone calls to the local crisis intervention center.
- Know that domestic violence in later life is a crime. Call the police immediately when you are aware that a domestic violence assault is occurring.

— Crisis Intervention Center Services —

- 24-hour crisis hotline
- One-on-one support and listening
- Emergency shelter or safe housing
- Emergency transportation
- Assistance with finding permanent housing
- Assistance with obtaining a protection order and other types of legal advocacy
- Assistance with emergency and basic living needs
- Survivor support groups or counseling referrals

FOR MORE INFORMATION



521 E Main Ave. Suite 250
Bismarck, ND 58501
PH: 888.255.6240
FAX: 701.255.1904
TTY: 800.366.6888

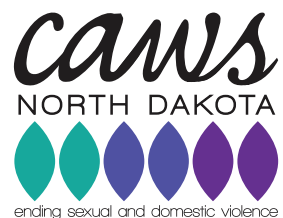
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03/2018



Understanding Domestic Violence in Later Life



ending sexual and domestic violence

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE

Domestic violence or relationship abuse in later life refers to aging or older adults (*age 60+*) who are experiencing abuse or violence in their relationship with a current or former spouse, live-in or dating partner.

Domestic violence among aging adults is a fast growing issue. Between 2010 and 2025, the number of adults ages 65 and older in North Dakota is expected to grow by 52 percent.

Relationship abuse in later life can happen to any aging adult regardless of their race or ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, education level, or the amount of money they have.

For older adults, relationship violence can also happen anywhere—in private or out in public—but most often goes undetected at home.

The majority of domestic violence in later life happens to women; about 2/3 of aging adult victims are female.

WHAT IS LATER LIFE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Later life domestic violence includes any repeated behaviors and tactics used by the abuser to have power over and to control the aging adult victim. Older adult relationship abuse can be emotional/psychological, economical, physical, and/or sexual.

- **Emotional/psychological abuse:** any words or behaviors causing pain, fear, or distress such as name-calling, humiliating, shaming or making the aging adult feel guilty; telling them they deserve the abuse.
- **Intimidation:** yelling or swearing, hurting pets, or damaging property; making threats to hurt, harm, or kill the older adult.
- **Isolation:** cutting off their contacts from friends/family or a spiritual support system; taking mail, not allowing telephone calls or visitors; leaving the aging adult alone for long periods of time.
- **Using privilege:** the abuser acting like "king of the castle" or "master of the home;" treating them like a servant.

- **Economic abuse:** financially exploiting the aging adult by taking their money or forcing them to sign papers they don't understand; keeping money that belongs to them or keeping information about their money or finances away from them.
- **Targeting vulnerabilities or neglect:** denying food or water or taking their walker/hearing aids/glasses/teeth; failing to take the aging adult to the doctor or dentist, or denying them medicines; failing to keep the home safe and clean.
- **Physical abuse:** hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, pushing, shoving, grabbing, pulling hair; strangling (*often called "choking"*); using a weapon like a gun, knife, or object.
- **Sexual abuse:** sexual contact of any kind (*physical or non-physical*) that the older adult does not agree or consent to including intercourse, oral or anal sex; making them afraid to say "no" to sexual activity; forcing sex with other partners; accusing them of sex activity with others, calling them a "slut" or "whore;" making sexual comments about their body or appearance.

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.7233

Different or multiple kinds of older adult domestic violence can be happening at the same time. This relationship abuse does not include an aging adult's self-neglect or any stranger crimes such as scams, identity theft, or burglary.



Information from: Department of Justice Elder Justice Initiative; National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL); Ontario [Canada] Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

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ABUSE IN LATER LIFE POWER & CONTROL WHEEL



Power and Control Wheel, developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN, and adapted by the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life

In addition to the tactics on the wheel, many offenders justify or minimize the abuse and deny that they are abusive. Perpetrators of relationship abuse in later life may try to blame the victim, or try to minimize the abuse by saying the victim bruises easily.