

Domestic and Sexual Violence in Later Life: How is it different?

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OBJECTIVES

- To identify domestic and sexual violence in later life.
- To identify appropriate resources and community collaborations.
- To identify issues for allied professionals.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE?

- **A pattern of coercive control and abuse of an older person in a trusted, ongoing relationship**
- **Primarily women, but includes older men**
- **Basis is "power and control"-**
- **Age 50 and Older**

What is Sexual Violence?

- Conduct of a sexual nature which is non-consensual, and is accomplished through threat, coercion, exploitation, deceit, force, physical or mental incapacitation, and / or power of authority.

The Interrelationship Between Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse



Created by National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, a project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence

SCENARIOS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE

Partner/Spouse/Adult Child

- Domestic Violence Grown Old
- New Relationship
- Late Onset Domestic Violence
- "Reverse" Domestic Violence

Family Violence

- Adult Children, Relatives/ Intimate Caregivers
- "Domestic elder abuse is a family problem- almost 90% of abusers were family members"
- "In the last decade domestic elder abuse reports investigated by APS have increased by more than 150%"

National Association of Adult Protective Services Administrators- National Center on Elder Abuse- 2001

Symptoms?

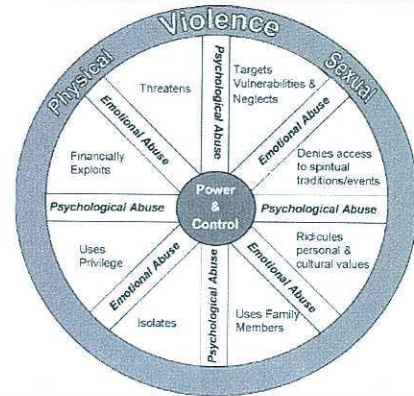


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- Domestic Violence in Later Life



Family Abuse in Later Life



POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL: THE INNER SPOKES

- These are behaviors that go on all the time. They make the victim feel trapped.
- Most of the abuser's acts are non-criminal(emotional abuse, control, ridiculing values)
- Only when you understand the victim's history (why she/ he stays, why she/he minimizes) can you develop a rapport



THE OUTER WHEEL: PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

These behaviors of physical and sexual abuse are how the abuser enforces control – they instill fear

These behaviors may be intermittent because the abuser is using *subtle threats* which are less able to be identified

Family Violence Code of Virginia § 16.1-228

"Family abuse" means any act involving violence, force, or threat including, but not limited to, any forceful detention, which results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of bodily injury and which is committed by a person against such person's family or household member.

"Family or household member" means (i) the person's spouse, whether or not he or she resides in the same home with the person, (ii) the person's former spouse, whether or not he or she resides in the same home with the person, (iii) the person's parents, stepparents, children, stepchildren, brothers, sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, grandparents and grandchildren, regardless of whether such persons reside in the same home with the person, (iv) the person's mother-in-law, father-in-law, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law who reside in the same home with the person, (v) any individual who has a child in common with the person, whether or not the person and that individual have been married or have resided together at any time, or (vi) any individual who cohabits or who, within the previous 12 months, cohabited with the person, and any children of either of them then residing in the same home with the person.

Issues with Assault in the Family

Older IPV victims socialized differently

Many have suffered years of abuse, disempowerment high

Complex, ambivalent feelings for offender normal

Dependency upon offenders

Desire to protect offspring inhibits self-protection

Fear that kin will be prosecuted

Victims Overlooked and Not Believed

Disbelief: elders are sexually assaulted

Victim conditions that prohibit reporting
(dementia, aphasia)

Some reporting discounted as psychotic or demented

Forensic indicators often missed or misinterpreted on an older body

Professional training insufficient

Response to allegations often insufficient

Exacerbating Victim's Issues

Missing or misinterpreting markers

Disbelieving disclosures

Contaminating physical evidence

Hiding cases to self-protect

Failing to provide forensic exams

Failing to offer SA services

Failing to report to authorities

Failing to protect elders under care