

## Ignored Victims: Older Adults and Domestic Violence



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### Objectives

- Learn how to access and encourage older adult victims to seek out services
- Identify types of abuse that specifically effect older adult victims of domestic violence
- Identify specific barriers to services of older adults
- Identify ways to advocate with older adult victims of domestic violence
- Learn the limits of confidentiality
- Learn how to safety plan with older adult victims of domestic violence and older adult victims with disabilities

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### Presenter Contact Info

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## Prevalence

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### Nationally



- Baby Boomers
- National incidence and prevalence data on domestic violence and older adults does not exist.
- 7.6%–11% people 60+ who can answer a phone and pass a basic dementia screen are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Missing data on older people at an even greatest risk: About 14% of stalking victims are ages 50 and older.

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## Accessing the Older Population

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## Places to disseminate information/provide training

- Senior care centers
- Adult day centers
- Geriatric health care centers, rehabilitation centers, and hospitals
- Ombudsman programs
- Meals on Wheels programs
- Housing – Senior living communities/apartments, assisted living, retirement communities, nursing homes
- Diners, bridge clubs, community clubs and orgs
- Adult Protective Services

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## Specific barriers

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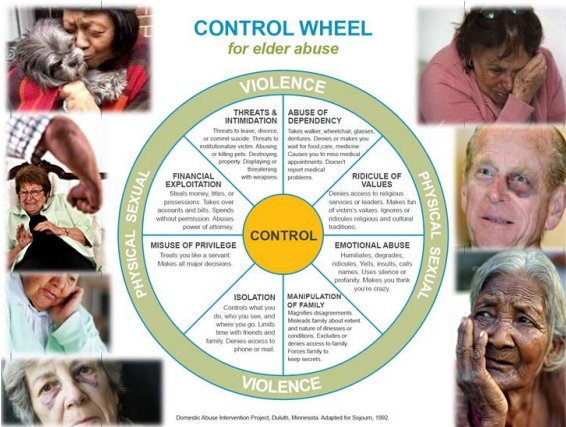
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### Additional issues for Older Adults survivors



- Ageism
- Cultural considerations
  - “stand by your man”
- Economic dependence
- Loss of independence
- Accessibility
  - Transportation and mobility
- Hearing loss
- Elder abuse vs. DV
- LGBT
- Time in relationship
  - Adult children/family

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### In Their Own Words clip: Miss Mary



*“I’m  
having  
to suffer  
for  
what  
he did”*

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### Advocating with older adult survivors of domestic violence

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### Don't assume that older adults:

- Look like this:  instead of: 
- Can't hear you  Have dementia 
- Don't understand technology 
- Are "stuck in their ways" 

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### Comfort is key



Language 

Touch (but always ASK!)  

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### Confidentiality



- Explain limits prior to disclosure of incident
- Explain process to victim if incident is reported
- Include victim in process
- Validate their feelings

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# Safety Planning

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### Safety Planning with Older Adults

- Competence
- Depression/suicide screening
- Support system
  - Safe caregiver
  - Family and Social activities
  - Friends
  - Aging service providers
  - APS
- SSI
- Safe alternative care giving/personal assistance
  - Health care professional




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### Safety Planning with Older Adults

- Medication and adaptive devices
- Alert Button or Safe Return Program
- Phone access
- Address concerns about losing independence
- Increase personal physical safety




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## Older Adults with a Disability




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## Things to consider...

- Conflict of interest with services
- Spectrum of skill sets




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## Skills for Using DV Support Services and Interacting w/Other Systems

- Communication skills, ability to use a phone, ability to call 911
- Ability to use public/pay phone
- Ability to know when to call 911
- Able to communicate quickly/fast responses to questions
- Ability to relate personal history to authority as needed and use short-term and long-term memory
- Ability to trust and use resources in the community
- Ability to explain events consistently and in time sequence
- Ability to live independently or qualify for support resources
- Have funds available for personal attendant services
- Availability of emergency caretakers
- Reading and writing skills, filling out forms and applications




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### Self-Defense and Escape Skills

- Ability to say no
- Ability to say no with stern face, appropriate voice tone
- Ability to deceive, keep secrets
- Ability to perceive a strike coming, or ability to move to avoid a strike
- Ability to carry out safety planning
- Mobility with/without a wheelchair
- Ability to leave the house (e.g., could be physical or psychological barriers)
- Partial loss or loss of all skills (e.g., catatonia)
- Ability to use public transportation
- Ability to see alternative solutions to barriers
- Ability to use safety devices
- Strength and stamina of limbs
- Ability to sense where someone is touching, private areas without nerve functioning
- Distance able to travel, accessible pathways of travel to safety
- Dependence level and replacement of devices dependent on for safety
- Short-term and long-term memory
- Concentration, organization and focusing skills
- Knowledge about human biology and social mores
- Ability to recognize an emergency

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### Safety Planning with Victims with a Physical Disability

- SSDI
- Care giving/personal assistance
- Escape route
- Medications and adaptive services
- Disability service providers
- Alert button
- Spy-hole
- Pre-arrange with 911
- Phone




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### Safety Planning with Victim with a Cognitive Disability

- No assumptions
- SSDI
- Written numbers
- Photographs
- Pictures
- Language
- Repeat questions
- Reassurance
- Support




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### Safety Planning with Victims who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing (HoH)

- Ability level
- 911 message in TTY
- TTY records
- Code word/phrase
- Interpreter information
- Home safety
- Email/text



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### Safety Planning with Victims Who Have Blindness or Low Vision

- Service dogs
  - "smile" command
  - Attack commands
- Motion detected appliances/devices
- Traveling



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### In Their Own Words- Pat

*"I can't believe that I'm free"*



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## Resources

- Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Elder abuse multidisciplinary teams
- Disability Commission
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Legal services (public and private)
- Senior housing

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## Questions?



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