

### WHAT IS ABUSE IN LATER LIFE?

Abuse in later life comprises financial, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, abandonment and neglect.<sup>1</sup> Perpetrators are people with whom the victim has an expectation of trust, particularly spouses, intimate partners, adult children, grandchildren, other family members, and non-related caregivers.<sup>2</sup> Perpetrators typically, but not exclusively, abuse older adults in their places of residence.<sup>3</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Every year, approximately 4 million older Americans are victims of physical, psychological and/or other forms of abuse and neglect.<sup>4</sup>
- Older adults who require assistance with daily life activities are at increased risk of being emotionally abused or financially exploited.<sup>5</sup>
- Approximately 50% of older adults with dementia are mistreated or abused.<sup>6</sup>
- An estimated 13.5% of older adults have suffered emotional abuse since the age of 60.<sup>7</sup>
- Victims of elder financial abuse lost an estimated \$2.9 billion in 2011.<sup>8</sup>
- 76.1% of physical abuse toward older adults is perpetrated by a family member.<sup>9</sup>
- A majority of elder sexual abuse cases involve female victims and male perpetrators.<sup>10</sup>
- Only 1 out of every 24 cases of elder abuse is reported.<sup>11</sup>
- Only 15.5% of elder sexual abuse is reported to police.<sup>12</sup>

### WHY IT MATTERS

Abuse in later life has a devastating impact on victims and can result in the loss of independence, security, life savings, health, dignity, and can be deadly.<sup>13</sup> Research indicates that older adult victims of abuse have shorter lifespans than their peers who do not experience violence.<sup>14</sup> Abuse in later life can cause both physical and psychological harm. Psychological harms associated with abuse in later life include depression, stress, helplessness, alienation, guilt, shame, fear, and anxiety.<sup>15</sup>

### TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE

#### EMOTIONAL ABUSE INCLUDES

- Embarrassment and humiliation
- Controlling behavior (restricting access to telephone, transportation, and other resources)
- Damaging or destroying property
- Social isolation
- Disregarding or trivializing needs<sup>16</sup>

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#### If you need help:

Call The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
Or, online, go to [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)



### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse of an elder involves injury, assault, or inappropriate restraint.<sup>17</sup> Indicators include:

- Broken bones, fractures, sprains, and/or dislocations
- Burns from cigarettes, hot water, or appliances
- Abrasions on arms, legs, or torso resembling rope or restraints
- Bruises, including bilateral and “wrap around” bruises
- Unexplained injuries or explanations that do not “fit”
- History of similar injuries and numerous or suspicious hospital visits
- Delay between onset of injury and seeking medical attention
- Neglect of bedridden adults’ injuries<sup>18, 19</sup>

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Elder sexual abuse is any non-consensual sexual contact:

- Non-consensual oral, anal or vaginal intercourse
- Forced viewing of pornography<sup>20</sup>
- Forced listening of sexual accounts
- Intentional touching of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, mouth, inner thigh, or buttocks<sup>21, 22</sup>

### FINANCIAL ABUSE

Financial abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Fraud
- Forced property transfers<sup>23</sup>
- Misuse or theft of money/possessions<sup>24</sup>
- Use of deception to coerce or convince a victim to surrender finances or property

<sup>1</sup> "Elder Abuse: Definitions." *Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14 Jan. 2014. Web.

<sup>2</sup> "Definitions." *National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life*. Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d. Web. <<http://ncall.us/content/definitions>>.

<sup>3</sup> "An Overview of Abuse in Later Life." *National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life*. Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2013. Web.

<<http://ncall.us/sites/ncall.us/files/resources/2.%20What%20is%20ALL.pdf>>.

<sup>4</sup> *Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions*. Rep. American Psychological Association, 2012. Web. <<http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/elder-abuse.pdf>>

<sup>5</sup> Acierno, Ronald, Heidi Resnick, Dean Kilpatrick, John Boyle, Kenneth Steve, and Wendy Muzzy. *National Elder Mistreatment Study*. Rep. Ann Arbor: Inter-U Consortium for Political and Social Research,

2008. Web. <<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/studies/28561/version/1#cite>>..

<sup>6</sup> *The MetLife Study of Elder Financial Abuse*. Rep. The MetLife Mature Market Institute, June 2011. Web. <<https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2011/mmi-elder-financial-abuse.pdf>>.

<sup>7</sup> Acierno, Ronald, Heidi Resnick, Dean Kilpatrick, John Boyle, Kenneth Steve, and Wendy Muzzy. *National Elder Mistreatment Study*. Rep. Ann Arbor: Inter-U Consortium for Political and Social Research,

2008. Web. <<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/studies/28561/version/1#cite>>..

<sup>8</sup> *The MetLife Study of Elder Financial Abuse*. Rep. The MetLife Mature Market Institute, June 2011. Web. <<https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2011/mmi-elder-financial-abuse.pdf>>.

<sup>9</sup> Acierno, Ronald, Heidi Resnick, Dean Kilpatrick, John Boyle, Kenneth Steve, and Wendy Muzzy. *National Elder Mistreatment Study*. Rep. Ann Arbor: Inter-U Consortium for Political and Social Research,

2008. Web. <<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/studies/28561/version/1#cite>>..

<sup>10</sup> *Elderly Victims of Sexual Abuse and Their Offenders*. Rep. National Institute of Justice, 20 June 2006. Web. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/216550.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> *Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions*. Rep. American Psychological Association, 2012. Web. <<http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/elder-abuse.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> "Definitions." *National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life*. Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d. Web. <<http://ncall.us/content/definitions>>.

<sup>13</sup> "Elder Abuse Facts." [www.alfa.org](http://www.alfa.org). Assisted Living Federation of America, 2013. Web.

<sup>14</sup> Dong, X. Q., M. A. Simon, T. T. Beck, C. Farran, J. J. McCann, C. F. Mendes De Leon, E. Laumann, and D. A. Evans. "Elder Abuse and Mortality: The Role of Psychological and Social Wellbeing." *Gerontology* 57.6 (2011): 549-58. *Karger Medical and Scientific Publishers*. Web.

<sup>15</sup> *World Report on Violence and Health*. Rep. World Health Organization, n.d. Web. <[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/en/chap5.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap5.pdf)>.

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## Domestic Abuse in Later Life

- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> *Elderly Victims of Sexual Abuse and Their Offenders*. Rep. National Institute of Justice, 20 June 2006. Web. <<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/216550.pdf>>.
- <sup>18</sup> "Elder Abuse: Definitions." *Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14 Jan. 2014. Web.
- <sup>19</sup> National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. (2008). *Physical Abuse*. Retrieved on August 13, 2014 from: <http://www.preventelderabuse.org/elderabuse/physical.html>
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> "Elder Abuse: Definitions." *Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14 Jan. 2014. Web.
- <sup>22</sup> "Types of Abuse." *National Center on Elder Abuse Administration on Aging*. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d. Web. <[http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/FAQ/Type\\_Abuse/index.aspx](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/FAQ/Type_Abuse/index.aspx)>.
- <sup>23</sup> *Elder Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions*. Rep. American Psychological Association, 2012. Web. <<http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/elder-abuse.pdf>>..
- <sup>24</sup> "Elder Abuse: Definitions." *Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14 Jan. 2014. Web.

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