

A landscape photograph of a field with a path leading to a distant horizon under a cloudy sky. The foreground is filled with tall, green grass. A dirt path winds through the middle ground, leading towards a line of trees on the horizon. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds.

ABUSE IN THE ELDERLY

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TOUCH POINTS

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE

WHAT WE KNOW

SEXUAL ABUSE WHAT IS

CONSENT/WHAT IS NOT IN

**ALARMING FACTS ABOUT ELDER
ABUSE**

**INDICATORS OF ABUSE IN
CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES**

SUMMARY/RESOURCES

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

ELDER ABUSE “INCLUDES PHYSICAL, SEXUAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, AS WELL AS NEGLECT, ABANDONMENT, AND FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF AN OLDER PERSON BY ANOTHER PERSON OR ENTITY, THAT OCCURS IN ANY SETTING (E.G., HOME, COMMUNITY, OR FACILITY), EITHER IN A RELATIONSHIP WHERE THERE IS AN EXPECTATION OF TRUST AND/OR WHEN AN OLDER PERSON IS TARGETED BASED ON AGE OR DISABILITY.”

WHO BY WHOM TYPES OF ABUSE

- **We know that 1 in 10 older adults in our community will experience some type of abuse. Over 45,000 reports filed with APS in 2024**
- **They will be current or former spouses, dating partners, family members, caregivers, professionals, neighbors, friends and strangers that will be the abusers.**
- **PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL, NEGLECT, FINANCIAL and SELF NEGLECT**

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

THE INTENTIONAL OR RECKLESS USE OF PHYSICAL HARM OR PHYSICAL COERCION THAT MAY RESULT IN BODILY INJURY, PHYSICAL PAIN, OR IMPAIRMENT. ***UNDER THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT, “PHYSICAL HARM” MEANS BODILY INJURY, IMPAIRMENT, OR DISEASE.***

- Hitting, beating, pushing, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, and burning
- Unlawful, excessive, or unnecessary use of force like restraints or force-feeding
- Over-medication or under-medication
- Controlling access to / breaking assistive devices (eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.)

WHAT IS ELDER SEXUAL ABUSE?

Elder sexual abuse is the initiation of physical or sexual contact with an elderly person, when that contact is nonconsensual or unwanted. This abuse also includes making contact with an elderly person who is confused or unable to give consent. Whether or not the contact is significant or minor, if it is sexual in nature and nonconsensual, it is sexual abuse. Both rape of an elderly person and unwanted touching can count as elderly sexual abuse. It also includes leaving someone in a state of undress. Forced to look at explicit images. Many other exploitative or shaming acts.

WHAT DOES CONSENT MEAN?

CONSENT IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS TO ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY. CONSENT SHOULD BE CLEARLY AND FREELY COMMUNICATED.

A VERBAL AND AFFIRMATIVE EXPRESSION OF CONSENT CAN HELP BOTH YOU AND YOUR PARTNER TO UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT EACH OTHER'S BOUNDARIES.

CONSENT DOES NOT LOOK LIKE THIS:

REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE “**NO**”

A PARTNER WHO IS DISENGAGED, NONRESPONSIVE, OR VISIBLY UPSET

ASSUMING THAT WEARING CERTAIN CLOTHES, FLIRTING, OR KISSING IS AN INVITATION FOR ANYTHING MORE

AS DEFINED BY THE STATE
SOMEONE BEING INCAPACITATED BECAUSE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

PRESSURING SOMEONE INTO SEXUAL ACTIVITY BY USING FEAR OR INTIMIDATION

ASSUMING YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO ENGAGE IN A SEXUAL ACT BECAUSE YOU’VE DONE IT IN THE PAST



FACTS ABOUT ELDER SEXUAL ABUSE

- **70%** of reported abuse occurs in nursing homes
- Only **30%** of victims of elder sexual abuse report it to authorities
- The abuser is the primary caregiver **81%** of the time
- Despite its prevalence, only an estimated **1 in 24** cases will be reported to the authorities
- Elderly women are six times more likely than men to be sexually abused
- Age is also a factor, and nursing home residents who are older are at greater risk of abuse.
- **60%** of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a family member. Two-thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

- Unexplained STDs and infections
- Bruises in genital areas, thighs, and breasts
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Clothing that has been torn, stained, or covered in blood
- Increased difficulty walking or sitting
- Depression or withdrawal
- Anxiety or excessive fear around caregiver
- Agitation and abrupt change in mood
- Bruising and cuts
- Broken bones and fractures
- Malnutrition and dehydration
- Rapid decline in health
- Changes in personality and behavior
- Agitation
- Rapid development of Alzheimer's
- Withdrawal or depression
- Sudden financial problems



ONE OF THE WORST FORMS OF ELDERLY SEXUAL ABUSE IS THE SEXUAL ABUSE COMMITTED TO THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM DEMENTIA, ALZHEIMER'S, AND OTHER FORMS OF MEMORY IMPAIRMENTS. BECAUSE THESE ELDERLY ARE OFTEN CONFUSED, THE ABUSER BELIEVES THAT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THEIR COMPLAINTS, THEREFOR FEELING MORE CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN ABUSE THEM WITHOUT REPERCUSSIONS. OTHER ISSUES THAT CAN INCREASE THE RISK IS SOCIAL ISOLATION FROM FAMILY AND OTHERS, NEGLECT FROM CAREGIVER AND FAMILY, AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY

EMOTIONAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

- Verbal assaults, insults, threats, intimidation, humiliation, isolation, and harassment
- Religious abuse, such as not allowing someone to practice their religion or using their religion against them
- Harming or threatening to harm pets

NEGLECT



- Not providing appropriate medical care, not renewing or administering prescriptions
- Not helping with dressing, bathing, eating, etc.
- Not addressing toileting needs / helping the bathroom
- Locking older adult in their apartment / bedroom
- Leaving older adult in same position for long periods of time

It is the refusal or failure of a caregiver to provide proper care. **The Elder Justice Act defines neglect as “the failure of a caregiver or fiduciary to provide the goods or services that are necessary to maintain the health or safety of an elder.**



FINANCIAL

THE ILLEGAL, UNAUTHORIZED, OR
MISUSE OF AN OLDER PERSON'S
RESOURCES FOR MONETARY OR
PERSONAL BENEFIT, PROFIT, OR GAIN,
OR THAT RESULTS IN DEPRIVING AN
OLDER PERSON OF RIGHTFUL ACCESS
TO, OR USE OF, BENEFITS, RESOURCES,
BELONGINGS, OR ASSETS.

SELF-NEGLECT:

When an adult's inability, due to physical or mental impairment or diminished capacity, to perform essential self-care tasks.

Examples can include:

- Not having adequate food, water, clothing, and shelter.
- Personal hygiene challenges
- Not seeking medical and mental health care.
- Not aware of safety precautions or practicing safety measures
- Not wanting and/or managing one's finances.



WHAT ABUSE LOOKS LIKE IN OUR COMMUNITY

- 300% HIGHER RISK OF EARLY DEATH
- DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, INCREASED MENTAL IMPAIRMENT
- 3X MORE LIKELY TO BE ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL
- 4X MORE LIKELY TO BE ADMITTED TO A NURSING HOME
- SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL LOSSES
- GREATER RELIANCE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS

NOW YOU KNOW



SUMMARY

Any form of abuse is not right; it is especially concerning when done to our older adults. If you work as a **HEALTHCARE SUPPORT**, you are **mandated to report abuse**. If you see something keep good documentation. If you are family member or friend report it!! and if you are being **ABUSED**, please tell someone there are people to help and protect you. If you need any resources or information, I am here to connect you to those needed resources.



RESOURCES



Elder Justice Learning & Research Hub VCU's Virginia Center on Aging, is leading 'Virginia Helping Elders Access Resources' (HEAR) in partnership with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, No Wrong Door, and Virginia Tech to achieve these actions across the State.

WWW.DARS.virginia.gov

Virginia Navigator

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/elder-abuse/elder-abuse>

- Adult Protective Services hotline at 1-888-832-3858
- <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/as/aps.cgi>
- *National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or chat online at online.rainn.org.*
- WWW.ALZ.ORG
- *SENIOR SERVICES OF SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA*
- *VCPEA.ORG, VA COALITION FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE*
- <https://ncea.acl.gov>
- <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/lbt8fwbx91bbo4lmg762w/ABJ8MyEcZTa1AGGQh87F0jM?rlkey=4zkajqm4rkkzcyui43c6oqf4h&st=k4mpkui9&dl=0>

THANK YOU

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