

# SESSION 1

## **Dynamics of Abuse in Later Life**

- ◆ Welcome and Warm-Up Exercise
- ◆ Defining the Target Population
- ◆ Why Abuse Occurs
- ◆ Barriers Victims Face



# Dynamics of Abuse in Later Life

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

(15 minutes)

*Notes*

### Key Training Points

- ▼ Welcome participants.
- ▼ Briefly thank co-sponsors.
- ▼ Briefly describe the PA Domestic Violence in Later Life project.
- ▼ Briefly describe agenda for the day (**overhead 1-1**), goals (**overhead 1-2**) and objectives (**overhead 1-3**). [Or goals and objectives can be put on flip chart paper and displayed in the front of the room.]
- ▼ Explain that blank post-it notes have been placed on each table. These post-it notes can be used to write down questions. The questions can be put in a designated area on the wall (Parking Lot) and will be answered periodically throughout the day.
- ▼ Provide directions to rest rooms, smoking areas, etc.
- ▼ Ask participants to turn off cell phones (if not on call).
- ▼ Ask participants to raise hands by discipline to let everyone know who else is present.
- ▼ Introduce trainers. [If trainers start the day, their introductions should be done first. Then one of the trainers can do the housekeeping.]

**SESSION # 1**

**9:15 – 10:45 am**

**Goal**

Participants will appreciate the unique dynamics of domestic violence in later life.

**Measurable Objectives**

- ▼ Participants will be able to distinguish the difference between caregiver stress and power and control as factors related to abuse and why this knowledge is important when working with older victims of family abuse.
- ▼ Participants will be able to list at least five barriers victims face to living free from abuse.

**Process**

This section is a mix of lecture, two short video clips and an interactive exercise.

<b>Topics Covered</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Time</b>
▼ Warm-up exercise	Interactive	10 min
▼ Video	Video	10 min
▼ Defining the Population	Lecture	15 min
▼ Why Abuse Occurs (Power and Control vs. caregiver stress)	Lec/discuss/video	30 min
▼ Barriers Victims Face to Living Free From Abuse	Video/interactive	20 min
▼ Q & A and concluding remarks	Interactive	5 min

**1a. Warm-up Exercise 10 minutes**

Tell participants that the day will be an opportunity to get to know and work with other local providers from different disciplines. Participants will introduce themselves to others sitting at their table. Introductions should include name, agency, age and why they like being the age they are.

Trainers should model this by giving an example like: “My name is Bonnie Brandl. I work for the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life. I like being 41 because I have more professional wisdom than I did in my 20’s and my knees are still young enough that I can run several times a week.”

After 5 minutes, bring the large group back together. Ask participants to describe how they felt being asked to share their age. Discuss the prevalence of ageism in American society and how ageism permeates our work with older victims/survivors of family abuse.

**1b. Introductory video *The Golden Years* 10 minutes**

Introduce video. Ask group to pay attention to the forms of abuse the older women describe and what they see in the opening scenario. Process video asking for forms of abuse. Ask about what indicators of caregiver stress were evident.

**2. Defining the Target Population 15 minutes**

Give a brief lecture on defining the population, the scenarios of abuse in later life, and the abuse in later life power and control wheel.

Five transparencies can be used with this material (1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6 and 1-7).

The content to cover can be found in the participants' handbook: "Defining the Target Population" (p. 7), "Scenarios of Abuse in Later Life" (p. 8) and the power and control wheel (p. 9).

When talking about the power and control wheel, briefly describe the tactics used by abusers, using the following:

<b>TACTICS USED BY ABUSIVE FAMILY MEMBERS</b>	
<p><b>Physical Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Slaps, hits, punches</li> <li>▼ Throws things</li> <li>▼ Burns</li> <li>▼ Chokes</li> <li>▼ Breaks bones</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Humiliates, demeans, ridicules</li> <li>▼ Yells, insults, calls names</li> <li>▼ Degrades, blames</li> <li>▼ Withholds affection</li> <li>▼ Engages in crazy-making behavior or using someone's decreasing cognitive abilities to control them</li> <li>▼ Uses silence or profanity</li> <li>▼ Threats of nursing home</li> <li>▼ Exploits sensory (e.g., sight and hearing) losses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Makes demeaning remarks about intimate body parts</li> <li>▼ Is rough with intimate body parts during caregiving</li> <li>▼ Takes advantage of physical or mental illness to engage in sex</li> <li>▼ Forces you to perform sex acts that make you feel uncomfortable or against your wishes</li> <li>▼ Forces you to watch pornographic movies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Using Family Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Magnifies disagreements</li> <li>▼ Misleads members about extent and nature of illnesses/conditions</li> <li>▼ Excludes or denies access to family</li> <li>▼ Forces family to keep secrets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Abusing Dependencies, Neglect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Takes walker, wheelchair, glasses, dentures</li> <li>▼ Takes advantage of confusion</li> <li>▼ Denies or creates long waits for food, heat, care or medication</li> <li>▼ Does not report medical problems</li> <li>▼ Understands but fails to follow medical, therapy or safety recommendations</li> <li>▼ Makes you miss medical appointments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Isolation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Controls what you do, who you see and where you go</li> <li>▼ Limits time with friends and family</li> <li>▼ Denies access to phone or mail</li> <li>▼ Age-related loss of friends and family</li> </ul>
<p><b>Threats, Intimidation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Threatens to leave, divorce, commit suicide or institutionalize (nursing home)</li> <li>▼ Abuses or kills pets or prized livestock</li> <li>▼ Destroys property</li> <li>▼ Displays or threatens with weapons</li> </ul>	<p><b>Using Privilege</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Treats you like a servant</li> <li>▼ Makes all major decisions</li> <li>▼ Abuses privileges of youth and ability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ridiculing Values, Spirituality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Denies access to church or clergy</li> <li>▼ Makes fun of personal values</li> <li>▼ Ignores or ridicules religious/cultural traditions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial Exploitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Steals money, titles or possessions</li> <li>▼ Takes over accounts and bills and spending without permission</li> <li>▼ Abuses a power of attorney</li> <li>▼ 'Imposes' self in to the older person's life to gain access to or assure her/his inheritance</li> </ul>



NOTE: that the original wheel was developed by the Domestic Violence Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN. Women attending older battered women's support groups in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois created this version of the wheel.

### 3. Why Abuse Occurs?

30 minutes

Briefly describe how elder abuse and domestic violence fields originated from different places with different theoretical models (p. 79 – 81). There is not time to cover all of the material written in this section. The main training point is that both fields started from different places and have differing perspectives about why abuse occurs, leading to significantly different service delivery systems. Place emphasis on the grassroots origins of domestic violence and the research/social work origins of Aging Services and system change versus working with the individual.

Today we understand that there are a number of reasons that abuse in later life occurs. Refer participants to the categories on page 15 & 16 of their manuals.

Show the clip of Nancy from "*Breaking Point*" in which Nancy talks about abusing her mother.

Ask participants to pay attention to what Nancy describes that would be examples of caretaker stress and/or issues of power and control. Stop the video at her statement "I can't imagine how she felt..."

Ask the audience to give examples of language that sounds like caregiver stress and language that sounds like power and control. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. We are simply looking for examples of how language can be interpreted.

Discuss caregiver stress and power and control. Talk about how difficult it can be to tell by the abuser's version of events whether abuse occurs due to caregiver stress or power and control.

**Note to trainer – Two additional overheads (1-8 and 1-9) can be used to summarize this section.**

▼ Comments that could indicate "caregiver stress":

- ▼ Feels very guilty
- ▼ Knew behavior was wrong
- ▼ Abuse happened when she was under stress
- ▼ Didn't seem to understand her mother's care needs
- ▼ Hit wall rather than hit mother

▼ Comments/indications that abuse could be power and control

- ▼ Placement of the injuries intentional so no one would see bruises
- ▼ Fearful of consequences if health care finds out about abuse

- ▼ More concerned about others finding out than her mother's well-being
- ▼ "Special spot" she hit on wall could have been near mother as a way to frighten her

Discuss how Nancy doesn't look like the abuser we typically think of in domestic violence situations. How does this effect our reaction to her? Ask the question: Which system would be likely to encounter Nancy?

Discuss dangers of focusing on caregiver stress if power and control is a factor (p. 20 - 21). Discuss the potential problems in assuming all abuse is power and control (p. 19).

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### Key Takeaway Points

- ▼ *Research does not support caregiver stress as primary cause of elder abuse.*
  - ▼ *Language can be interpreted to mean different things, depending on the framework used.*
  - ▼ *Focusing on caregiver stress can lead to blaming the victim/survivor, not holding abuser accountable and not focusing on victim/survivor safety.*
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#### 4a. Barriers Victims Face

20 minutes

Make the transition to this section by talking about the importance of hearing victims' stories to understand their experiences. "In the following video, we will have an opportunity to hear an older woman describe her experience and the barriers she faced to living free from abuse. We will also hear from her abuser, so consider the language – do you hear caregiver stress or power and control?"

Show *Just to Have a Peaceful Life* (10 minutes). Ask participants to identify tactics used by Pat's abuser, societal messages and internal messages affecting Pat's decision-making.

At the beginning of this discussion, mount the victim silhouette poster on the wall. Let participants react to what they have seen. Ask them to list barriers Pat faced to living free from abuse. Cover the points on the following page, if they have not been brought out by audience.

### Key Training Points from *"Just to Have a Peaceful Life"*

- ▼ Domestic abuse in later life can be dangerous. Pat experienced severe abuse.
- ▼ Pat experienced a variety of forms of abuse, used in combination. (Show power and control wheel and ask participants to identify forms mentioned in video. Suggest that even though sexual abuse was not mentioned, it is likely that Pat experienced sexual abuse.)
- ▼ Pat talks about her "brains feeling like scrambled eggs" and "going outside and not knowing where she is going." Discuss how signs of dementia are also signs of victimization and trauma. Stress the importance of making sure that victims/survivors receive food, water, proper medication and sleep before assuming they have dementia.
- ▼ Pat is not co-dependent or suffering from low self-esteem. She encounters many societal barriers.
- ▼ Bill, her abuser, is not a stressed caregiver. His sense of entitlement is clear. He feels comfortable saying abusive things in front of the camera.
- ▼ Barriers Pat encountered include generational values, financial barriers, housing, health problems, fear, hope that someday he would learn to be nice to her, lack of knowledge that services were available for her, etc.
- ▼ Family members may or not be helpful to older victims. Some offer help and encouragement; others need to put limits on their help. Some adult children need to be totally removed from the family, perhaps because they were victims of child abuse or incest. Other adult children may collude with the batterer or are also abusive to the victim.
- ▼ Shelter environment may not be welcoming for older victims. (Note child crying in the background.)
- ▼ Note how Pat looks older when she returns home to Bill.

## 4b. Web of Fear and Isolation

### Directions

Explain that the barriers victims face when making difficult choices come from three areas: internal values, abuser tactics and societal responses (p. 22-23) Using *Just to Have a Peaceful Life* or another victim's story, have the group identify barriers to living free from abuse.

Describe the difference between an internal value, abuser tactic and societal responses. For example, fear: the internal value may be "I'm not strong enough to defend myself." The abuser tactic may be telling her "I'll kill you if you leave." The societal response may be that law enforcement will not arrest an older man in her community.

As participants identify barriers, print each over the silhouette. Discuss how these barriers, create a web of isolation and fear for victims. Tell participants we will spend the rest of the training moving from the web of fear and isolation to creating a community safety net.

As the training day progresses, ask participants to identify other barriers, including cultural and other considerations (victims are immigrants, rural, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender, blind or cognitively-impaired). Invite them to consider that other unique barriers will exist for many individual victims.

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### Key Takeaway Point

- ▼ *The reasons victims are unable to live free from abuse are complex, often involving individual values, abuser tactics and societal messages.*
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**NOTE TO TRAINERS:** Revisit barriers after "Chutes and Ladders," which follows lunch.

Notes

### 5. Concluding Remarks

- ▼ Domestic violence and elder abuse fields started at fundamentally different places, but have mutual goals.
- ▼ Older victims/survivors of domestic violence are a segment of both populations who have been invisible in both service delivery systems.
- ▼ Caregiver stress is not the primary cause of elder abuse. Abuse of power and control is more likely to be accurate framework in most cases.
- ▼ Victims face many barriers to living free from abuse that include internal values, abuser tactics and societal responses and systemic messages.
- ▼ Additional material, including statistics and information on forms of abuse, is available in the participants' manual for this session.
- ▼ We will spend the rest of the training understanding how to transform the web of fear and isolation into a community safety net for victims.

Invite participants to take a 15-minute break and then to head to their breakout sessions. Domestic violence program and victim/witness advocates should go to session on elder abuse. Aging network and adult protective services staff should go to the domestic violence session.

### 6. Questions and Answers

**5 minutes**

Move to Break followed by break-out sessions.

**Overhead # 1 - 1**

# TRAINING GOALS

Participants will:

- ▼ Understand the unique dynamics of abuse in later life.
- ▼ Have a working knowledge of domestic violence and elder abuse services in PA.
- ▼ Understand effective interventions for working with older victims/survivors of domestic violence.
- ▼ Acknowledge the importance of a coordinated response to better serve older victims.



**Overhead # 1 - 2**

# **AGENDA**

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|-----------------|---|
| 9:00 – 9:15 am  | <b>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING</b>                  |
| 9:15 – 10:45 am | <b>DYNAMICS OF ABUSE IN LATER LIFE</b>                          |
| 10:45 – 11 am   | <b>BREAK</b>  |
| 11 am – Noon    | <b>BREAKOUT SESSIONS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE &amp; ELDER ABUSE</b> |
| Noon – 1 pm     | <b>LUNCH</b>  |
| 1 – 2:30 pm     | <b>INTERVENTIONS and SERVICES</b>                               |
| 2:30 – 2:45 pm  | <b>BREAK</b>  |
| 2:45 – 3:45 pm  | <b>COORDINATED RESPONSE</b>                                     |
| 3:45 – 4 pm     | <b>EVALUATION and FINAL Q &amp; A</b>                           |



**Overhead # 1 - 3**

## **ELDER ABUSE**

When a person 60 or over is subjected to:

- ▼ physical & sexual abuse
- ▼ material abuse
- ▼ neglect, or
- ▼ emotional abuse



**Overhead # 1 - 4**

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE**

Occurs when an older person has been subjected to a pattern of coercive control and abuse by a family member or someone with whom they have an intimate, ongoing relationship.



**Overhead # 1 - 5**

## **WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE?**

### **AGE**

- ▼ 50 years and older

### **GENDER**

- ▼ Primarily women, but includes older men

### **RELATIONSHIP**

- ▼ Ongoing, trusted relationship



**Overhead # 1 - 6**

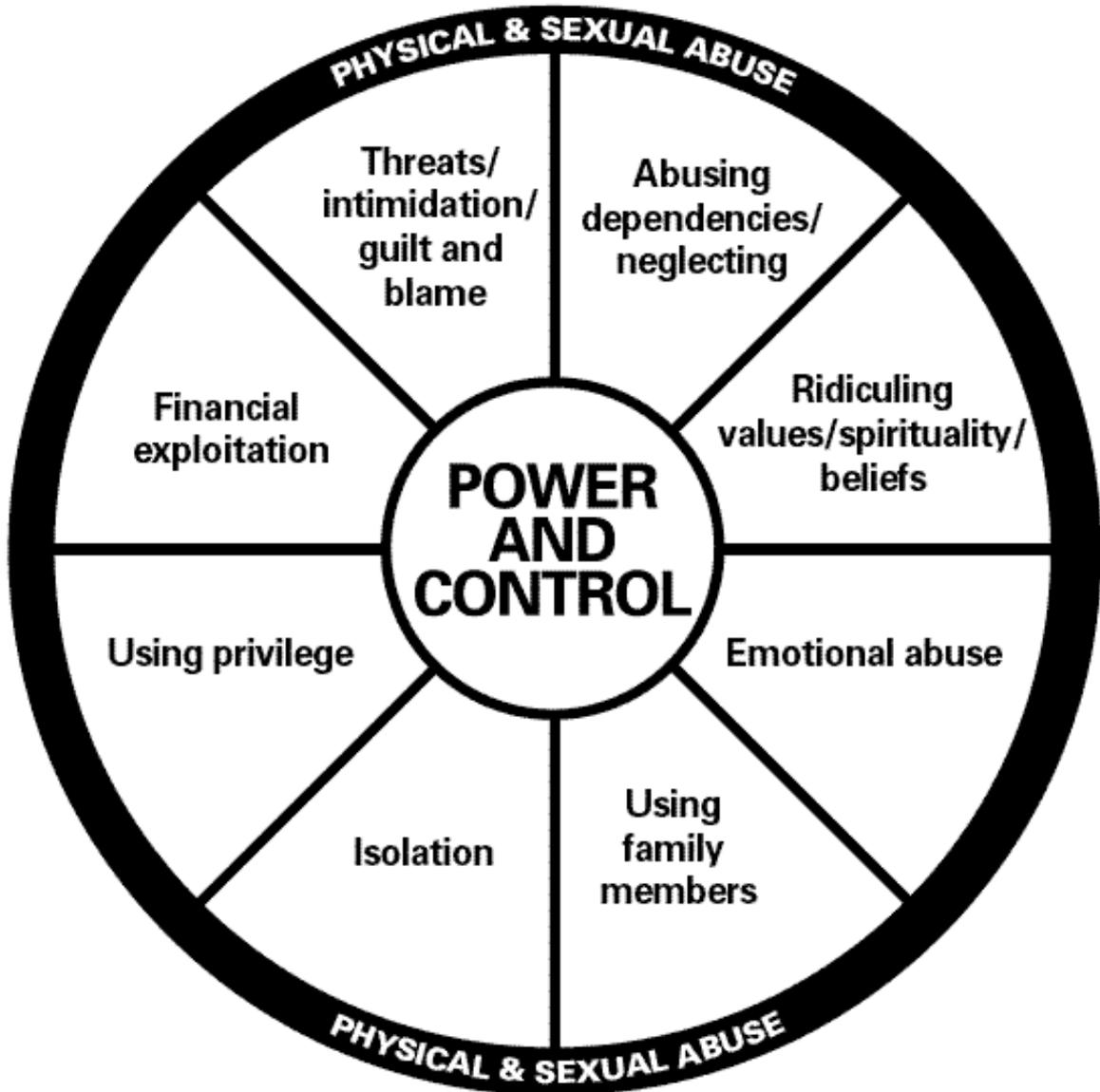
## **SCENARIOS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE**

- ▼ Spouse/Partner
  - ▼ “DV grown old”
  - ▼ New relationship
  - ▼ Late onset
- ▼ Adult child, grandchild or other family member
- ▼ Caregivers
- ▼ Care receiver as abuser



**Overhead # 1 - 7**

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE



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This diagram is based on the Power and Control/Equality wheels developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN



**MASTER FOR SILHOUETTE POSTER**

**From a Web of Fear and Isolation  
to a Community Safety Net**





**Overhead # 1 - 8\***

Misidentifying domestic abuse in later life as “caregiver stress” can place the victim at an increased risk of harm.

- ▼ focus is placed on the needs of the caretaker... resulting in offers of support, compassion and services to the abuser
- ▼ victims are assumed to be dependent and difficult to care for
- ▼ conveys the message the victim is to blame
- ▼ ignores the power and control dynamics



**Overhead # 1 - 9\***

Stressed caregivers need:

- ▼ to be told when their behaviors are abusive and unacceptable
- ▼ training on providing assistance with daily living or health care
- ▼ referrals for respite care, support groups for caregivers

In addition, abusers need:

- ▼ to learn their behavior is unacceptable, criminal, and not to be tolerated
- ▼ to be held accountable for their behavior

