

Elder Abuse in the Context of COVID-19:
Recent Trends and Recommendations for Response

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ncall

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A Division of the Department
of Health & Human Services

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Elder Abuse in the Context of COVID-19:
Recent Trends and Recommendations
for Response

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Presenters

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Learning objectives

As a result of this training, you will be better able to:

- Discuss the effect of a global pandemic on older adults who may be at risk for abuse,
- Describe the risk factors associated with various forms of elder abuse, and
- Identify strategies for working with older survivors both during and after the pandemic.

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Overview

- Overview of abuse in later life
 - Dynamics and risk factors
- Impact of the global pandemic on older adults
 - Physical and mental health
 - Pandemic-specific risk factors
- Response to older survivors during a pandemic

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Abuse in Later Life

An Overview

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Participant poll 1

Have you known a survivor of elder abuse, either personally or professionally?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

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Participant Poll 2


If you answered yes to the previous question, what form(s) of abuse have you encountered? Select all that apply:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Stalking

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Elder Abuse Defined



"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, either in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and/or when an older person is targeted based on age or disability."

Department of Justice, 2014 Elder Justice Roadmap.

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Elder Abuse Victims



About 2/3 of elder abuse victims are women.

Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc., Weill Cornell Medical Center of Cornell University, & New York City Department for the Aging. (2011).

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Victims Are Often Vulnerable



Nearly half of all victims have a physical impairment.

About one-third of victims have mental impairment or dementia.

Huang, Y., & Lenz, A. (2016).

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Elder Abuse and Dementia



Three international studies found overall rates of abuse of people with dementia by their caregivers ranged from 34–62%.

NCEA (212) Research Brief: How at Risk are People with Dementia?

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Perpetrators of Elder Abuse



Perpetrators of elder abuse are spouses, partners, family members, caregivers and other persons in a relationship where the victim and society expects compassion and caring.

Acienro, R. Hernandez-Tejada M., Muzzy, W., Steve, K. (2009).

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Risk of Death and Elder Abuse




Elders who experienced abuse, even modest abuse, had a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been abused.

Dong X, Simon M, Mendes de Leon C, Fulmer T, Beck T, Herbert L, et al. (2009).

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Elder Abuse: Under the Radar




For 1 case of elder abuse that comes to the attention of a responsible entity... another 24 cases never come to light.

Source: NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, Weill Cornell Medical College, NYC Department for the Aging Lifespan: (2011). Slide courtesy of Life Long Justice.

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Abuse in Later Life Power and Control Wheel



In 2006, NCALL adapted the Power and Control Wheel, developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN. Resource updated, April 2011.

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Common risk factors



- Isolation
- Poor mental or physical health
- Living situation
- Dependence
- Ageism
- Polyvictimization

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Why don't older adults report?

- Perpetrator may be a loved one
- Perpetrator may be a caregiver
- Fear of long-term care
- Traditional DV/SA options do not meet the needs of older victims
- Cultural/religious beliefs
- Shame/embarrassment
- Prior bad experiences with systems

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COVID-19 and older adults

Diverse experiences, diverse responses

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COVID-19 and physical health

- 37.6% of adults at risk of serious illness
- Of those, 55.2% are over 65
- 80% of all COVID-related deaths
- People with dementia have increased risk
 - 6-month mortality and hospitalization risks in patients with dementia were 21% and 59% respectively
- Older Black adults at higher risk



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COVID-19 and mental health



- 40% of all adults report symptoms of anxiety and/or depression in July 2020
- Younger adults significantly more likely to report anxiety or depression
- Multiple studies have shown that older adults may be more resilient and have better mental health outcomes than other age groups

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Factors impacting resilience




- Community living
- Financial stability
- Overall good health
- Personality traits
- Life experience
- Faith practice
- Physical activity

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Concerns of older adults

- Isolation
- Internalized ageism
- Disruption to daily routine
- Access to care/telemedicine
- Frustration with unfamiliar technology
- Concerns about partners/family
- Trauma



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COVID-19 and elder abuse

Increased risk factors among older adults

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Review: risk factors




- Isolation
- Poor mental or physical health
- Living situation
- Dependence
- Ageism
- Polyvictimization

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COVID-19 and elder abuse risk

- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Grief



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Elder abuse and COVID-19



- Reporting to law enforcement and APS is down
- Elevated risk for all forms of abuse
 - Isolation
 - Stay-at-home orders
 - Financial downturn increases risk of financial exploitation
 - Increased dependency

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Responding to older adults

Providing services during a pandemic

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Elder response to services

- Isolated from service providers
- Nervous about virtual contact
- Technology concerns – knowledge and access
- Access to masks and protective wear

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6/9/2021

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Organizational response

Workplace plans

- Grouping of schedules
- Independent housing plans
- Isolation units
- Transition to teleadvocacy
- Contactless resources
- Podcasts

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Post-pandemic advocacy

- Change in shared occupancy spaces
- Hybrid models
- Embracing mobile advocacy
- Reflections on interactions with law enforcement
- Greater need for mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Senior programs – volunteers
- Community senior centers

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Questions?

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Increasing Access to Healing Services and Just Outcomes for Older African American Crime Survivors Toolkit



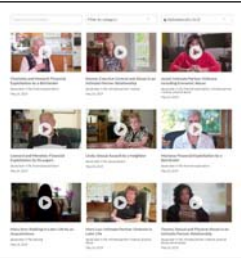
New resource exploring the specific challenges faced by older African American victims and the unique dynamics at play in their journey toward healing and recovery.

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Lifting Up the Voices of Older Survivors (LUV)

- Website: www.liftingupvoices.net
- Nine videos produced by NCALL and Terra Nova Films with funding by the Office for Victims of Crime

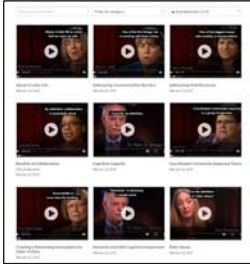


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NCALL Video Library

- Web address: www.ncall.us/video-library
- More than 30 video clips with subject matter experts




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NCALL YouTube Channel

- Web address: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB-sVm3bqLSYqROfmDAUFsw>
- More than 150 streaming videos



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Awareness/Outreach Materials

WEAAD WEAAD JANUARY IS STALKING AWARENESS MONTH. "Are you sure you're not confused?" "I was raped by my grandson." When someone tells you they've been raped, there's a simple response: Start by Believing. BRING FOCUS TO THE ISSUE OF ABUSE IN LATER LIFE. #DVAM. WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY. OCTOBER'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH. BRING FOCUS TO THE ISSUE OF ABUSE IN LATER LIFE.

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Staying Connected to NCALL

Sign up for our e-newsletter:
www.ncall.us/take-action

Join the forum:
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Website: www.ncall.us

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For more information

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Thank you!

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