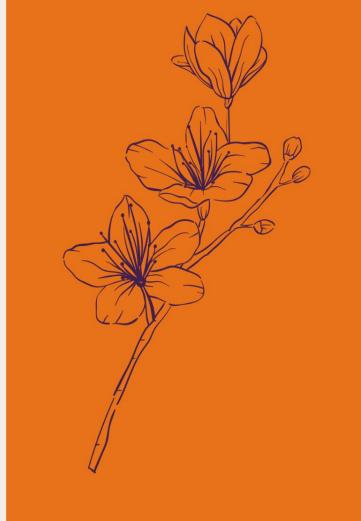
# Domestic Abuse in Later Life

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From Foreword to Maine Homicide Review Panel's 14th Biennial Report by Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey (p. 4):

abuse for senior Mainers. The increased need for home care and the prevalence of depression or suicidality experienced by aged individuals, particularly near the end of life, are areas recognized by the panel of deserving attention. More investment to support those family members who are stepping up to support aged family members, to support home health aides, and to support mental health screening is called for.

## Topics for learning



**Domestic Abuse** 



**Elder Abuse** 



Cultural Myths and – isms



Finding Support

### Domestic Abuse is...

- A pattern of coercive, controlling behavior (not isolated incidents of physical violence)
- In the context of a current or former relationship
- When one person uses intimidating, threatening, harmful or harassing behavior designed to create fear in the victim
- Purposeful and chosen
- Based on a belief system that the abusive person has the right to limit the human and civil rights of the victim

### Elder Abuse:

- coercive control
- perpetrated by a caregiver, family member, or intimate partner (usually)
- exploits vulnerabilities associated with advanced age and intimacy
- Any older adult of any demographic (gender, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, gender expression, etc.) can be a victim or an abuser



### Isolation

Controlling what the person does, whom he or she sees and talks to. where he or she goes,

limits time with care resources and friends or family.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Put-downs, mind games, name calling, ridiculing difficulties, worries and/or

fears. Frightening the person by using looks, voice, gestures, moving or hiding a

cane, walker, etc.

### Exploitation

Taking the Social Security check, taking over accounts, and bills, spending without permissions, drawing up or abusing a Power of Attorney, pressing for transfer of property.

### and **Control**

**Power** 

### **Using Family**

Magnifying disagreements, past injuries, playing favorites. Misleading members about extent and nature of illness/condition. Excluding or denying access to family members. Using power

> to ensure secrecy about the abuse; creating alliances against change or

> > support.

### Threats

friends, children, to leave, or to institutionalize.

Being rough with intimate body parts, forcing sex against wishes, taking advantage of physical or mental illness to engage in

Sexual Abuse

sex.

#### waits for food. toileting or other care.

Neglect

Withholding food, heat,

care. Understanding but failing

to follow medical or physical

therapy or safety

recommendations. Missing

medical appointments, not

reporting serious symptoms or

changes.

Telling the person how lucky

he or she is to have their help:

using needs to make

this point; creating long

**Abusing Dependencies** 

Making and/or carrying out threats to do things that hurt emotionally or physically. Threats to alienate neighbors, What's **ageism** got to do with it?

Vulnerability/Disability and Rights of Older Adults "Oh, that's just how men my father's age act. He loves Mom, he just doesn't know how to show it." (ageism, enabling)

"Mum's so ditzy. It's just better for everyone if Dad controls the money."

(sexism and victim blaming)

(using guilt, sexism, decentering victim's well-being)

"What will Dad do/Who will take care of Dad?"

"He just couldn't go on seeing her gradually lose the ability to recognize him or the kids-he took matters into his own hands, but he did it out of love."

(ageism, invoking myth of "mercy killing" to excuse murder)

"If I tell anyone, they will just judge me for staying all these years."

"I can't leave her alone at our age--who will help her manage things?"

"Maybe if I act more loving, fix better meals, say yes to sex more, or do X, Y, or Z, he will

be nicer."



The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence

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