

# 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):

... more attention needs to be given to the risk of domestic 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**

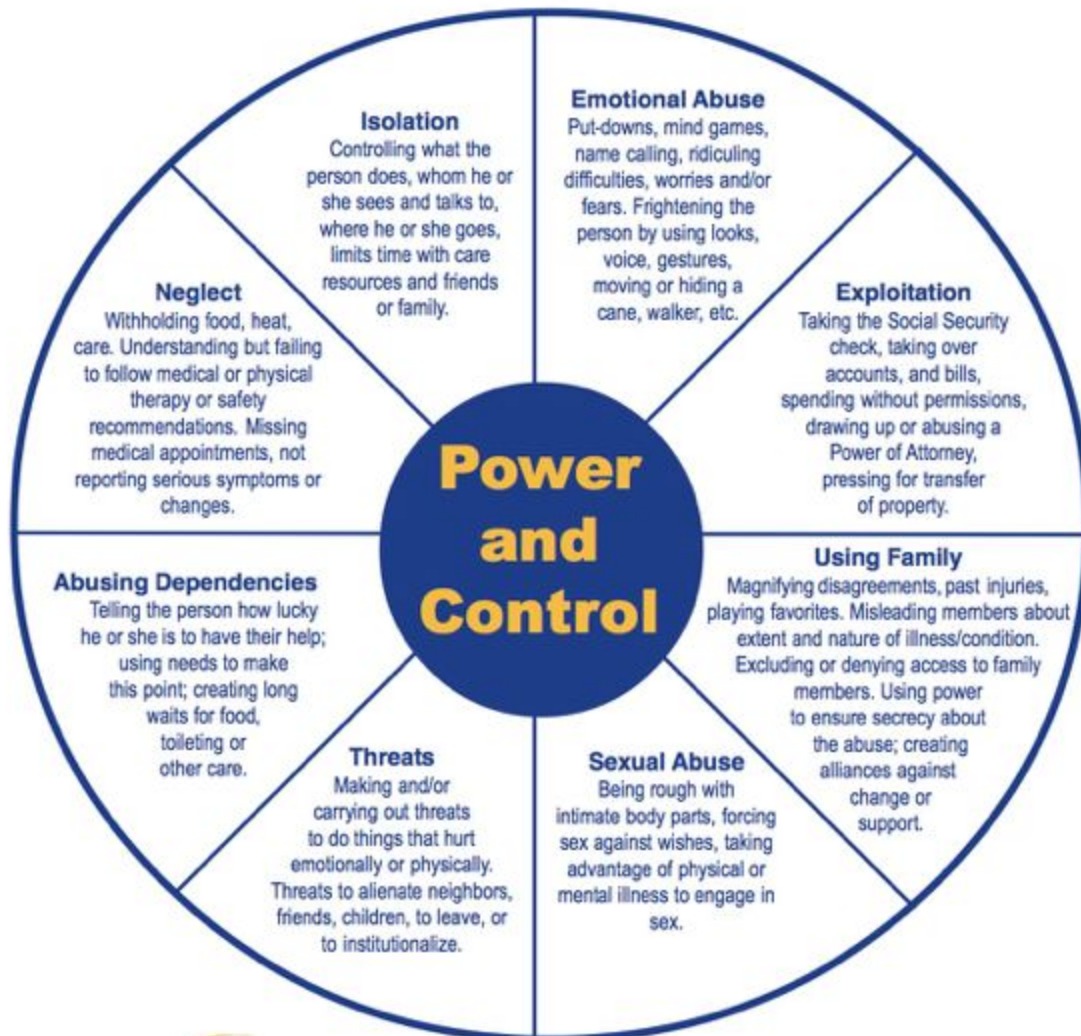
# Domestic Abuse is...

- 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





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)

“What will Dad do/Who will take care of Dad?”

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

“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)

“Maybe if I act more loving, fix better meals, say yes to sex more, or do X, Y, or Z, he will be nicer.”

“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?”



# MCEDV.

The Maine Coalition  
to End Domestic Violence

Help is just a call away.

24 Hour • Toll Free • Confidential

**1-866-834-HELP (4357)**

Maine Telecommunications Relay Service:

**1-800-437-1220**

## MCEDV MEMBERS:

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### **KENNEBEC & SOMERSET**

*Family Violence Project*

### **HANCOCK & WASHINGTON**

*NextStep Domestic Violence Project*

### **ANDROSCOGGIN, FRANKLIN & OXFORD**

*Safe Voices*

### **KNOX, LINCOLN, SAGadahoc & WALDO**

*New Hope Midcoast*

### **CUMBERLAND**

*Through These Doors*

### **YORK**

*Caring Unlimited*

### **CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES**

*Immigrant Resource Center of Maine*



[mcedv.org](http://mcedv.org)