

What is Elder Abuse

It's Not Always Physical

There are 12,000 cases of elder abuse in Maine each year, only a fraction of which are reported. While most of us want to believe that we have attentive, caring families and caretakers, this isn't always the case.

[Click here to view the Power and Control Wheel for Family Violence in Later Life.](#)

Typically, elder abuse is defined as various types of abuse against someone age 60 or 65 and older. Anyone can be an abuser: spouse, partner, child, caretaker, companion, lover or friend. The National Center On Elder Abuse reports that 90% of elder abuse is perpetrated by family members (mostly adult children & spouses). Sixty-six percent of all older victims are women. Older people who are experiencing hurtful behavior are often afraid or ashamed to ask for help. It's very difficult to acknowledge that your son, daughter or spouse is the one hurting you.

Some family members and caretakers use emotional, psychological, financial or physical pressure to get what they want.

Some have problems with drugs, alcohol and emotional instability and are financially dependent on those they are harming.

Abuse by an intimate partner can also be a pattern of hurtful behavior that has continued over the course of many years.

Domestic and sexual abuse in later life are a subset of elder abuse. Domestic violence in later life can be a form of elder abuse when an older adult is subjected to a pattern of coercive control and abuse by someone with whom they have an intimate, ongoing relationship.

Has a loved one ever...

made you feel stupid?

taken your money without asking?

put you on an allowance?

neglected and abandoned you when you needed care?

refused to let you go out with friends?

said they were going to put you away?

said they would leave you or get a divorce?

break your things?

withheld medicine?

made you feel frightened, ashamed, sad, or worthless?

hit, kicked, slapped or threatened you?

coerced or forced sexual activity?

You may have answered YES to some of these questions and still think, “It’s not that bad”, however, you should not feel scared, humiliated or controlled. Advocates are available to listen.

Battered Women's Project

24-hour hotline

1-800-439-2323 / out of state 207-769-8251