

Breaking Boundaries

Communicating with crime victims who are later in life.



Judy Clark, Family Services
Specialist, APS
Washington County
Department of Social Services

Key Training Points

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FOCUS ON VICTIM
SAFETY



BE AWARE OF AND
AVOID ASSUMPTIONS



RECOGNIZE ABUSER
TACTICS



WORK
COLLABORATIVELY

Target Population:

- The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) defines abuse in later life as the willful abuse, neglect, abandonment, or financial exploitation of an older adult who is age **50+** by someone in an ongoing, trust-based relationship (i.e., spouse, partner, family member, or caregiver) with the victim. NCALL also considers sexual abuse and stalking of an older adult by anyone (including strangers) to be abuse in later life.





Elder Abuse: Under the Radar

For every one case of
elder abuse that comes to
the attention of a
responsible entity. . .

1

another twenty-three
cases never come to light.

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How Are Older People Injured?

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- Victims of crime by a stranger
- Unintentional injuries
- Well-intended caregivers
- By persons who can't control their behavior due to medical conditions
- Abuse, neglect and/or exploitation
- Domestic violence

What Is Elder Abuse?

When an older adult experiences:

- ▶ Neglect
- ▶ Financial exploitation
- ▶ Physical abuse
- ▶ Sexual abuse
- ▶ Emotional abuse
- ▶ Psychological abuse

(Any of the above may co-occur with each other)

Who Are the Abusers of Older Adults?

- ▶ Abusers are both women and men.
- ▶ In almost 90% of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a relative.
- ▶ Two thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.

Abuse/Neglect of Older Adults

Abuse: knowing and willful conduct that causes physical injury or pain or knowing and willful use of physical restraint, including confinement, as punishment, for convenience or as a substitute for treatment.

Neglect: knowing and willful failure by a responsible person to provide treatment, care, goods or services which results in injury to the health or endangers the safety of an incapacitated adult.

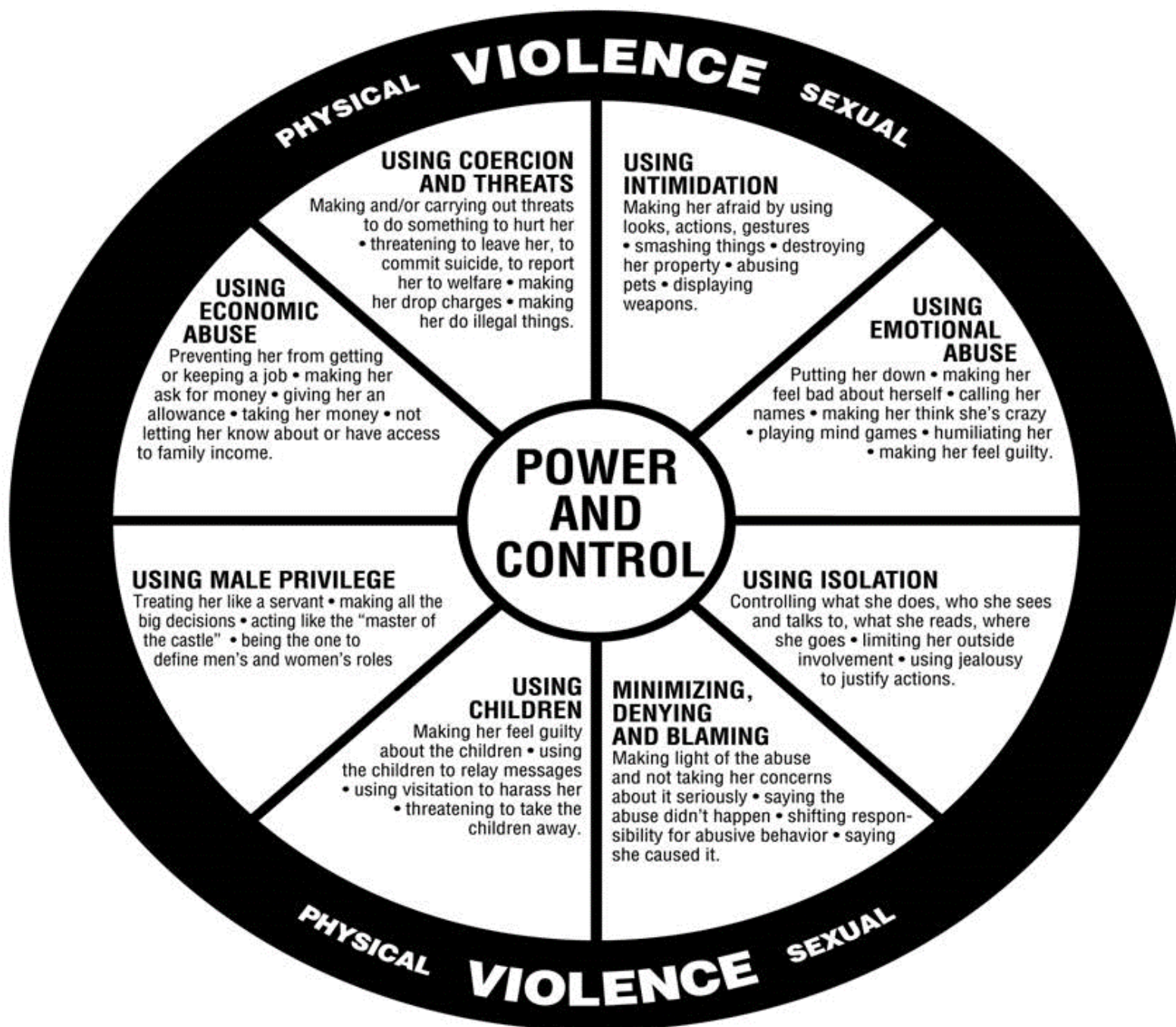
Responsible person: has responsibility for care, custody or control of an incapacitated person by law or who has assumed responsibility voluntarily

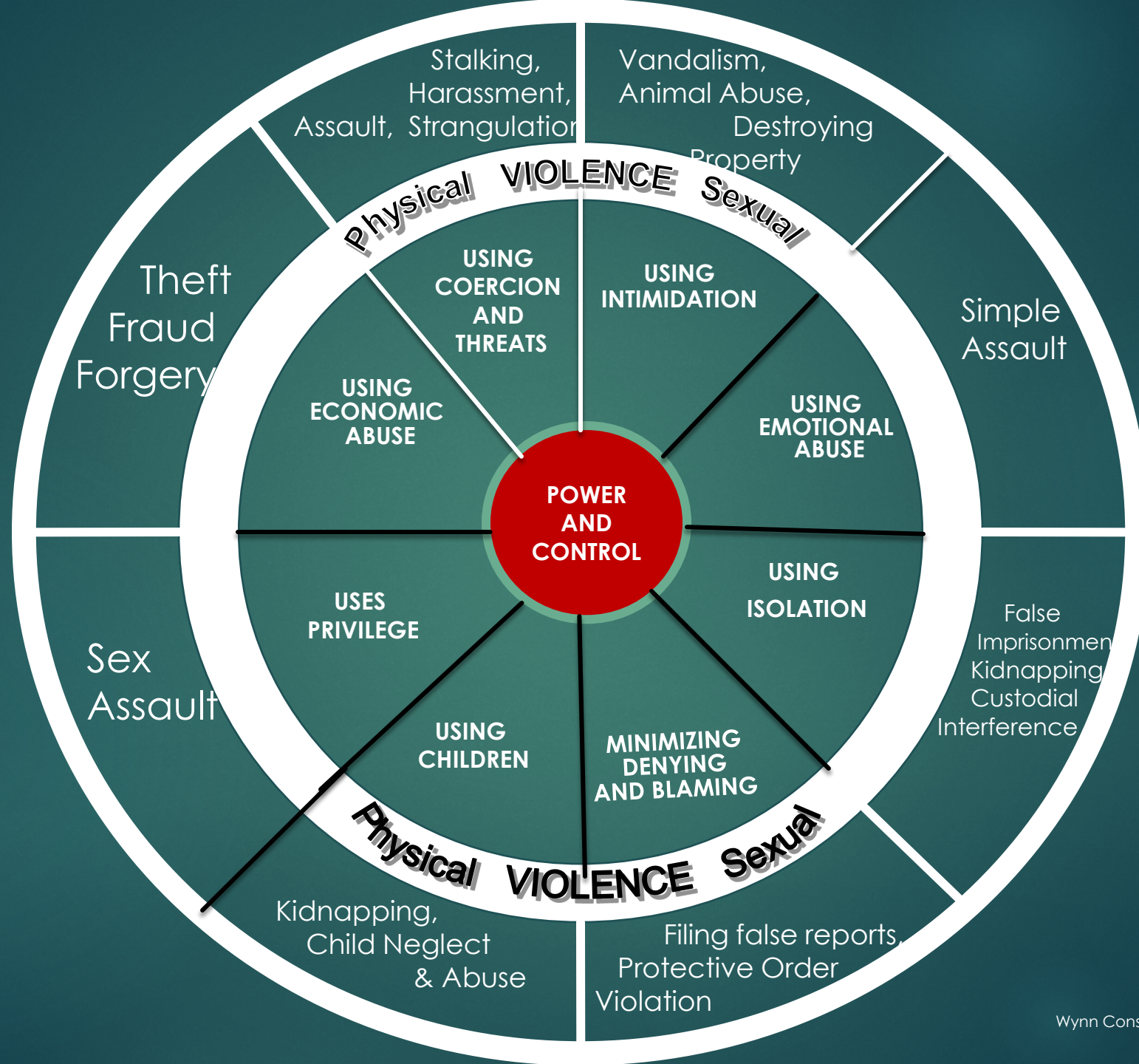
Definition - Family or Household Member

§ 16.1-228

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- ▶ Spouse, former spouse, child in common
- ▶ Parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother/father-in-law, son/daughter-in-law, brother/sister-in-law (residency required if in-law)
- ▶ Cohabitants within last 12 months and any children who reside with them





NCALL Abuse in Later Life Power and Control

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Wheel adapted with permission from Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN in 2006.

- Threatens to leave or commit suicide
- Threatens to institutionalize

- Steals money, titles, or possessions
- Abuses a power of attorney or guardianship

- Speaks for elder at financial and medical appointments
- Makes all major decisions

- Controls what elder does, who they see, and what they do
- Denies access to phone or mail

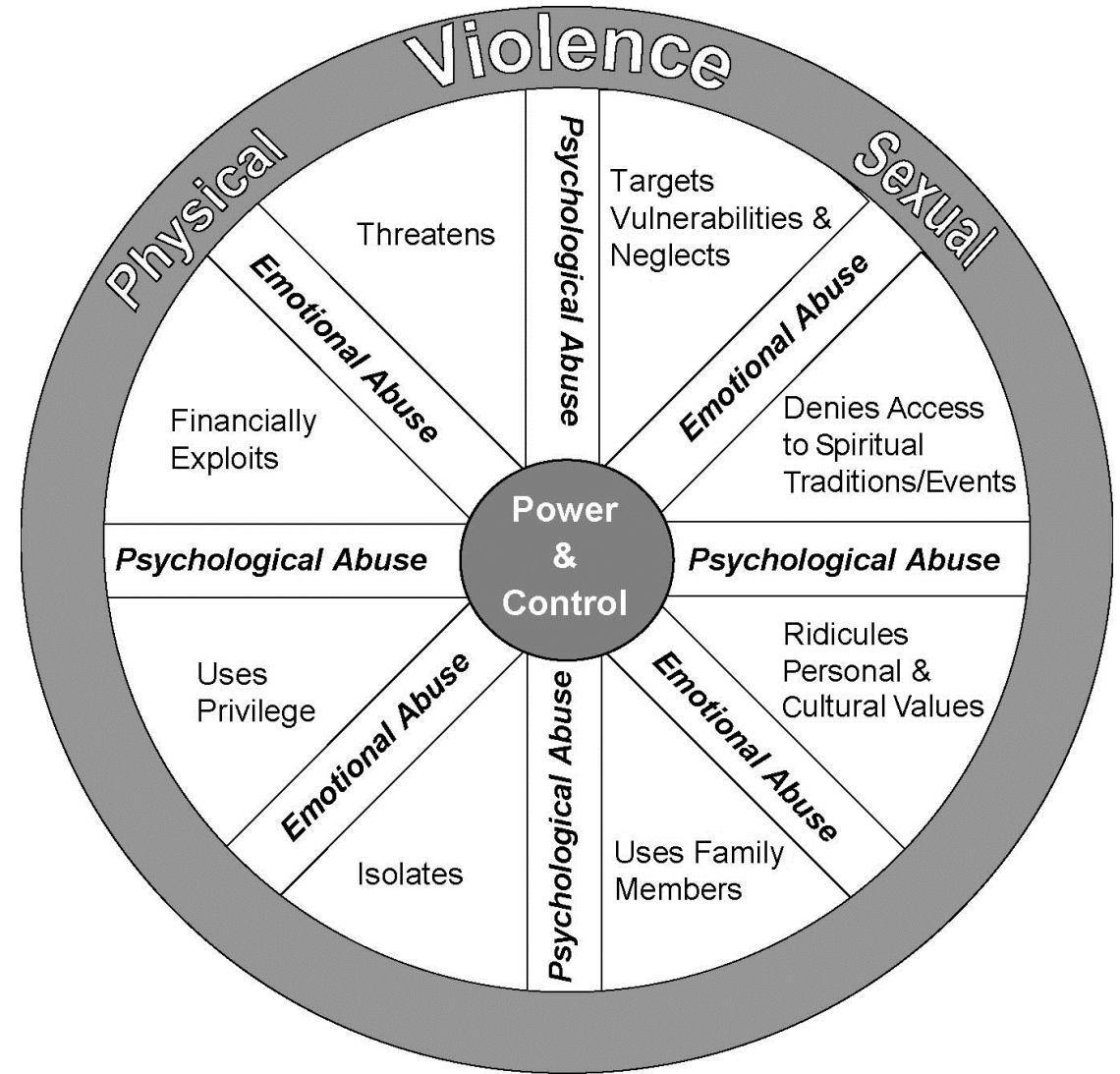
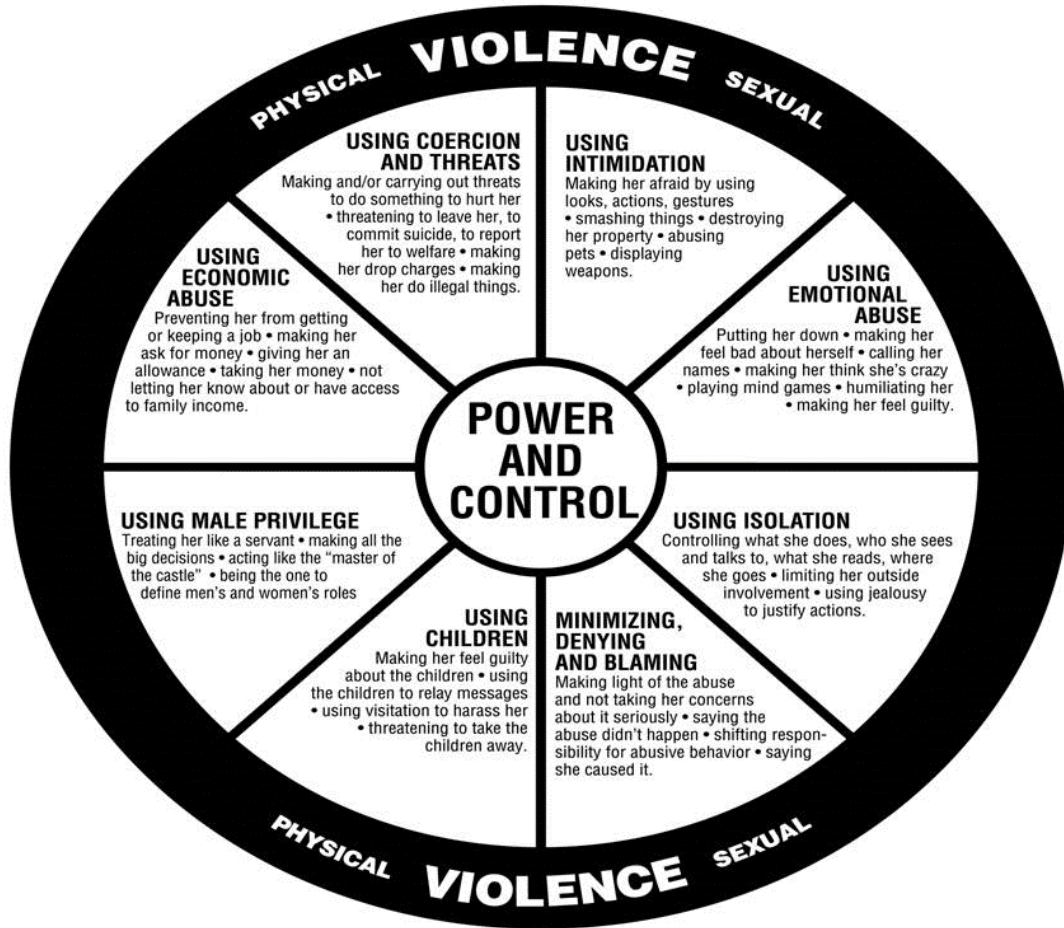


- Does not follow medical recommendations
- Denies food, heat, care, or medication

- Refuses transportation or access
- Destroys spiritual or traditional items
- of importance

- Disrespectful of cultural practices
- Ignores values when making decisions

- Misleads family members regarding condition of elder
- Excludes or denies access to family



Emotional/ Psychological Abuse

▶ Emotional Abuse

▶ This involves how we feel, what we feel, and the coping mechanisms we develop for both. Emotional abuse occurs when the victim's feelings are used as a method of control.

▶ Psychological Abuse

▶ Psychological abuse is a broad term that includes acts, threats of acts or coercive tactics to cause someone fear and trauma. If there has been previous physical or sexual abuse in the relationship, any further threat of abuse is considered psychological violence.

▶ May consists of:

▶ Humiliation Controlling what the victim can and cannot do Withholding information
Diminishing or embarrassing the victim Isolating the victim from friends and family

▶ Gaslighting: false information is presented to the victim, with the intent of making them doubt their own memory and perception. Gaslighting is sometimes called Ambient Abuse or Sleeping Beauty Slavery.

What makes older adult more susceptible to other forms of abuse such as financial exploitation, online dating and imposter scams?

- Limited digital literacy
- Isolation
- Accumulated wealth and high creditworthiness
- Fear of losing independence
- Respect of authority
- Dedication to family
- Cognitive decline



Aging can bring mild cognitive decline is the gradual loss of thinking abilities such as:

learning
remembering
paying attention
reasoning



**National Institute
on Aging**

As a person gets older, changes occur in all parts of the body, including the brain.

Certain parts of the brain shrink, including those important to learning and other complex mental activities.

In certain brain regions, communication between neurons may be less effective.

Blood flow in the brain may decrease.

Inflammation, which occurs when the body responds to an injury or disease, may increase.

Increases Risk

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Traumatic
Brain
Injury

Mid-Life
Obesity

Mid-Life
Hypertension

Current
Smoking

Diabetes

History of
Depression

Sleep
Disturbances

Hyper-
lipidemia

COGNITIVE DECLINE

Years of
Formal
Education

Physical
Activity

Mediterranean
Diet

Cognitive
Training

Moderate
Alcohol
Consumption

Social
Engagement

Decreases Risk

HOW Trauma IMPACTS THE BRAIN

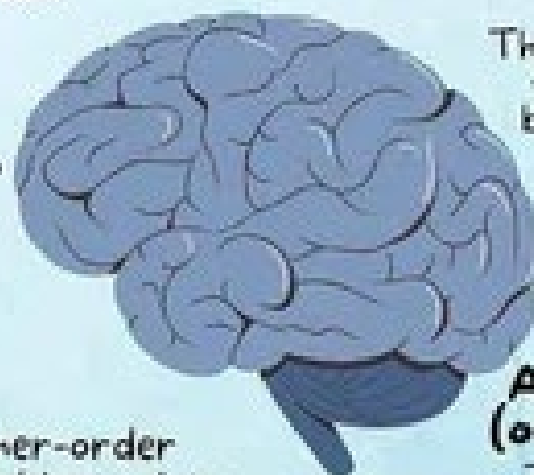
Trauma can alter the structure and functioning of the brain.



Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex (shrinks)

This area is responsible for mood and emotion regulation & rational thought.

It causes higher-order processes like problem-solving to become underfunctioning, while processes geared towards defense become overactive.



Hippocampus (shrinks)

This area is responsible for differentiating between the past & present.



Amygdala (overactive)

This area is responsible for responding to stress.

@laci.mcgarry

Text Message
Today 12:35 PM

FRM:WellsFargo-Call:833.9
SUBJ:\$240.00 @ ATM on
04/12/2021 Approved.
MSG:Ignore MSG if Valid. C
Us if Suspicious.
IDNo:10452420082

Today 6:10 PM

Verizon Msg: Your account
balance of \$.07 is due by
11/10/2020. To pay your bill
now, go to m.vzw.com/m/payb

CONGRATULATIONS! (1) \$1000 Amazon Gift Card

1 is reserved just for you, Facebook User!

Step 1: Click the "CONTINUE" button to claim your prize.

Step 2: Enter the correct information on the next page to claim your prize.

2 You only have 4 minutes 14 seconds to claim your pr iPod

9:36 PM

Messages + Details

on YouTube if you
what to remember
which one it is..

Everything that is
beautiful/amazing
and full of love
about you lives on
every day in little
things like songs,
places and
scents..

You are missed
and needed so
much, I fear you'll
never know how
much..

AT&T LTE 2:17 PM 34%
Messages Brooke Details

here.

Where are you lovee

I miss you

Come back to me soon ok?

I want to kiss you

I'm so tired. Not just right now
but in life.

I shouldn't be this tired. Too
young for that. Please help me

Going to sleep sweetheart.

I love you infinitely.

You have my heart.

Friday 1:14 AM

Oh my GOD I love you so much
thank you thank you. I'm still
digesting it but everything I just
read I was feeling as you were

1 Steve Jobs Actually Alive, See Photo!

stevejobslives.net • on Thursday • 1,597 shares



It's widely known that Steve Jobs is dead but we
have an exclusive, never before seen selfie taken
in Hawaii that has conspiracy fans buzzing.

number to read full story → 2

November 9

Dear Beloved Friend, I am the daughter of late
Al-badari whom was murdered during the recent
civil war. I am looking for a trustworthy person to
transfer 5 million US Dollars into a foreign account
for me. You will be entitled to 20% if you help me.
Please reply immediately with your name and private
telephone number, so that I may transfer the money
to you and leave this unsafe country immediately.

2

2:30am

AUG 9 2019, 11:51 AM

Hello This is an Officer from Social Security
Administration Department of USA. This is to 1
inform you that your Social Security Number has
been suspended. For more information just give us
a call back at (516)259-6468. Thank you. 2

Did you Attempt A ZELLE Payment
For The Amount Of \$2000.00 on
6/18? If Valid Reply YES, If Fraud
Reply No. Reply HELP for help,
STOP to end msgs. Msg&data rates
may apply.

No

Zelle Security Code: 123456. Do
not share this code with anyone!
Credit Union Employees will never
ask for this code.

Account Cancellation Request

From: Facebook (noreply@fb.com)

To: Me (myemail@company.com)

Hello,

2 We sending are your this email to inform your that we have
received an account cancellation request from your. Please
the link follow below to confirm or cancel this request.

Thanks,
The Facebook Team

[click here to confirm or cancel](#)

Community Partners and Collaborators

- APS (Adult Protective Services)
- Office of the Attorney General – Medicaid Fraud Unit
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Financial Institutions
- Private Law Firms
- Health Care Facility (Can document ongoing conversations)
- Medical Providers
- Area Agency on Aging Services
- Domestic Violence Agency
- Faith Leaders Multidisciplinary Teams

Benefits in Different Approaches

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More complete picture

Victim autonomy and safety

Coordination of services

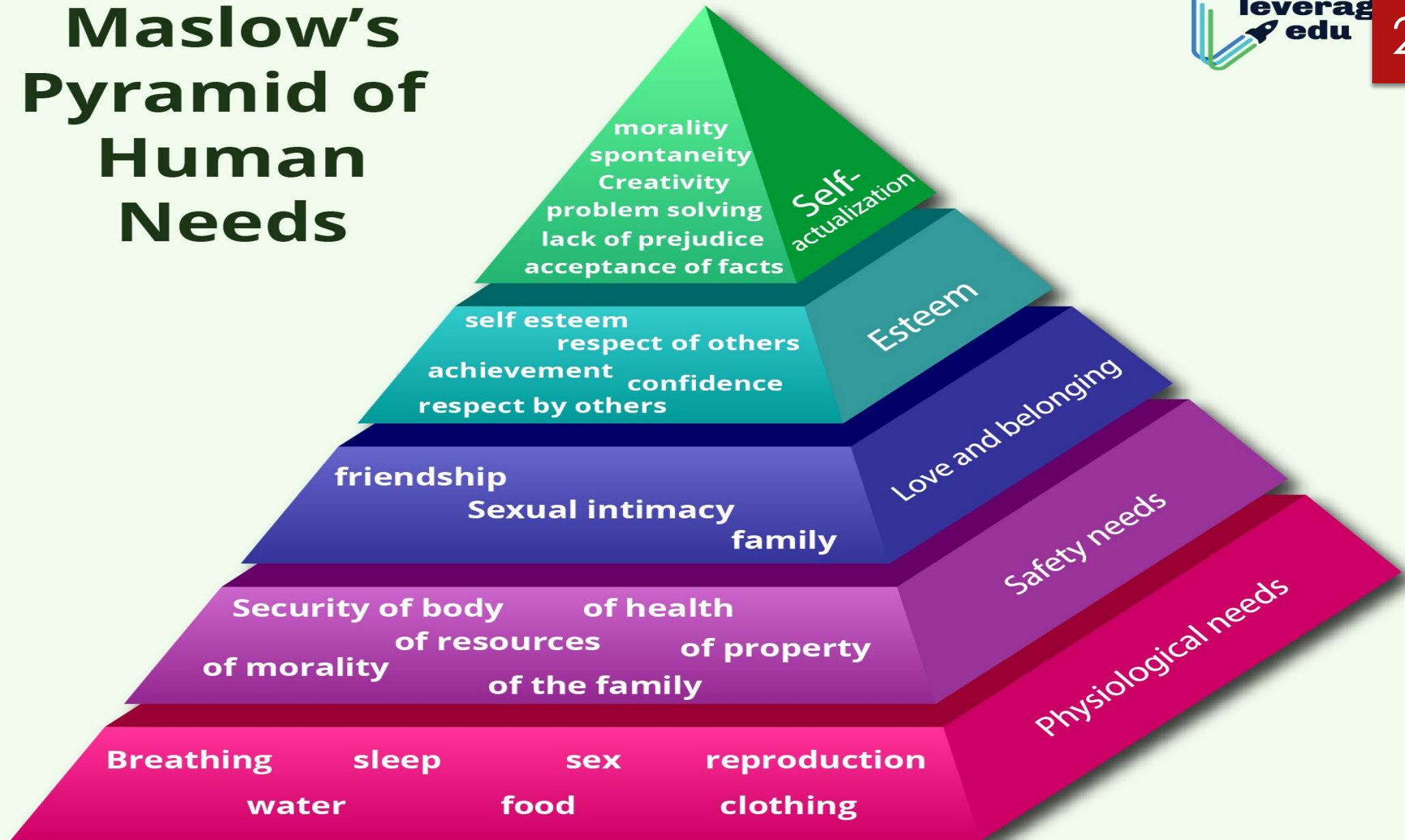
Provides more resources and less duplication of services

More holistic approach

Overcome agency limitations

Activity

Maslow's Pyramid of Human Needs



Barriers to Reporting

May not be believed because of society's view that domestic violence and sexual assault only happens to younger persons

May not be believed if there are cognitive limitations

If born before the violence against women's movement, may not have the language to identify the assault

Generational beliefs that increase shame and guilt

Historic trauma- societal and personal

Feelings of responsibility for the abuser's actions

Unique Issues for those later in life

Less likely to
have strong
support system

May
exacerbate
existing illness

Longer
recovery time

Increased
chance of
serious injury

Increased risk
of infection
from injuries

Brittle pelvis or
hip bones more
likely to fracture

May be
dependent on
abuser

Factors to Consider When Communicating with Older Individuals

Individual variables
(age, race, ethnic
background, education
level, sexual orientation,
socioeconomic status,
etc.)

Physical abilities

Cognitive abilities

May not speak or
read English

May not read or
write

May be deaf or
hard-of-hearing

May need assistive
devices to
communicate

**Eliminate the Abuse,
Not the Elder**

our community strong

STOP
Domestic Violence

Do not be afraid and

THE GRANDMA'S MAGAZINE
monthly

GRANDMA HELP STOP ABUSE

you absolutely have to try this casserole recipe Opal gave me, it's to die for

Can you help me find my glasses, honey?

I got this sweater for you on my shopping trip the other day, I hope it fits
It doesn't fit, I can just take it back

Kids These Days

I just mopped that floor, don't go walking on

For facts

Physical and financial abuse are commonly reported

Children and intimate partners are most commonly reported as perpetrators

Abuse can be unintentional or intentional

73% of abusers are family members

Types of elder abuse

Physical Social

- Stay socially connected
- Document your wishes
- Access support or aged care services
- Know your rights



Risk factors

- Dependency
- Social and geographical isolation



Positive Interviewing Strategies

- Explain why you are there and what will happen next.
- Build rapport with the person through questions about their interests.
- Allow time for them to answer.
- Describe the role of victim service providers and/or APS.
- Establish the victim's routine without asking about the crime.

Positive Interviewing Strategies

- Do not discount the alleged abuse because the statements seem untrue or the result of delusions.
Affirmations are not confirmations.
- Determine the best time of day to conduct the interview (sundowning).
- Redirect if the conversation gets off track.
- Ask about food, sleep, and medication.

Positive Interviewing Strategies

- Use focused open-ended questions with victims who may not provide information in a chronological order.
- Ask them if she/he can draw or show you the object or what happened.
- Use memory cues such as “What were you doing before this happened?”
- End the interview on a positive note but don't make any promises you won't be able to keep.

Challenges Victims Face

- Health concerns (victim and offender)
- Balancing safety and relationship
- Nowhere to go: Lack of economic resources and affordable housing
- Pressure from family and friends
- Fear

Potential Fears

- ❖ Being seriously injured or killed
- ❖ Being placed in a nursing home
- ❖ Being placed in a mental health facility
- ❖ Being under or over medicated
- ❖ Being without an interpreter
- ❖ Being “outed”
- ❖ Being deported

Case review

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You receive a police report stating the following:

- ▶ An 80-year-old female was at the home of a neighbor who called 911. She had injuries caused by her 81-year-old husband. She tells officers he was accusing her of having an affair while assaulting her. She had taken him to the ER earlier that day for high blood pressure.
- ▶ Officers go to the victim's home and find her husband sitting at the kitchen table. He tells them they are trespassing and threatens to call the sheriff.
- ▶ The husband is taken to the ER to be evaluated. He is cleared medically.
- ▶ While in the ER, he makes statements of going home to kill his wife.
- ▶ He is told he cannot return home. He admits himself voluntarily to a nursing facility.

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Conclusion/ Takeaways

- ✓ People who experience Abuse in Later Life want the same thing all victims of abuse want. They want the abuse to stop.
- ✓ Avoid assumptions
- ✓ Be aware of any possible interference in their recollection of events
- ✓ Resources available to victim of Abuse in Later Life may be specific to their age
- ✓ Get to know your community partners



Questions

Resources:



ncall

<https://www.ncall.us/>

<https://www.ncall.us/resources/video-library/abuse-in-later-life/>



**DIVISION for
AGING SERVICES**

<https://www.vda.virginia.gov/>

Judy Clark

Family Services Specialist, APS

Washington County, VA

Department of Social Services

(276) 645-5052

Judy.Clark@dss.virginia.gov