

The physical state of the older person is also a factor – might be chronically ill, immobile and incontinent.

It is clear that the potential victim demands a great deal of care and attention and is highly dependent on his/her caregiver.

PROFILE OF ABUSER

- 85% of abusers are family members or a person known to the victim.
- Feelings of loss of control, depression, confusion, low self esteem, resentment, helplessness and guilt as well as a lack of acknowledgement and support are all psychosocial factors.
- Social factors can be described as constant negative and aggressive communication, accompanied by punishment through hurtful criticism or withdrawal, poor inter-personal relationships, isolation, financial stress, inadequate housing, lack of appropriate caring skills, lack of supervision, lack of knowledge of needs and resources and absence of care facilities.

DO YOU NEED HELP?

Should you wish to report a case of abuse or would like more information on the scourge, contact your local Age-in-Action office.

One cannot help but realize that care of frail elderly persons places extreme demands and responsibilities on a caregiver. In an institutional setting the demand on care staff can also be excessive, especially in the face of inadequate training, supervision and knowledge, care equipment, plus long working hours and staff shortages.

CONTACT US

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“Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat.”

Mother Teresa



ELDER ABUSE

TYPES OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Acts that cause injury or physical discomfort. Examples of physical abuse are slapping, pushing, hitting, restraining, bruising, burning, cutting. Signs of physical abuse are amongst others bruises, burns, swelling and unexplained injuries.

EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Emotional or psychological abuse is acts that inflict emotional or mental suffering. Examples of emotional abuse are being ignored, insulted, blamed, humiliated, isolated, blackmailed, sworn at, treated as a child, called names, shouting, intimidation.

Signs are nervousness, agitation, anxiety, low self-esteem, fear and withdrawal, depression.

FINANCIAL/MATERIAL ABUSE

The misuse of funds and assets or obtaining property or funds without full consent, knowledge or under duress. Illegal exploitation of funds, property, assets, pension or other monies as well as theft, fraud and damage are examples of financial abuse.

SOCIAL/PHYSICAL ISOLATION

Locking an older person away in a room or abandonment.

PASSIVE NEGLECT

The failure to fulfil care needs. It is the withholding or not providing the care and basic necessities required for physical and mental well-being – this includes withholding of food, warmth, clothing, essential medication and deliberate abandonment.

Signs of passive neglect are untreated medical conditions, malnutrition, dehydration, dirty living conditions, dirty physical appearance.

SELF ABUSE/NEGLECT

The failure to care for him/herself, abuse of alcohol, drugs and improper diet.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual behaviour towards a person without their full knowledge and/or consent – sexual assault or harassment.

Signs of sexual abuse are bruising, bleeding, pain or injury in the abdominal, anal and genital areas, recurrent bouts of cystitis or venereal disease and/or symptoms of emotional abuse.

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The withholding of information or dominating decision making.

It is the denial of fundamental rights, for example respect for dignity, personal privacy, freedom of thought, belief, opinion, speech, expression and movement.

Older persons have the right to freedom, security, accurate information and not be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

NATURE OF ABUSE

PROFILE OF THE VICTIM

- Average age is between 70 and 80 years.
- Gender : 7 females to 1 male.
- The victim is most probably depressed, confused or demented and/or demanding.
- The care needs of the older person plays an important role with regard to abuse, especially where constant supervision, assistance with daily living requirements and 24 hour care is needed.
- Social factors contributing towards abuse are limited financial resources, social interaction, living space, care equipment, community resources as well as the past history of violence.