

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behavior used by one person in a relationship to gain power and control over another, usually an intimate partner. The pattern can include physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, sexual, and/or economic abuse.

Domestic Abuse in Later Life

Like younger victims, older adults may be subjected to a pattern of abusive behavior in their relationships. The abuse may be committed by a family member such as an adult child or grandchild, or by someone with whom they have an intimate

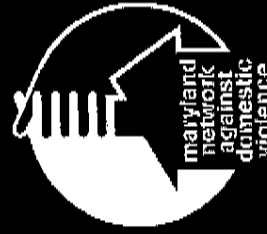


relationship, such as a spouse or life partner. In some cases, the family member or intimate partner may also be the caregiver.

For more information
please go to:
www.mnadv.org



Domestic Abuse... A Problem At Any Age



1-800-MD HELPS
(1-800-634-3577)
(Statewide Helpline)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM HOTLINES IN MARYLAND

- ALLEGANY COUNTY
301-759-9244 • TTY 301-759-9244
- ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
410-222-6800
- BALTIMORE CITY
House of Ruth MD • 410-889-7884
TTY 410-889-0047
TurnAround • 410-828-6390
- BALTIMORE COUNTY
410-828-6390
- CALVERT COUNTY
410-535-1121 • 301-855-1075
- CARROLL COUNTY
410-857-0077
- CAROLINE, KENT, DORCHESTER, QUEEN ANNE'S,
AND TALBOT COUNTIES
1-800-927-4673
- CECIL COUNTY
410-996-0333
- CHARLES COUNTY
301-645-3336 • 301-843-1110
- FREDERICK COUNTY
301-662-8800 • TTY 301-662-1565
- GARRETT COUNTY
301-334-9000
- HARFORD COUNTY
410-836-8430
- HOWARD COUNTY
800-752-0191 / 410-997-2272
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY
240-777-4195 • 240-777-4673 (after business hours)
TTY 240-777-4850
- PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
1-866-382-7474 • 301-731-1203
- ST. MARY'S COUNTY
301-863-6661
- SOMERSET, WICOMICO & WORCESTER COUNTIES
410-749-4357 • 410-641-4357
- WASHINGTON COUNTY
301-739-8975 • TTY 301-739-1012

Planning for Your Safety

- Leave your home if it is unsafe.
- Prepare an emergency get-away kit (cash, medications, important papers, keys, etc.) Keep it in a safe place where your abuser can't find it.
- Arrange a signal with a trusted neighbor, friend, or co-worker to let them know when you need help.
- Get medical attention if you have been injured.
- Get a Protection Order from the court.



Where to Get Help

- Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
1-800-MD-HELPS
(1-800-634-3577)
301-352-4574 • FAX 301-809-0422
e-mail: info@mnadv.org • www.mnadv.org
6911 Laurel Bowie Road, Suite 309, Bowie, MD 20715
- Maryland Department of Human Resources
(for Adult Protective Services and other information)
1-800-91-PREVENT
(1-800-917-7383)
- Your Local Domestic Violence Program
(listed on the back of this brochure.)
- Call 911 in an Emergency

Forms of Abuse in Later Life

Physical abuse – hitting, kicking, pushing, beating, slapping, spitting, choking, punching, burning, restraining

Sexual abuse – forcing the victim to perform unwanted sexual activities, degrading treatment

Emotional abuse – making humiliating remarks, name-calling, mocking, yelling, blaming, swearing, interrupting, threatening, harming pets, destroying personal property, withholding affection, not respecting the victim's feelings, rights and opinions

Financial abuse – stealing money or property, using money as a way to maintain control

Neglect – withholding or failing to provide food, water, assistive devices, shelter, clothing, personal care, medical treatment

Possible Signs of Abuse

- Repeated "accidental injuries"
- Injuries that do not match the account of what happened
- Statements about being afraid
- Vague, chronic complaints
- Missed medical appointments
- Signs of depression
- Limited or no social contact outside of the abusive relationship
- References to the other person's anger or temper
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts

Assisting the Victim



- Believe the victim and offer hope and support.
- Explain that abuse can happen to anyone at any age.

■ Explain that abuse does not have to include violence.

■ Refer them to their local domestic violence program. If the victim is a vulnerable adult, contact Adult Protective Services.

Questions to Ask....

- How are things going with your spouse/partner/family member?
- Are you getting to see your friends?
- Has anyone made you feel afraid or threatened?
- Does anyone threaten you or force you to do things you don't want to do?
- Have you ever been hurt by someone close to you?
- Have you ever been forced into sexual acts you did not wish to do? Is this going on now?



Always speak to the victim first and alone.

Tips for Professionals Working with Older Victims

Domestic abuse is ongoing intentional behavior that stops victims from doing what they wish or forces them to behave against their will. It is not an isolated incident of abuse.

Abusers may use a range of tactics to maintain control, such as threats of institutionalization, denial of access to medical care or assistive devices, or isolation from family and friends. They may demand that victims continue to take care of them and the household, or that they sign over all financial resources.

Domestic abuse happens to older adults who are physically and mentally healthy as well as "vulnerable adults" who lack the physical and mental ability to care for themselves.

Not all abuse of older adults is domestic abuse. In some cases, medical or mental health problems may trigger violent behavior from the abuser. In other cases, attempts to help an older adult may lead to unintentional injury, or the stress of caregiving may lead to episodic abuse, sometimes referred to as "caregiver stress." These situations should not be confused with domestic abuse.

To focus on victim safety and avoid colluding with the abuser, assume it is a case of power and control until proven otherwise. Recognizing and accurately assessing domestic abuse is critically important for appropriate intervention.