

Indicators

There are many signs an older woman may be the victim of domestic violence or family violence. These include:

- The granting of a Power of Attorney under unusual circumstances
- Significant or sudden withdrawal of money from bank accounts
- Dismissal of physical injuries, anxiety or depression as 'age related' -"She's getting old"
- Lack of adequate medications and other health supports
- Anxiety around their spouse/partner or abusive family member
- Reluctance to seek assistance
- Substance abuse
- Isolation

No matter what age a person is they have a right to protection from physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse.

They also have a right to safety and security and to participate in decision making regarding their well being.

If you are an older women or know an older woman who is being abused it is important to know that help and support is available. Things you can do:

- Talk to someone you can trust about what is happening
- Seek legal / financial advice
- Apply for a Protection Order
- Seek the support of a professional counselor

Section 5 of the Family Protection Act, 2013 defines Domestic violence as any behavior used by one partner in an intimate or family relationship against the other which causes

- physical,
- sexual or
- Emotional or psychological damage or
- Damage of property
- to live in fear.

The threat of doing physical or sexual harm or to damage property is also an offence .

The act of stalking as well as harassment by phone, email, texts and physically being followed is also an offence.

You can apply to the Court for Protection from the offender and receive an Interim Protection Order (IPO) which can last up to 1 month and be further extended.

If the offender has received an IPO and has breached it, he can be fined for up to \$10,000.00 or for 3 years.

Contact CFC for further information .

IF YOU NEED HELP

A directory is readily available at the website of www.meritoksave.org or contact us to get a copy .



Coalition For Change PNG Inc.

Violence Against Older Women

It DOES Happen

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Violence Against Older Women—It Does Happen

It is a sad fact that many older women experience domestic violence or family violence from their spouses, partners, their family or caregivers. The abuse may take the form of:

Fear: Is the most powerful way someone may control another person. Fear can be created by looks, gestures, destruction of property, possession of weapons or any other behaviour which can be used to intimidate.

Physical Violence: Behaviours range from hitting, shoving, kicking, bruising to homicide. Physical abuse also includes neglecting to provide for basic needs such as food, hygienic living conditions and health care.

Sexual Abuse: Includes unwanted touching, humiliating sexual comments, indecent acts and forced sexual intercourse.

Emotional Abuse: Includes name calling, put downs, threats, mind games and any other behaviour which undermines her confidence and well being.

Financial Abuse: Includes misusing or illegally using her property, possessions or money, withholding money, applying pressure to sign over money or assets or misusing a Power of Attorney.

Social Abuse: Includes denial of social contacts including friends and other family members.

Many older women have lived with the same partner for many years and the abuse may have been occurring since they were first married or commenced living together.

Some other older women also experience abuse from other family members.

The abuse may be seen like a 'normal' part of family life.

For many other women, violence and abuse enters their lives in later years.

*No matter how long the abuse has been occurring the use of Violence **Is NEVER OK.***

It is not the victim's fault that they are being abuses nor is it their responsibility to stop the violence.

They may be starting a new relationship following a death or divorce.

Their previous relationship/s may not have been abusive and they may find themselves the victim of domestic violence for the first time, in later years.

There are many reasons older women may find it difficult or impossible to leave an abusive partner or family member.

Many older women, because of generational values may consider what's happening to them normal, because of how they were raised and what was considered acceptable "back then."

She may be embarrassed or ashamed to disclose the abuse. Due to life circumstances specific to the aging population, set of obstacles and concerns not encountered by younger women.

Older women is often well hidden, has been ongoing for many years and many may not call their experiences as domestic or family violence:

Fear: They may be afraid of the consequences of intervention including, retaliation, appearing in court, leaving home, being placed in a home, divorce, becoming estranged from friends and other family members including grandchildren, and starting over.

Loss of Security: They may be physically, socially and financially dependent on the abusive partner / family member and are worried for the future.

Lack of Awareness: They may have lack of awareness of their rights and services available.

Medical Condition: Some older women may have a physical or mental disability which could make it more difficult for them to access support. This is further exacerbated if their abusing partner/ family member is also their career.

Language & Cultural Barriers: Women from culturally diverse backgrounds face many added barriers including racism and discrimination.