

1

Domestic Violence in Later Life

CANDACE J. HEISLER, JD

C. Heisler Training Materials, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Domestic Violence Occurs Across The Lifespan



C. Heisler Training Materials, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Understanding the Issues

- ▶ Largely invisible population
- ▶ Caught between systems
 - ▶ Domestic Violence
 - ▶ Aging Services, including APS
- ▶ Different approaches and philosophies
 - ▶ Different services and resources
- ▶ Systems may not work together or know how to talk to each other
- ▶ Critical role of health care

C. Heisler Training Materials, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Caught Between Systems

4

- ▶ Are victims battered women or abused elders?
 - ▶ Historically, seen as one or the other, not both
- ▶ Victims may benefit from resources in both fields
 - ▶ What if systems do not coordinate?
 - ▶ What if systems do not trust each other?
 - ▶ What if system defines problem in own terms exclusively?

C. Russell Parry © November 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Health Care Reporting

5

- ▶ Only a minority of health care providers routinely ask about abuse, although asking people about abuse helps detect it and identify it at an earlier stage
 - ▶ Cooper and Livingston (2014)
- ▶ Very low rates of reporting of elder abuse by medical professionals, especially doctors
 - ▶ Dong, X., Lachs, MS, Tinetti, ME (2002)
 - ▶ Teaster PB, Dugar TA, Mendiondo MS, et al. (2007)
 - ▶ Blakely & Dolan (2003)

C. Russell Parry © November 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Health Care Providers

6

- ▶ May be the only outsider patient will confide in or see
 - ▶ Importance of providing safe opportunity to disclose
- ▶ May be better informed about IPV in younger persons than in older adults
- ▶ May not think of role and remedies for IPV with older patient
- ▶ Opportunity to provide resources
- ▶ Opportunity to enhance safety
- ▶ Value of interdisciplinary response

C. Russell Parry © November 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Extent of DV in Later Life

7

- ▶ Frequent, costly, and damaging
- ▶ Several Studies
 - ▶ Fisher and Regan, 2006—47% had experienced at least one form of abuse since age 55
 - ▶ Bonomi et al (2007)— 26% had experienced IPV during lifetime
 - ▶ Rosay and Mulford (2017)—14% of elders suffered abuse in the prior year

C. Michael Parry, M.A., Ph.D., 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Video Clip

8



C. Michael Parry, M.A., Ph.D., 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Definitions

9

- ▶ Behavioral, not legal, definitions
- ▶ Focuses on abuser tactics and their impact

C. Michael Parry, M.A., Ph.D., 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Domestic Violence

10

- ▶ A pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as financial coercion, that a person uses against an intimate partner and others in the household

C. Harriet Parnoy, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Domestic Violence

11

- ▶ Not a single act
- ▶ Not a momentary loss of control
- ▶ Not just anger
- ▶ Tactics used in various combinations to control the relationship
 - ▶ Some criminal acts, many are not

C. Harriet Parnoy, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Tactics

12

- ▶ Violence is physical, sexual, and often both
 - ▶ In late life domestic violence, victim and/or suspect frailty may result in less current violence
- ▶ Vandalism—symbolic violence
- ▶ Animal abuse
- ▶ Stalking

C. Harriet Parnoy, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

If DV Involves Grand/Parents and Grand/Children

13

Copyright © 2019 All Rights Reserved

- ▶ "Always a parent"—natural bond and need to protect
- ▶ Guilt, shame, embarrassment
- ▶ Protect the child rather than considering personal safety
 - ▶ Want contact with children and grandchildren
 - ▶ Fear child will be homeless if turned away
- ▶ Children may have substance abuse, mental health problems, criminal history
- ▶ May be afraid of child (more abuse, damage to property or harm to pets)

When the Victim is in a Nursing Facility

14

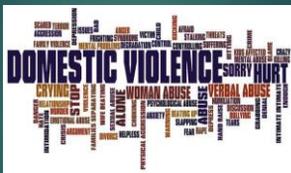
Copyright © 2019 All Rights Reserved

- ▶ DV will follow the victim, wherever they are
- ▶ Visits, home visits
- ▶ More potential witnesses—staff, other patients, visitors
- ▶ Need for staff vigilance
- ▶ Victim safety
 - ▶ Monitored visits
 - ▶ Move victim and place under false name
 - ▶ Make sure information is not leaked
 - ▶ Know HIPAA exceptions when DV suspected
 - ▶ Court order to exclude abusive spouse or family member

Domestic Violence in Later Life: Key Issues

15

Copyright © 2019 All Rights Reserved



Victims/Survivors

16

- ▶ Victims are primarily female
 - ▶ Females are two-thirds; males are one-third (estimated)
- ▶ Severely underreported as compared to DV in younger life
- ▶ Victims across a continuum of abilities
 - ▶ Some independent, others have medical and cognitive conditions
 - ▶ Conditions may be lifelong (or nearly life long) or developed in later life
 - ▶ Some may be referred to APS; many are not

C. Hunter Peery, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Perpetrators

17

- ▶ Long term spouses and intimate partners
 - ▶ DV Grown Old
- ▶ New Relationship
- ▶ Family members and trusted others
- ▶ "Reverse" DV

C. Hunter Peery, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Late Life Domestic Violence

18

- ▶ Organic based violence
 - Often confused with DV
 - Person cannot control behavior
 - Non-targeted violence
 - Role of health care system
 - Can be both long term DV and organic based violence

C. Hunter Peery, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Working With Older Victims and Survivors

19



© National Training Institute, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Barriers to Safety

20

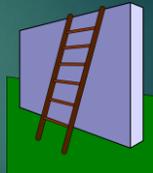
- ▶ Why do victims/survivors not report, recant, take their abuser's side, blame themselves, minimize the abuse, and/or stay with or return to their abusers?

© National Training Institute, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Barriers to Safety

21

- ▶ Systemic barriers
- ▶ Family barriers
- ▶ Cultural barriers
- ▶ Religious barriers
- ▶ Other



© National Training Institute, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Older Victims/Survivors

22

- ▶ Consider
 - ▶ If sought help decades ago, response?
 - ▶ Will they be believed by responders?
 - ▶ Is abuse minimized if an older abuser or if victim did not leave previously?
 - ▶ Do older victims/survivors identify with "domestic violence"?
 - ▶ DV Programs—do they serve older victims? Male victims? Older victims with physical or cognitive limitations?
 - ▶ Will leaving jeopardize health care benefits or income sources (e.g., pension)?

© National Training Institute, 2019. All rights reserved.

Older Victims

23

- ▶ Older victims are strong and resilient; have survived many challenging situations
- ▶ Older victims can make changes in their lives
- ▶ The existence of age-related conditions will affect their perception of their available choices
- ▶ Socialized with traditional attitudes and values, especially gender roles, marriage and family
- ▶ Privacy about family matters and strong commitment to family loyalty and solidarity

© National Training Institute, 2019. All rights reserved.

Understanding the Roles of APS and DV Advocates

24

- ▶ Approach
- ▶ Role
- ▶ Guiding Principles

© National Training Institute, 2019. All rights reserved.

APS Approach: Investigate Reports of Suspected Abuse

25

- ▶ Independent **investigations**
- ▶ Confidential privileged relationships, subject to laws imposing limitations
- ▶ May not use empowerment model
- ▶ Time constraints per code/ policy (Short term) involvement vs open ended (DV)
- ▶ Knowledge of aging/disability population
- ▶ Environmental focus
- ▶ Crisis based—can be similar for DV

© Michael Perry, MD, MPH, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Working with Clients to Enhance Safety Understanding The DV Approach

26

- ▶ Empowerment Model
- ▶ Victim/Client-Centered and Directed
 - ▶ Do not tell client what to do; non-judgmental; not an investigation
 - ▶ Victim knows what is best in situation based on experience, values, beliefs
 - ▶ Victim has to live with consequences

© Michael Perry, MD, MPH, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

DV Approach: Believe the Client-2

27

- ▶ Strengths-based
 - ▶ Problem-solving focus
 - ▶ Recognizes that clients are strong and resilient and able to make/accept changes
 - ▶ Victims have lived with this for a long time and have developed coping strategies
 - ▶ What have you tried? What worked? What has not?
 - ▶ Who can you call if you need help?

© Michael Perry, MD, MPH, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Both Approaches

28

- ▶ Share focus on victim/client/survivor safety
- ▶ Victim may be best served when systems work together on behalf of the client



© Ruth Perry, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Safety Planning

29

- ▶ May have different meanings for APS and DV
 - ▶ Safety is served when both working collaboratively
 - ▶ Both approaches are valuable
 - ▶ Cross training and MOUs
 - ▶ APS does not have same level of confidentiality as DV advocates so it may be preferable to have safety planning done by DV advocates where victim's confidences are more protected from disclosure

© Ruth Perry, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Ruth: DV Safety Planning

30



© Ruth Perry, Mowbray, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Building a Community Response to Abuse in Later Life: OVW Abuse in Later Life Program

31

- Approximately 8 – 9 communities a year
- \$400,000 for 3 years
- Address elder abuse by:
 - Providing training and cross training
 - Creating or enhancing a CCR team
 - Developing victim services

© Russell Berkey, November 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Required MOU Partners

32

- Law enforcement
- Prosecutors' office
- Adult protective services/aging network
- Domestic violence/sexual assault victim services

© Russell Berkey, November 2019. All Rights Reserved.

OVW Abuse in Later Life Program Grantees

33



© Russell Berkey, November 2019. All Rights Reserved.

OVW Abuse in Later Life Program

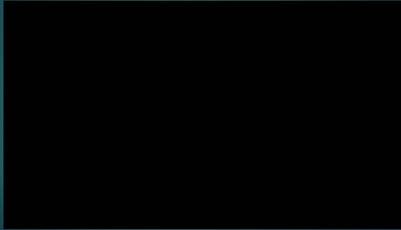
34

- ▶ National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL): www.ncall.us
- ▶ Office on Violence Against Women: www.ovw.doj.gov

C. Heisler, Ph.D., University of Missouri, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

It Can Work--Sam, Pat, and Lois

35



C. Heisler, Ph.D., University of Missouri, 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Questions?

36

- ▶ Thank You!
- ▶ Candace Heisler
- ▶ cjheisler@aol.com

C. Heisler, Ph.D., University of Missouri, 2019. All Rights Reserved.
