ANTICIPATE:

Identifying Victim Strengths and Planning for Safety Concerns

Participant Handouts

THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE
ON ABUSE IN LATER LIFE (NCALL),
A Project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV) is a statewide membership organization of domestic abuse programs, formerly battered women, and other individuals who have joined together to speak with one voice against domestic abuse. As a statewide resource center on domestic violence, we offer such services as:

- Training and technical assistance to domestic abuse programs;
- A quarterly education journal;
- Forums for the involvement of battered women;
- Networking and support for programs for battered women and professionals in related fields;
- Training for professionals in legal, medical, social service, child welfare, housing, education, aging, and mental health fields, and for employers throughout Wisconsin;
- Technical legal assistance for attorneys, legal advocates, prosecutors and public defenders, health workers, elder abuse professionals, disability and child welfare professionals, and limited funds for victims to acquire direct legal assistance.

The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) is a project of WCADV. NCALL's mission is: to eliminate abuse of older adults and people with disabilities by family members and caregivers by challenging beliefs, policies, practices and systems that allow abuse to occur; and to improve safety, services and support to victims through advocacy and education.

Additional Information on Abuse in Later Life

NCALL has a variety of materials available on abuse in later life including a resource list, journal articles, manuals, booklets, a video,and a national directory of programs. For more information about abuse in later life or other interactive training exercises, contact:

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Training Goals

1. Participants will enhance the skills needed to create a safety plan with older victims and people with disabilities.

2. Participants will learn about other resources available from a variety of systems in their community. Likewise, participants will begin to identify service gaps.

3. Participants will have the opportunity to build or enhance working relationships with professionals from other disciplines in their community.

Agenda

Introduction	20 minutes
Dynamics of abuse	15 minutes
What is safety planning?	15 minutes
Interactive exercise	30 - 60 minutes
Questions/answers and conclusion	10 minutes

Target Population For Today's Training

Older victims (50+) and
adults with disabilities (18+)

Women and men

Victims in an ongoing, trusted relationship with their abuser

Forms of abuse include physical, sexual, emotional and financial exploitation.

> It is important to recognize that often these forms of abuse are used in combination. Also, most often abusers are using these tactics to get what they want. They feel a sense of entitlement to use these methods to control, dominate or punish their victims.
>
> Consider the possibility of sexual abuse/assault with any victim, even if he or she does not disclose such abuse. Research and anecdotal evidence suggest that people with disabilities are at a high risk of being sexually assaulted and sexual abuse/assault also occurs later in life.

Abuse in Later Life Wheel

Created by the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), a project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV)
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This diagram adapted from the Power and Control/Equality wheels developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN

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Tactics Used by Abusers

PHYSICAL ABUSE
- Slaps, hits, punches
- Throws things
- Burns
- Chokes
- Breaks bones
- Creates Hazards
- Bumps and/or trips
- Forces unwanted physical activity
- Pinches, pulls hair & twists limbs
- Restrains

SEXUAL ABUSE
- Makes demeaning remarks about intimate body parts
- Is rough with intimate body parts during care giving
- Takes advantage of physical or mental illness to engage in sex
- Forces sex acts that make victim feel uncomfortable and/or against victim's wishes
- Forces victim to watch pornography on television and/or computer

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE
- Withholds affection
- Engages in crazy-making behavior
- Publicly humiliates or behaves in a condescending manner

EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- Humiliates, demeans, ridicules
- Yells, insults, calls names
- Degrades, blames
- Uses silence or profanity

THREATENING
- Threatens to leave and never see elder again
- Threatens to divorce or not divorce
- Threatens to commit suicide
- Threatens to institutionalize
- Abuses or kills pet or prized livestock
- Destroys or takes property
- Displays or threatens with weapons

TARGETING VULNERABILITIES
- Takes or moves walker, wheelchair, glasses, dentures
- Takes advantage of confusion
- Makes victim miss medical appointments

NEGLECTING
- Denies or creates long waits for food, heat, care or medication
- Does not report medical problems
- Understands but fails to follow medical, therapy or safety recommendations
- Refuses to dress or dresses inappropriately

DENIES ACCESS TO SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS/EVENTS
- Denies access to ceremonial traditions or church
- Ignores religious traditions
- Prevents from practicing traditional ceremonies/events

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WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Abuse of People with Developmental Disabilities by a Caregiver

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What is Safety Planning?

Safety planning is a process where a helper and a victim jointly create a plan to enhance safety. The safety plan is victim driven and centered. It is based on the victim's goals, not the professional's opinions.

Abusers often isolate victims and do not allow them to make their own decisions. Safety planning is a process that restores power and control to victims over their lives as they make decisions about how to enhance their safety. A good safety planning process provides the victim with information and an array of options to choose from. Then the victim decides whether to stay with the abuser or leave, and how to remain as safe as possible, no matter what decision the victim makes.

Safety plans include:

- **PREVENTION STRATEGIES:** Preventing future incidents of abuse (e.g., going to shelter or moving to another residence, obtaining a restraining/protective order, hiding/disarming weapons, changing schedules and routes to avoid being found).

- **PROTECTION STRATEGIES:** Discussing methods victims can use to protect themselves during an abusive or violent incident (e.g., having an escape route, or having victim seek shelter in a room where a door can be locked, with a working phone available or where weapons are not present).

- **NOTIFICATION STRATEGIES:** Developing methods for seeking help in a crisis situation (e.g., cell phones, emergency numbers readily available, life lines, security systems, towel in the window, code words with friends/family/neighbors).

- **REFERRAL/SERVICES:** Recognizing and utilizing services that can offer assistance (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, adult protective services, criminal justice, aging and disability network, faith and community organizations, etc.).

- **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:** Considering methods of emotional support and ways to become less isolated (e.g., music, exercise, yoga, reading positive or spiritual materials, hobbies, art, friends, support groups, and other community activities).

Recognize that the victim may want to stay with the abuser, or may be in the process of leaving or returning to the abuser, or may have left and ended the relationship. In each of these situations, the five components of safety planning listed above are crucial.

For Victims Who Have Left or Are Leaving

For victims who are leaving or who have left, additional issues will need to be considered.

Where Will The Victim Live?

- Can the person remain in his or her home safely?
- Is there an emergency shelter in the community?
- Are friends or family an option?
- What about church groups or other organizations?
- Where does the person want to live after the immediate crisis?

Money

- Can the person get money for the short term?
- Consider contacting Adult Protective Services (APS) for information about financial programs to help the person.

Health

- What health related items (e.g., medications, glasses, walker, hearing aids etc.) will the victim need to live without the abuser?
- Who is the victim's primary health care provider? Have the victim consider talking with a health care provider about the abuse to get help with health issues and possible documentation. In most states, health care providers are mandatory reporters, so discuss with the victim if they are comfortable with reporting.
- Is respite care available through social services?

Who Else Is Affected By The Abuse?

- Who can help with children, grandchildren or other persons living with the victim?
- Can a friend or family member care for pets or livestock if the person can't take them along? (If no, contact your local domestic violence programs. There may be a "safe haven for pets" program in your community.)

Legal

- Has the abuser been arrested? If yes, what support does the victim need?
- Does the victim want a protective or restraining order? You can contact your local domestic abuse program or APS for help with restraining/protective orders.
- Are there immigration issues? You can contact a local domestic abuse program or the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services for more information.

Safety Planning Steps

1. Build rapport and listen to the victim.
2. Learn about what the victim fears, both from the abuser and the consequences of any action that might be taken.
3. Ask what the victim wants to do and why. Learning why or the motivation behind the victim's decisions can help a worker understand the victim's goals. The worker may be able to suggest other options or methods of reaching the same goal. For example, the victim may state she does not want to leave the abuser. If the worker asks why, she may find that the victim is afraid to leave her three cats behind. The worker can let the victim know about "safe haven" programs for pets to give the victim more options.
4. Think creatively together about a variety of options and ideas.
5. Build a safety plan that is victim centered.

Keep in mind that safety planning is more than referring the victim to agencies for services. It also involves problem solving in advance what a victim can do during and after a crisis situation.

Safety Planning Is Not:

- Telling the victim what to do. (e.g., "I think you should go to a shelter.")
- Helping a victim accomplish your goals for his or her safety. (e.g. "Let's call the police and make a report.")
- Simply referring the victim to local agencies. (e.g., "Here's a list of agencies you can call. Let me know if you need other help.")
- Ignoring cultural, spiritual or generational values that influence the options the victim sees as available. (e.g., "I think your only choice here is to divorce him.")
- Deciding to talk to the abuser or others who know the abuser.
- Recommending strategies that could increase the risk for the victim. (e.g., purchasing a gun or weapon, attending couples counseling, "just standing up to him.")
- Blaming the victim if he or she does not follow the safety plan and experiences further abuse.

Directions for Safety Planning Exercise

Each participant/dyad is assigned (or chooses) one of the eight case scenarios on the grid, which can be found on pages 11 and 12 in this handout. The participant/dyad gets the pile of "Strength" cards for the victim. Place the cards face down.

Keep in mind that you are an advocate or worker who provides some direct services to the victim, including safety planning. Use the discussion guide included in these materials to frame your discussion.

One person or dyad starts by telling the group about the victim and abuser described on the grid. Remind the participants of the victim's goals. Next draw 4 cards; one from each of first 4 piles.

- **STRENGTH CARD #1**

  Draw one card. This card describes one of the victim's strengths. Read the card to the group.

- **CONSIDER IF THE VICTIM #2**

  Draw a "Consider If The Victim" card from the pile. Read this card to the group. The victim retains these characteristics for the rest of the exercise.

- **LIFE HAPPENS #3**

  Draw a "Life Happens" card. Read the card to the group. Consider that this has happened to your victim. How would this impact safety planning process? Keep this card for the entire exercise.

- **SAFETY PLANNING #4**

  Draw a "Safety Planning" card. Read the card to the group. Using the timer, take 3 minutes or less to have all participants at the table list potential safety planning strategies for the victim in this circumstance. Work the scenario as a multidisciplinary team would with everyone giving input. Consider all five categories of strategies discussed earlier in the workshop.

- **SAFETY PLANNING DISCUSSION CARD #5**

  After listing safety planning options or when the timer is done, the participant draws a "Safety Planning Discussion" card. Read the question and discuss for 3 minutes (using the timer) or less.

  The turn is done. The next participant/team draws 4 cards.

Do your best to make the cards work for the case scenario. Not every card may work perfectly, but victim's stories are seldom neat. Focus on coming up with creative ideas for safety planning and sharing resources from your system.

Case Scenarios for Safety Planning Exercise

Name of victim (age)	Race/ Religion of victim	Name of abuser (age)	Forms of abuse	What victim wants to happen	Other
Francis (63)	Caucasian Roman Catholic	Carl (65) Husband for 43 years	Physical, sexual and emotional	Francis wants to visit 87-year-old mother (who is ill) without fighting about it with Carl. She wants Carl to be nice. She wants to remain married.	Francis and Carl live in a rural community.
Lydia (83)	African American Baptist	Lionel (35) Grandson living with Lydia for 18 months	Financial exploitation and has hit Lydia more than once.	Lydia wants to remain in her home and for you to get help for her grandson.	Lydia lives in her own home. She is frail and has arthritis.
Neddie (47)	Hispanic	Denise (45) Partner for 12 yrs	Emotional abuse and refused to allow Neddie to go to physical therapy. Isolates.	Neddie wants to go to physical therapy.	Nine months ago Neddie was in a car accident. She has spinal damage and uses a wheelchair.
Timothy (24)	Caucasian	Ben (22) Caregiver for 1 year	Financial exploitation and emotional abuse.	Timothy wants Ben to be his friend. He doesn't want to live with his family or in a group home.	Timothy has a moderate developmental disabilty. Ben does not work for a personal care agency.

Name of victim (age)	Race/ Religion of victim	Name of abuser (age)	Forms of abuse	What victim wants to happen	Other
John (68)	Native American	Bill (42) Son	Financial exploitation, doesn't respect his father's traditional ways, and physically abuses him.	John wants Bill to stop drinking, and respect their heritage. John wants Bill to move into his own home.	John lives on a reservation. Bill moved in with John 3 years ago while he was getting a divorce. Bill is an alcoholic.
Shirley (72)	Caucasian	Bob (75) Husband for 3 years	Physical, sexual emotional, and financial	Shirley is not sure – some days she wants to stay with Bob and other days she wants to move in with her daughter.	Bob started being abusive right after they got married.
Anu (59)	Recent immigrant from Nepal with limited English	Steve (35) Son-in-law	Physical, lack of respect for culture, and isolates; treats as servant	Anu wants his daughter to be happy. He also wants to live on his own.	Anu moved from Nepal 6 months ago to live with his daughter and son-in-law. His daughter went to college in U.S. U.S. and met her husband there.
Elsie (93)	Caucasian Jewish	Ian (63) Adult son	Sexual abuse	Elsie wants the sexual abuse to stop. She wants her son to stay out of trouble and she wants to live at home, not in the nursing home.	Elsie lives in a nursing home. She is alert but needs help taking care of herself. Her son takes her to his home some weekends.

Discussion Guide

1. Start the discussion of each case by reminding all participants of the victim's goal. Avoid "fixing" the problem and offering only suggestions that are referrals to agencies. Try to come up with at least one example of each of the following strategies:

A. Prevention Strategies:

B. Protection Strategies:

C. Notification Strategies:

D. Referral/Services Options:

E. Emotional Support Strategies:

Use sample safety planning tools to generate additional ideas.

2. Allow all participants an opportunity to offer as many ideas as possible. Use the safety planning discussion time to answer the question on the card and evaluate the ideas generated by the group. Discuss the pros and cons of some of the ideas brought forward by participants. Evaluating the potential risk of some ideas will help all participants in their critical thinking about safety planning.