



Patrick Doherty

*ABUSE IN LATER LIFE EDUCATION SERIES FOR ADVOCATES:*  
**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR OLDER  
SURVIVORS**

Module 14

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life

2018

## Office on Violence Against Women Abuse in Later Life Program

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## As a Result of This Training, Participants Will Be Better Able to:

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- Identify why support groups are important for older survivors
- Apply survivor centered practices when planning & designing support group practices
- Develop an effective outreach plan to encourage attendance

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## Why Focus on Older Victims of Abuse



Gina Bower



Modeline Kasper

Elders who experienced abuse, even modest abuse, had a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been abused.

Dong X, Simon M, Mendes de Leon C, Fulmer T, Beck T, Hebert L, et al. (2009)

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Studies have shown that social support can reduce the effects of abuse, particularly in terms of depression and generalized symptoms of anxiety and poor health.

Acierno R, Henandez-Tejada M, Anetzberger G, Loew D, Muzzy W (2017)



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## Benefits of Support Group

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- Breaks isolation by providing social connections
- Promotes healing and recovery from trauma
- Prevents further abuse

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## Starting a Support Group

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Sue Hall Dreher  
Consultant  
Former Director, Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine

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## Planning

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- Talk to older survivors to determine interest
- Who will attend
- Find a safe and accessible location
- Determine facilitator(s)

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## Support Group Design

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- Therapy vs peer support
- Open or closed
- Determine if the group be for all genders or gender specific
- Determine how often the group will meet
- Provide time for check-in, educational component and opportunity to support each other
- Build on survivor's strengths

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## Encouraging Attendance

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## Effective Outreach

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- Name of support group
- Avoid language such as abuse, abuser, perpetrator
- Materials should be done in contrasting colors with larger font (14)
- Focus on safety
- Follow-up contact

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## Challenges

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- Mandatory reporting
- Assuring confidentiality
- Screening in instead of out

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## Survivors Stories

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**Survivors  
Share Their  
Support Group  
Experiences**

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## Special Appreciation

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Many thanks to Lois, Ruth, Lova, JoAnne, and Thelma for the courage to tell your story so others may benefit.

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2016

## Summary

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- Provide social connections to older survivors of abuse to assist with healing and safety for older survivors of abuse
- Practice survivor-centered practices when planning & designing your support
- Design an outreach plan to promote attendance and participation of older adults

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## Video Presenters

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- Sue Hall Dreher, Consultant, former Director of Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine
- Alice Ghareib, Director of the DOVES Program with the Area Agency on Aging in Arizona
- LaTrice Hogan, Consultant, former Director of the Milwaukee Women's Center in Wisconsin

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## Thank You

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- Special thanks to Terra Nova Films for the ongoing working partnership with NCALL and the beautiful video production
- [www.terranova.org](http://www.terranova.org)

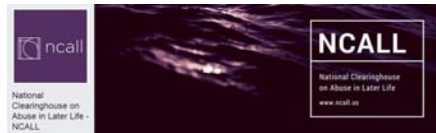


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## Staying Connected to NCALL and Other Advocates

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- Sign up for our enewsletter: <http://oi.vresp.com/?fid=03fcc93262>
- Join our listserv for advocates serving older survivors: [ncall@ncall.us](mailto:ncall@ncall.us)
- Join us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ncall.us](http://www.facebook.com/ncall.us)
- Join us on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/ncall\\_us](http://www.twitter.com/ncall_us)



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## National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

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National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life,  
a project of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin:  
(Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

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