

Abuse in Later Life Wheel



In 2006, NCALL adapted the Power and Control Wheel, developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN. Resource updated, April 2011.

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

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Tactics Used by Abusers

During 2005, NCALL staff asked facilitators of older abused women's support groups to have participants review the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Power and Control Wheel. Over 50 survivors from eight states responded. NCALL created this Abuse in Later Life Wheel from their input.

In addition to the tactics on the wheel, many offenders justify or minimize the abuse and deny that they are abusive. Perpetrators of abuse in later life may make comments like "she's just too difficult to care for" or "he abused me as a child" to blame the victim, or try to minimize the abuse by stating the victim bruises easily or injuries are the incidental result of providing care. The list below provides additional examples of some of the behaviors victims might experience under each tactic included on the wheel.

Physical Abuse

- Hits, chokes, burns, pinches, throws things
- Restrains elder to chair or bed

Sexual Abuse

- Sexually harms during care giving
- Forces sex acts
- Forces elder to watch pornography

Psychological Abuse

- Engages in crazy-making behavior
- Publicly humiliates

Emotional Abuse

- Yells, insults, calls names
- Degrades, blames

Targets Vulnerabilities and Neglects

- Takes or denies access to items needed for daily living
- Refuses transportation
- Denies food, heat, care, or medication
- Does not follow medical recommendations
- Refuses to dress or dresses inappropriately

Denies Access to Spiritual & Traditional Events

- Refuses transportation or access
- Destroys spiritual or traditional items of importance

Ridicules Personal and Cultural Values

- Disrespectful of cultural practices
- Ignores values when making decisions

Uses Family Members

- Misleads family members regarding condition of elder
- Excludes or denies access to family

Isolates

- Controls what elder does, who they see and what they do
- Denies access to phone or mail

Uses Privilege

- Speaks for elder at financial and medical appointments
- Makes all major decisions

Financial Exploits

- Steals money, titles, or possessions
- Abuses a power of attorney or guardianship

Threatens

- Threatens to leave or commit suicide
- Threatens to institutionalize
- Abuses or kills pet or prized livestock
- Displays or threatens with weapons