

Stereotyping victims of Domestic Abuse

1

MYTH: Young white women experiencing male physical violence, living in poverty and deprivation.

- FACT: 1 in 6 adults over 60 living in the community experience domestic abuse
- FACT: People over 60 account for 1 in 4 domestic homicides in the UK – Norfolk DARDR [here](#)
- FACT: Half of these people were killed by their adult children

Elder Abuse OR Domestic Abuse?

2

Although these overlap, if older people abuse is always framed as Elder Abuse, it can lead to a pathway through Adult Social Care.

If Domestic Abuse is recognised, older people can benefit from the DA support services available locally to them. Only 3% of people experiencing abuse over 60 were accessing an IDVA.

- Dedicated DA Professional to understand risks and needs
- Implement a safety plan to reduce risk factors
- Multi-agency working to increase safeguarding

Domestic Abuse and Older People

3

Abuse may be perpetrated by a partner, adult children or grandchildren. The Perpetrator may be in poor health and the person being abused may be their carer (vice-versa).

- Access to care agencies/social services may be being denied.
- Behaviour may be excused or may seem eager to please/seek approval of others.
- Long-term relationship may have ended through death or divorce, with limited experience of dating.
- Rural isolation is a big factor.
- Change in home ownership or access to own money/assets. Relying on others.
- Family/Partner/Carer always present.

Impact on the Older Person

4

The impact on older people may include:

- Change in personality – withdrawn, anxious
- Isolated and defensive attitude
- Doubting own memory and abilities
- Physical injuries or frequently unwell
- Fear of intervention and what could happen next
- Feelings of guilt/shame of family member

Barriers to reporting for Older People

5

- Systemic invisibility – not represented in DA services
- Long term abuse and dependency issues
- Generational attitudes about abuse may make it hard to identify
- Increased risk of adult family abuse
- Services not always meeting the needs of older people
- Better coordination between services
- Be proactive, make it a routine enquiry, use a trauma informed approach, record conversations verbatim (questions/answers), what impact is it having, what changes are observed (diet, finances, medication, relationships, carer, social activities).

The Law

6

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides a statutory definition of Domestic Abuse “aged 16 or over” and a Plan to tackle it.
- DA Protection Notice and Protection Orders are available.
- Local Authorities have a duty to provide accommodation-based support to victims/survivors.
- The creation of new offences, including post-separation abuse.

Further Information

7

- Safelives Older People and Domestic Abuse [here](#) and [here](#)
- NIDAS [link](#) and NIDAS Champions - [link](#)
- Norfolk & Suffolk Victim Care [link](#)
- Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board [here](#) and [here](#)
- Age UK [link](#) and Hourglass [link](#)
- Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance 2022 [link](#) and Factsheet [here](#)