



The Intersection of Abuse and Disability

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Thank you to...

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About Us

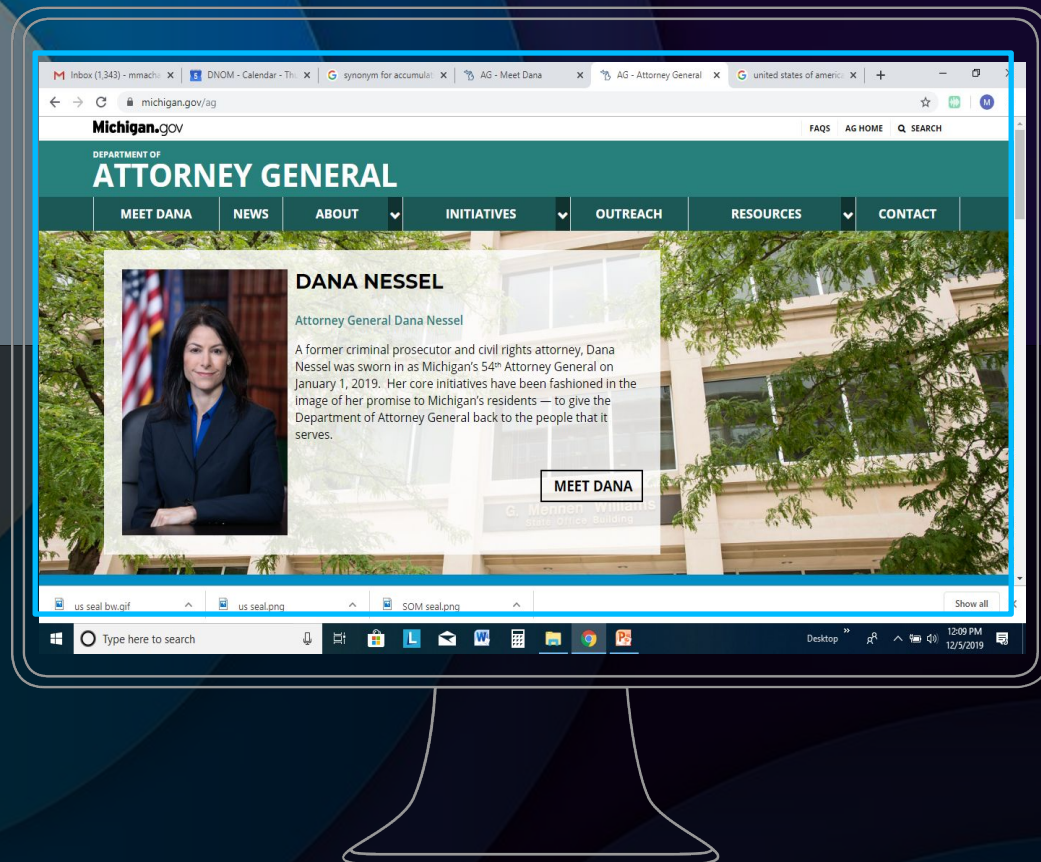
Disability Network Oakland and Macomb is a private, non-profit, non-residential organization that is run by and for people with disabilities. Our mission is inclusion for all by breaking down barriers and opening paths towards independence and personal choice through resources, advocacy, information, support, and education.



Problem

- Elder abuse is a crime that oftentimes go unreported and unprosecuted.
- Adults who are considered vulnerable are more likely than their peers to experience abuse.
- Community members are unsure how to help survivors of abuse.

Definitions



Elder abuse is an intentional act, or failure to act, by a caregiver or another person in a relationship involving an expectation of trust that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult. (An older adult is defined as someone age 60 or older.) (CDC, 2018)

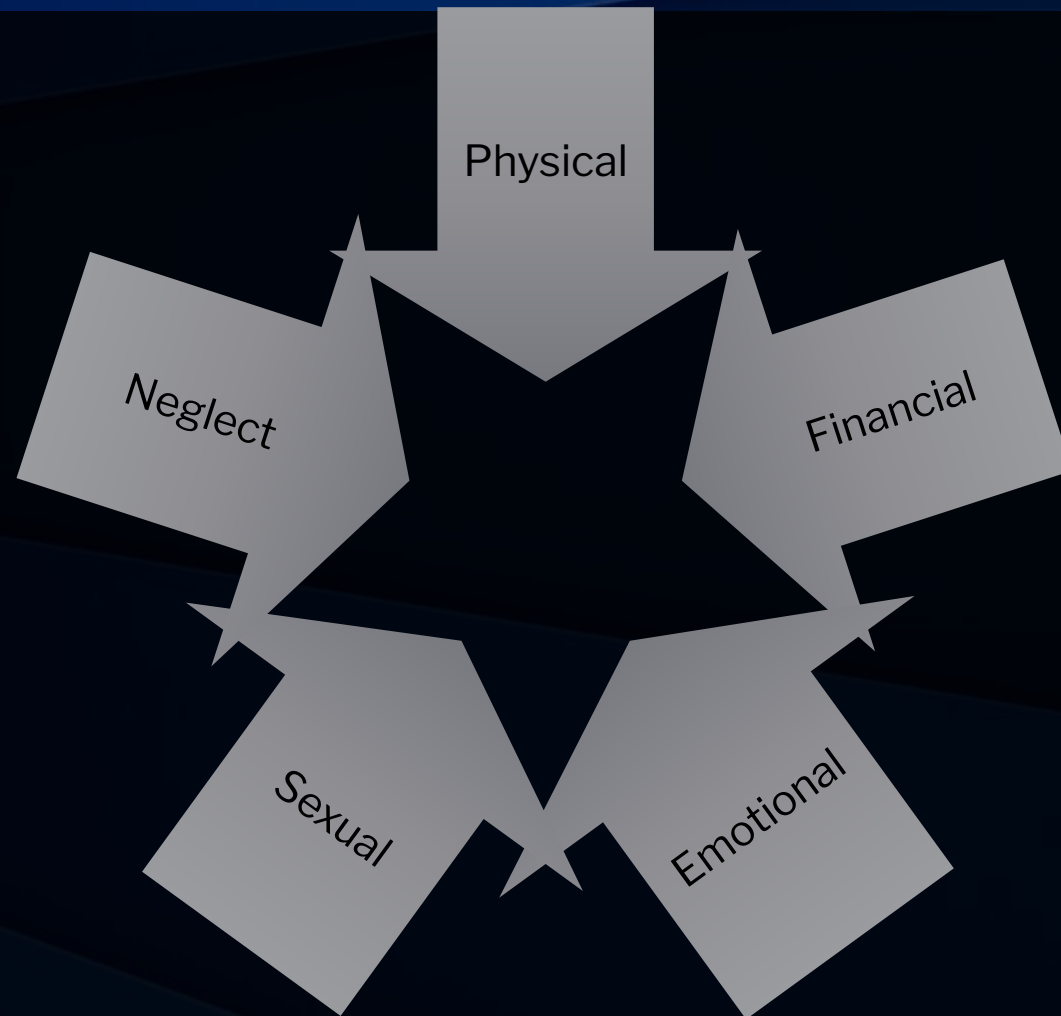


“Abuse” means harm or threatened harm to an adult's health or welfare caused by another person. (Michigan Legislative Act 400.11 The Social Welfare Act)



How to Spot Abuse

How did I get here?



Abuse

Common Behavioral Signs

Common Signs

Withdrawal

Isolation

Confusion

Disorientation

Anger

Helplessness

Depression

Memory Loss

Fear

Anxiety

Nervousness



The Abuse Research

Abuse and Disability

Disability status is a risk factor for experiencing abuse.

It is estimated that the rates of violence are highest in individuals with mental health diagnoses.

1. 12.8%

1. Rate of disability in all adults in the United States (Michigan is higher at 14.5%)

2. 30%

1. Adults with disabilities who are reliant on personal assistance report at least one type of abuse
 1. 55% of men experience abuse *after acquiring* a disability

3. 26%-90%

1. *lifetime* prevalence of IPV against adult **women with disabilities** (28.7%-86.7% for men with disabilities)

4. 30%

1. Adult **women** of all ages who have experienced sexual abuse *in addition* to another form of abuse

What are some risk factors for abuse?

- Previous trauma in the person's life
- Previous negative experience reaching out for help
- Identifying as LGBT
- Low social support
- Having dementia/cognitive impairment
- Lower income or poverty
- Living with a large number of household members

Impact of Abuse

The impact is not always financial.



Housing



Sense of Safety

Fear



Shame

Love for abuser
Lack of or impaired understanding



**Faith
Community**



Mental Health

Acceptance of abuse
as normal



Anger

Other Impacts

There are many impacts of abuse for our elder community members. Many of the impacts are related to one another.

\$2.9bil
Yearly

Financial Abuse

In the United States, financial abuse is the most commonly reported type of abuse. (NCOA, 2011)

\$5.3bil
Yearly

Physical Abuse

Attending to emergency care needs because of physical abuse costs us approximately \$5.3 billion each year.

60%
Perpetrator
s

Family

Family members tend to be the perpetrators of abuse. It is likely that 60% is on the low end of family members. (Peterson et al., 2014)

1 in 3
NH Staff

Emotional Abuse

Worldwide, nursing home staff report emotional (psychological) abuse, and they are doing so approximately 33% of the time. (WHO, 2018)

65%
LGBT

Identity

65% of LGB respondents have experienced abuse of some kind.

What encourages someone stay in an abusive relationship?

- Fear of being killed or seriously injured if they leave
- Lack of awareness of services or lack of access to services
- Fear of being left alone or losing independence
- Fear of deportation

More factors that encourage someone stay

- Resources are not culturally sensitive
- Shelter-specific factors
- Ending the relationship may also mean the person may have to leave their faith community
- Have a disability and services are not accessible

Easier said than done to involve others...why?

Trust your gut.

- It's not nice to cast suspicion.
- It's awkward to bring it up.
- What if I'm wrong?
- What if I make it worse?
- What if they don't believe me?
- I don't want to get anybody in trouble.
- I don't want anyone to lose their job.
- Nothing will come of it.



What Can I Do?

Team

In addition to collaborating with other agencies who help survivors of elder abuse, there is a wide net that needs to be in place to successfully recover from abuse.



Melissa

Community Education Facilitator

I can help raise awareness about situations that may involve elder abuse. I can also help connect people with elder abuse resources.



You

Social Worker? Neighbor?

You can help institute and maintain the social norm that abuse is not tolerated in your community. You can also support those who disclose abuse.



Family

Family Member

You may be in a unique position to witness the internal dynamics brewing to create risky situations. You can provide context and support for the rest of the family.

Education

What is the current state of ID/DD in the U.S.?

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db291.htm?fbclid=IwAR0MwhWDgawPUub4zG6mNEkUiRqFBd1NWECTYC5Z2eea9qInIGwsqAS0TEw>

What are ways to increase knowledge about sex for individuals with ID/DD?

<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/09/572929725/for-some-with-intellectual-disabilities-ending-abuse-starts-with-sex-ed>

What should be happening at a trial?

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practiceonline/child_law_practice/vol_32/august-2013/litigating-sexual-abuse-cases-for-deaf-children/

Resources

The following are some suggestions for resources.

Let's start here...

- Accept that the person is telling the truth.
- Accept that the person is the expert on their lives.

Then try...

- Just hearing the person.
- Ombudsman, if in a long-term care setting
- Affirmations (248-398-7105)
- Resource Guide (SAGE Metro Detroit)
- Sagemetrodetroit.org

Regional Resources

The professionals at these organizations either have training to help someone escape or repair his or her life OR know of resources that could be helpful to the survivor.

Supports

- Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS)
- Income and other support services (SSA) (1-800-772-1213)
- Faith community
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

Financial

- Financial institutions
- Successful Aging Through Financial Empowerment (SAFE) (313-664-2608)
- U.S. Postal Service Investigators (1-877-876-8455, press option “4” to report it)

More Regional Resources

APS 855-444-3911

Legal

- Law enforcement or tribal law enforcement
- Neighborhood Legal Services (313-964-1975)
- Lakeshore Legal Aid (586-510-1814)

Health Providers

- Social Workers
- Healthcare Workers
- Mental Health Workers
- Shelter Workers
- County Senior Services

Summary

- Empathy, patience, and lack of judgment goes a long way in healing abuse.
- Elder abuse is a prosecutable crime. Report accordingly.
- We are all at risk for experiencing elder abuse, and we are all capable of eliminating it.
- Many resources exist. Please reach out.

Thank you!

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